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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines representations of Germans during and after the Cold War. More specifically, it explores how during this period the American cultural landscape was populated by several mass media "sites of memory," places where collective memories and understandings of Germans in the United States were revealed, constituted, and contested. It investigates how American and German actors, both public and private, attempted to create, promote, manipulate and suppress certain representations. It uses the notion of "interpretive communities" to organize and discuss the various responses to these images. Ultimately, it argues that two main narratives—a World War narrative and a Cold War narrative—structured American interpretations of the Germans. The World War narrative, symbolized primarily by the Third Reich and the Holocaust, portrayed the Germans as unreconstructed Nazis still bent on world conquest, whereas the Cold War narrative, primarily through the symbol of Berlin, depicted the Germans as brave democrats dedicated to the defense of the West. The dissertation examines how these different narratives competed for dominance and how they fared in light of different international and domestic contexts.
Dedicated to Erica and my parents
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many people helped make this dissertation, and the process that it both culminated and represented, possible. I would like to thank the members of my committee for reading and commenting on various drafts. Professor Beyerchen helped deepen my understanding of the German side of my story, and forced me to question unwarranted and unrecognized assumptions. Professor Hahn helped in almost every stage of the process, encouraging and demanding my best. Dean Hogan served as a model mentor in every way. Both Professor Hahn and Dean Hogan furthered my professionalization in innumerable ways.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

During and after the Cold War, many Americans regarded Berlin as the preeminent symbol of their global struggle against the Soviet Union. Beginning with the joint occupation of Berlin in 1945 and continuing through the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, presidents, diplomats, business leaders, members of Congress, journalists, novelists, filmmakers, musicians, and theologians invoked the Western experience in Berlin to represent and explain the nature of the Cold War. For these Americans, the division of the city represented in microcosm the Cold War division of the world, and events within those separate spheres of the city exemplified the qualities of each system. The Berlin Blockade, the construction of the Berlin Wall, and the fall of that Wall, to name only a few of the major episodes, defined the true essence of the Cold War for many Americans.

At the same time, however, most Americans regarded the Third Reich and its excesses as the supreme justification for America's participation and behavior in World War II. Representations of the Third Reich helped many Americans conceive of the "good war" in moral terms that trumpeted the United States as the savior of Western civilization. Questions of interests (such as concerns about the American economy) and
qualms about tactics (such as the firebombing of Dresden) were subsumed by a dominant narrative that judged all American motives and actions in light of the horrendous atrocities committed by the Nazis. In the years following the Second World War, the American struggle against National Socialism remained a powerful image of American morality for those who invoked it.

Thus Germany, both through its past and its present, played a significant role in defining how Americans thought about themselves. But while the images of Berlin and the Third Reich were mutually reinforcing for those who dwelled on the abstract nature of totalitarianism, these images engendered considerable dissonance in those who focused on Germany itself. More specifically, critics wondered how the Germans could populate the symbol of freedom and democracy while simultaneously carrying the responsibility for the attempted annihilation of an entire group of people based on their religious practices and/or ethnic heritage. How these different narratives have competed for predominance in American society and what their uses say about the nature of American identity during this period are the questions driving this inquiry.

To answer these questions, this dissertation examines representations of Germans in American culture from the assumption of Adolf Hitler to power in 1933 to the tenth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1999. Employing a necessarily selective approach, it looks at representations of Germans in the mass media (newspapers, magazines, television, film, novels, and works of history) and seeks to understand the nature of these representations, how they changed, and what these changes meant. In this effort, it investigates the activities of organizations, both public and private, American
and German, to construct, interpret, suppress, and manipulate these representations. And perhaps most importantly, it examines reactions to these "sites of memory" to illustrate how these images have been received and interpreted.

Covering such a broad range of sources has required research in a number of different archives. Among American archives, the dissertation draws on material from the U.S. National Archives at College Park, the Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library at Princeton University, the Margaret Herrick Library of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in Beverly Hills, the Special Collections Department at the University of California, Los Angeles, and the Warner Brothers Archive at the University of Southern California. Among German archives, it uses documents from the Federal Archives in Koblenz and the Political Archives of the German Foreign Office and the city of Berlin Archives in Berlin. In addition to these archival sources, my dissertation also draws heavily from published sources in the Foreign Relations of the United States and the Akten zur Auswaertigen Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland series, as well as innumerable American journals, magazines, and newspapers.

Theory

Gathering and synthesizing the material necessary for this argument requires a careful methodology gleaned from a number of theoretical perspectives. Although the dissertation employs insights drawn from several disciplines, among them anthropology, media studies, literary criticism, semiotics, and, most importantly, collective memory studies, this apparent diversity is offset by the similar concerns driving these fields. Increasingly, scholars in these different disciplines have become concerned with the
social production of meaning, and have developed a number of theories designed to explore how meaning is created, transmitted, and received.

For an overarching theoretical construct, this dissertation draws from recent multi-disciplinary works in the study of reception, such as the work of John Fiske. Reception theorists posit that texts do not possess immanent meaning but rather that meaning is produced in the act of reading a text. My dissertation also draws heavily from the work of Stanley Fish, by treating Germany as a "text" and employing the notion of "interpretive communities" to understand how various groups of Americans have "decoded" it. Along these lines it argues that the examination of a cultural product that deals with Germany must be a multi-layered exercise: a film like Judgment at Nuremberg, for example, must be examined not only for how audiences and critics received it, but also for what it reveals about how filmmakers (i.e. producers, directors, and screenwriters) interpreted Berlin and Germany.¹

This dissertation also draws heavily from recent works in collective memory. Drawing insights from cognitive psychology, sociology, anthropology, and other disciplines, historians have begun to examine how collective memory is formed and gives meaning to society. As David Thelen points out in his excellent introduction to the topic,

historians have largely turned away from an analysis of memory as a reflection of the past to an analysis of memory as construction of the past. Rather than determining whether or not memory is accurate, historians have begun examining why memory so often is inaccurate. Biologists and cognitive psychologists have amply demonstrated that the act of remembering is a presentist activity generated by presentist concerns. To that extent, understanding why memories diverge from the historical record reveals a great deal about the concerns and issues facing the person remembering. And because science has demonstrated that the act of remembering relies on external validation, the relationship between personal and collective memory is often strong, thus allowing us to make connections between popular representations and personal remembrances. Often, the most likely place to witness these ties is when different memories collide with each other or a national tradition.\(^2\)

Historians like John Bodnar and Michael Hogan have explored how “vernacular” history often runs counter to “official” history, whether that history be a product of the state, as Bodnar argues in his work *Remaking America*, or a product of professional historians, as Hogan illustrates in his essay on the Enola Gay exhibit at the Smithsonian. In Bodnar’s rendition, “official history” is as an effort by agents of the state to simplify the past for present purposes of national unity and political legitimation. In his study of

the Vietnam War memorial, for example, he points out that the United States government sought to alter the original design of Maya Lin, which simply presented the names of those lost in Vietnam etched in stone, because it was not sufficiently nationalistic. In his essay on the Enola Gay exhibit, Hogan, on the other hand, highlights how professional historians and the Smithsonian sought to present a highly nuanced exhibit on Truman’s decision to drop the bomb, portraying it as a controversial and devastating action. When veteran groups got wind of this plan, however, they were outraged by the perceived “anti-American” slant of the presenters, and successfully petitioned Congress and the Smithsonian for substantial change. In both cases, compromise was reached and public memory altered. In the former, the official desire to patriotize the monument was tempered; in the latter, the official desire to cosmopolitanize the exhibit was thwarted. Both reveal that “vernacular” history plays a powerful role in the shaping of society and can work either in the service of or against the nation-state.3

In drawing from these diverse areas of inquiry, this dissertation explores how the American mass cultural landscape has been populated by several mass media “sites of memory,” places where collective memories and understandings of Germans in the United States have been revealed, constituted, and contested. It attempts to do this through an exercise in "thick" description, by establishing the existence of different

narratological structures, by illustrating how these structures were present and influenced by private and public actors, and, finally, by examining how competing narratives clashed in the production and reception of these images. Specifically, the dissertation argues that the two main narratives structuring American memory of the Germans— the World War narrative and the Cold War narrative— were intimately interrelated and affected by domestic and international events.

**Historiography**

In basing itself on this wide-ranging set of sources and in using theoretical works on reception and collective memory, this dissertation aims to contribute to a number of different areas. For one, it seeks to contribute to what some have called the "new diplomatic history," a growing body of literature that asks new questions of traditional sources and explores previously ignored activities. In this vein, while my dissertation considers evidence from American policymaking circles, it examines this evidence not for motives undergirding foreign policy decisions but for discursive clues as to how American officials understood Germans. Drawing on Benedict Anderson's conceptualization of the nation-state as an "imagined community," the dissertation also looks to understand how various American leaders sought to use foreign policy pronouncements to define the American nation.4

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More importantly, the dissertation explores the efforts of heretofore relatively ignored organizations. Until now, the efforts of the Public Affairs branch of the State Department or the Federal Press Office of West Germany, to take two examples, have gone relatively unnoticed in the United States. But, while investigating governmental activities, my work also seeks to de-center the state, casting the state as one of many actors, including Jewish organizations, film studios, and public relations firms, involved in the creation of these representations. In my focus on non-state actors I am not alone; several scholars have turned their attention to the activities of non-governmental organizations, examining the ways in which these organizations shaped the international environment. Akira Iriye has even gone so far as to suggest that the twentieth century could be known as the "century of the NGOs."  

My work explores the complex relationships among these various groups and gauges their influence upon American society.

My work also contributes to the "new international history." For many years, "American diplomatic history" has been the operating title of works done on international history. This title has been unfortunate for a number of reasons, the primary one being that it renders foreign relations history to an "America and" formulation and focuses almost exclusively on diplomacy or state-to-state relations. In the last few years, historians of international relations have increasingly shied away from this moniker (and all that it has implied), preferring instead to view relations outside of the state as

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"international history." In its multiarchival and bilingual approach, this dissertation places itself squarely in this new tradition.6

In a related fashion, this dissertation seeks to reverse the gaze associated with recent works in Americanization. While a great deal has been written about American cultural activities in the Federal Republic, or the so-called "Americanization" of Germany, very little attention has been directed toward German cultural activities in the United States.7 The benefits of investigating cultural transmission in the other direction are several, not the least of which being that an examination of cultural transmission to, rather than from, the United States problematizes the notions of cultural transmission and power often associated with Americanization. Americanization implies that culture follows power and that cultural transmission constitutes efforts to reconstruct other cultures. In the Cold War this involved a large degree of intentionality, as American policymakers attempted to remake other nations in their own image to stop the spread of Soviet bolshevism. But works addressing periods both before and after the Cold War

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6 International History is increasingly becoming the fashionable term for Diplomatic History. For example, the newly established graduate conference at Harvard has been entitled "the Harvard Graduate Conference on International History."

have suggested that the process of Americanization has been a function of spreading American capital. Whatever the prime reason, however, scholars of Americanization have agreed that cultural transmission has largely meant the reconstruction of other cultures along American lines.  

In exploring the efforts of the Federal Republic of Germany to promote a positive image of Germany in the United States, this dissertation suggests that cultural transmission can occur in other, more subtle, ways. In examining the efforts of the Federal Republic and the City of West Berlin to convince Americans that Germans were dependable democrats and not unreconstructed Nazis, it argues that efforts from the international periphery can affect the cultural core by recognizing and exploiting dominant cultural trends. In this way, West Germany's activities in the United States were a sharp departure from those of its predecessor, Nazi Germany. Pursuing a goal somewhat similar to Americanization, Nazi Germany sought to reawaken Deutschtum (Germanness) in the United States and thus remake the United States in the image of the Third Reich. By contrast, West German efforts, aware of the disparity of power in the postwar world, primarily attempted to convince Americans that Germans were like them, and thus hoped to remake West Germany in the image of the United States.

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Organization and Summary

The dissertation consists of ten chapters, including an introduction and a conclusion. The next chapter examines representations of Germans in American society during World War II. It argues that the simplistic notion that Americans experienced a dramatic reversal in attitude toward the Germans in the early stages of the Cold War is false. Rather, by demonstrating that readings of Nazi Germany, and specifically the relationship between Nazis and Germans, were contested, it illustrates that subsequent narratives of the German people largely patterned themselves on the same kinds of issues and perspectives. It argues that a spectrum of opinions on Germans existed, with one end positing a strong relationship between Germans and Nazis and the other arguing that no intrinsic relationship connected the two. The chapter shows this widespread indecision regarding the German people in American government, intellectual circles, popular culture, and mass society.

The third chapter explores American images of Germans from the immediate postwar period to the end of the Berlin Blockade. It shows how a period that began in uncertainty ended with a growing resolve. It argues that two main issues helped convince mainstream America that the Germans were not Nazis. The first was the German landscape and the people who populated it. Remembering Germany as it once was, Americans exhibited an overwhelming sympathy for what Germany had become and what it had lost. The other was the city of Berlin. Confronted with an increasingly intransigent Soviet Union, Americans became impressed with the willingness of Berliners to stand firm in the face of Soviet intimidation and fear. Berliners helped
persuade Americans that Nazism, like communism, had been a hostile ideology imposed on an unwilling populace. Using the concept of totalitarianism, Americans reimagined the pasts of both the Soviet Union and Germany, viewing Nazism and communism as only the most recent chapters in America's struggle with European authoritarianism. The chapter looks at how the American government encouraged certain readings of Germany and Berlin through the promotion and suppression of certain images.

The fourth chapter examines the Cold War consensus of the 1950s. This chapter looks at how both American and German officials sought to convince Americans of the virtues of the Federal Republic. In particular, the chapter relates the activities of the Roy Bernard Co., the public relations firm in the employ of the Federal Republic. It sheds light on Roy Bernard's activities in "placing" material in major American periodicals, scheduling and managing the visits of prominent Germans, and silencing or suppressing alternative narratives of the German people. The chapter also outlines the functioning of the Cold War consensus through the analysis of the reception of two films.

The fifth chapter specifically explores American representations of Berlin during the 1950s. It depicts the activities of West Berlin officials in the United States and the efforts of Americans to capitalize on the growing symbolism of the erstwhile German capital. Yet the main argument of this chapter is that both the American media and people spontaneously echoed the dominant narratives of American and German officials, because Berlin resonated with some of the deep currents of American culture. It illustrates this fact through the analysis of letters written by Americans to officials in West Berlin.
The sixth and seventh chapters explore the breakdown of the Cold War consensus during the 1960s. They argue that during this period representations of Germans splintered along political and ethnic lines, as Americans increasingly used both the American struggle against the Third Reich and the American support for Berlin to criticize American society during the 1960s. This multiplicity of meanings drawn from both the Third Reich and Berlin illustrate, these chapters suggest, the universalization of the experiences of the Third Reich to all of Western civilization.

The eighth and ninth chapters deal with the aftermath of the 1960s. Chapter 8 outlines how Berlin regained its power as the symbol of the Cold War in the 1980s and 1990s. Following the Nixon administration's failed efforts to remake Berlin as a symbol of cooperation in the wake of the 1971 Quadripartite Agreements, Reagan reinvigorated Berlin's Cold War symbolism as he reconstructed the Cold War. Because of this reinvested symbolism, the fall of the Berlin Wall came to symbolize the end of the Cold War. And because of the particular nature of the symbolism of the Wall, i.e. its representation of communism as bankrupt and depraved, the fall of the Wall not only symbolized the end of the Cold War, but the victory of the United States and the West in that conflict.

The ninth chapter deals with the growth of the Holocaust in the United States during the last two decades, using it as a prism to analyze American remembrance and understanding of the Third Reich as well as itself. It focuses on four different sites of memory: the "Holocaust" mini-series of 1978, Steven Spielberg's Schindler's List, Daniel Goldhagen's Hitler's Willing Executioners, and the United States Holocaust Memorial...
Museum. In examining these different representations of the Holocaust, and more importantly, popular and scholarly reactions to them, the chapter makes some final conclusions as to the place of the Holocaust in American public memory at the close of the millennium.
CHAPTER 2

"TOMORROW, THE WORLD"?

It has become commonplace for historians to note that two of the 20th century's most influential individuals came to power in the same year. Not without a touch of irony, lecturers in universities around the globe point out that both Franklin Roosevelt and Adolf Hitler rode the Depression into power in 1933. Both emerged as powerful leaders, they observe, who decisively dealt with the economic problems that their countries faced, and led their nations into wars in which they both enjoyed, for periods of time, great success. Both exhibited mastery in communicating with their constituents, and both symbolized in very real ways their respective nations and peoples. Both even exited the historical stage in the same year, passing away in the final act of World War II.9

Historians delight in highlighting these similarities precisely because the differences between the two men are both far greater and much better known. In fact,

fewer historical legacies are so widely divergent. Roosevelt is frequently rated as one of
the greatest Presidents in American history. He is credited with bringing the United
States out of the Great Depression, leading the United States into successful "good" war
against an evil enemy, and reviving and preserving American democracy. Hitler, on the
other hand, with his military campaigns, his denigration of women, his support and
elevation of irrationality, and his efforts to exterminate an entire group of people, has
become synonymous with evil. The wealth of scholarship on him and his minions seems
intent on illuminating the various facets of their depravity. His name has become an
epithet; any historian who ventures near a defense of der Fuehrer or any of his policies
risks the censure fellow historians.

Yet, in terms of importance for American identity, Hitler is as integral to
American identity as Franklin Roosevelt, and perhaps even more so. Fascination with
Hitler's particular brand of evil has been enormous. In his recent biography, Ian Kershaw
counts over 100,000 pieces of historical literature that deal with der Fuehrer. This
obsession with the Third Reich, observers have argued, stems in large part from its
fantastic and unbelievable nature. Indeed, Americans like to believe that everything
about Hitler and the Third Reich runs counter to Americanism and American ideals,
including the style of government, the level of tolerance, the value placed on life, and the
emphasis on reason. Nazism and fascism have been used interchangeably to denote
activities and policies that run counter to the way that Americans tend to think about the world and their place in it.  

This understanding of the Third Reich as America's "other" has not always been so. It has developed historically, and as many would be quick to point out, has never represented all elements of American society. This chapter provides a framework for understanding how Americans perceived the Third Reich during its existence, in the belief that these frameworks for understanding Germany continued into the Cold War. It does so briefly, with apologies to those historians of World War II who have lamented the frequent portrayal of that war as the prelude to the Cold War. 

This chapter argues that simplistic notions of American opinions of Germany during the war have distorted and exaggerated the transformation of American attitudes in the early years of the Cold War. American historians have assumed that there was a great deal of American hatred and animosity for the Germans during World War II, and that the American approval of and desire to rebuild Germany in the early Cold War period thus represented a dramatic change in opinion. Such an easy narrative masks the complex contestations and ruptures in American thinking on the Germans. At every level, Americans were divided as to how to approach and understand the nature of the

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10 For a discussion of Hitler's hold on the West, please see Ian Kershaw, Hitler, 1889-1936: Hubris (New York: W.W. Norton, 1999).

German people. This indecision can be seen among members of the Roosevelt administration, in journalism circles, in intellectual communities, and in the general public at large.¹²

Although there was a cacophony of voices on this subject, a range of opinions did emerge. The focal point became the relationship between Germans and Nazis. On one end of the spectrum, some offered the opinion that no difference existed between the two. Members of this interpretive community read the history of Germany as an unbroken chain of aggressive military ventures. The most extreme of this group believed that there was a biological element to the bellicosity of the German people and that the only way to rid the world of this militarism was to destroy Germany as an entity (and perhaps as a people). Most at the end of this spectrum, however, subscribed to a cultural explanation of Germany's warlike nature. They saw in Germany's history a tragic repetition of the same cultural determinants that bred militarism, ambition, and blind obedience to authority. For them, the best way to rid the world of German militarism was to purge Germany of these cultural factors through democratization and reeducation. These people believed that the preconditions or elements necessary for the rise of Nazism were intrinsically German.

¹² Michaela Hoenicke makes a similar observation. In fact, I have relied heavily on her outstanding dissertation for this chapter. She methodically traces the debate over Germany in a number of different venues and organizations, drawing on an impressive array of primary and secondary sources. See Michaela Hoenicke, "Know Your Enemy': American Interpretations of National Socialism, 1933-1945" (Ph.D. Diss., University of North Carolina, 1998).
For this group, it is important to understand that America's encounter with imperial Germany during World War I weighed heavily. Great Britain's successful propaganda campaign in the United States, along with the spontaneous consent by many Americans publicists and opinion-makers, helped embitter many Americans against the bloody Huns. Exaggerated claims about the dastardly acts of German soldiers engendered negative stereotypes of the Germans in the American mind during WWI, and these stereotypes found resonance in American representations of the Nazis twenty years later. For many of these people, World War I and World War II were the same war, fought against the same enemy.

On the other end of the spectrum were people who believed that "gangsters" had hijacked the German nation and dragged it kicking and screaming in a direction in which it did not want to go. To these people, the Germans were a cultured, civilized people who would never willingly support a dictator like Hitler. Their belief was that if the United States could rid Germany of its Nazi leaders, then the German nation would naturally revert to its democratic and peaceful ways. Others at this end, not as extreme in their defense of the German people, believed that the Nazi "disease" had infected much of the German people, and that simply removing the Nazi leaders would not be enough to rid the country of the destructive virus. They felt that some rehabilitative measures would be necessary to root out the Nazi scourge. For people on this end of the continuum, Nazism was an alien ideology that infected the German people. To drive home their point, they often pointed to the fact that Nazism could happen anywhere, including the United States.
During this period, a number of agencies and organizations tried to shape representations of Germans in American society. These included both American and German governmental organizations, as well as various private organizations. Neither government proved entirely successful in solidifying an American consensus on the Germans. Despite their efforts, the American people, like their policy- and opinionmakers, remained hopelessly divided at the end of the war.

Roosevelt and Germany

American foreign policy during the 1930s and 1940s has been discussed ad nauseum. Much has been made of America's unwillingness, through a curious combination of idealistic activity and realistic neglect, to bankroll and support the system that it had helped create. Historians have written volumes about Roosevelt's laudable struggles against an intransigent isolationism determined to prevent American action in international affairs. They have pored over Roosevelt's utterances in an effort to divine his intent for the postwar world. They have also sought to understand his actions in a global sense, in which they situate his efforts and activities in an international perspective that offers various perspectives on him and American foreign policies of this period.  

A central issue in this larger constellation of concerns has been America's relationship with Nazi Germany. After all, the Roosevelt administration felt that Hitler was the greatest threat. Even after Japan attacked Pearl Harbor in December 1941, Roosevelt worried about ways to maneuver the American military into Europe first. Clearly clinging to the notion of Europe as the "cockpit" of the world, Roosevelt believed that if Germany achieved hegemony on the European continent, the United States would suffer greatly. Indeed, in Roosevelt's State of the Union address of 1942, he blamed the Nazis for the attack on Pearl Harbor, referring to the Japanese as Nazi "chessmen." He also termed the methods of the Japanese at Pearl Harbor as the "method of Hitler himself." From his actions and his rhetoric, it is clear that Roosevelt subscribed to the common American view that Europe represented the epicenter of world power and the most important area on the globe. 14

But in defining the nature of the threat, that is Nazi Germany, Roosevelt was ambiguous. In private, Roosevelt appeared to make little distinction between Nazis and Germans. In 1940, he wrote to a British friend that he had little "patience" for people who attempted to make a strong distinction between Nazis and Germans. After offering a laundry list of examples of German misconduct and aggression, Roosevelt gave his belief that the current war was to "end German militarism." In another letter, this one to William Donovan, Roosevelt suggested the use of a strongly anti-German tract as the

14 Quoted in Hoenicke, "'Know Your Enemy'", 208.
basis for psychological warfare. Privately, Roosevelt nurtured a deep distrust and animosity toward the German people.\textsuperscript{15}

In public, however, Roosevelt did not let his anti-German bias show. Indeed, in his 1942 State of the Union address, he provided a sympathetic portrait of the Germans. While still harsh on the Nazis, Roosevelt suggested that Hitler had enslaved the German people first and the rest of Europe second. In depicting the German people as Hitler's first victim, he absolved them of their responsibility for his rise. Similarly, in the Atlantic Charter and the Allies demand for unconditional surrender, a differentiation between Germans and Nazis was made. When compared to his privately stated opinions, these public utterances seem to indicate a man conflicted himself about the Germans.\textsuperscript{16}

Historian Michaela Hoenicke has suggested a compelling hypothesis to explain Roosevelt's apparent ambivalence. Hoenicke argues that Roosevelt's public posture was carefully calculated to have the maximum effect on public opinion. Through various public opinion polls, Roosevelt realized that most Americans viewed the war as a struggle against the German government and not the German people. To implicate the German people in the crimes of the Nazis would be to unnecessarily complicate the task of motivating Americans to fight. Hence Roosevelt subordinated his personal beliefs

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., 218.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 221.
about the Germans to the greater goal of defeating them. Roosevelt remained throughout his life suspicious of the Germans and their attitudes.  

Just how did other Americans understand Germany? Prior to 1939, most Americans recognized a distinction between Nazis and Germans. Because of the reputation that Germans enjoyed in the late 19th century and during the Weimar period, many Americans viewed the Nazis as an aberration in German history. Many elite Americans, in particular those who had received an education in German universities, refused to believe that the Germans had accepted Nazism to any large degree. Also perplexed by the rise of Nazism were American Jews and the millions of Americans of German descent. Many of these Americans simply could not reconcile images of Nazi brutality and terror with those deeply embedded folkloric narratives of Germans as a hardworking, intelligent, and cultured people. As historian Sanders Diamond has persuasively argued, the power of these previously held images of late 19th century Germany helped give rise to the "good German" "bad German" dichotomy that persisted into the World War II and Cold War eras.  

Indeed, many Americans greeted initial reports on the Third Reich with disbelief and scorn. Especially vociferous in their denunciation of reports critical of Germany were recent visitors to the Fatherland. Edgar Mowrer and his wife reported that they

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17 Ibid., 216-221.
were tired of effusive estimates of Germany by Americans who only stayed in Germany for a week. These visitors only saw clean people, neat streets, and an absence of breadlines. They would often extrapolate from these brief encounters with Germany that it was preposterous to suggest that Jews were treated with anything other than respect and equality. American businessmen also denied negative reports of the Germans. In the debate over American participation in the 1936 Olympic Games held in Munich, for example, many Americans dismissed stories of German anti-Semitism as unsubstantiated and errant.

This skepticism meant that the American journalists in Germany who were alarmed by the actions of the Nazis had a very difficult task ahead of them. Indeed correspondents in Germany had more than the skeptical attitude of the American people to overcome. Journalists in Nazi Germany had to walk a very fine line between journalistic integrity and hard-headed pragmatism. Still, despite the unreasonable demands and restraints placed on American journalists, they were able to report on the growing horror in Hitler's Germany. Although all of the major journalists were strongly anti-Nazi, their appraisals of the source of Nazism in Germany differed.

Edgar Mowrer was one of the first American journalists expelled by the Nazi leadership because of his uncompromising stand against the new regime. In his 1933 work, *Germany Puts the Clock Back*, Mowrer argued that Germany was a fertile ground for Nazism, even during the Weimar period. He blamed the German elites, the bankers, industrialists, and politicians, for creating and maintaining an ideological education that trained people for "blind submission" and "Prussianism." He traced the effects of this
system from the Kaiserreich through the Weimar Republic, arguing that the fundamental structures of Imperial German society remained intact. Mowrer also traced threads of anti-Semitism and anti-Republicanism throughout German history. Mowrer's insistence on the culpability of Germany's long-established elite popularized the notion of "Junkerism" as the main causal factor in the rise of Nazism.20

William Shirer's indictment against the Germans was even stronger. Shirer lived in Germany from 1934 until 1940, when he was finally expelled by the Nazis. In 1941, he published the best-selling Berlin Diary, in which he argued that "the majority of Germans...are behind Hitler and believe in him." Shirer conceded that some of the Germans did not like Hitler, but he believed this number was far too low. He also noted that after a year of war some Germans were interested in stopping the war, but they were afraid of what would happen, because of the ill manner in which they treated other peoples, if they were defeated. Shirer believed that the Germans were naturally subservient, and even wondered, in his infamous phrase, if they might be "natural-born killers." The thrust of Shirer's beliefs was that the Germans were an incorrigible race.21

Dorothy Thompson's views were probably the most complex. While appalled also at the crimes and savagery of the Nazis, Thomspson, for the most part, stressed that the Germans were no different than other peoples. Thompson liked to suggest that


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"Nazism has nothing to do with race or nationality." Yet early on in her coverage of Nazi Germany, she concluded that the "German love of order" led to the surrender to National Socialism. Over time, however, she began to see the universal elements of National Socialism in sharper relief, attempting to "psychologize" the roots of Nazism. She ultimately concluded that "Nazism is a disease of our times, with more than purely Germanic roots." As a result, she implicated all of Western civilization in the crimes of the Nazis, arguing that "it could happen here."

Thus, despite a common disdain for Nazism and a common view of its dangers to Western civilization, American journalists in Germany "read" Germany in radically different ways. For Americans who turned to these respected journalists for guidance and information about Germany, these competing interpretations and assessments were of little help in helping them forge some consensus about the German threat. These journalists even had difficulty convincing Americans about the dangerous events going on in Nazi Germany. Ironically, it remained for one of Nazi Germany's own agencies to serve as the catalyst.

**The German-American Bund**

For Americans alarmed about the nature of the new regime, help came from an unexpected source--Fritz Kuhn's German-American Bund. The German-American Bund was part of the Third Reich's effort to galvanize Germans in the diaspora. Party theorists estimated that between seven and eight million German-Americans still spoke German as their primary language, and that fully a quarter of the American population was of German extraction. In fact, party leaders believed that the American population was as
much German as it was Anglo-Saxon. The Nazi Party believed that these German elements in the United States remained "uncontaminated" by the corruptive Jewish influences. Nazi race theorists went so far as to label the "melting pot" philosophy a "Jewish invention." During the 1930s, the Nazi government acted on these premises.22

During the first half of the 1930s, the German government attempted to reawaken Deutschtum or Germanness in the German-American segment of the population. They sought to make German-Americans aware of their racial heritage and encouraged them to think of themselves as Germans exclusively. One of the first things that Goebbels did in the United States was to hire an American public relations firm. They also disseminated information through more direct means, such as the German Library of Information and the German Railroads Information Office. The Nazi government supplied several indigenous American groups with pro-Nazi and anti-Semitic propaganda. The German-American Bund was one of their most important indigenous groups.

The German-American Bund was, by all accounts, a disaster. Its final leader Fritz Kuhn was also its most ambitious, and from the perspective of the Nazis, the most damaging. Kuhn liked to ape der Fuehrer, and by the late 1930s, when the Nazi leadership realized that Deutschtum was not being reawakened, his antics were viewed as anathema. For many Americans, as Diamond has noted, Kuhn "represented the essence of un-Americanism: his thick foreign accent, his Nazi-style uniform, his repeated

statements of allegiance to Hitler, and above all, his apparent misuse of his recently acquired American citizenship. By 1937, Kuhn accomplished "what...a host of other Americans had failed to do in the years immediately following Hitler's consolidation of power: he made numerous Americans aware of the fascist challenge."\textsuperscript{23} Popular fiction writers became obsessed with him and his Bund. Stories about their activities were splashed across the mass media, exaggerating the strength and popularity of this organization.

**Confessions of a Nazi Spy**

One of the best sources for gauging American attitudes on the Bund, and hence on Nazism and Germany in the pre-war period in general, was Warner Brothers' groundbreaking movie, *Confessions of a Nazi Spy*. The first anti-Nazi film produced in the United States, the production was based on a 1938 court trial in New York, in which four individuals were convicted of spying. Warner Brothers, already well known for its anti-fascist sympathies, sent writer Milton Krims to cover the trial and write a screenplay based on its proceedings.

The film emphasized the involvement of a former Bund leader in the spying activity. It suggested that the Bund was a Nazi instrument of domestic subversion in the United States, eliding the fact that the German government found the Bund to be counterproductive to their aims of reawakening *Deutschtum*. The film suggested that Americans should heighten their awareness of the "fifth column" activities in the United

\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., 204.
States, lest their country suffer the same fate as Austria and Czechoslovakia. In general, the film was intended to be a clarion call for ideological preparedness in the United States.

Viewers reacted differently to exhibitions of Confessions. Some viewers who saw the film praised the "splendid use of factual material" and "courage" in coming out "openly and boldly for the cause of patriotism and love of our country." But others drew different meanings from the film. Karl Lischka, an official of the Production Code Administration, concluded that "Hitler and his government are unfairly represented in this story." "To represent Hitler only as a screaming madman and a bloodthirsty persecutor, and nothing else," he believed, "is manifestly unfair, considering his phenomenal public career, his unchallenged political and social achievements, and his position as head of the most important continental European power." Others dissenters went further, sensing an ulterior motive behind the film, beyond mere patriotism. Signing his letter "An American Born," one critic suggested to Warner Bros. that after this picture, "it would be suitable [for Warners] to follow with 'I am a Communist' starring Eddie Cantor and a few other Communist Jews in order to let the public know what progress the Communists are making in this country, and who the people are who support

24 Letter, W.W. Dobson to Warner Brothers, May 16, 1939, Correspondence 1, Confessions of a Nazi Spy, Warner Bros. Archive, University of Southern California (hereafter WBA); Letter, Sylvia Razey to Warner Brothers, 1939, Correspondence 1, Confessions of a Nazi Spy, WBA.
these Reds."25 Many of those critics who wrote to Warner Brothers evinced concern about such "one-sided propaganda" that did not detail the dangers of communism. As one viewer pleaded, "Let us now see "Confessions of a Communist Spy," or the "Red Menace Exposed," or "Red Moscow and Satanic Utopia."26 In lumping Nazism and Communism together, these critics revealed that many Americans were concerned about the dangers of -isms to, as one critic termed it, "true American ideals."

Indeed, as responses to Confessions illustrate, the vast number of Americans believed that all foreign ideologies were hostile to Americanism. Any groups that subscribed to such ideologies or demonstrated unwarranted sympathy or affinity for other nations were branded as un-American and threats to the United States. Because of the Great Depression, the 1930s were viewed as a particularly ripe decade for subversion, and many Americans therefore felt the need for heightened vigilance against potential enemies. Several Americans worried that the economic dislocations brought about by the downturn encouraged desperate citizens to embrace radical doctrines. As Thomas Paterson and Les Adler have shown, American viewed fascism and communism, in particular, with alarm. Observing the dramatic and effective rise of Nazi Germany,

25 Letter, An American Born to Jack Warner, January 1, 1939, Confessions of a Nazi Spy--Notes Etc., Confessions of a Nazi Spy, WBA.

26 Letter, Luis De Angelis to Warner Brothers, May 31, 1939, Confessions of a Nazi Spy, WBA.
Americans worried that Nazi ideology could make substantial inroads in the United States.\(^{27}\)

This was, after all, what made these nations so frightening: it was not so much their individual power as nations, but the possible power of their ideologies to subvert and wreck American democracy and freedom. Thus what is important to realize in the pre-World War II era is that most groups in the United States did not view all Germans as Nazis. What made Nazi Germany aggressive and bombastic were Nazis and not Germans. In the same way, Americans strongly believed that Bolshevism and not the Russian people were responsible for the actions of the Soviet Union.

A few events mitigated against this forgiving portrait of the Germans. The most significant was Kristallnacht, or the Night of Broken Glass, which occurred on the evening of November 9, 1938. Kristallnacht signaled the beginning of open Nazi aggression against the Jews. On this night, Nazi thugs destroyed several shops owned by Jews. Americans reacted in horror to this event, and Roosevelt recalled his ambassador to Germany in protest. The American reaction to Kristallnacht foreshadowed the importance that the Nazi war against the Jews played in convincing some Americans that the Germans were a race that bordered on the irredeemable.\(^{28}\)


\(^{28}\) Hoenicke, "'Know Your Enemy'", 136-137.
The War Years

In the spring of 1942, after the United States had been at war for almost half a year, government pollsters discovered some disturbing information. Only half of Americans responded that they were ready to go fight. Moreover, only half of Americans seemed to know what the war was even about. The Office of War Information began work in the summer of 1942 to shape American attitudes on the war. Taking the cue from Roosevelt's State of the Union address in which he outlined the nature of the enemy, OWI, under the direction of Elmer Davis, sought to emphasize the differences between Germans and Nazis. The wisdom of this policy was confirmed by an August 1942 poll, which found that only 5 percent of Americans thought the Germans (as opposed to the Nazis) were the enemy. Yet the actual course of this policy reflected the concerns of liberals in the organization. Actual OWI policy focused on the Nazis as the primary problem, but also suggested that the Germans had been beaten into submission and obedience, therefore implying that simply removing the Nazi leaders would not be enough. At the same time, the OWI encouraged Americans to sympathize with the German victims, so that they might have a greater sense of immediacy in fighting the Nazis.29

One such example was Tender Comrade, which painted the Germans with favorable, albeit tragic, strokes. In this 1943 movie about the trials and tribulations facing American wives with husbands abroad, the Germans are portrayed as a betrayed

29 Hoenicke, "Know Your Enemy", 204-263.
people through the character of Manya. Manya and her husband fled to the United States after the rise of Hitler. In the United States, Manya begins working for a group of "war widows"—women working at the war plant—that are living together to save money and keep each other company while their husbands are away. Manya offers to work as a housekeeper for free, because these women are doing their part in the war against Hitler. When informed that the "war widows" run their house like a democracy, Manya replies, "Democracy. That is good. In Germany we once had a democracy. But we let it be murdered like a child." Later in the film, Manya becomes outraged when a "war widow" suggests that they should keep an extra pound of bacon generously offered by the butcher. She has seen, Manya lectures, how little violations of the law can snowball into major ones. Finally, Jo, the head of the "war widows," accuses Barbara, a disgruntled member of group, of being the kind of person Hitler relies on, one who talks but never thinks. By stressing the provisional nature of Nazi rule, this film clearly portrays Nazism as a virus that could infect any people, regardless of race or culture.

Not all cultural products followed this line, however. In the 1944 Days of Glory, for example, Germans are portrayed as a faceless, pitiless, and demonic force. In this film about a brave band of Soviet freedom fighters hidden deep behind the German lines in occupied Russia, the Russians use the terms Nazis and Germans interchangeably. When on the screen, the Germans speak their native tongue, and the lack of subtitles gives them a harsh and alien quality. When Mitya, an idealistic member of the group, is captured, he refuses to inform on his friends and tells the Germans that "they cannot hang a nation." The Soviets, by contrast, are portrayed like Americans. Although they live in
a community, one directed by a professor who coordinates their activities, they evince the same desires, fears, and concerns about life and death. At the end of the film, after Vladimir's brave group is annihilated by a German tank, the film's narrator declares that thousands of Russians like Vladimir's band should be credited for stopping "Hitler's horde" and turning "its evil face" back at the battle of Stalingrad.

In a similar fashion, the 1941 film *Above Suspicion* portrayed all Nazis as cruel bullies, thus suggesting that these traits were fundamentally German. The heroine's husband informs her, "You and I don't hate the Nazis because they are Germans. We hate the Germans because they are Nazis." "The lines between right and wrong, between good and evil," wrote one film critic, "were clearly drawn--and we were on the right side, the angelic side...[in] a fight between a free world and a slave world." Upton Sinclair's absurd, ridiculous *Presidential Agent* sounded a similar theme, portraying Roosevelt and Hitler as emblematic between good and evil. These images, according to historian John Morton Blum, left the Germans "stripped of their humanity."30

This wartime atmosphere as well as the reports trickling in on the extent of the Nazi pogrom against the Jews threw into doubt the nature of the German people. In sum, it revived and bolstered the Great War narrative of the Germans that portrayed them as bloodthirsty Huns. The addition of the racial component through Nazi activity in the Holocaust made the Germans appear even more sadistic. The onset of the war obviously did not change people's minds, but it did sharpen the question for most: if the United

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States and the allies prevailed in the war, they would have to work out some plan for Germany. This plan would be based on the relationship between Germans and Nazis.

In discussing the German question, then, Americans concentrated on the relationship between Nazis and Germans. Put simply, was there any meaningful distinction to be drawn between Nazis and Germans? This question was of the utmost importance to Americans. If all Germans were Nazis, then leniency could lead to disaster, for the Germans would take advantage of any weakness to make another attempt at world domination. If, however, the Nazis were indeed just a small portion of Germans who were able to take advantage of desperate times, then excessive harshness would not only be unjust, but unproductive. As it became clear that the Allies would win the war in Europe, this debate increased in ferocity.

There was no shortage of people convinced that the Germans bordered on irredeemable. Much of their argument was historical in nature; many Americans portrayed German history as a succession of aggressive ventures. "The fact is that the Germans have been warriors for centuries," declared a columnist for the *American Mercury*. "Professional soldiering is imbedded deeply in the Teutonic character."31 He argued that the Germans would continue to fight as long as there was a "fifty-chance of winning." Henry C. Wolfe, foreign correspondent, member of the Hoover Commission in the Soviet Union, specialist on Nazi Germany's foreign policy, and author of the alarmist tract *The German Octopus*, sounded a similar note of concern. "The Nazis have

taken military defeat into their calculations," he warned. "In their long-range program for world domination, military defeat in World War II is provisional." To assume that killing Hitler and his fellow hierarchs would kill off Nazism would be a "tragic mistake." After the war, Wolfe foresaw, the Germans will "step in and say: 'Let's go to work at once. We have the plans. Not all our machinery was destroyed by bombs. Give us the manpower and the raw materials and we shall produce for the world markets.'"32 Any leniency, these authors believed, would be dangerous given Germany's long history in international affairs.

Even Thomas Mann, the famous exile from Germany, conceded that there was something fundamentally disturbing about the German character. Horrified at the brutality of his homeland, he referred to his country's deficiencies in terms of a "dark curse" rather than "crime and guilt." He argued that this curse was a product of Germany's excessive idealism and pre-rational nature. Such innocence, he claimed, could be taken advantage of by demagogues, as happened with Hitler.33

Others were not so convinced that something inherent in the German culture, race, or nation led to Nazism. A columnist for The Nation, for example, claimed that the argument that Nazism "is due to something inherent in the German character is silly--or worse, an inverted Goebbelsism." Every "totalitarian regime," he opined, relied on a "deliberately puerile ideology" and the "methodical disruption of family life" to


33 Thomas Mann, "What is German?" Atlantic Monthly 173 (May 1944), 78-85.
implement a fascist state. Dorothy Thomson, the reporter and author of great reputation, emerged as the most powerful advocate for a lenient peace with the Germans. "It may be said," she argued, "that all this could not have happened in any other nation. It is my opinion that it could happen to any people if the continuity of all their traditions were so drastically broken by the convergence of many circumstances, as many of them fortuitous as designed." In short, she claimed, "we shall have to deal...with an abnormal people; not abnormal because their race made them so, or their history, or Bismarck, Nietzsche, Hegel and Fichte, but abnormal because they have led an abnormal life." Thompson believed that integration within a new Europe was the only means of keeping Germany peaceful and free from Soviet influence.

The rest of the American population was just as uncertain. Reactions to a Thompson article in Newsweek, for example, revealed a deeply divided public. Some supported Thompson's ideas, with one even suggesting that Thompson should work for the State Department. Others, however, expressed horror at Thompson's proposals. Public opinion polls reflected this uncertainty. Although in a late 1942 Gallup Poll 74% of Americans claimed that the Americans were at war with the German government and not the German people, the Americans were deeply divided over what should be done with the Germans. In a series of Gallup Polls throughout the war, Americans vacillated

34 Heinrich Fraenkel, "Is Hitler Youth Curable?" New Republic 111 (September 18, 1944), 335.
35 Dorothy Thompson, "Germany—Enigma of the Peace," Life (December 6, 1943), 74.
36 Letters to the Editor, Newsweek 24 (November 6, 1944), 14, 18.
between strict control of Germany following the war and destroying Germany as a political entity altogether.

The Jewish community shared this ambivalence. Major Jewish publications such as the *National Jewish Monthly* (the journal of B'nai B'rith, the largest Jewish service fraternity) and *Commentary* (the journal of the American Jewish Committee) revealed a divided Jewish community. Edward Grusd, editor of the *NJM*, for example, offered an essentially class-based interpretation of Nazism. Arguing that anti-semitism was merely a smokescreen for the concentration of wealth into the hands of a few, Grusd claimed that "a Fascist junta could use anything as a smokescreen: 'Negroes,' 'Quakers,' 'Catholics' or 'red-heads.'"  

Eugene Tillinger, on the other hand, contended that Nazism was the natural outgrowth of German Prussianism. "It is this Prussian spirit that lay behind the five wars of aggression launched by Germany within the past century, first under Bismarck, then under Wilhelm II, and finally under Adolf Hitler," he claimed. "It is Prussianism that has made the Germans the most warlike nation in the world."

Even the American government proved divided in its opinions of the German people. Franklin Roosevelt's Secretary of the Treasury, Henry Morgenthau, offered the first public, comprehensive plan for German occupation. In September 1944, Morgenthau suggested that Germany should be stripped of the Ruhr, and, to use Winston

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37 Editor, "Unconditional Surrender of Fascism," *National Jewish Monthly* 58 (September 1943) 1.

38 Eugene Tillinger, "Prussia: Menace to Peace", *National Jewish Monthly* 58 (February 1944), 188.
Churchill's memorable description, reduced to a "pastoral state." Morgenthau outlined the premises behind such a policy in a January 10, 1945 memorandum to Franklin Roosevelt:

The German people have the will to try it again;
Programs for democracy, re-education and kindness cannot destroy this will within any brief time;
Heavy industry is the core of Germany's warmaking potential.

"Nearly all Americans grant the first point," Morgenthau declared. "A few, such as Dorothy Thompson, appear to disagree with the second; but all that we know and have learned recently--our experience with war prisoners, for instance--seems to argue against them." Instead Morgenthau believed that the reasoning of "soft" peace advocates such as Thompson did not emerge from any real disagreement on these three points, but rather sprang from a "fear of Russia and communism."39

Such a harsh policy met with its fair share of critics in Washington. Secretaries Hull and Stimson, for example, disagreed vigorously. Viewing the Treaty of Versailles as the prime reason for the Second World War, Stimson said that Morgenthau's plan of "enforced poverty" "destroys the spirit not only of the victim but debases the victor."40

Both Hull and Stimson favored policies that would rehabilitate and reintegrate Germany's economy into a revitalized Europe.\textsuperscript{41}

This debate over what do with the Germans was brought to the silver screen in Lester Cowan's \textit{Tomorrow, the World!} Adapted from a Broadway play of the same name, \textit{Tomorrow, the World!} presents an allegorical tale in which the German people are represented by the Nazi Youth child, Emil. In this film, Emil is sent to the United States to live with his uncle after his mother and father are killed in German concentration camps for speaking out against Hitler. His uncle Mike and his friends are excited about the arrival of Emil, but are shocked at what has become of him under Hitler's rule in Germany. Emil causes problems with Mike's fiancée, a Jewish schoolteacher, and his housekeeper, a German who refuses to support the Third Reich. After repeated efforts to disrupt and destroy Mike's life, Emil is finally humbled by an unexpected act of kindness from Mike's sister and breaks down, begging for forgiveness. Realizing that the boy is an innocent victim of the Nazis, Mike allows him to stay.

The main theme in \textit{Tomorrow, the World!} revolved around the clash between the Nazi and American ways of life. By placing a Nazi youth in American society, the film enabled the viewer to draw distinctions between Nazism and democracy and come to some sort of conclusion about what must be done with Germans after the war. In light of this theme, the marketing team of Cowan's film constructed its campaign around ways to highlight the difference between the two ways of life. As they put it, one of the major

\textsuperscript{41} For more on this subject, see Carolyn Eisenberg, \textit{Drawing the Line} (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
aims of the campaign would be to "highlight the social and political angle presenting the
boy as a problem the world will have to face, 12 million strong, when Germany
capitulates and it's [sic] Nazi trained youth are thrust upon the world."42

In highlighting this theme for this story, the Cowan publicity team considered a
number of stunts. Most, with the exception of developing a fraudulent controversy over
the ending of the film, involved some way of highlighting the positive aspects of
American democracy. One suggested the creation of an award based on the opinion of
NY nightclub chorus girls, with "the girls, of course, naming 'Tomorrow the World.'"
"The idea of pretty chorus girls liking a play like 'Tomorrow the World,'" so the ploy
went, gave "it a stamp of down-to-earth just-folks acceptability and approval." Even
more suggestively, one member of Cowan's publicity team "proposed that we invite fifty
people, representing all walks of life from corporation head to, let us say, boot-black, to
meet at dinner and then see our picture." In being sure to include "the time-honored
group, 'doctor, lawyer, Indian Chief, poor man, rich man, beggar, thief'," such a group
would "typify American democracy" and provide an "excellent photographic
possibility." The absurd length that this individual was willing to go in creating a true
cross-section of American democracy was evidenced in his worry that "it might seem
difficult to get a thief for our group or it might be considered a social breach to introduce
a thief into this otherwise honest group of individuals." The most important effort,

42 "TOMORROW, THE WORLD!" ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN, Previews Tomorrow
the World, Lester Cowan Collection (hereafter LCC), Margaret Herrick Library,
Academy for Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, Beverly Hills, California (hereafter
MHL).

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however, was the funding for a study conducted by a group of school superintendents. The study asked students to answer questions on the differences between the American and Nazi ways of life, then watch the film, and then take the same test again to see if their answers changed.

Although the sole motive for Cowan was almost surely publicity, the ensuing study was professionally conducted. The results from the study therefore are instructive in illustrating the ways in which the children interpreted and understood the film. Moreover, in order to get a broad sample of responses, the organizers of the study questioned students from affluent areas (Beverly Hills) and disadvantaged districts (Willowbrook in Los Angeles). So, in contrast to other sources, this report on the reception of the film is much richer and more varied than other sources that usually stem from the same kinds of socio-economic communities. The sheer number of opinions considered helps provide a more complete picture of American sentiment near the end of the war.

The intent of the study was to examine the effect of the film upon pre-existing attitudes toward the Nazi way of living. The most instructive part of the study for the purposes of this work is the section of the exam that asked students what they would do with Emil, the Nazi youth who came to live with his American relatives, because it illustrated the attitudes that the children presently held with regard to Nazis and Germans.

43 In this regard, the study was already slanted in favor of an interpretation of the German people that did not read the Third Reich as representative of the German people. Nevertheless, several children voiced interpretations that coincided more with the harsher narrative.
One of the most striking findings, according to the authors of the report, was that almost all of the students, regardless of socio-economic background, believed strongly and deeply in the American way of life. This belief in the American dream was so strong in the disadvantage community that the educators worried that these children were unrealistic and headed for major disappointment and disillusionment. The effect of this powerful belief in the righteousness of the American way of life meant that expressed attitudes towards the Nazis were often framed by favorable allusions to the United States.44

Like their parents, the children were divided in their opinions of the Nazis, even within their own communities. Interpretive communities of the German people therefore cut across racial and social lines. Some affluent white, disadvantaged African-American and Mexican children favored a forgiving embrace for Emil, while other members of each ethnic community preferred a stern and unforgiving response to Emil's mischief. Educators were only able to generalize about degrees of sophistication among the different school districts. The African-Americans and Mexicans from Willowbrook, the report noted, tended to voice simplistic "gang methods" for dealing with Emil, while the students at Beverly Hills waxed eloquent about the various possibilities for handling the child (with many, it must be said, suggesting psychological counseling for the young boy). To the surprise of the educators, the Jewish children were the most forgiving.

44 THE DEMOCRATIC VERSUS THE NAZI WAY OF LIFE: A REPORT ON AN EXPERIMENT WITH THE MOTION PICTURE "TOMORROW THE WORLD", 1945, Correspondence, Tomorrow the World, LCC, MHL.
Two-thirds of the group supported the kindest possible course for Emil, while only 11 percent said that they would reject him.45

As the Allies pressed deep into German territory, however, the American Jewish press slowly learned of the extent to which Hitler had attempted to exterminate the Jews. The horrifying details of what would become known as the Holocaust hardened many American Jews in their opinions of the Germans. Edward Grusd, editor of The National Jewish Monthly, who had once claimed that Nazism could happen anywhere, now, after witnessing the terrible atrocities in Lublin concluded that "when it comes to the most soul-shriveling crimes of savagery, lust and degeneracy, no distinction can any longer be drawn between party members and non-party members...The criminals are the German people."46 A month later, Grusd dismissed the argument that Germans were "just following orders," claiming that "every man is responsible for his acts."47 As a result, he argued that the "Allies must take every measure, no matter how stern or uncomfortable to the German people, to guarantee that such things can never happen again."48

One final point bears mentioning. During this debate, Americans read Berlin no differently than Germany. Prior to the Cold War, Americans viewed Berlin as

45 Ibid.

46 Editor, "A Soft Peace...An Insult to Justice," National Jewish Monthly (October 1944), 33.

47 Editor, "If Germans Aren't Guilty, Only Wotan Is." National Jewish Monthly (November 1944), 81.

synonymous with Germany; Berlin, in fact, was often read as the seat of a Reich intended to last a thousand years. As a result, American readings of Berlin were as contested as those of Germany in general. Both the production and reception of Warner's *Hotel Berlin* illustrate this fact. Based on Vicki Baum's novel of the same name, *Hotel Berlin* described, in the words of one reviewer, "the stinking mess the German capital has become under the combined impact of the Nazis and Allied air blows." It depicted the efforts of a German underground, the effects of Nazism on the German people, and the attitudes of the Nazi elite. In short it spanned the entire range of sentiment on the German people. Several reviewers approved of its evenhanded treatment, while others balked at its sympathetic portrayal of several Germans. Like their reaction to the rest of Germany, Americans were divided on what to make of Berlin.49

**Conclusion**

During the war, then, Americans evinced an uncertainty about the German people. Drawing on the "lessons" of Germany's past, some Americans advocated a "hard" peace determined to emasculate the Germans forever. Others, employing a comparative perspective that emphasized the provisional aspect of Nazi rule, favored a "soft" peace designed to re-educate Germany and reintegrate it in the family of civilized nations. As the Allies entered German territory in the winter of 1944, American contact with the

49 List of Main Changes in Treatment, 1944, Hotel Berlin, WBA. 1945 Reviews, 1945, Hotel Berlin, Clipping File, MHL.
Germans did not shed new light on this mainstream debate. Indeed, into the post-World War II, Americans remained uncertain about what to do with Germany.
"Your first impression is, 'Confound you, this is what you deserve to have. You are getting now what the rest of the world got from you for a long time.' I expect most of us felt that way for a few hours, maybe a day or two after we got over there. 'It is good enough for you.' But you can't meet men and women on the street very long who are despondent and who shuffle along with poor clothes, and especially you can't meet those youngsters in the classroom...without realizing that after all they are human beings that have to live with us here on this earth as far as we know, and we have to live with them."

--- Dr. Zook, American education expert after a fact-finding mission in Germany

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50 Report by Members of Education Mission to Germany, October 18, 1946, Information Policy--Germany, Subject Files, 1941-1954, Records of the Office of Western European Affairs, Record Group 59, National Archives II, College Park, MD (hereafter NA).
On March 30, 1949, an irritated Arthur Loew wrote a letter to Secretary of State Acheson regarding MGM's recent film The Search. One of the first films shot on location in occupied Germany, The Search told the story of the fond relationship that developed between a young refugee boy and the handsome American soldier who rescued him from starvation, took him into his home, made plans to bring him back to the United States, and finally, when he discovered that she still lived, helped him find his wandering mother. Starring one of the bright young talents in Hollywood, Montgomery Clift, the film earned significant accolades in the United States, garnering Academy Award nominations for Best Actor, Director, and screenplay. Noting its virtues and accomplishments, Loew, one of the executives at MGM, wrote to Acheson that his fine film had suffered severe "mutiliation" at the hands of censors in Spain. Loew complained that "all suggestions of cruelty visited upon the boy and others by Nazi Germany" had been purged, leaving the "appealing frightened waif, the central character of the film...a depressingly backward youngster." In a similar vein, he observed that "no mention of Germany remains [and] thus the picture is weakened by having its action take place in an apparently mythical kingdom." To top it all off, Lowe bitterly wrote, all scenes depicting the "nobility of the American military government," such as the one showing "the American officer's intention to abandon his much desired permission to return home to the United States, in an attempt to aid the waif," had also been excised. Loew surmised that Spanish regulations against "grieving" nations friendly to Spain, and especially those who assisted Spain in the Civil War, must have led to the changes
"which have mutilated the story and seriously destroyed its entertainment, cultural, and pro-American value."

To Peter Viertel, the original screenwriter for *The Search*, such a letter would have been high comedy, indeed. Viertel's original story was a scathing indictment of both the Germans, whom it portrayed as secretly working to hamper and sabotage the aims of the American occupying forces, and the American occupying soldiers themselves, whom it depicted as too callow, too corrupt, or too randy to recognize this duplicity and discharge their responsibilities competently and honorably. In the beginning, Fred Zinnemann, the director of the film, shared Viertel's vision for the film. But in the end, Zinnemann, along with Swiss producer Lazar Wechsler, decided to drop both Viertel and his vision. In contrast to Viertel's designs for a critical inquiry into the nature of American occupation, *The Search* became, according to some reviewers, just the opposite, a sentimental piece of American propaganda that ignored or elided many of the problems of postwar Germany.

What happened in *The Search* exemplified broader shifts in American perceptions of the Germans. At the outset of the film's production, both Viertel and Zinnemann, self-avowed Leftists, sought to use the film as a vehicle for criticizing the American occupation of Germany. But once Zinnemann visited the American zone, he broke with

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51 Letter, Loew to Acheson, March 30, 1949, Central Decimal Files, RG 59, NA.

his fellow traveler, dismissing him as out of touch with reality and hiring another
screenwriter to help him author a film with a far different message. The final film
portrayed the Americans as heroic and compassionate occupiers and minimized the
responsibility of the Germans for the chaotic situation in Europe, a depiction more in line
with the developing Cold War consensus.

Both in the presence of ideological contestation in its production and in the
outcome of that contestation in the film's final form, *The Search* represented in
microcosm the larger cultural milieu in which it was created. Although the end of the
war brought a conclusion to the fighting and killing, it did not bring a conclusion to one
of the most hotly contested questions of the war--which was, what relationship did
Nazism have with Germany? Given the circumstances in Europe, the Americans,
whether they liked it or not, had to answer that question, at least partially, for that answer
would frame American reconstruction policy in the postwar period. Continuing from the
war period, opinions ranged from those that posited a deterministic element (whether it
was biological or cultural) in the relationship to those that stressed the contingent nature
of Nazism's rise to power. Simply put, Americans in the early postwar period remained
divided as to the nature of the German people.

But by the end of the decade, a clear majority had emerged on the Germans.
Basing itself on the view that a militant minority had taken advantage of desperate times
to waylay German democracy and bamboozle an entire nation, a new Cold War narrative
of the German people suggested that the destruction of the Nazi leadership in effect had
meant the destruction of Nazism and the emancipation of the German nation.
Accordingly, the Cold War narrative focused on the growing role of West Germany as the eastern frontier of freedom, and in particular on the brave and courageous actions of West Berliners. For its adherents, World War II was an aberration in the history of Germany, one that did not warrant excessive attention or discussion. Germans became fundamentally like Americans; the only difference was that Americans were further along the path of democracy and capitalism.

Crucial to the new Cold War narrative was the increasingly popular notion of totalitarianism. Historians Thomas Paterson and Les Adler describe how Americans from the 1930s to the 1950s equated Nazi fascism and Soviet communism under a general rubric known as "red fascism." They found that Americans drew parallels between fascism and communism in economics, politics, and leadership styles. In the Cold War narrative, then, the histories of both Russia and Germany were secondary; the primary thread became the history of totalitarianism, and specifically how a totalitarian form of government spread from Germany to Russia. In this sense, Nazi Germany was re-imagined as the past, not for Germany, but for a form of government that now constituted the Soviet Union.53

Part of the reason for totalitarianism's powerful pull for Americans lay in its relationship to greater trends in American culture. In the broader narrative of the American nation, Nazism and Soviet communism represented only the latest chapters in the United States' epic struggle with authoritarianism. Beginning with Winthrop's telling

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characterization of the United States as the "city on a hill," Americans urged European governments to overthrow their despotic governments and institute American style democracy and freedom. With the onset of the Cold War, America's more pro-active stance of working in the world to advance the causes of freedom, first articulated in American entry in World War I and later revived in World War II, became a permanent condition of both American foreign policy and American identity. In this broader narrative, oppositional Nazi Germany became a part of Western history and not just German history.54

This broad and pervasive cultural construct colored the ways that many viewed the American occupation in Germany. Increasingly understanding Nazism as a plague inflicted on Germany by a few fanatics, many Americans came to downplay the punitive aspects of the occupation and view the American mission in Germany primarily as an effort to rehabilitate Germany. Images of German rubble and rubble women (Truemerfrauen) aided in the process by helping Americans understand how much Germans had lost during the war. After the Berlin Blockade and Airlift, several Americans became certain that Germany was ready for supervised sovereignty, and the Federal Republic was born in 1949.

But despite the overwhelming power of this narrative, a number still resisted, and believed that Germany was beyond the pale of Western civilization. For members of this

interpretive community, World Wars I and II represented the true nature of Germany. The Germans were a bellicose, savage, blindly obedient people, who would wreak havoc upon the world again if given half the chance. The larger shift to a more conciliatory attitude toward the Germans greatly alarmed them, and they worked hard to warn Americans of the potential of their new course.

This chapter outlines how a period that began in widespread indecision ended in a growing resolve. It illustrates the activities of American officials, American opinionmakers, and the Germans to control images of the Germans. It concludes with a discussion of the impact of these efforts on the American people, examining popular reactions to some important films of the time.

**Drawing the Line**

American foreign policy toward Germany in the immediate postwar period has been covered at length in several excellent historical works. Although for the most part these works have been caught in the historiographical malestrom over responsibility for the Cold War, they nevertheless do an admirable job of presenting the complex decisionmaking processes concerning the disposition of Germany. As a result, there is no

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need to go into detail about all of the diplomatic maneuverings involved in the decision to divide Germany. Still, for the purposes of contextualizing American public affairs policy and more importantly the public debate on and understanding of Germany, a few issues warrant examination.

In private, American policymakers in the dusk of World War II were as divided as the American populace about what to do with Germany. The fault lines appeared largely along departmental lines. Under the leadership of Henry Morgenthau, the Treasury Department supported a "hard" policy aimed at destroying the German state as an entity and demolishing the industrial capability of the German people. Based on the view that the Germans tended toward authoritarianism and militarism, the Treasury Department believed that the Germans must be reduced a simpler state of existence where they could no longer cause mischief. The State Department, represented mainly by the opinion of Secretary of State Cordell Hull, came to support a policy aimed at the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the German economy, based on the belief that German recovery was essential to European recovery and ultimately necessary for American prosperity. Staunch Wilsonians, Hull and other State Department officials argued that the Treaty of Versailles was ultimately responsible for World War II because its unjust provisions provided the opportunity for Hitler's rise to power. They felt that the best way to prevent German revanchism was to rebuild Germany in the American mold. The Secretary of War Henry Stimson agreed with State's assessment of Morgenthau's plan of "enforced
poverty," which he viewed as "more inhumane and vindictive than the Versailles Treaty."56

At "heart a Morgenthau man" President Roosevelt sided initially with Morgenthau's plan. The President did not want to starve the Germans, but he did want it "driven home to the German people" that their "nation has been engaged in a lawless conspiracy against the decencies of modern civilization." Unexpectedly invited to a conference between Roosevelt and Churchill at Quebec in September 1944, Morgenthau used the opportunity to further impress his views on the President and expand his influence to the British Prime Minister. Using the carrot of extended Lend-Lease, Morgenthau and Roosevelt secured Churchill's consent at Quebec to remake Germany "as a country primarily agricultural and pastoral in...character."57

Once news of the conference and its results was leaked to the press, however, the backlash against the Morgenthau plan caused Roosevelt to reconsider. At the end of September, the President admitted to Stimson that Morgenthau had "pulled a boner" in Quebec. Faced with public and private resistance to a "hard" peace with Germany, Roosevelt returned to a policy of vacillation, equivocation, and indetermination. In view of Roosevelt's desire to continue the Grand Alliance into the postwar period, it made

56 Kimball, Swords or Ploughshares?, 4-5. Schwartz, America's Germany, 19.
57 Eisenberg, Drawing the Line, 46. Schwartz, America's Germany, 20. Quoted in Eisenberg, Drawing the Line, 44.
sense not to ruffle feathers needlessly. In other words, he stalled on occupation policy, saying that "I dislike making plans for a country which we do not yet occupy."58

Amidst all of this indecision, one constant was held by virtually all members of the Roosevelt administration. The United States would conduct policy with regards to Germany in concert with its wartime allies. At Yalta, the allies established specific machinery for allied cooperation such as the Allied Control Council. Thus when Nazi Germany surrendered in May of 1945, the United States, although divided about what to do with the Germans, assumed that it would be able to work out some kind of arrangement with its victorious comrades.

And then President Roosevelt died. The death of President Roosevelt delivered the decision on what to do with Germany to those who sought to rebuild Germany. Morgenthau was dismissed, and the new Truman administration quickly adopted a get-tough policy with the Soviet Union. To American officials, the Soviet Union seemed bent on expansion in Eastern Europe. This they were willing to tolerate, if the Soviet Union respected the United States' sphere of influence. Despite the apparent agreement at Potsdam to treat Germany as an economic whole, Marc Trachtenberg has persuasively argued that American policymakers accepted the de facto division of Germany. Trachtenberg suggests that the American lip service of unified policy on Germany at Potsdam was largely to satisfy domestic critics both on the left, who did not wish to see

the end of four power rule, and the right, who did not care to witness the tacit enslavement of Eastern Europe.59

When the Soviet Union appeared to nurture expansionist aims in Iran and Turkey in 1946, the Truman administration decided that Soviet leaders harbored global ambitions rather than simply desiring a buffer zone in Eastern Europe. American policymakers became convinced that no real progress could be made with allied machinery and began making plans with the other allies to rebuild their zones. In January 1947, the Americans and the British, convinced of the need for a powerful Germany to reconstruct Europe and serve as a bulwark against Soviet expansionism, fused their zones into one economic unit, Bizonia. In the process, the United States largely abandoned its aims to denazify and demilitarize German society, preferring instead to expedite the recovery of German might. As Rebecca Boehling has pointed out, the American military was more than happy to go along with this policy.60

It also became clear to American policymakers that they needed to publicly affix blame for the breakdown in allied policy on the Soviet Union. Moreover, they realized that they needed to mobilize public opinion behind a wide-ranging foreign policy designed to contain the spread of Soviet communism. To do this, Truman employed a rhetoric charged with dramatic and moral terms. The thrust of the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan was that Soviet Communism threatened the peace, and the West had to

59 Trachtenberg, A Constructed Peace, 26-43.
stand up against communism and defend its freedom. In discussing the American
decision to aid Greece and Turkey, for example, Truman told a meeting of the American
Society of Newspaper Editors that "we tried going along with them as far as we possibly
could, trying to please them. There is no way to please them."61

In portraying the Soviet threat, Truman leaned heavily on a Cold War narrative of
the German people. He frequently likened the current situation with the Soviet Union
with the dilemma that Western democracies faced with Nazi Germany a few years earlier.
He often invoked the Munich metaphor, suggesting that appeasement of the Soviet Union
would sow the same seeds that appeasement of Nazi Germany had reaped--namely,
disaster. At an address in Kansas City, to take but one example, he informed his
audience that "Hitler's dream of controlling the world was spurred by his belief that the
Western nations were weak and lacked the will to resist. Hitler's eagerness for war
increased as his estimate of the strength of democracy decreased." To do the same with
Hitler's heir, Josef Stalin, Truman suggested, would invite destruction.62

The Dissenting Narrative

A number of prominent Americans were alarmed at this shift in policy. The
intellectual contemporaries and the political and moral heirs to Morgenthau, these

60 Ibid., 51. See also Rebecca L. Boehling, A Question of Priorities : Democratic
Reforms and Economic Recovery in Postwar Germany : Frankfurt, Munich, and Stuttgart
61 Harry S. Truman, vol. 1947, Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States
62 Ibid., 369.
Americans clung to a World War narrative of the Germans that viewed them as an incorrigible race that required firm supervision, thorough re-education, and for some, outright destruction. Members of this interpretive community came from varied backgrounds; some were relatives or colleagues of fallen soldiers, others were Jewish-Americans horrified at the brutality committed against others of their ilk, and still others were historically-minded Americans who believed that history demonstrated the destructive tendencies of the Germans. A good number of these Americans were on the political Left, and their voices were often found in liberal journals.

Members of this interpretive community who visited Germany personally found the Truman administration's growing faith in the inherent goodness of the German people unwarranted. Horrified at the extent of the German destruction of European Jewry, American Jewish journalists in Europe at the end of the war placed blame squarely on the heads of the German people. After witnessing the terrible atrocities in Lublin, Edward Grusd, editor of *The National Jewish Monthly*, concluded that "when it comes to the most soul-shriveling crimes of savagery, lust and degeneracy, no distinction can any longer be drawn between party members and non-party members...The criminals are the German people." Later Grusd dismissed the argument that Germans were "just following orders," declaring that "every man is responsible for his acts." He argued that the "Allies must
take every measure, no matter how stern or uncomfortable to the German people, to guarantee that such things can never happen again.\textsuperscript{63}

Perhaps most disturbing for many was the fact that many Germans did not appear to accept responsibility for the war. Eduard Lindeman, of the \textit{New Republic}, for example, could not find the "slightest shred of evidence" to show that the Germans felt "any sense of responsibility for the present world chaos." Lindeman cautioned that Americans should not be fooled by excessive displays of German kindness, arguing that the German character was marked by an "ambivalence" that at one moment "exhibits sullen arrogance and at the next groveling obsequiousness." Others agreed, noting that it was difficult to find any Nazis left in occupied Germany. An article in \textit{The Ladies Home Journal} illustrated how the Germans were blaming everyone but themselves—the Nazis, Hitler, the Allies—for the bitter hardships that they were now enduring. After living in occupied Germany a few weeks, another journalist observed that "as I go about I see an outward change, but when I visit among Germans I do not find an inward change." For those still wedded to the World War narrative, the Germans remained unreconstructed Nazis.\textsuperscript{64}


American leftists feared that their fellow Americans could not see through this German charade. In particular they worried about the occupying soldiers. In an influential report, Richard Joseph, an interpreter during the war, and Waverly Root, author of a Secret History of War, observed that American GIs preferred serving in Germany more than any other place because, among other things, they viewed the "Germans as the friendliest people in Europe." In particular, they found that the young GIs had trouble reconciling the stories of atrocities that they heard with the civilians whom they met. Germans told the GIs that they were the "good Germans" who had been ruthlessly suppressed by Hitler. Now that the Americans had eliminated the Nazis, these helpful Germans concluded, the Germans and the Americans could be allies again. The results of this deception, Joseph and Root argued, could be disaster:

And now he [the American GI] is coming home, full of this feeling that his enemies are closer to him than his allies. He is returning by the millions, to take his opinion into every corner of the United States...These impressions can have a tragic effect on our nation's destiny...They could help a defeated, humiliated, desperate, vengeful Germany rise from its ashes for a third try at world domination.65

Those on the left worried most about American fraternization with female Germans. With much of the young male population decimated in Germany, a large number of German women made themselves available to the occupying Americans.

Some feared that these women were German agents aimed at disrupting the allies. The army shared these concerns. Worried about the moral purity of the occupying mission, the American military initially issued a ban on fraternization. It tried to discourage inappropriate contact in other ways also. Military publications created a new cartoon character to portray German women. Veronica Dankeschon (or V.D. for short) was an unattractive, filthy, and disease-ridden figure looking for naïve American boys. Despite these measures, however, the military was forced, according to a journalist for the *American Mercury*, to "set up prophylactic depots all over the place."

Those that continued to subscribe to the World War narrative feared that the growing tension in Germany would break up the Grand Alliance. European liberals Curt Siodmak and Jacques Torneur worked together to bring an allegorical tale of cooperation and reunification among the Allies to the big screen. Against the backdrop of the postwar world, the movie's plot centers on the efforts of underground Nazis to capture Dr. Bernhard, a "good German" who has a secret plan that will solve the German Question (neither of which, the plan nor the Question, is ever provided). When Bernard is eventually captured, his assistant implores four passengers from the Berlin Express to help find him. Composed of an American, a Briton, a Frenchman, and a Russian, this international band sets out on a search for the good German. Amidst the expected intrigue and deceit, they find and rescue him from the Nazis. As this model UN breaks up in front of the Brandenburg Gate, Lindley the American stops Max the Russian and

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says, "I really tried to figure out what makes you tick, Max--what makes all of you tick. We try to understand you; why don't you try to understand us?" Lindley gives Max his address, which Max carelessly drops on the ground. Just as it appears that the movie will end on a somber note, Max stops, gets out of his vehicle, and returns for the address. The good German Dr. Bernhard ends the film by saying, "Someday we will make it."67

Adherents to the World War narrative struggled against an increasingly heavy opposition. The Cold War was making a major impact on the ways that Americans understood Germany. Trained as they were on the Cold War, Americans tended to downplay the past misconduct of Germany. Lewis Mumford railed against Americans who forgot during the interregnum how beastly the Germans were in World War I. He noted that there was an all too common tendency to "dismiss" promptly any writer who "discloses an unpleasant fact about Germany which will make more difficult its rehabilitation as a cooperative member of the United Nations." As the decade wore on, critics of Germany found themselves marginalized in American discourse on foreign affairs.68

**American Government Propaganda**

While, as we shall see, larger structures in American culture helped determine the shift in the American understanding of Germany, American policymakers were not content to sit on their hands and wait for favorable changes in American public opinion.

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From the beginning of the occupation, government officials consciously worked to produce public consent for its policies. Although the War Department was in charge of the occupation, the State Department took the initiative and responsibility for presenting the rationale for American policy in Germany to Congress and the American people. The burden for producing support for these decisions fell specifically on the shoulders of the Public Affairs department under the leadership of Frances Russell.

Officials in Public Affairs understood that American interest in the fate of Germany was high, and that American sentiment on what to do ran equally high. Immediately, they began an intensive public affairs campaign to familiarize Americans with the issues involved. These activities involved public speeches, the publication of pamphlets, authorship of articles for publication in the *State Department Bulletin* and *Fortune*, and appearances on television. In the early years of the occupation, Public Affairs concentrated on educating Americans on the Nuremberg war trials, the question of repatriations, and local German elections.\(^6\)\(^9\)

The State Department also sought to educate many of America's private organizations. By targeting private clubs and organizations, the State Department sought to establish conduits through which it could spread its policy propaganda to a larger audience. To that end, the State Department organized several question-and-answer

\(^6\) Lewis Mumford, "German Apologists and the German Record," *Saturday Review*, August 11 1945, 5.

\(^9\) Information Program on Germany, November 6, 1945, Information Policy--Germany, Subject Files, 1941-1954, Records of the Office of Western European Affairs, RG 59, NA.
sessions with leading American experts. A popular topic of conversation in these meetings was German re-education. In May and October of 1946, for example, the State Department hosted experts who outlined the progress of re-education in Germany. Public Affairs officials hoped that these types of meetings would convince American organizations that the United States was succeeding in its aims to rehabilitate the Germans.\(^7\)

One of the major initiatives of the U.S. government in this regard was the creation and circulation of an exhibit on the American occupation in Germany. In July 1946, officials from the State and War Departments visited traveling exhibits in Great Britain and France on their respective occupation zones. Finding them "technically inferior" and "unusually expensive," the officials agreed that the United States could do one better and cheaper. The eventual plan called for an exhibit on the occupation in Germany to begin its tour in Washington, and then go on to New York, Chicago, and other major cities. In each city, politicians, journalists, and other leaders would be invited and encouraged to attend the opening of the exhibit. The plan also called for radio and television broadcasts and a "considerable range of public relations activities in connection with the exhibit." To encourage participation and attendance, organizers

\(^7\) Memorandum of Meeting, Reeducation Japan and Germany, May 1, 1946, Information Policy--Germany, Subject Files, 1941-1954, Records of the Office of Western European Affairs, RG 59, NA. Report by Members of Education Mission to Germany, October 18, 1946, Information Policy--Germany, Subject Files, 1941-1954, Records of the Office of Western European Affairs, RG 59, NA.
planned promotion in posters, magazine articles, advertisements in newspapers, and local press stories.\textsuperscript{71}

Officials in both the War and State Department objected to the planned exhibit. A general stationed in Berlin worried that such a venture would tax American resources needlessly. He preferred that the U.S. Government "leave the job of explaining the problem to the American public to a prospective edition of Mr. Luce's 'March of Time.'" A State Department believed it "highly doubtful" that the State Department could do a "creditable" job. He argued that the American people were unaccustomed to such exhibits, that the exhibit itself would move too slowly, and that it would be insufficiently funded. Most importantly, he believed that the exhibit would leave the Department open to charges of propaganda. Despite these protests, Hildring opted for the creation of the exhibit, and asked for help from Public Affairs.\textsuperscript{72}

While the State Department took the lead in presenting positive information to the American people through such exhibits, the Army worked to censor negative portrayals coming out of Germany. To this end, the American military exercised

\textsuperscript{71} Memorandum, Leonard Rennie to John Hildring, July 29, 1946, Information Policy--Germany, Subject Files, 1941-1954, Records of the Office of Western European Affairs, RG 59, NA. Memorandum, Public Relations in Connection with Exhibit on Occupation of Germany, September 12, 1946, Information Policy--Germany, Subject Files, 1941-1954, Records of the Office of Western European Affairs, RG 59, NA.

\textsuperscript{72} Memorandum, Leonard Rennie to John Hildring, July 29, 1946, Information Policy--Germany, Subject Files, 1941-1954, Records of the Office of Western European Affairs, RG 59, NA. Memorandum, Russell to Weidman, August 22, 1946, Information Policy--Germany, Subject Files, 1941-1954, Records of the Office of Western European Affairs, RG 59, NA. Memorandum, Francis Russell to Mr. Benton, September 19, 1946,
substantial control over the American media. In defining access to the American zone of occupation, the Army stated its desire for "writers of fiction, professional or technical interests with proper sponsorship." It also stated its wish for "writers of news media" instead of book authors "unless the author is publishing material of particular interest to or benefitting the operation of military government." Above all they sought to avoid writers who wanted to produce "speculative" pieces. They believed such writers would "produce sensational type articles in order to insure market value" and that a "distorted picture would easily result."  

They also made their selections for accreditation based on ideology. Authors who evinced left-leaning views were frequently denied access. For example, they denied accreditation to Mrs. Landrum Bolling of the Overseas News Service because they possessed information that her husband "is a correspondent who has displayed Leftist tendencies and has frequently followed the 'fellow traveler' line." Moreover, Mrs. Bolling's own background was suspect. A report observed that her "education was in the radical school, Antioch College, Yellow Springs, Ohio" and her father, who "was the head of the College," had "received unfavorable publicity for having sponsored the radical teachings of that school." Officials denied entry to another reporter because his magazine, the Jewish Daily Forward, was "pro communist and extreme leftist in views."

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Information Policy--Germany, Subject Files, 1941-1954, Records of the Office of Western European Affairs, RG 59, NA.

73 Telegram, Huebner to War Department, April 12, 1947, Central Decimal Files, RG 319, Chief of Staff, U.S. Army, NA. Telegram, King to Frankfurt, April 14, 1947, Central Decimal Files, RG 319, NA.
The also refused accreditation to Maurice Goldbloom of the Jewish periodical *Commentary* because he was an employee of the American Jewish Committee and a member of the American Association for a Democratic Germany.74

Frequently, as an excuse to exclude undesirables, the army invoked the notion that the chaotic and impoverished conditions in the American zone necessitated a restricted number of visitors. But the military proved quite capable to make room and provisions for those whom they wished to accommodate. Officials accredited Joel Carmichael of *The Nation* because of his "moderate articles in [a] leftist magazine." They rolled out the red carpet for Arthur Sulzberg, President and owner of the *New York Times*, and his son, offering them the "VIP treatment" which included a special mission aircraft for transport from Paris to Berlin. They also violated their ban on the wives of correspondents for those journalists whom they deemed useful and important. By employing this selective approach, the military hoped to exercise informal control over representations of the American occupation and the Germans in the American media.

Sometimes the American government was forced to resort to more forceful measures. Such was the case with its commissioned film, *Nuremberg—Its Lessons for Today*. In 1946, General Lucius Clay, head of the United States Office of Military Government, commissioned a film to document the proceedings of the Nuremberg trials. This task eventually fell into the hands of Pare Lorentz, famed documentarist of Depression era films, who was then working for the army. Lorentz and his team looked

74 Telegram, Huebner to Parks, April 1, 1947, Central Decimal Files, RG 319, NA. Telegram, King to Frankfurt, April 14, 1947, Central Decimal Files, RG 319, NA.
at millions of rolls of footage from the trials themselves, as well as captured film taken from prominent Nazis. From this mountain of material, they fashioned an eighty minute long film that documented the history of the Third Reich from the 1920 to 1946. They elected to tell the bulk of the story in flashback, using the trials themselves as the main thread of the story. Upon its initial completion, the rough product was sent to the Pentagon for approval. The film resurfaced in 1948 in Germany, when the American army released it for circulation in German movie houses.75

The problem for the Army began when the American press reported the German release. Many private filmmakers clamored for release of the film in the United States. Twenty four journalists, among them William Shirer and Dorothy Thompson, who were granted a private viewing, also demanded its release from the Army. The Society for the Prevention of World War III also joined the fray. The Army informed these interested Americans that the film was unworthy of display in the United States, citing the rough nature of the film and the overabundance of atrocity scenes. Colonel Eyster, in particular, assured anxious journalists and suspicious filmmakers that the decision was not based on issues of foreign policy.76

Eyster dissembled. Army correspondence with the State Department reveals that foreign policy considerations dominated discourse on the matter. Officials in the State

75 John Norris, "Army Reluctant to Clarify Inaction on Nuernberg Film," Washington Post, September 1949, 1, 8.
76 Ibid. Letter from Jacob Beam to Monteith, March 8, 1949, Central Decimal File, RG 59, NA. Office Memorandum, January 28, 1949, Central Decimal Files, 1945-1949, RG
Department were split on the proper course of action. One group believed that the Department should cooperate with the Army and edit the footage so that the "treatment and final product are in agreement with the Government's present constructive policy toward Germany." The other group, however, thought that the "Department should discourage any further use of this footage because the over-all effect of its display would be out of accord with current Government policy and the present world situation." At any rate, both sides argued that "atrocities" footage would "again stir up indignation and hatred precisely at a time when every effort is being made to allay it." But the former group believed that, if edited properly, the film could be a "factual presentation of the Nuremberg trial, with background, emphasizing democratic judicial procedures as applied at an international level." 77

The creator of the film, Pare Lorentz, appeared to gain access to it in late 1949, after suggesting to the State Department that a new and improved film would "make clear that Nazis and not all Germans were the criminals" and "emphasize the judicial atmosphere in which the Trials were conceived and conducted." The State Department responded favorably, informing him that he could make the film as long as he gave "some emphasis...to the democratic elements within Germany upon whom we can depend to pick up the burden of democratic education of their own people." At this

59, NA. Letter from Beam to Monteith, April 29, 1949, RG 59, Central Decimal File, RG 59, NA.

77 Memorandum of Conversation, March 4, 1949, Central Decimal Files, 1945-1949, RG 59, NA. Memorandum from Wright to Beam and Fuller, February 9, 1949, Central
point, the film disappeared from view, until it turned up twenty years later in the National Archives. Film historian Erik Barnouw argues that the State Department, under John Foster Dulles, pocketed the film at the behest of Konrad Adenauer.\textsuperscript{7,8}

\textbf{German agency closed}

But often the American government did not need to exercise such force. Germany in many ways spoke for itself. Both the land and its people inspired pity in many of the Americans who visited. For Americans who had visited Germany previous to the war, the landscape was utterly unbelievable. Germany had been populated by thriving metropolises that rivaled both the Old World charm of other major European cities and the frenetic sense of purpose and industry that characterized many of America's great urban centers. Now there was only rubble. Remembering Germany as it once was, visiting Americans sympathized immensely with all that the Germans had lost.

For the Germans themselves, the war largely destroyed their ability to collectively influence Americans. Gone were their government organizations, institutes, and representatives. Dreams of reawakening \textit{Deutschtum} and remaking the United States in the German image died along with their Nazi leaders. Now, caught in a desperate struggle for survival, the Germans were reduced to personal diplomacy with the

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Decimal Files, 1945-1949, RG 59, NA. Office Memorandum, January 28, 1949, Central Decimal Files, 1945-1949, RG 59, NA.

occupying Americans and their hangers-on. Often concerned merely with surviving, the
Germans begged, cajoled, defrauded, and seduced their captors for the least advantage.
Although these interactions sprang primarily from individual motives of necessity and
survival, a general picture of the Germans emerged nonetheless.

For the American military, for example, the Germans gradually became the
victims of Nazism and Communism. As Petra Goedde has argued, the personal, visceral
interactions of many American officers and soldiers with the Germans transformed their
understanding of the former enemy. Confronted with the devastation of Germany,
American military personnel viewed the remaining Germans with compassion and saw
them as in need of their protection. Fraternization, she argues, was crucial to this
process.

American political visitors were also impressed by the appalling destruction.
President Truman, upon his arrival in Berlin for the Potsdam conference in 1945, noted
"the depressing sight" of "ruined buildings" and the "long, never-ending procession of old
men, women, and children, wandering aimlessly along the autobahn and the country
roads." In 1947, an unsympathetic delegation arrived in Germany to assess the needs of
the people. After a tour, they returned to support the military's program, in General

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Lucius Clay's words, "to the last penny." Clay remembered that "they were touched by the conditions that they saw." 79

The absolute devastation also had a major impact on many of the journalists that came to Germany. In an article for *Ladies Home Journal*, Dorothy Thompson concluded that "Germany is finished." Saddened by the overwhelming destruction that he saw, a reporter for the *American Mercury* exclaimed, "this is the goddamndest place now that has probably ever existed since civilization began." "For the Germans the war is definitely over," he concluded. "They all want to be your friend and simply jump to oblige you if you want anything." "You can tell the Germans by their manner," a *Life* columnist remarked, "they are stunned and tired and beaten and frightened; they start when spoken to; they smile timidly, ingratiatingly and beg information most humbly." The Germans and their land convinced many of their visitors that they had suffered enough. 80

*The Search for Germans*

Visiting Germany and meeting Germans had a profound effect on many Americans. Yet determining the extent of that impact can be difficult. The story behind the production of *The Search* gives us an insight into how dramatic and extensive the


effect of this experience was. It also illustrates how the American military, now, for the
most part, in support of rehabilitating the German people, could further shape these
impressions. Most importantly, the story behind *The Search* illustrates how a visit to
Germany could transform an individual's perception and orientation toward the German
people. For these reasons, an extended examination of *The Search* is warranted.

In the summer of 1946, Swiss producer Lazar Wechsler traveled to Hollywood
and approached director Fred Zinnemann and writer Peter Viertel about producing a film
on displaced persons in Germany. Impressed by the both the "enormous generosity of
Americans" as well as their "total lack of comprehension of the depth of human suffering
in Europe," Wechsler wanted to make a film that educated Americans on the plight of the
most desperate of Europe's population. Both promising talents in Hollywood, Zinnemann
and Viertel realized that the proposed film offered a vehicle for addressing many of the
problems of American policy in Europe. Self-styled European leftists, they saw the film
as an opportunity to express their position on a number of interlocking debates. In
particular, they wanted to address the need for aid to displaced persons in Europe, the
ineptitude and corruption of the American occupying forces, and the unreconstructed
nature of the German people.

The first treatments that Zinnemann and Viertel developed reflected these desires.
Both the initial plot created jointly by Zinnemann and Viertel in California, and the
subsequent screenplay written by Viertel in Switzerland that fleshed out these themes,
sought to inform Americans at home about the tragedy of the American occupation in
Germany. In his screenplay, Viertel told the story of Carl and Susan, two children of no relation, who break out of a DP camp somewhere in the Bavarian Alps. After some initial wandering, they fall in with a wild gang of German children. The leader, Ernst, keeps Carl and other potential troublemakers in line through displays of cruelty. At the outskirts of a German town, Ernst makes contact with an older man, "a cynical Nazi diehard, whose function in life has become the corrupt hindrance of the local military government." The older man uses the group to wreak havoc on the occupation authorities. In a sabotage operation, Carl, blackmailed into his role by threats against Susan, is captured by the American military. The officer in charge, Patterson, takes pity on the boy. Moved by this unexpected act of kindness, Carl discloses the location of the group. The troublemakers are captured, and Susan is saved. Patterson takes Carl and Susan into his home.

Patterson's encounter with Carl substantially complicates his life. Previous to meeting Carl, Patterson, as Viertel described him, had simply done his duty, while at the same time only thinking of returning home. But impressed with the courage and fortitude of the young boy, Patterson's priorities begin to change. As Viertel wrote, "Carl begins to infuse the young officer with a completely new sense of what his work in Germany should be." At the same time, the introduction of Carl into Patterson's life ruins his relationship with his German "occupation wife." The German woman with whom

81 Letter, Viertel to Wechsler, June 22, 1946, Correspondence 1946, The Search, Fred Zinnemann Collection (hereafter FZC), MHL.
Patterson is living declares that she does not want to keep the children. Shocked by this admission, Patterson tries to explain that he "feels it is his duty to look after these two human beings, who have endured so many hardships already." Viertel wrote of the ensuing discussion:

Their discussion becomes more heated, and the girl tells him bluntly that she has greater pity for German children now struggling against the odds of life. Patterson tells her he feels pity for them too, and then more discerningly he asks her why she makes this differentiation [sic]...Is it perhaps a feeling of guilt that makes life with Carl and Susan intolerable for her? Guilt? The girl flings back at him...I don't believe in guilt. There are only those lucky enough to have won, and those that have been beaten... Patterson is shocked again by this revelation. He never suspected that this woman was anything but an anti-Nazi. Now he sees the same signs of nationalism in her that he has seen in others.83

Patterson leaves the German woman and takes the children to Czechoslovakia to look for their families. Unable to find them, Patterson leaves them with the proper authorities. Susan is adopted, but Carl, in a sensational scene, is revealed as a Jew. Told that he will be shipped to Palestine, Carl breaks out and starts wondering again.

82 Letter, Viertel to Zinnemann, November 25, 1946, Correspondence 1946, The Search, FZC.
83 Ibid.

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As should be evident, many of the themes that Viertel and Zinnemann had originally discussed were substantially developed. For one, the Germans were incorrigible. Ernst, the leader of the German band of youths, keeps order through terror and cruelty. His contact in the city is a "Nazi diehard" dedicated to the disruption of the occupying army. For another, the American forces appeared even more corrupt. Viertel made Patterson an officer precisely because he believed that at the top was "the love of the Germans [and] the cynicism toward Russia and the whole world" most apparent. In contrast to his colleagues, Patterson "has to be sensitive, keenly aware of things that an intelligent human has to be sensitive, keenly aware of things that an intelligent human being feels." In sum, he wrote to Zinnemann, "he must be you and me without our left European background." 84

Most of all, the addition of the "occupation wife" strengthened the original indictments against both the depravity of the German people and the bewildered activities of the American occupation forces. As early as 1945, fraternization had emerged as a major cause of concern in the United States. As J.P. O’Donnell of Newsweek had observed, many Americans worried that the GI’s "judgment seems particularly blurred when referring to his own Gretchen." 85 In exposing the ostensibly true nature of Patterson’s German lover, Viertel validated these fears. Patterson’s “occupation wife” had effectively fooled Patterson into believing that she was different, until she railed

84 Ibid.
85 J. P. O’Donnell, "Do the Frauleins Change our Joe?," Newsweek, December 24 1945, 50.
against the prospect of caring for children that she did not believe worthy of attention. By making Patterson unique in his motivation, insight, and intelligence, Viertel simultaneously condemned the present situation in Germany while offering his vision for its possible redemption.

From California and New York, Zinnemann encouraged both the author and his script. As the date for his departure to Europe grew nearer, he became even more enthusiastic. At one point, he wrote Viertel that they had "a hell of a chance to make an honest and strong movie about Europe today," and that if they muffed it "both of us deserve to get our balls cut off". 86 As for the story itself, Zinnemann approved of its thrust wholeheartedly, even to the point of offering more damning episodes. He suggested that Viertel include other GIs in the story--"some of whom could no doubt advance the popular theory about the Germans being the nicest, cleanest people in Europe and the most similar to Americans." He believed that the gang of kids should become "involved in some more sinister Nazi underground activity." He suggested that an "old guy" somewhere should "point out the growing parallel between 1919-1920 and today -- when the first peace was sold out from under the nose of a fat, dumb and happy America, that wanted [nothing] but to go to sleep again, just like today." In all of this, however, he cautioned, the film must "be built up" with "great skill," otherwise "you'll get nothing but

86 Letter, Zinnemann to Viertel, December 2, 1946, Correspondence 1946, The Search, FZC.
bitter resentment of the goddam foreigners and dirty Jews." On December 2, 1946, less than a month before he was to depart for Europe, Zinnemann wrote Wechsler:

It should be calculated to arouse a powerful emotion, not just a vague sadness or discouragement, or an unhappy, frustrated feeling of "Isn't it too bad about the foreigners, how they never seem to know what they want. Why don't they get together among themselves. Well, hell, we can't do anything about it so let's go get drunk"... At the very least, if we can't find any hope, if we can't drive for a stirring, inspiring solution, we should try to generate a burning feeling of indignation and of same at the apathy, the injustice, the peace being sold out -- at the disregard of the oppressed, the trapped, the helpless. Maybe we could scratch that thick, sleek, complacent hid of America and give a few people here and there a few minutes of uneasiness in the midst of their self-satisfied lives. Maybe we could tell them that their Allies had locked the Jews of Europe in together with their murderers, and ask what about it.

Naturally, Viertel welcomed such comments and support. He wrote Zinnemann that he eagerly awaited his arrival.

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87 Ibid.
88 Letter, Zinnemann to Wechsler, December 2, 1946, Correspondence 1946, The Search, FZC.
But Zinnemann changed his mind after visiting Europe personally. In a letter to his agent, Abe Lastfogel, he explained why he changed his mind and agreed with the producer to replace Viertel. Informing Lastfogel that France "had suffered tremendously from the war," he declared that such destruction and suffering "cannot be explained unless you have seen the landscape and have looked into the eyes of the people you talk to." His visit to the displaced children's institutes seemed particularly heartbreaking. Thus while he found Viertel's script a "good job of writing" and the "basis of a fair movie," Zinnemann believed that it "did not seem to encompass the tragedy of European children today." He told Lastfogel that he would have more of an idea of what kinds of themes to address when he traveled to Germany at the end of the month.

After his visit to Germany, Zinnemann's criticism of Viertel's became even more wide-ranging. Zinnemann's visit to Germany, it seems, only reinforced his change of heart regarding Viertel's script. In a letter to William Wells, the film chief of the United Nations Recovery and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), Zinnemann wrote that in his two weeks in the U.S. Zone he "saw and heard things that constitute the most powerful kind of raw material for a motion picture." Along these lines, he informed Wells that Viertel's original story was rejected because "it seemed too remote from reality and...lacked inner truth and strength." He believed that "no one has the right to make a mediocre film about a subject of such tremendous importance." For Zinnemann,

89 Letter, Zinnemann to Lastfogel, January 24, 1947, Correspondence 1947, The Search, FZC.
90 Ibid.
a director who prided himself on realistic films, Viertel’s decision not to visit Germany consigned his story to inevitable failure.91

This issue was fleshed out even more clearly when an injured Viertel angrily wrote Zinnemann after parts of Zinnemann’s letter appeared in *Variety*. In a serious lapse of judgment, Wells forwarded Zinnemann’s letter along to the magazine apparently in the hopes of garnering some free publicity. In addition to the expected concerns about friendship and propriety, Viertel’s letter addressed Zinnemann’s criticisms of his script. Viertel noted that in their meeting in Zurich, Zinnemann had said that the script was a “good job” yet “insufficient” but never that it “was removed from reality and lacking in inner strength and truth.” “If you were suddenly outraged at my script, following your trip through Germany,” Viertel suggested, “please remember that again you are dealing in concepts that are not fixed by anything more than opinion and sensitivity, and that what I put into my script was not a Hollywood pipedream, but the unforgettable pictures that my mind’s eye collected while I was in Germany.”92 In essence, Viertel challenged Zinnemann’s claim to realism, arguing that reality depended on perspective and experience, and that Zinnemann’s perspective was no more “real” than his.

Zinnemann’s reply to Viertel suggests the extent to which his trip to Germany influenced his opinion of Viertel’s script and thus of Germany itself. Although he apologized for the public way in which his opinions had been aired, he defended the

92 Letter, Viertel to Zinnemann, March 12, 1947, Correspondence 1947, The Search, FZC.
opinions themselves. He agreed that his comments in Zurich were "exactly" what he thought of it "at the time." "It was not until late January," he wrote Viertel, "when I went to Germany for the first time and was literally hit over the head by things of enormous, you might say monstrous, emotional impact, that my feelings in regard to your script began to change." Zinnemann's experience in Germany validated his earlier belief that Viertel should have proceeded to Germany without delay, because he saw and heard things "that defy the imagination of any essentially normal person, matter how talented."

The fact that Viertel had visited Germany two years earlier struck Zinnemann as irrelevant because he felt "Germany as a whole is like an express train moving at full speed without an engineer." He believed that "the whole landscape has changed in those two years, the whole fabric, the whole psychological basis of existence, the whole climate." No one could understand the "insane, unnatural, non-human pattern of reactions, the psychological wreckage left lying around in the wake of recent history" or the "situations, incidents, characters that make up the witches cauldron called Germany" without "direct physical contact." One could not confuse Germany of two years ago with the current Germany, he believed, without "losing the inner truth."93 Thus to keep major elements of Viertel's story would be to pollute the real Germany with the unreal or the imagined.

Yet Zinnemann's visit to Germany was heavily supervised, and provided a narrative of Germany that the army was interested in fostering. Prior to his dismissal, in

93 Letter, Zinnemann to Viertel, April 3, 1947, Correspondence 1947, The Search, FZC.

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fact, Viertel warned Zinnemann about the ways in which Wechsler, the Swiss producer, and Theresa Bonney, an American war journalist, would color his experience in Germany. He believed that Wechsler, whose "approach" was "always from the top," "would get us entangled with more colonels and Generals." He wrote Zinneman, "believe me, if I've learned anything at all in the past four years, those are the boys that don't know nothing." He felt Bonney was even worse, calling her a "bullshit artist from way back," who was "sort of an official army gal, decorated from a-- to elbow" and an "apologist for the US army." In his opinion, he and Zinnemann had to strike it on their own, where "alone we could mooch around the right places, and hear the truth instead of what they want us to hear." But in the end, Zinnemann dismissed Viertel's advice along with Viertel, and accompanied Bonney on his initial tour of Germany.

Thus when Zinnemann traveled to Germany in 1947, many of the men and women that he encountered had already become convinced of the importance of rehabilitating the German people. Judging by Zinnemann's subsequent correspondence, he not only relied on them for information, but became well acquainted with them, and even remained in contact with a few after the film was completed. One army officer, for example, continued to write to Zinnemann after he returned to Hollywood. This individual, who signed his name only as "Dick," spoke frequently of personal and occupation issues. Most telling, perhaps, of the extent to which Zinnemann had become

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94 Duplication of Report from OMGUS, December 18, 1946, Correspondence 1946, The Search, FZC. Letter, Viertel to Zinnemann, November 25, 1946, Correspondence 1946, The Search, FZC.
enmeshed within this system that he and Viertel had initially intended to denounce was the name of his good friend’s wife and nanny. Dick often mentioned that his wife Gretchen and newborn Linda were doing well, the latter especially so under the "fanatically good care" of nanny Frau Niletiz. Of Frau Niletz, Dick observed, "there are damn few like her either in Germany or back home."  

In the end, this context played a decisive role in shaping the film that Zinnemann created. His film ultimately focused on the experiences of two displaced persons, a mother in search of her child, and her child’s adventures with the American military government and UNRRA. The American military, portrayed largely through the winning persona of Montgomery Clift, came across as squeaky clean do-gooders. The Germans, on the other hand, were almost completely non-existent. There are only two direct references to the Germans throughout the film -- one when the narrator says that German barracks are put to better use as DP camps, and the other when an UNRRA administrator excuses German boys who adopt other identities because they are “hungry, too.” When contrasted with his original ideas with Viertel, it becomes clear that Zinnemann’s stay in Europe changed his mind regarding the nature of the German people.

Official reception of the film was quite positive. Personal reports on official opinions of the film suggested that the film was well received by Army policymakers. Dick reported that "all who have seen [the film] are happy," and that "our man in

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95 Letter, "Dick" to Zinnemann, January 19, 1948, Correspondence 1948, The Search, FZC.
Frankfurt gave it a '4-handkerchief rating.' He also claimed that "the ICD [International Control Division] people were greatly pleased with it as were the people at Eucom [European Command]." Lt. Col. William Rogers of ICD verified this positive appraisal, adding that "there were no cuts necessary from a political standpoint." He found that "everyone liked the spirit and the feel of the picture very, very much." Popular reception, as we shall, was not quite so positive.

As the production of The Search illustrates, the landscape and the people of Germany had a far-reaching impact. Faced with the devastation and impoverishment of a once advanced nation, many American visitors came to pity the Germans and desire to help them reconstruct their lives. But these feelings of sympathy did not alone translate into a desire to rebuild German power. Pitying a people and viewing them as the heroic defenders of the frontier of freedom are two entirely different matters. In this sense, feeling sorry for the Germans only lay the preconditions for America's dramatic reversal on the Germans. Events in Berlin served as the catalyst.

The Frontier of Freedom

While many Americans in the western zones of Germany were often ambivalent in their feelings about the Germans, the situation in Berlin was a different matter. Indeed,

97 Letter, "Dick" to Zinnemann, January 19, 1948, Correspondence 1948, The Search, FZC.
98 Letter, Lt. Col. William Rogers to Fred Zinnemann, March 24, 1948, Correspondence 1948, The Search, FZC.
American reports of activities in Berlin differed markedly from information coming out of other parts of Germany. The primary difference, of course, was the presence of Soviet soldiers. Berlin was located deep in the heart of the Soviet occupation zone. Like Germany itself, Berlin was divided into four different sections, but these boundaries were very permeable. Berlin was the place that many of the American occupation troops had their only encounter with the Soviet soldiers. The Soviets had sole occupation of Berlin for almost two months before the other Allies arrived, and they, by all accounts, made the most of their early entrance by firmly entrenching communist rule.

American diplomatic reports reflected the different ways in which American conceptions of occupation in Berlin differed from other areas of American occupation. Whereas ambiguity and uncertainty dominated reports from Frankfurt and other areas in the American zone, reports from Berlin often centered on episodes of Soviet coercion or misconduct. Almost immediately after American entrance into the city, United States political advisor for Germany Robert Murphy began praising certain segments of the Berlin population for their heroic stances against Soviet intimidation. Although the Soviet Union had made great inroads into the Berlin political scene, Murphy reported in August 1945, the "leaders of the Social Democratic Party and Christian Democratic Union...have impressed American contacts so far as relatively independent and democratic individuals." Murphy also reinforced this separation between Germans and Nazis by constantly paralleling the methods of the Soviets with that of the Nazis. The

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99 Murphy to the Secretary of State, August 13, 1945, FRUS, 1945, 3:1039.
Soviets, he grimly reported, were using former Nazis in the "same way that Nazi SA won
support in 1932 from former Communists."\textsuperscript{100} On another occasion he remarked that the
"Russian-created municipal administration had replaced former Nazi Blockleiter system
with similar organization consisting of so-called Haus and Blockobmaenner." This
system of "considerable tyranny," he discovered, received many complaints alleging that
it "was just as objectionable from viewpoint of individual rights and liberties as under the
Nazis."\textsuperscript{101}

The Cold War reached a new low when the Soviet Union, threatened by sweeping
currency reforms in the Western occupation zones, opted to blockade Berlin in 1948 to
force the issue. As ground traffic to West Berlin ground to a halt, the American
government was forced to make a difficult decision. Robert Murphy, echoing the beliefs
of many policymakers in Washington, believed that since the conclusion of World War II
the "presence in Berlin of Western occupants became a symbol of resistance to Eastern
expansionism." For them, withdrawal from Berlin would signify eventual withdrawal
from West Germany and Western Europe. In addition to these matters of prestige,
Murphy cited another reason for staying in Berlin: "the protection of those Berlin
elements who oppose and indeed manifest courage in preventing Soviet domination of
the largest municipal area in Germany."\textsuperscript{102} The United States should, in effect, stay
because the Soviets were the enemy and the Germans America's friends.

\textsuperscript{100} Ibid., 1040.
\textsuperscript{101} Murphy to Secretary of State, September 4, 1945, \textit{FRUS}, 1945, 3:1047.
\textsuperscript{102} Murphy to Secretary of State, June 26, 1948, \textit{FRUS}, 1948, 2:919, 920.
General Lucius Clay echoed Murphy's sentiments. In a July 1948 letter, he wrote, "I cannot but feel that the world today is facing the most critical issue that has arisen since Hitler placed his policy of aggression in motion." He continued that "the Soviet Government has more force immediately at its disposal than did Hitler to accomplish his purpose. Only America can exert the world leadership, and only America can provide the strength to stop this policy of aggression here and now."\textsuperscript{103} The constant comparisons by American policymakers of the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany reveal the growing power of Berlin to transform Germans and Russians in the American imagination.

As the airlift grew stronger and more efficient, the Soviets realized that their action had been counterproductive and called it off in May of 1949. But irreparable damage had been done. By drawing international attention to the plight of Germans in Berlin, the Soviet Union had unwittingly aided the transformation of Germans in the American imagination. The brave actions of Berlin's citizens in resisting Soviet pressures helped convince Americans that a difference did exist between Nazis and Germans. And by a cruel twist of fate, the Soviet Union, through its suppressive methods, became the heir to the Nazi legacy of totalitarianism, the "other" against which Americans opposed themselves. In this binary world, the Germans were now dependable democrats.

Along these lines, Berlin received a far different kind of news coverage than the rest of Germany. As Newsweek journalist James O' Donnell reported, "the four-power

administration of the German capital inadvertently has given the Western Powers a city-sized glimpse of the tactics the Russians have applied to half a continent." In another article, O'Donnell criticized those who felt that the Germans were clouding American minds about their Soviet allies. Despite some valid reasons for concern, he found that the American GIs still blamed the Nazis for the war. Although he conceded that the GI's "judgment seems particularly blurred when referring to his own Gretchen," he argued that vestiges of the Aryan race doctrine and the physical remnants of German concentration camps served as sobering reminders of Germany's role in bringing about World War II.

If Americans wanted to understand why attitudes of American GIs toward their Soviet counterparts were changing, O'Donnell suggested that they look toward Soviet activity in Berlin.105

Reinhold Niebuhr, one America's most important theologians and philosophers, became a staunch supporter of the policy of containment following his visit to Germany and Berlin. In one particular article, the links drawn between Nazi totalitarianism and Soviet Communism were thrown in sharp relief. "Russian truculence cannot be mitigated by further concessions," Niebuhr flatly stated. "Russia hopes to conquer the whole of Europe strategically and ideologically." Anyone who saw things differently suffered from "illusions similar to those held by the conservatives of another decade in regard to

105 J.P. O'Donnell, "Do the Frauleins Change Our Joe? Not a Bit of It, He's All Wised Up: Yanks Fraternize One Way But Think in the Other Direction; Still Blame Nazis for War," Newsweek 26 (December 24, 1945), 50.
Nazism." The Russians, Niebuhr contended, sought to exploit the same weaknesses the Nazis did: the "reluctance of democracies to risk war." Thus the American policy should be one of firmness. And such firmness was especially needed in Germany, where the Soviets had already realized the importance of the German Question. In Berlin, the "heroic" refusal of Socialists to merge with the communist party revealed that Germans could be counted on in America's struggle with Soviet totalitarianism. Niebuhr reported that that one such "heroic anti-Nazi" told him, "The rigor of our fight against Communism must be our penance for having allowed the Nazi tyranny to arise." To continue the fight, Niebuhr concluded, these good Germans needed sweeping economic reforms that could revitalize their industries.106

The behavior of Germans in West Berlin received extremely favorable press in the United States during the Berlin Blockade. Several articles on the crisis in Berlin were accompanied by stock images of men, women, and children with upturned, expectant faces, watching American and British planes come and go. Soon after the crisis began in June, Life magazine, for example, included a special on the situation in Berlin. In conducting research for the piece in Berlin, the author, Emmet Hughes, came across a teenager named Siegfried, who had helped him conduct research when the Americans arrived in 1945. Rather than trigger memories of the dubious activities Siegfried had been involved in during World War II, his encounter with the German teenager initiated another memory: "These were the wild days when the men from Mongolia came to

almost every house for a woman or a piece of pretty cloth and might be distracted by an
electric light switch or a doorlock or a toilet in which they could stand barefooted and
exultantly cheer the gurgling water and splash it on their dark and wondering eyes." This
negative remembrance of the Soviet occupying forces was juxtaposed with an extended
discussion of the "Good Germans" (as the subheading read) now living in Germany.
Heinrich Droms, 60 year old leader of transport union, was a good example. "Between
democracy and dictatorship, compromise is impossible," Droms informed Hughes. "We
had 12 years of one. Now we're going to fight for the other. The Russians and the
communists have no weapon, however, terrible, that we have not learned about from the
Nazis." Additionally, the article, drawing on the language of separation and division,
contained a graphic depicting West Berlin surrounded by an imaginary wall.107

Film representations of the airlift were also positive. In the case of The Big Lift,
the American government, and especially the Air Force, actively supported the film's
production and promotion. The Big Lift tells the story of two American GIs, Danny and
Hank, stationed in Berlin during the Berlin Blockade and Airlift. In the semi-realist style
popular in the time period, the film under the direction of George Seaton depicts the
various measures undertaken by the occupation forces to feed and protect the citizens of
Berlin. It also portrays the heroic actions of the Berliners in facing the staggering
sacrifices involved. But all of this serves as the backdrop for the morality play that
depicts Danny (Montgomery Clift) and Hank (Paul Douglas) and their romantic

encounters with German women. In the course of their courtships, Danny finds that his frau has attempted to dupe him into marrying her so that she can go with him to the United States where her supposedly dead Nazi husband waits for her under an assumed identity. Hank, on the other hand, discovers that his frau has learned the lessons of democracy a little too well. A prisoner of the Nazis for a considerable amount of time, Hank has taken advantage of his power and vented his frustration on many of the Germans that he encounters. His German girlfriend, after perusing America's documents of democracy, informs him that he is being tyrannical.

The Air Force was desperate to have this picture made for publicity reasons. The army in Berlin had no desire to have another film made in Berlin. They were afraid that they would tax resources even further during the airlift. Although Seaton sought to allay their fears by promising to keep their demands on the army small, the army ultimately acquiesced because the Air Force was adamant about having this picture made. In the summer of 1949, the United States Air Force cabled occupation authorities and requested help. After the film had been completed, Seaton wrote General Hoyt S. Vandenberg the following summer and acknowledged that "it was an extremely

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108 Telegram from HQ EUCOM to CSUSA, 1949, Decimal File, 1948-1949, Chief of Information, Public Information Division, RG 319, NA.
109 Ibid.
difficult task that could never have been accomplished without the amazing cooperation which was provided by the Air Force."\(^{110}\)

The Air Force was also instrumental in assisting in publicity for the picture. Anthony Muto of Twentieth Century-Fox requested a number of items to insure a "solid send-off in New York and throughout the country," including an award or citation from the Air Force for Seaton, a lobby display, an honor guard, and enough material "to do a Winchell column on 'Things I Never Knew Before About the Airlift.'"\(^{111}\) The Air Force included marching troops, an Air Force recruiting station, and additional information for use in newspaper articles "in connection with the premiere."\(^{112}\) The Air Force did everything that it could to make sure that people saw the film.

Although it is clear that the Air Force approved the script, it is unclear to what extent they exercised control over it. Much of the material in the original story outline remained the same in the film. The original story outline, for example, still sought to portray American efforts in Berlin favorably. In one part of the original outline, Seaton

\(^{110}\) Letter from George Seaton to General Hoyt S. Vandenberg, July 14, 1950, Motion Picture Scripts, Corres, etc. 1947-1953, Pictorial Branch, Office of Information Services, RG 340, Secretary of the Air Force, NA.

\(^{111}\) Letter from Anthony Muto, Twentieth Century-Fox to Lt. Col. W. C. Lindley, Department of Air Force, March 16, 1950, Motion Picture Scripts, Corres, etc. 1947-1953, Pictorial Branch, Office of Information Services, RG 340, Secretary of the Air Force, NA.

\(^{112}\) Telegram from USAF Headquarters to Mitchel Air Force Base, April 4, 1950, Motion Picture Scripts, Corres, etc. 1947-1953, Pictorial Branch, Office of Information Services, RG 340, Secretary of the Air Force, NA. Telegram from USAF Headquarters to Andrews Air Force Base, March 22, 1950, Motion Picture Scripts, Corres, etc. 1947-1953, Pictorial Branch, Office of Information Services, RG 340, Secretary of the Air Force, NA.
wrote: "Now briefly we show shots of what happens to the food once the air lift delivers it to Tempelhof. We will get across that the German economy pays for this food, and I think answer many questions that the American taxpayer is asking every day." What is clear, however, is that the original script was much harsher on the Germans. Danny and Hank still carry their different presuppositions regarding the Germans. But in this rendition, Hank's girlfriend is an American, so there is no balancing "good German." And Danny's fraulein is still a vixen, but for a different reason. She turned in her husband to the police because the Allies told all Germans to turn in Nazis. Her vice was following orders too carefully.113

**Understanding the Germans**

Although the United States was flush with unprecedented power at the end of the war, Americans were exhausted and ready to focus on domestic life. After World War II, many Americans simply wanted to return to the personal cares of reconstructing hearth and home. There was a loud cry to bring the boys home, and the boys that came home busily went to work with spouses to repopulate the nation. Feeling as though they had done their part in the world, Americans were ready to turn their attention inward again.

But Americans remained interested in Germany. Having fought two major wars against them in the last thirty years, Americans understandably kept abreast of what was happening with their vanquished foe. Just as with their leaders, however, a common

113 "The Quartered City:" Story Outline by George Seaton, April 18, 1949, Twentieth Century Fox Script Collection, UCLA.
interest did not equal a common purpose. At the end of the war, rank-and-file Americans
were similarly divided about what to do with Germany. Shortly after V-E day, a public
opinion poll that asked Americans about occupation aims in Germany found that over a
third believed that the allies should treat it very severely including destroying it as
political entity or permanently crippling it. For captured Nazis, Americans evinced little
sympathy. When asked what should be done with Goering, 67% said execution, with
many of them expressing the belief "that the manner of death should be made as
unpleasant as possible." When questioned about the fate of Gestapo agents and storm
troopers, almost half said that they should be "quickly destroyed." Gallup found that one
in ten respondents thought in terms of more than death:

They want SS troopers and Gestapo men to die, but they want them to die
slowly, they want to torture them, some suggesting 'hard work and
starvation' as the means. Imprison them...jail them....cage them (at least
some part of the public always wants to put enemies on display)...exile
them...isolate them...treat them as they treated others...no punishment is
bad enough. These are just a few of the suggestions.114

The Cold War helped alter these feelings. By late 1946, Americans were
transferring their anger toward the Russians. In September, sixty-two percent of
Americans felt less friendly toward the Russians than they did a year ago. By contrast, in

February of 1947, forty-five percent of Americans reported that they felt friendly toward the Germans, with only 28% feeling unfriendly.\(^{115}\)

In addition, Americans, like their colleagues who had traveled to Germany personally, were captivated by images of the German landscape. This fact can be seen in the responses to American films shot in Germany. As a movie reviewer for *Time* wrote about the film *Berlin Express*, the film is really two movies:

one in the background, the other in the foreground. The background is an album of postwar Germany: a series of malignantly beautiful photographs of rubbled cities, taken with a depth of focus that clarifies the year in every handful of dust. Unfortunately, the view of this film is frequently obstructed by the one in front of it...\(^{116}\)

Like this reviewer, most commentators cut through the heavy-handed morality tales involved with the films and focused on the truth that these images of Germany ostensibly revealed.

The power of the German landscape can be seen in the reception of *Berlin Express*, *The Search*, and *The Big Lift*. As with those who visited Germany firsthand, the scale of devastation in Germany witnessed in this film had a galvanizing effect on audiences. One reviewer wrote that "shots of bombed out Berlin and Frankfurt alone make 'Berlin Express' worth the price of admission."\(^{117}\) Another reviewer of *Berlin

\(^{115}\) Ibid., 599,625.


\(^{117}\) "Berlin Express," *Variety*, April 6, 1948 1948, 3.
Express observed that "the devastation left by Allied bombers is caught with striking fidelity by the camera: the sheer destruction is indeed appalling." Similarly, a reviewer of The Search reported that "the shocking background of ruined Germany is well--but not too well--photographed." A different reviewer of the film had difficulty in deciding which aspect of the film was most "stirring:" the film's plot or the "shots of devastated Germany."\textsuperscript{118}

At the same time, however, as the above quote on Berlin Express illustrates, many reviewers found that the symbolic, moralizing plots threatened to obscure the value of these scenes. One reviewer wrote that the message of Berlin Express, that world brotherhood is the antidote to world conflict, discovers a "truism that has not been widely disputed since the years of the Trojan War."\textsuperscript{119} Another found that the "film was elementary and confused when it came to the issues of national sovereignty, resurgent Naziism and world peace."\textsuperscript{120} The reviewer who lauded The Search's camera work devastated it for producing a "fairy tale for old ladies to weep over." He concluded that "The Search' manages only to be sentimental about a subject that demands anger and shame."\textsuperscript{121}


\textsuperscript{119} New Republic, May 31, 1948 1948.

\textsuperscript{120} Eng, "Film Review 'Berlin Express'".

\textsuperscript{121} "Movie Review," New Republic, April 12 1948, 21.
Many reviewers received George Seaton's *The Big Lift* in a similar way. As Robert Hatch penned in his write-up for *The New Republic*, the confused film made one point very clear: "fliers should confine their activities to airplanes and leave politics and ethics to people equipped to deal with them." On the one hand, reviewers praised the depiction of the Airlift. Hatch wrote that the actors involved with it "are naturally, wonderfully dexterous and casually ingratiating." As another reviewer for *Time* noted, the film is "at its best" as "an absorbing documentary of the airborne supply of Soviet-blockaded Berlin." As in *The Berlin Express* and *The Search*, viewers favorably pointed out the "camera work does full justice to the brooding ruins of Berlin."\(^{122}\)

On the other hand, many reviewers believed that film's attempted (and obvious) symbolism threatened to wreck what value the film possessed. One reviewer groaned at George Seaton's simplistic attempt "to reduce the meaning of it all to elementary terms, in an a-b-c kind of dialogue between the 'Kraut'-hating Douglas and a pert fraulein"\(^{123}\). Another groused that Seaton "endeavored to give the illusion that these four, as soldiers and their girls, are in truth general symbolic of relations as they prevail."\(^{124}\) Another wrote that the film went really wrong "in having [Paul] Douglas spout repeated primer-

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\(^{123}\) *Movie On Air Lift Achievement, Too*, May 11, 1950, *Los Angeles Times*, Big Lift, Clipping File, MHL.


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level sales talk for democracy at his girl friend," with the result being "clumsy propaganda in a movie that would be excellent propaganda without it."^{125}

As for Berlin itself, although many Americans did not understand (or care to understand) the complex situation out of which the Berlin blockade arose, stock images simplified the situation for Americans: the Soviets were trying to starve these people and the Americans were helping feed them. The American people overwhelmingly supported the American decision to stay in Berlin. When the Gallup Poll posed the question, "Do you think the United States and her Western European allies should stay in Berlin, even if it means war with Russia--or should the United States give up Berlin to the Russians?" an overwhelming eighty percent of respondents replied that the Americans should stay in Berlin.

Conclusion

By the end of the decade, a mainstream consensus on Germany had emerged. Based on events in Berlin, personal interactions with occupied Germans, and the horrendous amount of devastation witnessed in Germany, many Americans increasingly believed that the Germans were ready to return to their rightful place in the Western World. The new Cold War narrative of the German people drew upon the World War II metaphor of "disease" and the notion of a "victimized" Germany to portray the German nation as an innately democratic people. By the end of the decade, many Americans were willing to trust the Germans again.

After the Berlin blockade, American sympathy for the Germans was high. But this sense of common purpose could be fleeting, Americans and Germans realized. In the coming decade, it was up to the newly established Federal Republic of Germany to build upon and solidify this newfound support in the United States for the German people.
CHAPTER 4

"GERMANY BELONGS IN THE WESTERN WORLD"

"There was such propaganda to accept the Germans. I went to Germany and a very high political figure said to me, 'Well what do you want to do?' He said, 'They've been waiting outside the church for a long time, we have to embrace them finally.'"\textsuperscript{126}

-- Abby Mann, playwright, \textit{Judgment at Nuremberg}

On January 28, 1951, something in the \textit{Wall Street Journal} caught the eye, and riled the temper, of Republican Senator William Langer from North Dakota. The item was an advertisement for the sale of the former German Embassy. The advertisement noted that the United States had seized the Embassy during the war, and the government was now offering it for sale to the highest bidder. The next day, he brought the item before the Senate and announced his intention to do something about it. In a long,  

\textsuperscript{126} Abby Mann, \textit{Recollections by Abby Mann}, An Oral History of the Motion Picture in America (Regents of the University of California, 1969).
rambling diatribe on communism and American foreign policy, Langer shared his belief that no other single act "would do more harm to the friendly relations" between the United States and West Germany "than the sale of the German Embassy." "It would be the height of folly," he continued, "to have the Embassy sold when, at the same time, our representatives in Western Germany are telling the people there that we are their friends and that we are looking forward to the time when they will fight side by side with us if there is war." He asked for the support of his fellow Senators in a proposed resolution to block the sale of the Embassy. He followed this public declaration with a private letter to the Attorney General of the United States, in which he reiterated his belief that this would be an "inopportune time" to sell the property.127

Many in the Department of State sympathized with Langer's position. State had finally decided to vest the property in August 1950 only after four years of agonizing internal debate. During the war, the Allies had agreed to seize all German diplomatic and consular property abroad, and the Soviet Union, Great Britain, and France had already disposed of their German appropriations. But the Cold War had given many in the Department of State pause. Some, viewing Germany a new potential ally for the United States, had argued that the Department should do nothing to upset the Germans, while others, subscribing to the World War narrative, claimed that the United States should


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follow through with its agreements to sell the property. In the end, as an internal memorandum noted, "while the Department might have found it preferable to deal with the question in a manner harmonious with the developing post-war policy of friendly association with Germany, it was not able to deny the punitive wartime policies against Germany to the extent of failing to carry treatment of this item forward to its logical conclusion." When the decision to vest finally came, High Commissioner John J. McCloy informed Bonn in the summer of 1950. Told that the United States had to fulfill its obligations, German representatives replied that they "had never really expected the property to be returned." Their only request was that "when the action was taken the publicity could be held to the minimum."128

Thus Senator Langer's outrage, while in the name of the new German government, violated its desire for silence. When the Department of Justice informed him that the Department of State vested the German property in fulfillment of its obligations, and that the property moreover was in very bad shape, Langer did not acquiesce. On March 26, 1951, the Senate passed a resolution requesting that the Senate Judiciary Committee look into the sale. On May 21, the Department of Justice received a phone call from the office Herbert H. Lehman, the famous Jewish Senator from New York. According to his aides, the Senator wanted to make "a friendly gesture toward the

128 Draft Bill by Senator Lehman to Divest Former German Embassy, Washington, and Return it to Federal Republic of Germany, May 25, 1951, German Embassy, Washington, Subject Files, 1949-1956, Miscellaneous Lot Files, RG 59, NA. Telegram, McCloy to Secretary of State, July 22, 1950, German Embassy, Washington, Subject Files, 1949-1956, Miscellaneous Lot Files, RG 59, NA.
Germans which would, in some degree, offset the numerous actions he had had to take in the last several years on behalf of persecutee of Nazism, etc. where his attitude might have been construed as anti-German." The Department of State subsequently found out that Lehman intended to introduce a bill directing the attorney general to cancel the sale and return the embassy to the Germans.129

The Department of State found itself, in the words of a member of its staff, "on the horns of a dilemma." The State Department could not take any action that implied that the Department viewed any appropriations of German property as "not legally sound." Nor could it, however, "take a stand against a senatorial effort to make a pleasant gesture toward the Germans thoroughly consistent with present policy." Ultimately, the Department of State suggested that the Senate permit the sale to occur, and then after a proper interval present the Germans with a suitable gift amount for the purchase of a new embassy. In this way, all sides would be satisfied. As a memorandum noted, the proposal should satisfy the Senators because it both "does away with all the legal confusions of trying to unsell a sold property or divest a vested property" and "would take the new German Government completely out of any association with the now

129 Memorandum, Sham, DOJ, to Calhoun, DOS, February 8, 1951, German Embassy, Washington, Subject Files, 1949-1956, Miscellaneous Lot Files, RG 59, NA. Copy of Senate Resolution 121, March 26, 1951, German Embassy, Washington, Subject Files, 1949-1956, Miscellaneous Lot Files, RG 59, NA. Memorandum, Elwood Williams to Lewis, May 21, 1951, German Embassy, Washington, Subject Files, 1949-1956, Miscellaneous Lot Files, RG 59, NA. Draft Bill by Senator Lehman to Divest Former German Embassy, Washington, and Return it to Federal Republic of Germany, May 25, 1951, German Embassy, Washington, Subject Files, 1949-1956, Miscellaneous Lot Files, RG 59, NA.
shabby Embassy reminiscent of the regimes of Adolf Hitler and Kaiser Wilhelm." The Senate adopted this plan, and after ironing out a few wrinkles with the German government, presented the Germans with $300,000 to get them started on the purchase of a new embassy.\textsuperscript{130}

The whole episode of the German Embassy symbolized the problematic nature of German representation in the United States. From an American perspective, it illustrated the psychic tension created by an abrupt rupture in institutional policy. As a State Department official wrote, the affair "reveals in capsule form the kind of intradepartmental difficulties that occur during a period of rapidly changing general policies." He found particularly fascinating "the somewhat tormented position of the German political desk, and its attempts to persuade all other parties to look forward, rather than back, without being, at the same time, willing or able to shoulder the practical difficulties of changing the policy line." This uncertainty characterized American policy toward the Germans during the 1950s; but, as with the Embassy affair, American officials refused to let their uncertainty show. In particular, they were content to leave these difficult issues to the Germans, whom they supported both institutionally and financially.\textsuperscript{131}

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{130} Ibid., NA. Memorandum, Elwood Williams to Lewis, May 21, 1951, German Embassy, Washington, Subject Files, 1949-1956, Miscellaneous Lot Files, RG 59, NA.

\textsuperscript{131} Draft Bill by Senator Lehman to Divest Former German Embassy, Washington, and Return it to Federal Republic of Germany, May 25, 1951, German Embassy, Washington, Subject Files, 1949-1956, Miscellaneous Lot Files, RG 59, NA.
\end{footnotesize}
From the German perspective, the Embassy affair demonstrated the kinds of obstacles that plagued German representation in the coming decades. In this case, it was the literal place of representation, i.e. the Embassy, that was politically sensitive. The new Federal Republic also found that several other issues threatened to hamstring their efforts. In general, the Federal Republic attempted to convince Americans that it was qualitatively different from the Third Reich, while avoiding or minimizing the debris from the Nazi period that littered the cultural landscape.

The Embassy affair also illustrated the unpredictable nature of the American population. Although the State Department tried subtle means to influence public opinion and the German government and its proxies waged a more forceful campaign, individuals and organizations resisted pressure and voiced dissenting narratives. But in the bruising conformity of the 1950s, these dissenting narratives were often ignored or interpreted quite differently. The tale of the 1950s was one of uneasy consensus.

**American Government**

During the 1950s, the scope of the Cold War expanded greatly. With Europe largely divided into two competing but stable blocs, the conflict spread to Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East. In Korea, the United States supported South Korea in a bloody war against communist North Korea. In French Indochina, the United States assumed the place of a depleted France in supporting a vestige of Western imperialism. In Iran and Guatemala, the newly created Central Intelligence Agency of the United States engineered successful coups against legitimate governments. By the end of the decade, the United States' vision and perspective had become global.
Despite the United States' newfound global awareness, Germany remained a prominent Cold War battleground. Because of its power and geopolitical position, Germany was recognized by both the United States and the Soviet Union as the focal point of the Cold War in Europe. And because of Germany's familiar past and uncertain present, both of the superpowers worried that their respective positions were tenuous. Indeed, the German people regarded the division of Germany as intolerable, leading both East and the West to fear what role a united Germany might take in Europe. But because of the politics of the Cold War, the Americans and the Soviets supported their respective sides anyway.

During the 1950s, American policymakers grappled with how to handle West Germany. The general sympathy for Germany and the admiration of German courage demonstrated in Berlin helped lead to the founding of the Federal Republic, but it did not erase completely fears of a revived Germany. American policymakers finally settled upon a strategy that some historians have termed "dual" or "double" containment. As the name implies, this strategy was designed to contain both Soviet communism and German nationalism. The strategy called for the creation of a number of structures that would serve as bulwarks against Soviet expansion while at the same time harnessing German power for the good of Western Europe. Such structures included the European Coal and Steel Community, the European Defense Community, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Worried that an unfettered Germany would wreak havoc in the Cold War world, American policymakers sought to chain it economically, militarily, and politically to its West European neighbors.
In carrying out these policies, the United States gradually loosened the constraints on the Federal Republic. When the State Department took over responsibility for the occupation from the Army, it granted limited sovereignty to a newly created government, reserving to itself the ultimate right to intervene. After the outbreak of the Korean War, American policymakers calculated that they would need German military might in Europe to offset the drain of American resources to Asia. Thus began a series of negotiations and domestic political dramas that finally culminated in the complete independence of the Federal Republic and its admission to NATO in 1955. In this slow gradual process, American policymakers relied heavily on its Public Affairs program to prepare the German people for their independence.132

In the realm of public affairs, then, the aims of the State Department were unsurprisingly similar to those of the Army. In a report on Germany, a member of the U.S. Advisory Committee on Information reaffirmed the importance of the Public Affairs Program, stating that "it is probably the most important thing they have to do over there, because the future conduct of Germany depends on what kind of Germans they are going to be."133 As with the military, the most important aspect of public affairs for the State Department lay in formulating the proper means and methods for the continued democratizing of Germany. As Henry Byroade, the Director of German Affairs, stated


133 Report by Survey Mission on Program in Germany by U.S. Advisory Committee on Information, August 4, 1949, 811/42700 ACI/8-449, Central Decimal Files, RG 59, NA.
the objective of US foreign policy in Germany was "the full resumption of self-government and democratic freedoms by the German people." The only alternative to this course, Byroade noted, was continued occupation and rule by force, which would further embitter the German people and drain American resources.

The primary emphasis and focus in the State Department was on American policies in Germany. As countless monographs have shown, the American government expended a great amount of time and treasure in attempting to "Americanize" Germany. They experimented with ways to promote the American message and instruct Germans in the American way of thinking. They believed that successful "Americanization" would promote the stability and durability of the fledgling German democracy. American policymakers believed that if they could remake the Germans in their own image, then they would have made substantial progress in promoting peace on the continent.

But while the State Department nurtured private fears about Germany, their public utterances were nothing but positive. They realized that significant work remained to be done to convince Americans of the continued wisdom of this course. Four years of the Cold War had not completely erased memories of World War II, and many Americans were still skeptical of their new ally. Yet the options in the State Department's Public


Affairs section for influencing American public opinion were limited. Often they sought to pursue these means in conjunction with American organizations and societies.

One major way that State Department officials tried to convince Americans of the progress of democratization in Germany was through exchange programs. During the 1950s, the State Department and its counterpart, the German Foreign Office, helped arrange exchanges that ranged from housewives to police and prison and parole leaders. Although, from the American perspective, the primary purpose of the exchange programs was to use every-day Americans as agents of Americanization, these exchanges also served to familiarize Americans with "good" Germans.136 The State Department and the German Foreign Office also encouraged cultural exchanges. The State Department funded tours of "Porgy and Bess" and the Howard Singers in Germany. On the other side, the German Foreign Office funded the goodwill tour of Fritz Kortner, a noted German actor and refugee of the Nazis, and his troop of actors.137

In 1951, the United States sought to formalize these exchanges with the German government in a Cultural Treaty, believing that, as a State Department aide put it, a cultural treaty would help maintain the needed "reorientation" purpose of the Public

136 Letter, Douglas Batson to Mr. Alexander, Assistant Director, Bureau of Prisons, August 2, 1950, Central Decimal File, RG 59, NA. German Police Leader Program, Fall, 1952, Evaluation 1952, International Information Administration, Field Program for Germany (IFG), RG 59, NA. Memorandum of Conversation, July 6, 1950, Information Policy--Germany, Subject Files, 1941-1954, Records of the Office of Western European Affairs, RG 59, NA.

Affairs Program without appearing to "perpetuate the attitudes of an occupying power."
Fearing that Germany's fragile democracy faced the twin threats of external communism and internal Nazism, the Department of State moved to maintain the lines of access without appearing imperious.\textsuperscript{138}

Yet the State Department understood that these kinds of exchanges were insufficient to guarantee continued support for American policies in Germany. Low-level contacts, while effective, were limited in scope. Officials realized that they needed to maintain a vigorous publicity campaign on behalf of their growing alliance with the new West German government. As a result, State Department officials stumped tirelessly for their policies in lecture circuits, State Department publications (such as the \textit{State Department Bulletin}), and interviews. Henry Byroade set the tone for this publicity campaign in CBS broadcast in 1950:

I know that you have all heard a great deal about Germany since the war's end some five years ago. American emotions run high on this aspect of our foreign policy in Germany, and there is no lack of opinion as to what we should or should not be doing in Germany. For instance, you have heard that we are rebuilding Germany into an industrial Frankenstein that will again menace the interests and security of its neighbors. At the same time you have heard criticism that we have dismantled Germany's war

\textsuperscript{138} Revision of the Public Affairs Program and Conclusion of a Cultural Treaty, March 13, 1951, Public Affairs Program, Subject Files, 1941-1954, Records of the Office of Western European Affairs, RG 59, NA.

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plants and have thus held her back. You have heard that we have condoned the return of nazism in Germany and that political reform in general is not keeping step with economic recovery; in short, that we are rebuilding German again in her own image. Yet others express the opinion that the time has come for Germany to assume control of her own armed forces.

Byroade sought to convince the viewing public that the United States government was pursuing a prudent yet far-reaching program in Germany. The United States could maintain force indefinitely, he said, but he thought it far wiser to encourage German development along peaceful lines. Two central assumptions undergirded his assertions: one was that "nazism as such is dead" and the other was that Germany constituted the "heart and focal point" of the Cold War in Europe. The first suggested that Germany was responsible enough to develop properly and the second illustrated the necessity of this proper development. When asked about German rearmament, Byroade emphasized his belief in the necessity of building the right kind of Germany. Subsequent publications echoed these themes.¹³⁹

As Byroade's remarks indicated, the State Department also understood that a substantial number of Americans still adhered to the World War narrative, and thus that a significant facet of this campaign was the handling of subversive stories. Although the

¹³⁹ Television Broadcast on 20 August, 1950, August 20, 1950, Miscellaneous German Files, 1943-1954, Records of the Office of Western European Affairs, 1941-1954, RG 59, NA.
State Department was quite adamant about the freedom of the American press, it did feel free to respond to alternative narratives. Quite often, the government felt compelled to address reports that questioned the new narrative promulgated by official sources and spontaneously echoed by other groups and outlets. More often than not, these stories revolved around the idea that the American government was complicit in the revival of German power, a variation on the theme that had dogged American occupation policy after the war. Several of the major issues, such as German rearmament and the revival of German nationalism, remained constant pressures throughout the decade. But others helped bring these issues to the fore immediately.

One such example was High Commissioner John J. McCloy's decision to establish a clemency board for convicted Nazis still serving time in Landsberg prison. The result of their review was the release of a large number of previously convicted war criminals. Known popularly as the "Landsberg Cases," McCloy's decision prompted a firestorm of criticism from several areas of American society. Members of private organizations around the country conveyed their dismay with his decision. Individuals like Irving Kane of the National Community Relations Advisory Council wrote letters to Secretary of State Dean Acheson expressing their disapproval.140

Congressional members also voiced disappointment over McCloy's decisions. Senator Jacob Javits from New York stated his belief that "the family of every United

140 Letter, Irving Kane, National Community Relations Advisory Council, to Dean Acheson, February 20, 1951, Information Policy--Germany, Subject Files, 1941-1954, Records of the Office of Western European Affairs, RG 59, NA.
States soldier who died fighting Hitler's Nazi legions, the family of every soldier who was a victim of the Malmedy massacre, the families of the millions who died in concentration and extermination camps under the Nazis have a right to ask whether this represents appeasement." Representative Klein from New York included a statement from the Jewish Community Council of Washington Heights who "vigorously protest the current policy of our Government which nullifies the defeat of naziism and restores to power the foes of liberty and the adherents of totalitarian tyranny." Javits summed it up, when he said, "we must ask the question whether our wooing of the Germans, relaxing rapidly the restrictions of the occupation statute, the vast money and material support to maintain German living standards at a tolerable minimum basis, enhancing their prestige by letting the Bonn Government open consulates and establish direct diplomatic relations with other nations and now leniency to the war criminals, has been effective."  

The most damning public condemnation was Eleanor Roosevelt's article, "Why Are We Freeing So Many Nazis?" Roosevelt expressed outrage at the release of a large number of Nazis and intimated that the decision was based more on expediency than justice. She was particularly incensed at the release of Alfried Krupp, whom she held responsible for the actions of his father's company. Her stature as the former first lady,

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141 Congressional Record 1951, 97: 891-892.

142 Ibid.

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and the most recognized and admired female in the country, lent powerful credibility to these charges. 

McCloy attempted to refute these charges. He wrote a personal letter to Roosevelt, explaining the reasons for his actions. He assured her that he did not base his decision to establish a clemency board on consideration of German defense. Denying the existence of "political pressure," he asserted that he "followed a principle...based on a distinction between actions taken for reasons of military security and those based on furtherance of Nazi racial or political objectives." The State Department reproduced McCloy's letter and distributed it to several organizations. In the end, however, American officials decided to let the matter die on its own.

In another incident, the State Department sought to silence a private citizen's effort to remind Americans of the Grand Alliance. In 1955, Joseph Polowsky, an American World War II veteran, announced the tenth anniversary of the Elbe River Link-up between armies of the United States and the Soviet Union. A private in the war, Polowsky was one of the first soldiers to greet the Soviets at the Elbe on April 25, 1945.

\[143\] Clipping, Eleanor Roosevelt "Why Are We Freeing so many Nazis?, February 28, 1951, Information Policy--Germany, Subject Files, 1941-1954, Records of the Office of Western European Affairs, RG 59, NA.

\[144\] Letter, McCloy to Eleanor Roosevelt, March 12, 1951, Information Policy--Germany, Subject Files, 1941-1954, Records of the Office of Western European Affairs, RG 59, NA.

\[145\] Letter, Francis Russell, Director of Office of Public Affairs, to Eleanor Roosevelt, March 23, 1951, Information Policy--Germany, Subject Files, 1941-1954, Records of the Office of Western European Affairs, RG 59, NA.
Polowsky was deeply moved by the joy and hope associated with this first contact, and he worked tirelessly to promote American-Soviet friendship. In 1949, he had traveled to the United Nations in New York to petition the General Assembly for a day of commemoration in honor of the link-up. By 1955, he had established an organization, the American Veterans of the Elbe River Link-Up, geared toward a celebration of the tenth anniversary of this event in Washington.

For the United States government, Polowsky and his quest proved problematic. He embarrassed the State Department, which, in light of the prevailing mood of foreign policy, did not want to recognize an old alliance against a new ally. He invited the Soviet Veterans of the link-up to the celebration, thus initiating a minor foreign policy crisis when the Soviets accepted but insisted on special visas. He sought to cast a shadow over the celebration of the American Committee for the Liberation from Bolshevism, which celebrated something far different. He was, in other words, a voice from the past, hopelessly out of step with the mainstream. The Department tried to silence his efforts by refusing to grant the Soviet veterans visas.¹⁴⁶

In carrying out many of these efforts, the State Department enlisted the support of many organizations. By co-opting American organizations, officials in State hoped to

¹⁴⁶ Letter, Joseph Polowsky to Dulles, April 14, 1955, Central Decimal Files, RG 59, NA., Letter, Polowsky to Soviet Veterans of the Elbe River Link-Up, March 31, 1955, Central Decimal Files, RG 59, NA., Telegram, Bohlen in Moscow to Secretary of State, April 16, 1955, Central Decimal Files, RG 59, NA., Telegram, Dulles to Moscow, April 16, 1955, Central Decimal Files, RG 59, NA., Memorandum of Conversation, April 19, 1955, Central Decimal Files, RG 59, NA., Telegram, Bohlen to Secretary of State, April 20, 1955, Central Decimal Files, RG 59, NA.
expand the range of their influence. In the exchange programs, for example, the State Department acknowledged the assistance of several volunteer organizations. Noting that the "German Public Affairs Program has always been a program sui generis," a State Department memorandum declared that the "execution of the exchange program alone depends on the continued cooperation of hundreds of American public and private agencies, educational institutions, community organizations, etc." The State Department also sought to utilize American "experts" who had either visited or served in Germany for information activities back home.\textsuperscript{147}

In the case of the cultural treaty, the State Department consulted and sought the support of other groups. State Department officials sent a copy of the proposed cultural convention to, among others, the American Jewish Committee, the Council on Foreign Relations, the American Federation of Labor, the American Council of Learned Societies, and the Young Men's Christian Association.\textsuperscript{148} They tried to convince these groups of

\textsuperscript{147} General Characteristics of the German Public Affairs Program, 1951?, Public Affairs Program, Subject Files, 1941-1954, Records of the Office of Western European Affairs, RG 59, NA. Brief, Henry B. Cox, Chief of Exchange of Persons Division, an Professor Hallstein, Staatssekretär, Auswärtiges Amt, September 15, 1955, B 90/36, AA. This document includes an article by Cox.

\textsuperscript{148} Tentative List of Organizations from which to Request Comments, April 17, 1952, Public Affairs Program, Subject Files, 1941-1954, Records of the Office of Western European Affairs, RG 59, NA.
the necessity of a cultural treaty, and the desirability of closer relations with the Germans.\(^{149}\)

Finally in the Landsberg decisions, officials from the State Department organized a meeting between the judges involved in the clemency board and a number of groups that were skeptical about the motives behind the pardons. Kellermann noted that these discussions exposed some flaws in the procedure, such as the lack of a prosecutor to offer a rebuttal and the disproportionate weight given to new evidence offered by former Nazis in support of clemency. He also observed that many of the groups worried about the effects that the Landsberg decision would have on the meaning of Nuremberg for international justice. But by the end of the meeting, he observed that most of the organizations, and especially the Jewish ones, were satisfied with the purity of the motives, if not with the decisions. Based on these reactions, it was he who suggested that the State Department should let the matter die out on its own.\(^{150}\)

In addition to recruiting these organizations, the State Department also enjoyed working relationships with the media. During this period, the State Department continued its informal relationship with Hollywood. In late 1949, for example, Joseph Breen, the head of the Motion Pictures Association of America, passed to Henry Byroade

\(^{149}\) Proposed Cultural Convention with Germany, January 24, 1952, Public Affairs Program, Subject Files, 1941-1954, Records of the Office of Western European Affairs RG 59, NA.

\(^{150}\) Letter, Henry Kellermann, Director of German Public Affairs, to Shepard Stone, March 19, 1951, Information Policy--Germany, Subject Files, 1941-1954, Records of the Office of Western European Affairs, RG 59, NA.

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a script proposal called *The Seven Needles*. The broad outline of the story, according to Sylvan Simon of Columbia Pictures, concerned an American who comes across "certain evidence which indicates to him that Adolf Hitler may still be alive." The American pursues the story "motivated by his belief in our American democracy" and learns that "the legend that Hitler lives is being used by his followers to provide inspiration to underground Nazis for the time when the allied occupation troops are withdrawn from Germany." The hero succeeds in foiling these plans, pointing out to the world "the need for vigilance." Breen assured the State Department that "if there is a disposition in the State Department not to look with favor upon this particular matter, the whole idea will be scrapped."\(^{151}\)

In reply, Byroade informed Breen that the State Department did not engage in censorship, but was happy to give its opinion when solicited. According to Byroade, the Department felt that *The Seven Needles* could have serious negative effects politically. For one, he found that it would contribute to "the belief which persists in some circles, in Germany as well as elsewhere, that Hitler is still alive." For another, he felt that "the proposed film would perhaps give an exaggeration of the size and importance of a 'Nazi underground movement' in Germany today." Finally, he believed that such a film would "unwarrantably" contribute to the "existing distrust or hatred for the German people." Such a development, he argued, would not be "particularly helpful to our Government's

\(^{151}\) Letter, Simon to Breen, November 21, 1949, Chief of Information, Central Decimal Files, RG 59, NA. Letter, Breen to Carl Humelsine, November 23, 1949, Chief of Information, Central Decimal Files, RG 59, NA.
present policy and purpose of affecting the acceptance and assimilation of the German people in the community of democratic peoples." Byroade concluded by cautioning Breen that plans regarding "any film about Germany or Hitler or the Nazi movement" warranted "more than usual care" before deciding to produce it.\textsuperscript{152} Breen's reply revealed the informal power that the State Department wielded. "Your letter is quite clear, and complete," he wrote. "I am reasonably certain that this idea will not be pursued further." And it was not.\textsuperscript{153}

Yet despite all of these activities, the United States government understood that primary responsibility for the rehabilitation of the German image in the United States rested squarely on the shoulders of the new German government. The United States was willing to advise the German government on matters relating to public affairs. In fact, when the German government sought the advice of the American government on the creation of its own public affairs program, the State Department provided a great deal of documentation outlining the activities of the State Department. But beyond that its actions were limited by constitutional constraints and its own uncertainty regarding the German people.\textsuperscript{154}

\textsuperscript{152} Letter, Byroade to Breen, December 9, 1949, Chief of Information, Central Decimal Files, RG 59, NA.

\textsuperscript{153} Letter, Breen to Byroade, December 14, 1949, Chief of Information, Central Decimal Files, RG 59, NA.

\textsuperscript{154} Memorandum, Norvelle Sannebeck to Mr. Patterson, August 9, 1951, 511.62a3/6-16-51, 2558, NA. Memorandum of Conversation, August 14, 1951, Central Decimal Files, RG 59, NA. Memorandum, J.M. Fleischer of US HICOG to Dr. Denzer, August 17, 1950, B 145/1202, Bundesarchiv Koblenz (hereafter BAK).
Marketing Germany

As we have seen, German propaganda in the United States did not begin with the Cold War. Indeed, during the 1930s, Americans watched German activities in the United States very carefully. As it turns out, these concerns were well justified. As historian Sanders Diamond has pointed out, Adolf Hitler and other members of the Nazi party sought to reawaken Deutschtum or Germanness in the diaspora, and the United States, with a quarter of its population of German extraction, was a prime target for their activities. The Nazis attempted to make German-Americans aware of their racial heritage and encouraged them to think of themselves as Germans exclusively. They hired a public relations firm and disseminated pro-Nazi and anti-Semitic information through the German Library of Information and the German Railroads Information Office. But their main vehicle was the German-American Bund, led by the maniacal Fritz Kuhn. Kuhn's antics in the late 1930s aroused such fear and trepidation in mainstream America that the Nazis found him and his organization counterproductive and tried to rein him in. As a result of these activities, when war came to the United States in 1941, German representation in America was synonymous with subversion and intrigue.155

After World War II, during which official German representation in the United States was virtually non-existent, a defeated Germany was occupied by the victorious allies. For the next four years, the Germans had no sovereign federal government, much less official German representation in the United States. During this period, the main

source of influence for Germans was personal contact with American military forces, journalists, and charitable organizations in the American zone of occupied Germany. Desperate Germans attempted to convince the occupying Americans that they were powerless to prevent Hitler's Third Reich. As Petra Goedde has persuasively argued, perhaps the most powerful personal diplomacy on behalf of the Germans was the relationship between German women and American men. Although there was no centrally planned strategy for portraying the German people to the American occupiers, a general impression emerged that depicted the Germans as a victimized people, first by the Nazis and now by the Communists. By the end of the decade, with the Berlin Blockade, the German people had made significant inroads into changing their image in the American mind.\footnote{Goedde, "From Villains to Victims": 1-20.}

When the Federal Republic was born in 1949, German officials understood the present international situation all too clearly. In the Cold War world, the West Germans were dependent on the Americans in almost every way. The German economy was chained tightly to the American economy. The creation of the West German state was largely at the initiative of the Americans, and the American High Commissioner could still exercise great control over the Federal Republic. And militarily, the American forces protected the Germans against invasion by the Soviet Union. Although the Americans might have felt that they needed the Germans very badly, and the West German government under Adenauer wisely took advantage of this fact when it could,
the truth of the matter as the Germans saw it was that the Germans absolutely could not survive without a close friendship with the United States.\textsuperscript{157}

In foreign policy, the Adenauer government masterfully played the hand it was dealt. By embracing the West fully and completely, Adenauer made the fledgling Federal Republic an indispensable ally to the West. He skillfully played upon Western fears of German nationalism to extract more concessions from the allies. When the United States approached Adenauer about rearmament, he astutely tied the issue to German sovereignty. He convinced the Americans that the Germans were capable of self-rule; in 1955, the Germans were granted their full independence. He did this despite the fact that German society was experiencing an amazing economic boom that could have threatened the security of the West.\textsuperscript{158}

But while the Federal Republic was willing to invoke its more nationalistic elements in order to leverage more concessions out of the United States, it was not willing even to acknowledge them in their public affairs activities. When the German government resumed its consular and public affairs activities, it attempted to ignore and/or silence such discussions. Consuls in New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, and New Orleans, responded to queries for interviews and information on Germany. They also re-established relationships with local institutions, such as governments, universities, and

\textsuperscript{157} Aufzeichnung, 17. Januar, 1951, B 11/297, Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes, Berlin, Germany (hereafter AA)


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firms. They participated vigorously in exchange programs, viewing them as a useful vehicle for proving the humanity of Germans to Americans. \(^{159}\)

But the Federal Republic realized that it needed something more. In an internal memorandum, an official of the German Foreign Office observed that, in terms of the importance of public opinion, few countries rivaled the United States. The American policymaking process, German Foreign Office officials noted, was heavily dependent on favorable public opinion. Many other nations had realized this fact, and had embarked on extensive campaigns to influence the American public. Israel, for example, spent over 6 million dollars a year in their efforts to garner American support. Couple that with the fact that, as Dr. Heinz Krekel, then Generalconsul of New York, noted, the last world war left a "great bitterness" against Germany in "influential circles in the United States," and it was clear that the Federal Republic needed more than simple exchanges and cultural conventions. It needed an American public relations firm. \(^{160}\)

A public relations firm, Krekel and other high-ranking officials of the German Foreign Office felt, was now an "essential" element of cultural policy in the United States. As Krekel observed, all elements of American society were using them, from the American Air Force to state universities. They were simply needed to coordinate all of the "multi-faceted" propaganda activities of an organization. One official in Bonn argued that the old forms of propaganda and advertising had been eclipsed by a much

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\(^{159}\) Report, Krekel to AA, May 28, 1954, B 90/36, AA.

more sophisticated method of acquiring public support. Simple advertisements were no longer sufficient: organizations now had to specialize in the personal and skillful interactions that maintained a favorable representation for an organization in the media and the rest of society. Krekeler found that an "especially important" arm of activity was the "placement" of information and pictures in periodicals. Officials in Bonn found this type of activity so different than advertising (Werbung) and propaganda (Propaganda) that they often used the English word "public relations" to denote these activities. They found that to successfully carry out these delicate tasks required a special kind of talent.161

The Federal Republic entertained a number of offers from public relations firms in the United States. Three emerged from the rest of the pack to comprise the short list of applicants. Although each firm claimed to handle all aspects of public relations, German officials found that they had different specialties and strengths. The Aitkin-Kynett, Co. was the weakest. Headed by General Frank Howley, who served for many years in Berlin, Aitkin-Kynett specialized in the production of advertisements for placement in periodicals and newspapers. In its methodology and campaign ideas, Aitkin-Kynett's proposal was the most conservative by far.162

Of all the competitors, the Hamilton Wright Organization probably had the greatest recognition factor. In its proposal, company officials bragged that they had

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161 Report, Krekeler to AA, August 20, 1951, B 145/775, BAK.

162 Aufzeichnung, June 25, 1951, B 11/297, AA.
discussed their plan with the American State Department, and that the State Department welcomed their plan very much. They also claimed that the State Department assured them that the German government would be able to pay for their services with Marshall Plan money. Their proposal sought to emphasize the production of short films for cinema and television. They also proposed to create richly illustrated material and special essays on Germany. In this material, they wanted to highlight "the amazing recovery of the German economy on a sound basis" and "the Pan European and democratic psychology of the immense majority of the German people." Hamilton Wright boasted an impressive clientele, including several Latin American nations.\(^{163}\)

But from the beginning, Roy Bernard, Inc. was the frontrunner. Named after its founders, Roy Blumenthal and Bernard Gittelson, Roy Bernard was a medium sized firm that handled the accounts of Dresdner Bank, the American Air Force, and the US. Public Health Service, among others. Blumenthal and Gittelson submitted their proposal to Chancellor Adenauer in the summer of 1950, and their memorandum became the benchmark against which all other offers were measured. The basis of their strategy was that "Germany belongs in the Western world." They argued that a number of contemporary developments had made a favorable impact on the relationship between the two nations: one, the division of Europe made Germany the "eastern frontier of the Western world;" two, the State Department understood that only a strong German

economy would "prevent the infiltration of Soviet ideology into West Germany;" and three, a "miraculous transference of American hostility from Germany to the Soviet Union had occurred." Yet, Roy Bernard contended that there was "no permanent value in a friendship created by a common enemy." It believed that positive connections between the United States and West Germany had to be forged for long-lasting friendship. Luckily, it argued, the basis for such a relationship still existed, albeit buried under 36 years of negative publicity. It proposed the revival of "traditional" concepts of Germany from the 19th century that stressed the quality of German production and the cultural attainments of Germany's literary and artistic communities. In stressing both of these, Roy Bernard hoped to demonstrate to the American people that Germans were just like them. It offered to carry out these aims through the establishment of a German Information Service, which would function as a clearinghouse for information on Germany, and a publications bureau, which would publish newsletters, brochures, and the like on positive aspects of Germany.  

After further deliberations, Aitkin-Kynett was quickly eliminated, leaving the choice between Hamilton Wright and Roy Bernard. Although Georg von Lilienfeld, head of the American desk in the Federal Press Office (BPA), was more inclined to go with Hamilton Wright, virtually all of the representatives of the German Foreign Office in the United States favored Roy Bernard. Their reasons were several. They expressed concern about the familiarity of Hamilton Wright with Germany. Roy Blumenthal, by contrast,  

came from a family of German immigrants and professed a strong affinity for his ancestral homeland. In a similar vein, Blumenthal made an "excellent impression" personally, coming across as "very American in a good sense," while Hamilton Wright, Jr. seemed distant and vague. Too, the fact that Blumenthal and Gittelson were both Jewish, and thus may have pull with Jewish organizations, did not hurt. But what finally won von Lilienfeld over was Krekeler's reasoned report on the specialties of both firms. While he felt that short films for presentation in cinema houses and television would be most useful, he believed that there was an "urgent need" for written advertisements and the placement of favorable articles in major American periodicals.165

So in late 1951, the Federal Republic of Germany entered into a contract with Roy Bernard. The initial contract was for only one year. It stipulated that Roy Bernard should be "public relations counsel within the general area of public-relations that shall be considered by the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany conducive to the promotion of harmony, understanding and industrial and cultural intercourse between the nations of West Germany and the United States." Part of this responsibility included the preparation of literature, pamphlets, and brochures, as well as the general charge to do whatever it could and whatever the German government thought was necessary to

165 Aufzeichnung, June 25, 1951, B 11/297, AA. Report, Krekeler to AA, August 20, 1951, B 145/775, BAK. Aufzeichnung, October 18, 1951, B 145/775, BAK. Letter, (?) from Washington Embassy to Lilienfeld, BPA, August 21, 1951, B 145/775, BAK. Letter, von Lilienfeld to Walter Gong, Pressereferent, October 17, 1951, B 145/775, BAK.
promote German interests. For this service, Roy Bernard charged $50,000 per year, part of it payable in DM, and much of it coming from Marshall Plan funds.¹⁶⁶

In order to provide timely material to Roy Bernard, the Federal Republic established INTER NATIONES. Patterned in large part after the United States Information Agency, INTER NATIONES supported the activities of Roy Bernard in a number of ways, including the supply of texts, photographs, books and other informative material, and the production of new works about Germany in English. It also established links outside of Roy Bernard, promoting the preparation and printing of English treatments of German topics, as well as answering questions from and providing information to foreign education and commercial institutions and opinion makers. Its first director was Dr. Richard Moennig. Moennig previously worked in a similar capacity with the cultural department of the German Foreign office from 1925-1933 and most recently served as a German advisor to the education department of the American High Commission. Over time, INTER NATIONES’s mandate would grow to global proportions.¹⁶⁷

Once under contract with the Federal Republic, the Roy Bernard Co. made a number of significant hires that boosted the ability and profile of the firm. In particular, it turned to former American officials to handle some of the most important aspects of the

¹⁶⁶ Contract between Federal Republic of Germany and Roy Bernard, 1951, B 145/775, BAK.

¹⁶⁷ Memorandum ueber Durchfuehrung und Finanzierung deutscher Werbung in den U.S.A., April, 1952, B 145, BAK. See also the files in B 145/770, BAK, which is dedicated to the establishment of INTER NATIONES.
account. In May 1952, for example, it hired Charles Campbell to head its Federal Republic account. Previously, Campbell had worked with the U.S. government in setting up America Houses in Berlin and Heidelberg. The Germans were favorably impressed with him. Krekeler wrote that Campbell appeared to be very well versed in German issues. He also noted that his "close personal relations" with important journalists in New York and Washington were "of great value." He also seemed to have the quiet healthy judgment that was of "special importance" in the realm of public relations. Moennig observed that Campbell was well received in a recent visit to Bonn. He also noted, with delight, Campbell's observation that American "returnees" from Germany (such as himself) have come home "remarkably good friends" of Germany.168

The West Germans also warmly welcomed the employment of Dick Yahraes in 1953 as a liaison to INTER NATIONES. From 1948-1952 Yahraes had participated in public affairs work for the American government. Von Lilienfeld of the BPA believed that his service with HICOG, his contacts with American newspapers, and his natural affinity for the German people made him "an ideal choice." As with Campbell, Yahraes proved his value repeatedly. In July 1953, for example, he demonstrated his familiarity with the publishing world, when he began giving story ideas directly to American correspondents in Bonn. He argued that such an arrangement was mutually beneficial: it

allowed the German government the opportunity to shape impressions out of Bonn, and it
gave American reporters an easy way to get credit with their editors.169

Despite German approval of these hires, the first few years were difficult for the Roy Bernard Co. Once the decision to hire Roy Bernard became known, Georg von Lilienfeld of the Federal Press Office began to receive negative reports on Roy Bernard from American sources. For example, when von Lilienfeld had the opportunity to speak with Sanford Griffin, a correspondent in Germany and president of the Overseas-Press-Club, about their recent hire, Griffin informed him that they had made a terrible mistake. Griffin argued that Roy Bernard was "practically unknown" in New York and did not have the connections to determining personalities that was absolutely necessary for effective public relations work. He also suggested that if the German government had based their choice of Roy Bernard on the Jewish heritage of the Blumenthal and Gittelson, in the hopes that they would have special clout with leading Jewish circles, then they would have been wrong. Although Blumenthal worked with several Jewish organizations during the war, Griffin claimed that he did not have the sufficient reputation to seriously influence them. Despite these negative assessments, and those of others, representatives in the German Foreign Office continued to support Roy Bernard. Von Lilienfeld pessimistically wrote a colleague in early 1952 that he had heard rumors

169 Memorandum, von Lilienfeld to AA, February 13, 1953, B 145/775, BAK. Memorandum, Yahraes to von Mutius, July 23, 1953, B 145/776, BAK.
that personal relations between Roy Blumenthal and a female member of the New York consulate had played a substantial role in their selection.  

Relationships became so strained that von Lilienfeld demanded more critical reports of Roy Bernard from representatives of the German Foreign Office, and in August of 1952, withheld payment from the firm, claiming that the budget people needed proof of its activities. Officials in the German Foreign Office counseled patience. Krekeler and Walter Gong, the German press attaché, continued to advise von Lilienfeld that public relations work required time. Both warned that it took a great deal of time to prepare and place articles in magazines, and much of what Roy Bernard did successfully occurred behind the scenes. By 1953, von Lilienfeld's doubts had thinned away. In a triumphant report, Krekeler declared that Roy Bernard had proven its worth in the past year. Moennig agreed, citing two examples: the handling of an Overseas Press Club lunch meeting in New York, entitled "Will German turn toward the East or West?" and stacked with pro-German speakers; and the enlistment of Martin Ebon of the Saturday Evening Post, who wrote an article against the showing of old anti-German movies on TV, entitled "Yesterday's Villains."  

170 Letter, von Lilienfeld to Dr. Schirmer, March 26, 1952, B 145/775, BAK. Letter, von Lilienfeld to Dr. Denzer, February 29, 1952, B 145/775, BAK.  

Roy Bernard kept the account by formulating and executing a convincing campaign. It pursued the aims of its initial campaign strategy, "Germany belongs in the Western World," but proved flexible enough to take advantage of opportunities as they presented themselves. For example, it largely left the revival of 19th century notions of Germanness to stories on tourism and culture. But in the realm of politics it was smart enough to capitalize on perhaps its greatest ally in convincing Americans that Germany belonged in the West—the leader of West Germany, Chancellor Konrad Adenauer himself. In 1953, Roy Bernard helped *Time* write its story on Adenauer before the 1953 election; this story helped his selection as *Time* Man of the Year for that year. By the mid-1950s, German officials observed that Adenauer was widely known as "Mr. Germany." They wrote that the identification between Adenauer and German democracy had become so strong that American policy- and opinion makers worried greatly about what would happen to the Federal Republic once Adenauer was no longer in charge.\(^{172}\)

The Roy Bernard Co. executed its campaign and served as public relations counsel to the Federal Republic in a number of different ways. One of its main functions was to serve as a the conduit between the press and visiting dignitaries. When Roy Bernard found out, for example, that Dr. Hans Riesser was named UN Observer for Federal Republic, it arranged a press conference at UN Headquarters, took photographs,

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and wrote a newspaper release. But Roy Bernard did not limit itself to official representatives. It made great use of the visit of Miss Germany, Susanne Erichsen, in 1952, scheduling several press conferences and radio and television interviews. Walter Gong warned that the value of these appearances should not be underestimated, observing that "pretty girls and pretty dresses always make an impression here."\(^{173}\)

In 1956, Roy Bernard began bringing American journalists to the dignitaries, coordinating the visits of American journalists to Germany. It sent a total of 12 for the year. These reporters were given special tours of facilities, installations, ports and factories. Roy Bernard also set up appointments for them to interview prominent West German officials and other newsworthy Germans. The resulting articles, the firm reported, reflected positively on West Germany, especially emphasizing the desirability of reunification and the necessity of rearmament.\(^{174}\)

Roy Bernard also fulfilled admirably its reputation for placing articles in major newspapers and periodicals. As Blumenthal pointed out, placing or "planting" articles was a delicate business, and not all planned pieces bore fruit. But Blumenthal and Gittelson proved successful at the subtle suggestions, the back slapping, and the general wining and dining necessary to cultivate an atmosphere of cooperation with important editors. In the first few years, it placed articles on children in Germany in *Woman's Day*,


\(^{174}\) Annual Report, April, 1957, B 145/9764, BAK.
divided Berlin in Look, the break up of neo-Nazis in Quick, restitution in Time, and a special issue on Germany in Life, to name only a few. In Travel sections of newspapers around the country, it placed articles on German food and people. In subsequent reports, Roy Bernard added articles on tourism in Cosmopolitan and other subjects in National Geographic and Seventeen. Sometimes, it took time for these pieces to materialize, but the firm's skill in placing articles in major American periodicals became well recognized.\textsuperscript{175}

One of the greatest triumphs for the Roy Bernard Co. was the publication of a supplement on Germany in Atlantic Monthly in 1957. Roy Bernard began work on this piece in February of 1956, visiting Boston to discuss the matter with the editors of the Atlantic. Company officials advised at every step of the way, setting up meetings with German officials, scheduling conferences, and suggesting authors and subjects. It also took a hand in authoring or editing the pieces submitted in the name of Germany's leaders such as Theodore Heuss and Konrad Adenauer.\textsuperscript{176}

The resulting supplement trumpeted the virtues of the new Federal Republic. The introduction by editor Walter Hasenclever congratulated the West Germans on their amazing economic recovery and their obvious superiority to their misguided and oppressed brethren in the East, while at the same time minimizing their culpability for


\textsuperscript{176} Annual Report, April, 1957, B 145/9764, BAK.
their unenviable position Germans found themselves at the end of the war. He painted
the West Germans as victims of the "bloody and brutal nightmare of the Hitler era," who
somewhat undeservedly harbored a "repressed sense of guilt" that "has left many
Germans shy of displaying emotions or of showing interest in their fellow man." He
noted approvingly that a new generation of Germans was "skeptical, irreverent, and
fiercely independent" and that "fascism as a political fact or force is as dead as its leader."
The articles included in the supplement, some of the them by Germany's top statesmen
and artists, attempted to demonstrate the truth of these claims.177

Although the print media was Roy Bernard's specialty, it also proved adept at
other ventures. In October 1952, for example, Roy Bernard announced "the most
extraordinary single public relations exploit for the Federal Republic of Germany," the
exhibition of a pro-German MARCH OF TIME film engineered by the staff of Roy
Bernard. Displayed at film theaters and on the burgeoning new medium of television,
MARCH OF TIME films reached incredibly broad segments of the population.
Company officials noted that "11,000,000 Americans saw a film on Germany which was
not only favorable but ecstatic."178 A beaming Walter Gong concurred with Roy
Bernard's positive assessment, claiming that it was probably the "best propaganda film

178 Interim Report, October, 1952, 1952, B 145/775, BAK.
for Germany which ever ran here." Gong informed the BPA that he held a letter from MARCH OF TIME proving Roy Bernard's involvement.\textsuperscript{179}

Another major function of the Roy Bernard Co. was to advise on German propaganda. One of the most striking examples of the utility of Roy Bernard in this regard was its intervention against INTER NATIONES's idea of creating a special brochure for Americans about the nature of German division. In July 1952, Moennig wrote Roy Bernard with his belief that a "chart describing the consequences of a situation superimposed on the USA" could "help" Americans understand "the meaning of this German situation." He sent a draft copy of such a chart to Roy Bernard for its consideration.\textsuperscript{180}

The maps in this draft and the story that explained them revealed an appalling lack of understanding and sensitivity on the part of INTER NATIONES. The maps depicted the United States divided into four occupation zones administered by the Soviet Union, Mexico, Latin America, and South Africa. This division occurred, according to the accompanying narrative "United States Quartered--Democracy in Peril", as a result "of a mere trifle." Without elaborating upon the nature of this trifle, it went on to describe how cities were destroyed inexplicably, as "carefully camouflaged production plants were traced down" and "turned into grotesque ghostly [sic] cities of the dead." Resistance became futile as approaching enemy armies destroyed everything. The

\textsuperscript{179} Auszug aus Brief Walter Gong vom 15. Oktober 1952, October 15, 1952, B 145, BAK.

\textsuperscript{180} Letter, Moennig to Roy Bernard, July 9, 1952, B 145/1277, BAK.
northern enemies were ruthless, while the southern enemies pledged to fight for democracy "and meant it." The southern army was appalled by the devastation it witnessed in the north.

In the "Washington Agreement," the four allies, the Soviet Union, Mexico, Latin America, and South Africa, agreed to quarter the United States. Washington State was annexed by the Soviet Union. Washington, D.C. and New York were each divided into four sectors under joint allied administration. Seattle was renamed Pacificgrad. Boston became Atlanticgrad. "Canada was the decisive blow that the Russians had struck," declared the pamphlet, "to turn the former ally of the United States into the strongest satellite power with the help of the fifth column."

For those living in the democratic zones, life was decent. "One might have felt quite comfortable," it declared, "if it had not been for the woman next door and her anxiety about her husband and her son who had been soldiers up north and had not been heard of since for many months now. That made your heart sink of course." The constant stream of refugees south and the paralyzing extraction of reparations also made things more problematic. The story concluded: "an utopy? Surely to a certain degree and yet not quite. It is the description of the situation in Germany transferred to the territory of the United States." It noted, however, that "the comparison is not compatible with conditions--it could not be. Even a breakdown like the above sketched would never condense the remaining people on such a deploringly small space like Germany...Overpopulation under social emergency means a heavy strain on the individual and thus a danger for democracy."
This brochure intended not only to promote the Cold War depiction of the German people, but also to nullify the World War narrative of them. German responsibility for the position in which it now found itself was never asserted, much less recognized. This devastation rained down on the Americans over a "mere trifle." Invading armies suddenly appeared, without provocation, even without reason, and began destroying all in their paths. When the proposed brochure pointed out the differences between the real and the imagined at the end, it made no effort to highlight these issues. Instead, it said that the situations were not comparable because Germany's "deploringly small space" made it even harder in Germany.

Roy Bernard instantly realized that such a brochure would not only fail to promote the Cold War narrative, but likely provoke a return of the World War narrative. Joseph Thomas of the New York German consulate spoke with Roy Bernard about the proposed brochure. They both agreed that it was a very bad idea. They felt that it would spark bitterness in the United States and dredge up bad memories of the Germans. Thomas also believed that the notion of zones no longer possessed any resonance for Americans, and that difficult problems like the Saar and the Oder-Neisse Line were omitted.181 Officially, Campbell informed Moennig, "We have given the matter much thought and it is our considered opinion that it is unusable in the United States."182

181 Report, Joseph Thomas to von Lilienfeld, August 7, 1952, B 145/1277, BAK.
182 Letter, Campbell to Moennig, September 16, 1952, B 145/1277, BAK.
Perhaps Roy Bernard's most controversial function as public relations counsel for the Federal Republic was the suppression or neutralization of stories. In 1952, for example, Roy Bernard discovered that a reporter of Look magazine was charged with the task of writing a cautionary essay of the revival of Nazism in Germany. Roy Bernard approached the reporter with alternative information and effectively purged the essay of much of its aggressive and negative tone. The essay, entitled "Germany, the World's Fate Lies in its Rubble," was mostly pictorial, with some suggestive captions like "they love a parade--but will they march for the West?" and "Germans see their heritage of guilt--but many openly covet the past." But the last line of text reflected Roy Bernard's strong intervention: "For the Germans, however, unity would let them lift their eyes from the ground and look ahead to their destiny, a destiny which the great majority of that voiceless mass is now convinced lies with democracy." By implying that Germany's silent majority believes in democracy, the article reduced any vocal supporters of fascism to the margins.183

Another significant episode involved the coverage of the German-Israeli agreement in 1952. In September 1952, the German government agreed to pay DM 3.5 billion to Israel in restitution for the Holocaust. Krekeler requested that Roy Bernard find a way to publicize the "moral background of the German decision which was reached despite the strong and threatening protests of the member nations of the Arab League." Roy Bernard organized a conference with Drew Pearson, "whose anti-German history is

183 "Germany, the World's Fate Lies in its Rubble," Look, February 26 1952, 69-75.
well-known," and the next Sunday 240 newspapers carried the first pro-German column written by Pearson, in which he "extolled the Adenauer Government for persisting in its attitude towards payments in Israel." That same Sunday, Roy Bernard worked feverishly to silence Walter Winchell, who planned to "castigate" the German Government on his radio broadcast and in his columns. They were successful, in large part through the use of "America's largest Jewish organization"--the American Jewish Committee.\footnote{Report, Roy Bernard to Lilienfeld, October, 1952, B 145/775, BAK.}

In July 1957, \textit{Look} presented Roy Bernard with another problem. The Chancellor granted an interview with Edward Korry, the European Editor of \textit{Look} magazine. In the previous year, Korry had proved himself no friend of the Germans with the publication of an article entitled "Again, the Germans." Accompanied by dark, menacing photographs, the article surveyed business, education, society, and the military in present-day Germany. The general thrust of the article was that the Germans were on the rise again and becoming restless with the inflexible foreign policy of Adenauer. Korry quoted Alfried Krupp, Germany's unshackled business tycoon, as saying "The only way they could have stopped us would have been to kill us all." He warned that "we Americans have a frozen cold-war image of Germany" in which West Germany is populated by "51,000,000 democratic, prosperous citizens firmly tied to the U.S. and ready to rearm under the unswerving leadership of Konrad Adenauer." The situation had changed, he noted: "after 11 years of furious rebuilding with hardly a pause for politics, impatience is overtaking the Germans." According to Korry, the West Germans believed the Soviet
Union was drawing East Germany more tightly into its orbit and worried that the promise of reunification would never happen.\textsuperscript{185}

It should have come as no surprise then that Korry was on the hunt for a controversial statement from Adenauer. Richard Yahraes' replacement, David Lent, wrote to Roy Blumenthal that the interview went very well, but Adenauer made a statement that gave Korry the opportunity that he sought. When asked about the Oder-Neisse line, Adenauer stated that "the Federal Republic should put the Oder-Neisse line on ice until there is a general peace settlement." Although this had remained the official policy of the FRG, as Lent reminded, Korry was convinced that he "has a scoop." He informed Lent that in his publicity for the piece, he was "going to try to steer attention to this answer of the Chancellor's as representing a change in course, a significant policy change." FRG officials warned that the German government would "regard an arousing of this sleeping dog issue" as very unfortunate.\textsuperscript{186}

Federal Press Office officials requested that Roy Bernard try to neutralize the story. David Lent tried his best to dissuade Korry from pursuing this line of presentation. When Korry asked Lent for some background research, he wrote Korry a letter, in which he tried to make him "feel that he may make a fool of himself by emphasizing a change of policy which has in fact been policy for years." He informed Korry, "I am afraid that the results of my research may be a little disappointing to you, Ed." He tried to include

\textsuperscript{185} E.M. Korry, "Again the Germans," \textit{Look}, October 2 1956, 26,33.

\textsuperscript{186} Letter, Lent to Blumenthal, July 24, 1957, B 145/2466, BAK.
material that brought previous official statements on the Oder-Neisse line and the Chancellor's comments "into complete alignment." But he worried that "Korry may give up his 'news scoop' reluctantly." Lent passed along BPA's desire for Roy Bernard to have an "accidental" meeting with the editors of Look. "Maybe you can convince his superiors of the wisdom of such a step," Lent wrote Blumenthal, "a little more easily than I can convince Korry."187

While waiting for word from the New York office, BPA officials tried to reason with Korry. He allowed a review and correction of the interview based on the stenographic minutes. But BPA officials were afraid to ask for more, fearing that they would expose themselves to the danger of a "rebuff" by some of the "headstrong" types of editors and journalists. They also worried that such actions would "arouse" the impression that the interview contained "sensational" material, and thus encourage others to take notice.188 And yet the Chancellor's statements regarding Poland greatly troubled them, and they feared that it would encourage a renewed fear of German aggression. On July 31, 1957, Lent received a telegram from Bernard Gittleson that read: "LOOK MATTER OK GITTELSON." A defeated Korry approached Lent and said, "as for the Polish business, you certainly went to a lot of trouble. I am leaving it to [the editor] to decide." Lent claimed a "significant victory" for Roy Bernard and the Federal Republic,
since the matter was now out of Korry's hands.\textsuperscript{189} The interview with Adenauer was buried in the back of the September 1957 issue of \textit{Look}. Although Adenauer's statement regarding the Oder-Neisse line remained, no attention was drawn to it.\textsuperscript{190}

By the end of the decade, Roy Bernard had established itself as the source for information on Germany, and found itself the host to an increasing number of referrals of writers looking for storylines on Germany. In 1957, alone, for example, Roy Bernard reported the placement of 47 articles in major periodicals. Roy Bernard also skillfully continued to promote the interests of West Germany through a variety of means. In these ways, Roy Bernard functioned for much of the decade. The breadth of its influence can be seen in the many letters of thanks sent by the editors of major periodicals such as \textit{Time}, \textit{The Christian Science Monitor}, and \textit{The Saturday Evening Post}, as well major television studios such as NBC.\textsuperscript{191}

Despite these successes, Roy Bernard was not equipped to solve all of the Federal Republic's problems. The German Foreign Office realized its limitations when it asked Roy Bernard to speak with Hollywood studios about "Hetzfilme" or "smear" or "hate" films in the United States. Unfortunately for the German Foreign Office, it did not share

\textsuperscript{189} Letter, Lent to von Jordans, July 31, 1957, B 145/2466, BAK.


the same consultative status that the State Department enjoyed with the MPAA. During
the 1950s, German Foreign Office officials noted a disturbing number of anti-German
films in circulation in both movie houses and television, and they sought to counteract
these somehow. In the end, they pursued different strategies to handle television and
movie houses. They both ultimately failed, but these attempts demonstrated the lengths
to which the German government was willing to go to influence mass media in the
United States.

Representatives of the Federal Republic observed that a great deal of anti-German
programming still dominated American television. Krekeler reported in the summer of
1952 that a "disproportional" amount of entertainment films with negative German
stereotypes appeared on American television in the evening. Most, he noted, were old
films of British origin produced during the war. On one evening, for example, he
observed that a film portraying a "brutal shooting" of French freedom fighters by SS men
was followed by movies depicting German spies and saboteurs. Cautiously estimating
the nightly viewing population at 50-60 million Americans, Krekeler wrote that the
"tasteless" manner of these films was "extraordinarily distressing" from a German
standpoint.192

And yet as he, and later Dr. Moenning, argued, this was not a conscious campaign
to influence public opinion against Germany, as some had claimed. He contended that
the reason was primarily economic in nature. Since film studios viewed television as a

192 Report, Krekeler an AA, July 2, 1952, B 106/903, BAK.
rising competitor, it did not want to risk giving new films to television stations. As a result, television stations had to rely on old films, and especially cheap imports. Moenning reported that, because the film market in the United States was normally closed, European companies were thrilled to sell their old films to the television stations in the United States.193

Two possible courses of action were considered. All recognized that there would be great "difficulty" in "interrupting" the showing of the existing films, so they decided that they would have offer pro-German programming to counterbalance them. Some officials like Moennig favored the synchronization of previously produced films by the German film company UFA. Entailing the substitution of the German language with the English language, the idea of synchronizing old films enjoyed currency in some quarters of the German Foreign Office.194 But Ludwig Fera at INTER NATIONES and New York's Generalconsul Kessel pointed out that this might not be as effective, because the American public was not used to synchronized films. Fera preferred the idea offered by an American film producer for the creation of new pro-German films in the English language.195

During the spring of 1953, Dan Morley of Bruce Chapman met with Fera to discuss the idea of creating low budget, "psychologically correct" television programs for

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193 Ibid., BAK. Aufzeichnung, June 24, 1953, B 145/531, BAK.
194 Ibid., BAK.
195 Report, Kessel to AA, July 8, 1954, B 145/531, BAK. Aufzeichnung, June 24, 1953, B 145/531, BAK.
consumption by American audiences. After several follow-up visits, Bruce Chapman made an official offer to the government of the Federal Republic. Noting that the Germans needed to reach the common people, they made the following offer:

We propose through a series of television films, to show the average American that the average German is very much like himself; that the democratic German way of life as known in West Germany today is very much the same as the democratic American way of life; that the West German family unit, church, school, factory, etc. is run along line very similar to those in America; that the German people are "understandable"; that the German country is beautiful; that German men and women and children have the same peaceful and practical hopes, wishes, dreams, desires; that German business practices are sound and honest; that German products are well made and worth buying. In short, that Germany and America have much in common -- and have every good reason to be friends.

Bruce Chapman offered his belief that his company could get these programs displayed on commercial television for free, because the quality would be so good. Some of the topics would include: German industry, farming, tourism, refugees, Berlin as an island of

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196 Letter, Dan Morley to Ludwig Fera, May 20, 1953, B 145/531, BAK.
democracy, German city life, education, religion, free economy, democracy, and culture. He listed Roy Bernard and the USIA as references.\textsuperscript{197}

Both the USIA and Roy Bernard spoke highly of Bruce Chapman. Theodore Streibert at the USIA described Chapman as a "thoroughly reliable person of good character in all respects" and "most competent" to carry out the program he provided to the German government.\textsuperscript{198} Roy Bernard spoke with Bruce Chapman about his proposal, and also rated his ideas very highly. Moenning informed Roy Blumenthal that his letter influenced von Lilienfeld to such an extent that he asked Fera to get more details on the proposal. Blumenthal also suggested that they give Chapman a test run to see how well he handled his responsibilities, perhaps through a Christmas film or something similar. In the end, Chapman's short film did not impress the Germans and they junked the project. But the seed had been planted for future years.\textsuperscript{199}

In dealing with Hollywood films, however, the approach was quite different. A report by Dr. Riesser to the German Foreign Office in Bonn on MGM's recent film \textit{The African Queen} initiated a heated debate on the practices of Hollywood. In this report, Riesser outlined several objectionable scenes contained in the \textit{African Queen} that portrayed the Germans as bumbling villains. He noted that the Generalconsul of Los

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{197} Letter, Bruce Chapman to Julius Hoffman, Commerical Adviser, consulate of New York, June 11, 1954, B 145/531, BAK.

\textsuperscript{198} Letter, Theodore Streibert to Julius Hoffman, Commerical Adviser, Consulate General of the Federal Republic of Germany, June 22, 1954, B 145/531, BAK.

\textsuperscript{199} Letter, Monnig to Roy Blumenthal, September 4, 1953, B 145/531, BAK.
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Angeles had met with the MPAA, and was informed that the *African Queen* did not violate any codes, especially since it was based on a historical case and popular book. Riesser admitted that not much could be done to prevent the showing in the United States, or indeed, in the rest of the world, but suggested that it should not be allowed in Germany. He further declared that the Federal Republic should look into enlisting international support for sanctions against Hollywood hate films.200

Riesser's report struck a nerve in the German federal government. When the German Foreign Office forwarded his report along to the Federal Ministry of the Interior (BMI) for comment, BMI officials expressed their doubts that international organizations such as UNESCO could be enlisted against Hollywood, but they did share Riesser's belief that German money should not support companies that produced anti-German films. Dr. Lueders of BMI took the lead in coordinating this effort. He requested that the German Foreign Office supply his office with specific information on specific companies. He informed the Foreign Office that he would take their results to the Federal Ministry for Economics (BMW) and recommend that these companies be banned from film distribution in Germany.201

Determining what films were actually anti-German was very difficult, however. As Generalconsul Hertz in Los Angeles noted, in making these evaluations, "the location

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200 Report, Riesser to AA, July 21, 1952, B 106/903, BAK.

201 Memorandum, Dr. Frahne, AA, to BMI, August 5, 1952, B 106/903, BAK. Memorandum, Krahe, BMI, to AA, August 26, 1952, B 106/903, BAK. Memorandum, Dr. Lüders, BMI, to AA, Kulturabteilung, September 22, 1952, B 106/903, BAK.
of the observer plays a crucial role."²⁰² In his report on The Devil Makes Three, of which substantially more will be said later, Hertz argued that his positive appraisal of the film would seem bizarre to Germans in Germany, who would only see the film as a distortion. Moreover, a Foreign Office official informed BMI that it was difficult to distinguish between anti-Nazi films and anti-German films. And as Generalconsul Knappstein of Chicago observed, pure hate films were very rare. What was more common, however, was an underlying stereotyping of German characters in many films. In his estimation, such films were more dangerous because they subconsciously reaffirmed the traits of Germans such as their brutality and criminality.²⁰³

Despite these caveats, the German Foreign Office came up with a list of anti-German films. From this list, they targeted three American film companies: Paramount, United Artists, and Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Officials in the BMW concurred with the German Foreign Office and BMI found it intolerable that these companies produce anti-German films for consumption in the United States and in the rest of the world, and that German money went to support them. They agreed to try and affect a boycott of American films from these three companies in Germany. But, in the end, other initiatives took priority. When officials with the Federal Ministry of Justice got wind of this plan, they stepped in and put a halt to it. They informed the German Foreign Office and the

²⁰² Report, Hertz to AA, October 8, 1952, B 106/903, BAK.
²⁰³ Report, Salat, AA, to BMI, October 8, 1952, B 106/903, BAK.


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Federal Ministries of the Interior and Economics that the GATT agreements prohibited such retaliatory measures. Although several German officials were willing to risk the ire of Americans over the content of certain films, other officials could not let it happen.204

Making Sense of Germany and Nazis

How did all of this activity affect the collective memory of Americans? Like Big Brother in Orwell's 1984, the American and German governments and Roy Bernard tried to manipulate American memory. As Roy Bernard noted, the "miraculous" transference of hostility from Germany to the Soviet Union provided a strong initial push for this task, but it could not be enough. They encouraged Americans to live in the present and think about the positive actions of Germany's new democratic government. When they invoked the past at all, they reminded Americans of Germany's traditional 19th century style of living before World War I and World War II.

Official representatives were not the only organizations attempting to mold American memory. Without question, many organizations supported the new narrative. German-American organizations were among the most vocal, but American protestant organizations were also quite supportive. Among the most surprising were America's leading Jewish organizations. Germans made a point to court these groups, believing that

they were the key to public opinion in the United States. As the case of publicity in the German-Israeli agreement of 1952 indicated, Jewish groups could be powerful actors on behalf of the Germans.

Yet at the same time other groups sought to keep the memory of Nazi Germany alive. The Society for the Prevention of World War III continued its campaign against the German people. Although the German government worried about its activities, this organization's visibility diminished throughout the decade. Drew Middleton of the New York Times also remained an implacable foe. Roy Bernard, the United States government, and German government worked together to monitor his articles. 205 Too, reporters who were ideologically unaffiliated nevertheless sought out neo-Nazi stories for the sake of sensationalism. As Theodore White related, "When I arrived in Bonn in February of 1949, I knew a new German government was forming, and if I could expose any taint of sin or Nazism in these new constitution-framers, it would make an exciting story." 206

Despite these efforts, however, the continuing American pre-occupation with the Soviet Union and the Cold War helped further marginalize those that subscribed to the World War narrative. Anti-communism dominated American thinking about their society and the world. McCarthyism inflicted a bruising conformity on the population. In this world, concerns about a Soviet push into Germany easily overshadowed fears

205 Letter, Goerl to Gong, January 19, 1953, B 145/10295, BAK.

about a revival of Nazism. As a result, in this general atmosphere of anti-communism, feelings regarding the Germans changed dramatically. At the beginning of the decade, Americans believed that the Germans had been punished enough, but they did not quite trust them. For example, in July 1949, after the end of the Berlin Blockade and prior to the establishment of the Federal Republic, only 31 percent of Americans believed that the people of Germany could govern themselves in a democratic way. And in May 1950 a majority of American respondents were against German rearmament. But in an August 1950 poll, when told that the Soviet Union was building an army in East Germany, over 70 percent of Americans voted in favor of helping build a West German army. By the end of the year, that number had stabilized into a substantial majority. By October 1954, a Gallup poll indicated that Americans felt that West Germans should be granted their sovereignty. In November 1955, an overwhelming majority of Americans stated that they would like to see Germany reunified.207

A necessary precondition of this newfound appreciation of the Germans was the widespread belief that the Germans were on the path of Americanization and democratization. By and large, Americans believed Byroade's assertion that "Nazism as such is dead." Despite the constant reports of a revival of Nazism, a March 1953 Gallup poll reported that a majority of Americans believed that there was "not much chance" that the Nazis will again become powerful in Germany. By September 1954, a majority of

American were favorably inclined to the Germans. They even felt friendlier towards the Germans than towards the French.

Americans did not forget the Nazi past. They remembered it well. But they did not view the Germans in light of the Third Reich. Instead they increasingly viewed Nazism in association with communism and the Soviet Union. Aided by the work of Hannah Arendt and the concept of red fascism, many Americans saw Nazism as part of the Soviet Union's past rather than Germany's. By focusing on the mode of government, instead of race or nationality, as the primary factor, they re-imagined the pasts of both nations. In this way, Americans remained extremely hostile to Nazism, while growing increasingly favorable toward the Germans. Some groups remained fearful that the Germans would relapse, but their warnings often went unheard.

The reception of two films is illustrative of this Cold War understanding of the Germans. The first is The Devil Makes Three. One of the only films of this period to deal with postwar Germany, The Devil Makes Three's producers intended it to be a stark warning about German revanchism. Yet American viewers saw it differently, viewing it instead as a sympathetic portrait that depicted the Germans as a people dealing with very trying times. The other is The Desert Fox. Inspired by the life of Erwin Rommel, The Desert Fox's producers sought to argue that not all Nazis were morally depraved. American viewers interpreted this film differently also, heaping scorn on the possibility that top level Nazis like Rommel could be viewed with admiration.

MGM's The Devil Makes Three was easily one of the most anti-Nazi films produced during the 1950s, and the only one to deal with the American fear of revived
nationalism in the Federal Republic. Produced by Richard Goldstone and directed by Andrew Marton, the story of *The Devil Makes Three* was based on an actual case history taken from the files of the Air Force Criminal Investigation Division (USAFCID). Lawrence Bachman, then stationed with the HICOG, wrote the original story based on the case of an American Air Force officer who was approached by a smuggling ring in Germany. The officer alerted his superiors, who told him to continue with the plot. They found that the smugglers outfitted the officer's car with several small compartments, in which they placed ball bearings and other contraband items. Over time, these items disappeared, but he was still paid to drive his car and leave it at a certain place for a certain period of time. One day he had an accident and discovered that his original bumper had been replaced with one fashioned from gold. The CID figured out that the smugglers had been smuggling gold out of Germany for some time and arrested the criminals.

From May to June of 1951, Jerry Davis of MGM conducted research in Germany in Berlin, Frankfurt, Wiesbaden and Munich. What he found validated the general contours of Bachman's story. He verified the aims and methods of the Criminal Investigation Division. He found that this division had been particularly involved in cleaning up the black market in Germany. In the case of this particular story, Davis was satisfied that the GIs involved were effectively duped by the smugglers, and not criminals.

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208 AUTOBahn, October 13, 1950, MGM Collection, MHL. AUTOBahn, January 15, 1951, Devil Makes Three, MGM Collection, MHL.
themselves. The smugglers consisted mainly of DPs out of Poland. Davis noted that "they were completely apolitical. Their only object was to make money."209

In translating this story to the screen, Davis and director Andrew Marton took some liberties with the facts. Rather than have the smugglers consist of apolitical Polish displaced persons, they made them fanatic neo-Nazis. Instead of making the purpose of the smuggling ring simply to earn money, they made it a means for funding a neo-Nazi rebirth in Germany. And in a particularly nasty twist, they originate the smuggled gold with Jews murdered in the concentration camps. They cast Gene Kelley to play the Air Force officer, and added Pier Angeli as a misguided German girl who ensnares Kelley in the smuggling ring.210

According to Richard Goldstone, they had to pay some homage to the American reconstruction effort in Germany to secure approval and assistance from the State Department. But the State Department worried that the producer and director might make changes to the script during filming, so it instructed HICOG to keep a close eye on them. In an oral history interview, Goldstone related that he and his crew still felt a great deal of anger:

A number of us, of course, were Jews, and there was Hans Habe as I told you, there was Bundy Marton, myself, Henry Henigson, the production manager, and I think our own feelings were very ambivalent. We were

209 Autobahn--notes from Jerry Davis, May 2, 1951, MGM Collection, MHL.

210 The Devil Makes Three: Original Screenplay, 1952, MGM Collection, MHL.
cynical of the good will that we were being shown [by the Germans]. I think we were angry and I think all of these feelings are reflected in the film itself.\textsuperscript{211}

Later, Goldstone agreed that he along with the screenwriter and the director "viewed the Germans as gangsters who are really in need of serious supervision." In many scenes, especially the last one, in which American Military Police Guards chase Nazis over a frozen lake, Goldstone felt that the crowds who watched were "definitely hostile to us."\textsuperscript{212}

Yet this authorial intent was not realized by those who saw the film. Although all of the reviewers acknowledged the presence of Nazis in the film, none believed the movie to be particularly anti-German. In fact, a reviewer for the \textit{Saturday Evening Post} argued that the theme of the film was that "Germans are people." "During the war," it continued, "it may have been necessary to bomb and destroy indiscriminately, but now, the war over, one must discover them as individuals." It argued that some were die-hard Nazis, but most were coerced into supporting the system. A report by Generalconsul Hertz supported this review and found this interpretation to be common among Americans.\textsuperscript{213} This reception of \textit{Devil Makes Three} illustrates how the context in which the film was interpreted was increasingly sympathetic to the Germans.

\textsuperscript{211} \textit{An Oral History with Richard Goldstone} (1962), 864.

\textsuperscript{212} \textit{New York Times}, May 4 1952.

\textsuperscript{213} \textit{Saturday Review}, September 20 1952. Report, Hertz to AA, October 8, 1952, B 106/903, BAK.
And yet as the reception of *The Desert Fox* demonstrated, Americans did not give Nazis the same benefit of the doubt. (Nor did the State Department for that matter.) In the early winter of 1950, Anthony Muto and Nunnally Johnson of 20th Century Fox came to visit Henry Kellermann about their proposed film *The Desert Fox*. They wanted his opinion about making a film of Rommel. After reading a script, Kellermann laid out his belief that the film, in his opinion, should not be made. Rommel was a great war hero and political appointee, Kellermann pointed out, who disliked Hitler only after it was clear that they would lose. What was more, Rommel was not a major actor in the plot against Hitler. Kellermann felt that such a film would be seized by the Soviet Union as pro-German propaganda, and would further cast doubts in American circles about American resolve to prevent rise of German militarism.²¹⁴

Muto and Johnson vehemently disagreed. In an impassioned plea, the screenwriter Nunnally Johnson defended his script, arguing that its intent was to "demonstrate that there were good as well as bad Germans, an objective which he felt was in accord with the State Department policy." He promised that the script would not "glorify Rommel but treat him objectively." He thought it would be useful to "remind Germans" that some of their leaders "turned against the Nazi regime and tried to overthrow it."²¹⁵

²¹⁴ Memorandum of Conversation, December 18, 1950, Central Decimal Files, RG 59, NA.
²¹⁵ Ibid., NA.
In an oral interview some years later, Johnson said that he had great difficulty in telling the story "without seeming to even subconsciously favor one of our enemies such a short time after the war." After going to Britain to speak with British soldiers and to Germany to speak with Rommel's widow and son, though, Johnson felt his "conscience was clear about dealing with him." Johnson and Muto went ahead with the creation of the film despite the reservations of the State Department.

When the film was released, several organizations lodged protests against it with the State Department. They believed it fantastic that a positive film biography of a Nazi leader would be produced. Nunnally Johnson later remembered that the New York Times "established a 'party line'" that his film was "the celebration of a Nazi." In particular, he angrily related that Bosley Crowther of the New York Times depicted "how Rommel was a street rowdy and a hoodlum and so on." Many reviewers concurred that the film portrayal of Rommel was "sympathetic." They found too the "inference that Nazi Germany's army was invincible" and that the Germans lost only because of "Hitler's dependence on astrology for his war strategy." A few applauded these efforts, but most denounced them. A smug reviewer wrote that the film tends "to show these leaders and Nazi forces as an invincible might that was overthrown solely because of Hitler's stupid

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leadership. History has recorded differently." Clearly, many American reviewers bristled at the notion that Nazism should be welcomed along with the Germans.217

In the United States during the 1950s, both Nazism and communism provided comforting benchmarks for many Americans who chose to focus on the sins of other nations while ignoring their own. The selective memory promulgated by consensus historians encouraged Americans to view their history as an unbroken chain of liberty and freedom. Television shows encouraged Americans to ignore gender and racial injustices and focus on the happy maintenance of home and suburb. Americans during the 1950s, as Godfrey Hodgson has argued, were supremely confident in themselves and their abilities.218

Conclusion

During the 1950s, the locus of producing and manipulating representations of Germans shifted from the United States to the new Federal Republic of Germany. The State Department continued to exercise informal power over the mass media, but it clearly wanted to hand over much of the responsibility to its German ally. State Department officials helped the Germans establish their information program in the

217 Letter, Mulver to Lewis, December 3, 1951, Central Decimal Files, RG 59, NA. Telegram, Bonn to Secretary of State, November 20, 1951, Central Decimal Files, RG 59, NA. "Rommel, a "Good" Nazi," Motion Picture Herald, September 29, 1951, Clippings File, MHL. Variety, September 28 1951, Clippings File, MHL.

United States, and the Germans, with a great deal of help from their American public relations firm, took the initiative in creating favorable images of the German people and suppressing negative ones. More specifically, the Federal Republic and the Roy Bernard Co. encouraged Americans to think of the Germans selectively. They revived 19th century notions of Germanness while trumpeting the virtues of the new Federal Republic-purposefully ignoring and silencing everything else in between.

The changed source of production did not alter significantly the American understanding of the Germans, however. As the mood of consensus and containment continued to characterize the 1950s, the American impression of the Germans continued to improve. Due in large part to the concept of totalitarianism, Americans saw the Soviet Union as the heir to Nazi Germany. As a result, the Germans became wayward children, who although they erred once were now developing along the proper lines (i.e. Americanization).

It was not until the end of the 1950s, that some Americans began to question this comfortable narrative. The great irony is that the beginning of this painful re-examination occurred during a crisis that seemingly reaffirmed the superiority of American civilization. During the 1950s, the city of Berlin continued its emergence as the primary symbol of the Cold War. Events in Berlin were a comforting reminder to Americans of the superiority of American civilization, and the crisis in Berlin during the late 1950s and early 1960s seemed to reaffirm everything that Americans believed about themselves. The next chapter explores the many crises of Berlin and their general effect on the American people.
CHAPTER 5

"FREEDOM'S SECRET CAPITAL"

"Here in Berlin all the slogans that rend the air during the East-West struggle take on a real meaning. Here no one needs any professional lectures about democracy, about freedom and all the other nice things that there are in the world. Here one has lived all that; ones lives it every day and every hour...This city is freedom's secret capital...Berlin's resistance during 1948 and 1949 saved the peace of the world. If Berlin had fallen, Europe would have inevitably fallen in its train." 219

-- Governing Mayor of West Berlin, Ernst Reuter, May 15, 1950

Whitunstide was traditionally a joyous day of celebration in Berlin, in which Berliners gathered with friends and family to celebrate life. But in 1950, an East German communist organization, the Free German Youth of East Germany, announced that it would use the occasion of the religious spring holiday to stage a massive march into West

Berlin. Faced with the prospect of a half million young militaristic East Germans marching into Western Berlin, many Westerners worried that the proposed Whitunstide march would signal the beginning of a communist invasion. In contrast to the countless celebrations before, this Whitunstide, they feared, would be bloody and violent.

American officials were among the most concerned about the proposed communist march. As early as February 9, the State Department evinced considerable interest in the planned march, worrying that this was an effort by the Soviets to use Germans to "weaken our position in Berlin."220 The Office of German Affairs was particularly concerned. With numbers estimated between 500,000 and 600,000 marchers, Louis Wiesner of the Office of German affairs feared that the Soviets would use the march as a pretext to "overthrow the legal Berlin Government by force."221 Similarly, in a memorandum to the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Army outlined his two primary fears: one, that "the intervention of Soviet troops to restore order could result in clashes with Allied Forces which might possibly lead to war; and two, that "failure of Allied troops to apply military force to the extent necessary to restore order might well result in the overthrow of the West Berlin Government and our eventual ejection from Berlin."222

220 Secretary of State to the Office of the United States High Commissioner of for Germany, at Frankfort, February 9, 1950, FRUS 1950, 4: 824-825.


222 Memorandum by the Secretary of the Army (Pace), Referred to the National Security Council by the Secretary of Defense (Johnson), April 28, 1950, FRUS 1950, 4: 845.
Americans therefore felt stuck between a rock and a hard place, fearing war if they did too much and defeat if they did too little. Walter Lippmann's public suggestion that the American government seek negotiations with the Soviet Union or the intervention of the United Nations also seemed an unwise course. Henry Byroade feared that such an action would lead the Soviets to regard the "Western powers as so weak as to be frightened by a peaceful gathering of mere children."

Ultimately, the Americans decided to try to turn the potential crisis to their advantage, planning a major rally on May 1, May Day, the traditional holiday of labor, and scheduling a series of cultural events throughout the month, including an automobile show by American and European manufacturers, a UNESCO Rights of Man exhibit, and theater and motion picture weeks.

The State Department hoped that a strong turn out for May Day would show organized labor's disapproval of the Soviet regime. The Director of the Berlin Element in HICOG also believed that the May Day celebration this year "transcends exclusively labor manifestations" and should be "viewed as collective demonstration [of people in West Berlin] in support [of] freedom and democracy."

Perceiving that the eyes of the world would be on Berlin during the weekend of May 27-29, American officials sought to use the opportunity to turn the tables and embarrass the communists.

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223 Memorandum by the Director of the Bureau of German Affairs (Byroade) to the Under Secretary of State (Webb), May 1, 1950, FRUS 1950, 4:848.

224 Memorandum by the Under Secretary of State (Webb) to the Executive Secretary of the National Security Council, May 3, 1950, FRUS 1950, 4:849.

225 Director of the Berlin Element, HICOG to the Office of the United States High Commissioner for Germany, at Frankfort, February 9, 1950, FRUS 1950, 4:839.
The march came and went without serious incident. But, according to the American media, the march itself confirmed two interrelated truths: one, little difference existed between communism and fascism; and two, that system, like its totalitarianism forebear, was bound to fail. Given the perceived militaristic nature of both regimes, few events could have evoked more comparisons than a military march. The major media outlets wasted little time in drawing similarities between the two, and the May 29 cover of *Newsweek* featured a severe-looking band of youths marching in lockstep, with the caption "Red Nazism on the March." Keeping the focus on the parade itself, *Life* found that the Free German Youth "cheered Stalin and marched in a manner frighteningly reminiscent of Hitler's Jugend." *Time* reported that all Americans who witnessed the spectacle experienced a sickening sense of déjà vu. The march on Whitunstide confirmed American beliefs about the relationship between fascism and communism.

And still, though this sight was frightening to the West, it was quite apparent that this system was unsustainable. The march, although exuding order and power, appeared forced and unwanted. In a poignant and illustrative passage, *Life* reported that the "pinched suspicious" faces of the Free German Youth "revealed far more the gray and hopeless pressures that had driven them into uniforms again." Indeed, even more

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226 "West is Ready for the Test," *Newsweek*, May 29 1950, 23.
indicative of the shortcomings of the communist system were the extracurricular activities of the German Free Youth in the West. All of the major media outlets reported that East German youths stole across to the West, where they could enjoy the simple pleasures of capitalism. Terming Whitunstide a "sodden flop," Time described AWOL East German youths gorging themselves on Western-style food and entertainment. Based on the actions of these defectors, they concluded that the "Reds had trapped themselves into a severe propaganda defeat."231

The march on Whitunstide also offered another opportunity for Americans to reaffirm the importance of standing firm in the face of totalitarianism. In a special on the crisis, David Perlman and Seymour Friedin argued that the march on Whitunstide was nothing less than a Soviet initiative designed to drive the West out of Berlin. An American failure in Berlin, they feared, would signal a weakening American resolve. It would also help convince the Germans that they should jump on the Soviet bandwagon. For Americans on the ground, Whitsuntide reaffirmed the practical importance of Berlin. Edward Page, Chargé at Berlin, stated that the "vital importance of Berlin for both West and East [was] again emphasized," arguing that, for the West, Berlin

231 Ibid.
“constitutes the most potent weapon against communism,” while, for the East, it "represents [a] continuing menace which must be neutralized [as] soon as possible."233

The Whitunstide march in West Berlin illustrated the broader issues at play for the United States and Berlin during the 1950s. Americans and German officials alike realized that Berlin was a powerful symbol for the Western version of the Cold War, and as such, deserved protection and promotion. But both feared that the situation in Berlin could easily get out of control. Weakness in Berlin could lead to a loss of Western morale elsewhere and thus threaten the stability of the Free World. Yet at the same time if the Western powers proved too heavy-handed in their dealings over Berlin then they could provoke the Soviet Union into triggering a general world war. Americans and Germans understood that Berlin was a useful propaganda tool in the Cold War, but they also worried that it potentially could carry the Cold War to a new level of danger.

For the American people as a whole, Berlin became the defining symbol of the Cold War. It simplified an increasingly complex and global struggle by casting the United States as the heroic defender on the frontier of freedom and the Soviet Union as a despotic murderer that imposed a bankrupt and ineffective ideology on an unwilling populace. In this narrative that Berlin spun, the West Berliners themselves emerged as a strong, powerful people bravely fighting the totalitarianism of the Soviet Union just as many of its citizens had previously done against the totalitarianism of Nazi Germany.

233 The Chargé at Berlin (Page) to the Office of the United States High Commissioner for Germany, at Frankfort, June 2, 1950, FRUS 1950, 4:861.
Berlin was a powerful symbol primarily because it seemingly crystallized many of the underlying ideas and notions that Americans had about themselves and their role in the world. Events in Berlin were visceral and personal; the Berlin Blockade and Airlift concerned the supply of food and other necessary materials to a people threatened with starvation and death. The Whitunstide march illustrated in a very real way the imposition of a totalitarian system on poor and defenseless children. The Berlin uprising of 1953, in which East Berliners carried out a general strike only to be put down by Soviet tanks, demonstrated the human spirit's desire to throw off the yoke of Soviet style communism. The daily flow of refugees, and Khrushchev's ultimatum to reach agreement on Berlin to halt this flow, suggested the overall failure of the Soviet system.

Because the symbol of Berlin was so powerful, American and German officials often had to do little to promote it. Yet this is not to suggest that these officials were listless. In fact, officials from the United States, the Federal Republic, and the City of West Berlin worked together to publicize both the "bright, gay" West Berlin as well as the "drab" and "lifeless" East Berlin. At the same time, though, it is true that American journalists were drawn to Berlin without the help of the government officials, for its stories mingled the personal and the political in a very compelling way. As the letters written by Americans to the Governing Mayor of West Berlin illustrate, rank-and-file Americans interpreted Berlin much as their leaders hoped and their opinionmakers depicted it.
**Promoting the Divided City**

In public, American policymakers trumpeted West Berlin and its citizens. They used official organs like the *U.S. Department of State Bulletin* as well as popular forums such as magazines, newspapers, and television to disseminate their opinions. Their discourse constructed Berlin as a bipolar world in which light and darkness, goodness and evil, capitalism and communism battled for the souls of the German people. And they found that the results of that struggle had major ramifications for people outside of Berlin. Looking East, John J. McCloy claimed that "Berlin is a constant reminder to the satellite people [of Eastern Europe] of the possibility of a different way of life—a reminder which no amount of propaganda can erase, a reminder which the Soviets recognize as a standing threat to their coercive system." General Maxwell Taylor argued that Berlin also served a model to those in the West. Upon his departure from Berlin, he stated that "here is the spirit of the front line, which brings a solidarity found nowhere else in Germany, perhaps nowhere else in Europe." Of his successor he said, "he will be another American who came to occupy Berlin, stayed to defend it, and left a Berliner."234

In addition to this rhetorical support, several American policymakers personally pledged their continued devotion and aid to Berlin. Former Office of Military Government, Berlin Sector (OMGBS) director General Frank Howley sent a complimentary copy of his positive autobiographical account, *Berlin Command*, to the

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City of West Berlin in thanksgiving for his time there. Elmer Cox, chief of the Information Branch of the State Department, wrote West Berlin Mayor Ernst Reuter that he would work tirelessly to promote the cause of Berlin in the United States. Head of the German Public Affairs branch of the State Department, Henry Kellermann gave Reuter the opportunity to speak at the Voice of America radio network to personally describe the issues and problems facing the city.235

With the aid of the United States, city officials often promoted Berlin personally. Most dramatic were visits to the United States. The Governing Mayor was the most visible visitor, but a host of other prominent Berlin personalities also made the rounds in the United States. Whenever they came, heavy demands were made on their time. When Reuter visited the United States in 1949, for example, he was asked to appear on radio and television programs such as NBC’s Meet the Press, speak at or attend various meetings, and have personal audiences with prominent journalists such as Freda Utley. When Dr. Hans Hirschfeld, the director of the Berlin Senate Press Office visited in 1955, he was similarly swamped. Hirschfeld’s list of sponsors alone was intimidating; it included the Berlin Senate, the State Department’s Bureau of German Affairs, the Foreign Policy Association, the American Jewish Committee, and the American Association of Teachers of German.236


But probably the most publicized trip was Governing Mayor Willy Brandt's sojourn to the United States in early 1959 after Khrushchev's ultimatum in 1958. Prior to his departure, Brandt was inundated with requests for time and offers of public relations assistance. In addition to the standard invitations for discussion with labor leaders, Jewish leaders, and Congressional leaders, Brandt was asked to appear on "What's My Line?" and give an address to the Lincoln Sesquicentennial Dinner in Springfield, Illinois. In these appearances, Brandt, like his predecessors, emphasized the centrality of Berlin to the West and the similarity of its struggle with despotism with that of the United States. The itineraries of important visitors from Berlin always reflected the high level of American interest in former German capital.237

West Berlin officials also worked behind the scenes to influence American reports on Berlin. They cultivated relationships with major journalists such as Freda Utley and William Chamberlain. Their one-time public relations firm for tourism, Stephen Goerl and Associates, helped prep Harry Gilroy, the new New York Times correspondent in Berlin, by explaining the needs and goals of Berlin with him. It informed Mayor Otto


Suhr in 1956 that you will find him "cooperative in the interpretation of Berlin news for U.S. consumption." Hans Hirschfeld introduced popular academic Henry Kissinger to several Berlin editors to acquaint him with the Berlin crisis in 1958. A Berlin official even attempted to alter an article in a December 1959 issue of Life on the Adenauer foreign policy. In these ways, Berlin Senate officials tried to fulfill many of the functions that Roy Bernard did for the Federal Republic.238

In fact, West Berlin had looked into hiring a public relations firm to promote the city economically and politically. In 1953, Wolf Citron, an associate of Roy Blumenthal, informed the Press Office of the City of West Berlin that the reception given to Governing Mayor Ernst Reuter during his recent visit to the United States illustrated that now was the time for a "systematic" public relations campaign on behalf of Berlin. His plea apparently convinced the Berlin Senate to grant them a test run of three months, based largely on increasing American interest in the 1954 Berlin International Fair. Roy Bernard went to work in May of 1954, setting up a mailing list for the Berlin catalogue, placing material on television, radio, newspapers, and magazines, and convincing Victor Riesel, noted syndicated newspaper columnist, to visit Berlin during the Fair and write six separate columns on his experiences there. Roy Bernard also worked Berlin in more prominently in its efforts for the Federal Republic. One of its major successes, it bragged

in a subsequent report, was the English synchronization and distribution of the documentary "Revolt in Berlin" on the East Berlin uprising of 1953. Based on these triumphs, the Roy Bernard made a pitch for the extension and annual renewal of the current contract.\textsuperscript{239}

As it turned out, however, Roy Bernard was not the only public relations firm interested in the West Berlin account. Stephen Goerl and Associates, a public relations firm that had worked on behalf of West Berlin's \textit{Verkehrsamt} (tourism office) since 1950, also made a strong pitch for West Berlin's business. Stephen Goerl submitted a seventy-page proposal trumpeting its efforts on behalf of Berlin Tourism Office, as well as the German Tourist Association, which it also had represented in the United States. Stephen Goerl somewhat disingenuously claimed that it had affected a dramatic reversal in American perceptions of Berlin since 1950 (conveniently ignoring the far greater impact of the Berlin Blockade and Airlift and other significant events on American attitudes). Still, the fact that American tourism had jumped from 38,000 in 1949 to 200,000 in 1952 suggested that Stephen Goerl was doing something right. The Senate had a real decision on its hands.\textsuperscript{240}


\textsuperscript{240} Public Relations for the City of Berlin, 1951?, B Rep. 010-01/372, LAB. Results of Tourist Promotion for Germany, 1950-1955, 1951?, B Rep. 010-01/372, LAB.
In the end, however, members of the Senate favored Roy Bernard, despite the strenuous lobbying on behalf of Stephen Goerl by Tourism Office official Dr. Wolff. The other members of the Werbeausschuss, the Berlin Marketing Council, a council composed of West Berlin officials concerned about Berlin's image abroad, admitted that Stephen Goerl had done an admirable job for Berlin tourism, but believed that Roy Bernard had better political contacts and relationships with important editors. They also believed that Roy Bernard had done a wonderful job on behalf of the Federal Republic. Yet a lack of funding coupled with a reluctance on the part of some Berlin officials to support the campaign prevented the employ of any public relations firm by the City of West Berlin until the 1960s.

Part of the reluctance for some officials to hire an American public relations firm stemmed from the fact that it would be hard, because of high transportation and delivery costs, to increase substantially American consumption of Berlin products. Another surely was that Berlin already garnered a great deal of positive attention in the American media. And by far, the greatest booster of Berlin and the Berliners was the American publication, Life magazine. Throughout the decade, the most popular news magazine in the United States carried a number of significant pieces that trumpeted the virtues of West Berliners and deplored the state of affairs in the East. In 1950, for example, Life published a substantial photo exposé on West Berlin. The cover was graced with a beautiful Berlin

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girl stroking a German shepherd, and emblazoned with the title “West Berlin: a Gay and Courageous City.” Inside the article detailed the everyday exploits of average Berliners, beginning with Herr and Frau Fritz Kehl. Illustrated with a dramatic photo of the Kehls enjoying a quiet dinner in their bombed out villa, the article stated that they were bravely optimistic even though “overshadowing their lives was grim knowledge that Russia surrounded them on every side.” How, wondered Life, is it possible for the inhabitants of this “beleaguered island of freedom” to show such confidence “right on the doorstep of the power most feared by the free world?” The answer, it found was threefold: part lay in the “Berliner's cocky, stubborn attitude;” part lay in the fact that “he has already touched bottom;” part lay in the “confidence which the Allies built up by the Berlin airlift and the recent reinforcements.” Life went on to document the ways in which these brave people strove to be like Americans. Photographs illustrated hardworking Germans, the Berliner’s love for his pets, and the little vanities of women, as they sought to make themselves look better through consumerism.242

At the same time, Life was sure to underscore the negative aspects of East Berlin. In 1952, reporters from Life were allowed to photograph the tremendous building project taking place at Stalinalle in East Berlin. Rather than deliver the positive appraisal that the GDR's leadership was surely hoping for, Life used the opportunity as a springboard to criticize the methods and products of communism. Despite all of their efforts to the contrary, communism “could not hide the fact that neither propaganda nor commissars' ____________________________________________________________________________

242 "This is Berlin: West Sector Shows a Brave Gaiety," Life, December 4 1950, 141.
threats could keep people on the job." Even though it diverted massive amounts of capital from other areas in an effort to create a showcase of socialism, Stalinalle was founded on "slip-shod building methods" which exemplified the bankruptcy of communism.243

Thus it was unsurprising to *Life* that such a contrast between East and West would encourage citizens of the GDR to flee westward, and it wasted no time in relating these adventures. In 1953, for example, it included an article on the harassment measures of the GDR and the Soviet Union. The article described common methods of traffic disruption such as tearing up tram lines, blocking streets with trees, and blocking S-Bahn lines. The effects of these measures, according to *Life*, were twofold: one, it induced a growing exodus from east to west, 41,000 in the last month alone; and two, it effectively constrained traffic between East and West, so much so that, in the evocative words of *Life*’s Roy Rowan, "the streets that mark the frontier between East and West become an eerie no man’s land."244 Two years later, *Life* related the personal tale of the Schmidtkes, who had lost the mother and a son to the East Germans. Earlier, the Schmidtkes had fled West, and were recently informed that friends from the East had a present for Bernd, the son. At the exchange point at Potsdamer Platz, East German police abducted the mother and son. According to *Life*, "an ordinary family suffered most poignantly."245

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By no means was *Life* the only publication to portray Berlin as the salvation of Germany and the West. After an extended tour of Western Europe, German expatriate Martin Gumpert wrote an article for the *American Scholar* on the conditions he found. Gumpert observed a "latent" crisis that gets "louder as one moves east; it cries in your ears in Germany; it screams in Berlin." In Germany, he found that the Germans suffered from neurosis; they downplayed the terrible nature of their actions by pointing to examples of American misconduct, such as the bombing of Hiroshima, as worse. He claimed that the average German was "full of contempt for the Western occupying powers, but wanted their presence because he was "full of fear of the Russians." The situation in Berlin, however, was different. "Berlin," he argued, was "the most reassuring place in Germany." Here he sensed a change, "the kind of change one ardently had hoped to discover in Germany elsewhere, and that the lesson learned will prevent the Berliner from the old German vice of self-treason." He found this hopeful because "Europe's fate is decided here, by the people of Berlin." West Berlin was vibrant, while East Berlin had the "old Hitler look of terror." He argued that the maintenance of this "show window of resistance within the Eastern area of distress" was "of the utmost vital importance for the life of all Europe." He ended his article with a plea of support for the good Germans.²⁴⁶

²⁴⁶ Dr. Martin Gumpert, "Return to Europe," *American Scholar*, July 1950, 319-340.; Heinz Guadze, a subscriber to *American Scholar* claimed that Gumpert was too harsh on regular Germans in his assessment. A former German himself, Guradze wondered whether he and Gumpert would have fared any better than other Germans had they stayed: Heinz Guradze, "Return to Europe: Reply," *American Scholar* 20 (January, 1951): 108.
During the 1950s, Joseph Wechsberg began authoring a series of "Letters From Berlin" for The New Yorker that provided an in-depth look at the lives of average Berliners. In these, Wechsberg drew constant contrasts between West Berlin and East Berlin and between West Berlin and other West German cities. West Berlin was much livelier than East Berlin, he found. In a visit to a theater in East Berlin in 1953, for example, he discovered that the "novelty" of visiting a communist country "wears off fast." The West Berliners were also beating the East in the competition to clean and rebuild. In considering differences between West Berlin and other West German cities, he observed that denazification was "less of a comedy here." In Wechsberg's rendition, West Berlin exemplified the best that the Germans had to offer.247

Major mainstream magazines spontaneously echoed the American and Berlin government's emphasis on and interpretation of Berlin. Berlin revealed the superiority of Americanization and the West in a number of ways. First, the physical appearance of "gay bright" West Berlin in contrast to the "drab dinginess" of East Berlin demonstrated the comparatively better standard of living offered by capitalism. Second, the apparent similarity between East Germany's form of government and that of Nazi Germany illustrated the barbaric nature of communist governments. That people from East Germany and Berlin were leaving in droves for the West seemed to confirm both of these points. And finally, the fact that so many people chose to "vote with their feet" illustrated that the Cold War fundamentally was a choice between two systems and ways of life--

and that the West was winning this contest for the hearts and minds of the people. All of this was communicated in simple, personal ways: kidnapped family members, divided streets, military marches. Lost in this Cold War narrative, of course, was any mention of West Berliners as former Nazis. There simply was not any room for such a discussion in the Berlin context.

**Uprising and Ultimatum**

Two events in Berlin during the 1950s stand out in particular. The first was the East Berlin Uprising of 1953. On this day, East Berliners spontaneously revolted against increased work norms on the Stalin Alle project. The next day, Soviet tanks crushed the uprising. For Americans, both official and non-official, the uprising revealed the terrible conditions of communist East Berlin and represented the indomitable yearning of the human spirit to be free. The second was Khruschchev's ultimatum of November 1958, in which he demanded a solution to the German and Berlin problem in six month or he would unilaterally hand over all controls in East Germany to the German Democratic Republic. Whatever his intent, his ultimatum increased American sympathy toward and sense of attachment to West Berlin. As in 1948-1949, the Berlin Crisis became a test of American resolve, an examination that Americans were self-confident that they would pass.

On June 16, 1953, an American official in Berlin reported to HICOG that a demonstration had begun at noon that day. Disgruntled workers at the Stalin Allee project had laid down their tools and marched to Alexander Platz in protest over an
increase in production norms. Other workers had joined the procession as it made its way to the government buildings at Leipzig Strasse. Communist leaders had made an effort to quell the anger of the crowd, at which point someone in the crowd shouted, “what you have declared here is of no interest to us. We want to be free. Our demonstration is not against norms. We come not just from the Stalin Allee but from all of Berlin, this is a people’s revolt.” Certain that the present course of action would not yield results, the leaders called off the demonstration and promised a general strike the following day.²⁴⁸

The next day, the 17th of June, is a well-known day in German history. The East Germans carried out their threat of a general strike and further demonstrations. The communists responded with brute force. The Soviet Union cracked down on the demonstrators, cut off access to West Berlin, and imposed martial law in the city. By June 19, 20,000 Soviets troops, 350 tanks, and numberless East Germans patrolled the city.

The reaction of the American government was mixed. On the one hand, American policymakers believed that the uprising in East Berlin symbolized the deep problems in the Soviet satellite countries. In a meeting the day after the crackdown, John Foster Dulles insisted that the United States had nothing whatsoever to do with inciting these riots, citing the riots instead as “evidence of the boundless discontent and dissension behind the Iron Curtain.” Special Assistant to the President C. D. Jackson agreed, but went one step farther, arguing that the uprising was “important in showing,

²⁴⁸ The Director of the Berlin Element, HICOG (Lyon) to the office of the United States High Commissioner for Germany, at Bonn, 16 June 1953, FRUS 1952-1954, 7:1584.
for the first time since their enslavement, that the slaves of the Soviet Union felt that they could do something." 249 Despite their emphasis on this rhetoric of freedom, however, American policymakers also realized that the uprising had its mundane causes. In particular, James Conant observed that "there is the economic factor that we wouldn't say too much about politically. It seems clear from the evidence that a good deal of the unrest is due to the fact that the food conditions in the East Zone have been worse than some of us imagined from what we heard." 250

On the other hand, the Eisenhower administration found itself in a difficult dilemma. For a government that had preached "rollback" instead of "containment," the prospect of rebellion in East Germany seemed to offer the perfect opportunity to chip away at the Soviet edifice. Yet the cautious way with which the Eisenhower administration handled this incident illustrates the inherently conservative nature of its approach—its bombastic rhetoric notwithstanding. Instead of sending material support for the revolt, the Eisenhower administration contented itself with sending food to help feed the hungry in East Germany.

The Eisenhower administration was certain, however, to make clear the nature and purpose of the Berlin uprising. At a news conference the day it happened, Eisenhower's lone remark was that the uprising illustrated "the general feeling just behind

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the Iron Curtain" that ran counter to the communist "propaganda of the happiness and concern for people's governments that we have heard." In a letter to the presidents of the AFL and CIO, Eisenhower wrote that the government shared their "feelings about the workers of East Berlin who by their heroism have demonstrated that totalitarianism has not extinguished the desire for freedom in the enslaved countries of Eastern Europe." In their attempt to send food to East Germany, American policymakers sought to drive home the point that conditions in the communist country warranted such a revolt.251

The significance of the East Berlin uprising was not lost on the American press, either. The cover of Newsweek showed protesters marching under the Brandenberg Gate with the caption "Berlin Revolt: the Kremlin is Shaken." The most significant passage ran thusly:

But the final victory belonged to these Germans. The men and boys hurling stones at tanks, burning Red flags, and attacking the Red Police demonstrated that force alone was not enough to break the human spirit. And they were able to fight the good fight in a showcase along the dividing line between West and East Berlin, where their heroism could stimulate the entire free world. For two days they showed the West how weak its enemy was and how strong it was—if it had the courage to use that strength.252


252 "Berlin Surprise Outbreak Jolts a Weakened Kremlin," Newsweek, June 29 1953, 36.

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Life covered a funeral for 8 men killed during the riot, a funeral which was attended by 125,000 mourners. According to Life, the East Germans finally admitted that they made an “error” after “foolishly blaming the riots on western saboteurs,” promising more housing, consumer goods, food, and freedom.\textsuperscript{253} Newsweek and The New Republic also carried significant pieces on the importance of the East Berlin uprisings.\textsuperscript{254}

The most disturbing event of the decade happened at the end of 1958. In November of 1958, Nikita Khrushchev issued an ultimatum to the West. The Western powers had six months to work out a settlement with the Soviet Union regarding Germany. If they proved unable to do so, then the Soviet Union would unilaterally sign a peace treaty with the German Democratic Republic and turn over all institutional and political controls to it. The East German assumption of administrative control of East Berlin would threaten American war-time occupation rights in the city, because it would imply that a peace treaty had been reached between the Allies and Germany. A peace treaty between the Soviet Union and the German Democratic Republic also would endanger Adenauer’s political position in the West, because it would make more permanent the division of Germany. For these reasons, Khrushchev’s ultimatum alarmed the West and initiated a heated round of negotiations among the allied powers.


In private, members of the United States government never considered leaving Berlin or entertaining Khrushchev's free city proposal. They did, however, differ over the extent to which Khrushchev's threat to hand over controls to East Berlin constituted a real danger to allied control of Berlin. On the one hand, Eisenhower did not endorse General Norstad's proposal to break through to Berlin when American convoys were stopped, believing that such an action would increase the likelihood of war. But on the other hand, the administration did not support the "agency theory" in which some officials believed that the Allies could deal with the East Germans as "agents" of the Soviet Union and thus not endanger the Western position in Berlin. Although Dulles flirted with the concept briefly, he ultimately concluded, as did the other major members of the administration, that such a policy would constitute a "slippery slope" toward recognition.²⁵⁵

In public, the Eisenhower administration reconfirmed American support for Berlin. But American officials desired to keep their response low-key, out of fear that they would give the Communists the impression that they were on edge. On November 21, Eisenhower's Press Secretary Jim Hagerty informed Americans that "our firm intentions in West Berlin remain unchanged."²⁵⁶ These statements were echoed in subsequent publications. In specific, Eisenhower found that the reason given by the


²⁵⁶ Tusa, *The Last Division*, 99.
Soviets for wanting to settle on Germany, namely that they were afraid of German revanchism, was spurious. He announced in a news conference that the Soviets accusation that the United States rushed "right in after the war to rearm West Germany" ignored that "there was no rearmament of West Germany...until after West Germany had become a member of NATO in 1954." By contrast, "East Germany had 50,000 troops under arms in 1950, and by 1953, had some 225-240,000 under arms." Americans believed that the Berlin Crisis was fundamentally about present American resolve, not previous German misconduct.

The Federal Republic also responded decisively to Khrushchev's ultimatum. West German officials initiated a Berlin-Aktion, or a Berlin campaign, that started on January 5, 1959. This campaign was conducted by INTER NATIONES, the BPA, and the Berlin Senate. Together, these organizations invited prominent Americans to Berlin, sent several speakers to the United States to discuss the problem, published pamphlets, and created films and advertisements on the crisis. Although the Berlin campaign ended in August of 1958, West German officials believed that public relations work on behalf of Berlin should continue.

One example from the Berlin campaign was an INTER NATIONES pamphlet entitled "Berlin--cross-roads of world politics," which sought to convince Americans that "although Berlin is far from your home" its safety and protection were very important.

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258 Abschlussbericht, Berlin-Aktion 1959, July 29, 1959, B 136, BAK.
because it symbolized the struggle for peace and freedom. It sought to reduce the complex issues surrounding the Berlin crisis to a simple metaphor: "four people sign an agreement that they are going to live together in the same house. Then, all of a sudden, one of them tells the other three to get out." The "people" of course were the occupying powers and the "house" the city of Berlin. By suggesting that a complicated situation riddled with cross-currents and encrusted with layers of contradictory memories and misunderstandings could be understood in personal terms familiar to every American, INTER NATIONES attempted to galvanize American support for one of the most difficult crises of the Cold War.\(^{259}\)

The Berlin Senate tried to take advantage of the situation to press the Federal Republic again for assistance on hiring a public relations firm. Wolf Citron of Roy Bernard used the appearance of a *Time* magazine poll in December to press home the need for a continuous and systematic campaign for the city of West Berlin. The poll noted that 23 percent of Americans did not understand the Berlin Crisis. Armed with this information, the Berlin Senate renewed its efforts to fund a public relations campaign in the United States.\(^{260}\)

The Senate appealed to the Federal Press Office for financial assistance. A BPA official informed Paul Hertz of the Senate Press Office that the BPA could not aid in paying for this campaign because of budgetary reasons. He suggested that if the bulk of

\(^{259}\) Berlin--cross-road of world politics, No date, E Rep. 200-18/16/1, LAB.

\(^{260}\) Letter, Citron to Schlesinger, December 29, 1958, B Rep. 002/4097, LAB.
the advertisements were of an economic nature then the Senate should approach the
Federal Ministry of Economics, or Bundesministerium fuer Wirtschaft (BMW). A
miffed Schlesinger of the Berlin Senate noted the Federal Republic seemed to find the
funds to prosecute its own Berlin campaign. In 1960, West Berlin officials decided to
wait until the status of Berlin was more certain, figuring that an expensive public
relations campaign in the middle of the crisis would not be helpful. A sustained public
relations campaign for West Berlin would have to wait until 1961.261

Throughout both the East Berlin uprising and the Berlin Crisis, the importance
and significance of Berlin grew clearer. Both events illustrated the bankruptcy of the
communist East German regime. The East German people did not want the current
regime, and the Soviet Union was driven to extreme measures to protect it. The
American government, the German and Berlin governments, and the American media all
interpreted and promoted events in Berlin the same way. But what about the rest of the
American population?

"I am protected by your post on the frontier"

We have explored how American policymakers and journalists have responded to
Berlin, but what about rank-and-file Americans? Did they understand Berlin in the same

261 Letter, Krueger to Paul Hertz, April 27, 1959, B Rep. 002/4097, LAB. Vermerk, May
002/4097/I, LAB.
way during the 1950s? The previous chapter discussed the reception of Germans in the United States; was there any difference in the way that Americans thought about Berlin?

The answer is a resounding yes. Although there was overwhelming support for Germans during the 1950s, there remained a substantial minority of Americans who remained unconvinced of Germany's rehabilitation. In the case of Berlin, such an opposition was virtually silent. As an AFL-CIO official wrote Mayor Willy Brandt in 1959, "upon arriving home, we quickly concluded that our interpretation of the American people, as expressed in our conversations while in Berlin, was surely not exaggerated; rather we found that our expressions represented the minimum thinking." Throughout the 1950s, American support remained extremely high for the former capital of the Third Reich.262

An excellent resource for exploring the various ways in which people understood Berlin can be found in the archives of the Land of Berlin. In the holdings of the Senate Press Office there exist hundreds of letters written by Americans to officials in West Berlin. Through an examination of these letters, it is possible to gain a clearer understanding of the reasons undergirding this massive swell of support, as well as the extent to which Americans supported Berliners during the 1950s.

In examining these letters, it becomes clear that the Cold War was the decisive context through which Americans understood events in Berlin. Although a few mentioned Berlin's checkered past, these citizens took pains to place those events in the

262 Letter, William Schnitzler to Brandt, April 15, 1959, B Rep. 002/985, LAB.

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past. Now, they wrote, the Soviet Union is our common enemy. And the way that they described Soviet communism illustrates that they understood communism as an evil force that must be stopped. One writer believed that "communism will be 1000 times worse than Hitler and his gang and the terrible Gestapo." He went on to say that "documents and treaties didn't mean a thing to them any more than it [sic] did to Hitler." Another, believing that the Cold War was fundamentally the struggle between good and evil, wrote that brute force was the only way to deal with the Soviet Union, "arguing that the way to steer a dumb ox is to hit him right on the nose with a club." Perhaps the most illustrative depiction of the Soviet Union came from an American citizen who wrote to Reuter in 1950. In his letter of praise, this individual included a florid passage on what a picture of Stalin said to him:

...Gaze upon me, observe my features closely. Look into my eyes; behind them. What do you see? An apparition perhaps; too real! The specter comes to life and his Nibs, upon being summoned from his quiet repose, gleefully stretches his netherworld body. And emitting putrid breath, he bombastically introduces himself. 'How'dy Comrads.' [sic] (A greeting to lost souls who wander into his domain; the fools!) I'm Lucifer, I live in Purgatory; I'm master of your destiny. I hate everything and everybody. My savage voice makes them tremble in terror. My baleful eyes cower and pierce their dazed brain. My barbed tail stings them with excruciating pain. My sharp horns gore and rip their tender bowels. Their agonizing shrieks are music to my grotesque ears. To gulp their gushing blood is

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ecstasy. I delight in tearing their mangled bodies with my cloven hoofs. It thrills me to crunch their broken bones with my venomous [sic] fangs. The nauseating odor of carrion facinates [sic] my carnal nostrils. The saliva drools from my hideous mouth, in anticipation...What more can be said of the Communists' World Revolution...Shall we worship the devil and his works?"

The author mentioned that he included this passage in a letter to the editor of Reader's Digest. It was, perhaps unsurprisingly, rejected. And yet his sentiments, while overwrought, represented the feelings of many of his fellow citizens regarding the Soviet Union and its leaders.263

Thus, with this Cold War backdrop, West Berlin became the frontline in the battle against evil for many Americans. A housewife expressed personal gratitude to Berlin, "because I am protected by your post on the frontier." An interested Pennsylvanian wrote Brandt that Germany is the "keystone country" just like Pennsylvania is the "keystone state," and that "the battle which you wage is one upon which the eyes of the world have been focused, with issues at stake that concern us all." An aspiring songwriter felt compelled to send along the sheet music for an original song entitled "Keep Freedom Everywhere!" Another viewed Berlin as the appropriate place to launch his "free world" symbol, an upper-case L with an upper-case C connected to it and surrounding it,

imploring Brandt to encourage those behind the iron curtain to chalk it on the walls and "embarrass and frustrate the communists."\textsuperscript{264}

Often this love and respect for West Berlin extended to its governing mayors. A banker out of Sioux City, Iowa praised Ernst Reuter in 1951 for everything he had done for "Berlin and for the German people" and expressed thanks that "there are men of your calibre in Europe" during a time when democracy and freedom would be tested. The same sorts of sentiments were far more prevalent for Willy Brandt. A schoolteacher thanked Brandt for the all that he was doing for world, impressing upon him "as long as I have the ability to teach I shall endeavor to impress upon my students the importance of the life and work of Willy Brandt." Another American congratulated Brandt on his reelection in 1958, offering his belief that "God himself inspired once more the overthrow of the Communist party." On a more personal note, an American wrote Brandt that "I have seldom had the pleasure of meeting anyone who at first acquaintance seemed more like the kind of man I should be proud to have for a son or younger brother." A former soldier wrote: "for the first time, in my entire thirty-six years on this most beloved earth, I am, for reasons which I cannot fathom, impelled to write this communication to a courageous, humane, and most patriotic personage."\textsuperscript{265}


Indeed, a number of former soldiers wrote the Governing Mayor of West Berlin to let him know that the past was behind them. This ex-soldier said that he bore "no hatred" and that all U.S. soldiers of the past felt as he did. "For the first time in my life," he went on to say, "I want to tell someone, be he king or slave, tycoon or worker, rich or poor, that I am grateful for his devotion to duty in carrying on a fight WHICH IS IN REALITY MY FIGHT TOO" (original emphasis). Another soldier wrote that while part of the occupation force in Germany he worried about the "after-effects of the Nazi regime." "Perhaps Berlin cannot speak for Germany," he stated, "but I think and hope that Berlin answered that question for me in the days of the Luftbruecke [the Air Lift]." For him, that was why Berlin was "so close to my heart." These soldiers suggested the power of Berlin to represent the nature of America's self-appointed struggle against evil.\footnote{266}

Strongly worded letters, however, were not the only things that Americans sent to demonstrate support for Berlin. Moved by the depictions of Berlin in the mass media, many Americans sent tangible items of support. Several sent CARE packages. One group of young men from California sent along a package saying that they had "the greatest respect and admiration for you and the people of Great Berlin and the way you have stood up to the Russian bully boys." The Fraternal Order of Eagles offered to send 100 tons of food to West Berlin. Others earmarked their packages for the influx of refugees. A couple mailed 15 boxes of used clothes and 2 specifically for Berlin/Steglitz

\footnote{266} Ibid., LAB. Letter, David H. Blair to Mayor Schreiber, April 19, 1954, 002/977, LAB.

High School. The Moorestown Rotary Club "answered" Ernst Reuter's "urgent plea" for clothing by collecting and sending clothing along. 267

Others simply sent cash. Gus Petrit send two donations of $58.15 to Reuter, noting "we're seeing quite some of Berlin on television these days besides reading our newspapers." Another was moved by a talk given by Reuter in Minneapolis and sent $5 to help in "this great fight for freedom." After reading an article on children in Berlin in The Los Angeles Times, a couple sent $5 "to help send some poor child on a much needed vacation." Many Americans clearly felt moved to give more than just encouraging words.268

Some were willing to give more than money, food, or used clothing. A number of Americans offered to send themselves to Berlin to help out with the struggle for freedom. A former soldier who lived in Germany during the years of occupation offered his services to Berlin a month after Khrushchev's ultimatum. Seeking no financial compensation, he simply wished to help Berlin out in this battle with tyranny. Two boys at Malvern Prep School in Malvern, Pennsylvania wrote Brandt asking if they could help. They said that they had planned to go straight to college, but after reading the December 15 issue of Life wanted to do something more with their lives. "We are average


American boys and therefore hate communism," they wrote. "To us, you are the paragon of a living, fighting resistance to the greatest danger in the world today." Some Americans envisioning Berlin as the frontline of the fight against communism sought to defend liberty at its farthest outpost.269

The effect of Berlin on Americans was revealed in other ways. One of the most notorious effects of the Truemmerfrauen (rubble women) images was to suggest to Americans that streets of Berlin overflowed with beautiful, desperate women. Predictably, confronted with pictures of gorgeous Berliners in *Life* and other major media outlets, some American men sought out women in Berlin. Several men envisioned a Berlin populated by so many beautiful women that they could have their pick. One man wrote to Reuter and asked him to place a personal ad in the newspaper for him. He told Reuter that he was 32 years old, possessed of a good income and was looking for a girl about 5'2" with a "reasonably good figure and looks." A 60 year old "white American widower" sought a "young good looking girl or widow in the age bracket of 22 to 30." The widower insisted that "she must be well built and good looking" and informed him that he would appreciate it "if you would have several write to me and send their photos so that I can have my pick."270


270 Letter, Frederick Hamwell to Reuter, October 24, 1951, 002/974, LAB. Letter, James I Younger to Reuter, July, 1953, 002/976, LAB.
Events in Berlin also had a positive impact on the self-esteem of German-Americans. One American bragged to Reuter during the Airlift that she was a genuine Berliner, baptized in the water of the Spree River. One American student of German heritage wrote that people now look on Germany with respect and admiration. "Today, unlike the past," he commented, "our German heritages [sic] produces feelings of proudness [sic]." During the Berlin crisis, several Americans with the last name of Brandt wrote to Brandt wondering (and hoping) if they were related. Even dogs of German ancestry got in on the act. One woman, at the urging of her friends, sent a snapshot of her 5 month old Dachshund to Brandt. She informed the mayor of West Berlin that in her "search for a fine German name" one of the professors at the University of Tennessee suggested naming him after one of the most beloved figures in the United States. She concurred and named him Willy Brandt.271

But for all of the power of Berlin, a few still associated it with Nazi Germany. A 16 year old boy of German descent wrote Reuter for information on "the former Nazi form of government under Adolf Hitler," noting that the material that he had access to "was limited" and possessed "too much American influence to get the real meaning of the Nazi form of government." He asked for more unbiased information. Others wrote to Berlin officials requesting memorabilia from the Nazi era. Although the link between the

Berlin and the Third Reich had been severely weakened, a few Americans still thought of Berlin in a World War context.272

In a similar vein, Americans occasionally railed at the media's efforts to whitewash Berlin. Following Life's initial feature on Berlin at the beginning of 1950, for example, many subscribers responded negatively, invoking instead the World War narrative. John Maass of Los Angeles angrily wrote: "Millions of people are still homeless, hungry or crippled because of what the Berliners and their friends did to them." Rather than remember this, Life instead thought it "ducky that the perfume and nightclub businesses in the unrepentant capital of the Third Reich are booming once again." Joseph Krinsky pointed out that "Berliners were also gay and brave when London was blitzed, when France was invaded and plundered, when innocent Lidice was destroyed without a trace and when thousands of peaceful, helpless people were killed in gas chambers and concentration camps." In an interesting commentary on the seeming flexibility of American sentiment, Eda Tevlin furiously argued that "one of these days LIFE will feature the "gay Muscovites." 273

Yet these Americans were certainly in the minority. Berlin in the 1950s was firmly entrenched in, and indeed constitutive of, the Cold War narrative. Just before Whitewash, Governing Mayor Ernst Reuter referred to Berlin as "Freedom's Secret

272 Letter, Wallace Berning to Reuter, February (date by receipt; none given by author), 1952, 002/973, LAB. This letter was annotated in typewritten English with "it seems he hasn't all cups in the cupboard."

Capital." Berlin may have been Freedom's capital, but it certainly was no secret. As a result, these anti-Berlin sentiments existed on the margin of discourse about Germany. America's role as defender of the outpost of freedom and the ostensible courage and bravery with which everyday Berliners lived out their lives transformed the Berliners into willing soldiers of the West.

As the decade drew to a close, Germans found that despite the power of Berlin and their own public exertions, a hardcore resistance to Germany remained. As one American wrote to the German periodical, Der Speigel, "I am delighted to inform you that I hate Germans, Germany and everything which you culture, as represented by your many aggressions through out [sic] your recorded history, represents." He continued to say that he taught his children to hate Germany, and sought to influence his friends and associates to act to destroy Germans, claiming that the Germans "have excluded themselves from the human race." While these sentiments, when received, were alarming enough to German officials, the fact that a perceived wave of anti-German sentiment was steadily mounting in American mass culture led them to believe such statements were increasingly voiced and hence that more drastic measures were necessary to convince Americans of German goodness.274

274 Letter, Lester G. Rees, February 27, 1959, B Rep. 002/984, LAB.
CHAPTER 6

"A WALL IS A HELL OF A LOT BETTER THAN A WAR"

"The fact of the matter is that in the last 12 months we have seen more clearly than ever before the contrast between our system and that of those who make themselves our adversaries. The wall in Berlin, to lock people in, I believe is the obvious manifestation, which can be demonstrated all over the world, of the superiority of our system." 275

President John F. Kennedy, in an address at a fundraising dinner, March 10, 1962

"A clothesline is a Berlin Wall,
Berlin Wall, Berlin Wall,
A clothesline is a Berlin Wall,
In Selma, Alabam'." 276

Refrain from a civil rights song, 1965


On the evening of August 12-13, the German Democratic Republic took a decisive step to stop the hemorrhage of refugees fleeing westward. Since its inception, the GDR had lost hundreds of thousands of its most talented and productive citizens every year to the West. To remedy matters, on this evening it sealed off the border and began building a barricade intended to keep its citizens from escaping. East German guards and policemen began stringing barbed wire along the border. By August 13, West Berliners were cut off from the eastern part of the city and the surrounding countryside. The episode initiated another crisis in Berlin, but the Americans did nothing to prevent this development. Publicly, the Kennedy administration denounced this new development, but privately, Kennedy sighed, "a wall is a hell of a lot better than a war."

The construction of the Berlin Wall proved to be a major development in the way that Americans understood Germany, the Cold War, and ultimately themselves. The Wall provided a stark commentary on the Cold War: many Americans read the Wall as an effort to hinder that most basic of all freedoms, personal movement, and its very construction was an admission of failure on the part of the East Germany's communist system to provide the basic necessities of life. American leaders wasted no time in incorporating and utilizing Berlin for rhetorical purposes in the Cold War. For many

Americans, the constant stream of stories on East German efforts to circumvent the Wall and escape to the West provided a consistent source of pride and faith in the superiority of their own system.

Despite the private relief over an averted war, many policymakers continued to understand that events in Berlin held great importance for American foreign policy elsewhere, and thus Berlin demanded attention and defense. As a telegram from the Kennedy administration to the Embassy in Bonn put it, "As the crisis deepened each moment of real test found the US at the center of responsibility." Arguing that "every test of will in Berlin has been a test fundamentally for the US," the Kennedy administration believed that the world watched Berlin for clues as to American intentions.278 The Kennedy administration liked to blame the Soviet Union for this tense state of affairs. In a conversation with Khrushchev in Moscow, Ambassador at large Llewelyn Thompson, for example, charged that "it was [the] Soviet side and not we that had focused world attention on Berlin to [the] point where [the] smallest thing became [a] test of our intentions."279

The truth of the matter, however, was that the Americans often invoked Berlin in discussions with other leaders to highlight the righteous nature of America's mission in the world. One of the most obvious examples was Under Secretary Chester Bowles's efforts to woo neutral India just five days before the Wall was erected. In a discussion

278 Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in Germany, May 12, 1962, *FRUS* 1961-1963, 15: 144.
with Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, Bowles "underscored the vital importance" that
the United States attached "to the right of the people of Berlin to self-determination." Bowles claimed that the "difficulties" that the Soviet Union faced in Eastern Europe "stemmed in large measure from the utter failure of the East German government under Ulbricht." Bowles went on to say that "Khrushchev had repeatedly asked for a peaceful competition between two economic systems, a competition in which he had assured the world the Communists would triumph." In truth, Bowles found that "such a competition had been in effect between the two zones of Germany for the last fifteen years and anyone who has visited these knows that the Communists have suffered a disastrous defeat." At the moment, he stated, "5,000 of their ablest people are fleeing the social 'paradise' of East Germany each week to live in the capitalist zone." Given the pure, uncomplicated nature of American involvement in Berlin, Bowles "expressed surprise that the Indians showed so little public interest in Berlin."280

The meaning that American policymakers read into Berlin also helped shape their view of possible foreign policy options elsewhere. In a memorandum to President Johnson on Vietnam, Ambassador Johnson placed American involvement in Southeast Asia in America's grand strategy for the Cold War, arguing that "we are helping the South Vietnamese as part of our underlying strategy of seeking to prevent the extension of Communist power." A successful example of stopping communist expansion was in

279 Telegram From the Embassy in the Soviet Union to the Department of State, July 26, 1962, FRUS 1961-1963, 15: 254.
280 Memorandum of Conversations, August 8 and 9, 1961, FRUS 1961-1963, 14: 81.
Berlin. By placing Berlin at the front line of America's Cold War, containment strategy, this official revealed his belief in the sameness of the struggle across the globe.281

The effectiveness of America's steadfast commitment to Berlin in deterring further aggression also was a common reading. In 1965, Maxwell Taylor, Johnson's Special Consultant on Vietnam, observed that the Vietnamese communists "have thus far given no indication of an intention to mend their ways. But neither did the leaders in Moscow give any intention of calling off the Berlin airlift or the North Korean-Chicom leaders of abandoning their effort to take over South Korea until the game had been played down to the last card. Up to that point, their attitude was one of defiant, aggressive confidence. We should expect nothing different from Hanoi now."282 Another official agreed, stating "We can either get out of their way and let them have it or we can meet them. We have decided to meet them. When I spoke of 'securing South Viet-Nam without major bloodshed' I was referring to the contingency that the other side may look down the road ahead and decide that it is too costly or too dangerous for them to persist. This has happened with the Greek guerillas, the Berlin blockade, Korea, and the Cuban missile crisis."283 The intractability of all communists was pointed up by Ambassador Lodge in Hanoi: "the proposal assumes that Communists are like us; that they are in effect like misguided Americans who will reciprocate our kindness and our

282 Letter from President's Consultant on Vietnam (Taylor) to President Johnson, December 27, 1965, FRUS 1964-1968, 3: 712.
toleration and our sense of fair play when every experience we have had with Communists, whether at the United Nations, or Panmunjom, or in Berlin, shows that the reverse is the case and that they can only be induced to follow certain course by the application of pressure. They are in truth indifferent to human life and are always probing.\textsuperscript{284}

In public the city was often invoked to defend America's growing involvement in Vietnam. Kennedy, for example, was a rhetorical master at using Berlin to justify American policy in Vietnam. In several speeches he was fond of defining the "frontiers of freedom from Viet-Nam to West Berlin." In March of 1962, Kennedy told members of the American Legion that "we assist countries stretching all the way from Berlin around to Saigon to maintain their independence under great pressure."\textsuperscript{285} By circumscribing the free world at Vietnam and Berlin, he effectively related American participation in Southeast Asia to that in Berlin. Thus the meaning that Kennedy inscribed on Berlin, a defensive struggle to maintain the independence of a free people, became the meaning that he gave for the growing American presence in Vietnam. Again, at an address at Independence Hall in July, he invoked Berlin and independence, saying "if there is a single issue that divides the world today, it is independence—the independence of Berlin or Laos or Viet-Nam; the longing for independence behind the

\textsuperscript{284} Telegram from the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (Wheeler) to secretary of Defense McNamara, December 21, 1965, \textit{FRUS} 1964-1968, 3: 675.

Iron Curtain." In his 1963 State of the Union Address, Kennedy claimed that the Third World was coming to understand independence as the central issue, that it was beginning to understand that "the longing for independence is the same the world over, whether it is the independence of West Berlin or Viet-Nam." As the world witnessed in Berlin, Kennedy lectured, "such independence runs athwart all Communist ambitions but is keeping with our own."

As the war in Vietnam dragged on, the appeals by his successor to the American experience in Berlin became shriller. For added effect, the American experience in Berlin was also joined by a host of other perceived American victories. In 1967, for example, Johnson noted that "in every war that we have fought there have been passionate voices crying out that engagement was unwise." Claiming these voices argued against involvement against the Axis in the 1930s, involvement against the Communists in Greece and Turkey in 1947, and involvement against the Berlin Blockade, he stated that "you hear them now as we meet here, as Communist power threatens the life of little Vietnam." For Johnson, the Berlin Blockade became particularly powerful, especially since 1968 represented the twentieth anniversary of its onset. Before delegates to the National Farmers Union Convention in March, he compared the "struggle in Southeast Asia to stop the onrushing tide of Communist aggression" to Greece, Korea, and the

286 Ibid. 537.
Berlin Airlift, in which "we had to fly in zero weather into Berlin to feed the people when that city was beleaguered and cut off."\textsuperscript{289} "We have had our will tested before," he told the delegates to the Conference of the Building and Construction Trades Department of the AFL-CIO that same month. "We have seen it tested over the skies of Berlin when the people of that desolate city were hungry and we had to feed them with our courage, with our planes, and with our cargoes landing, many times, in zero-zero weather."\textsuperscript{290} Johnson liked to highlight the hardships faced by the Americans in the Berlin Airlift, believing that it emphasized the essentially benevolent aspect of American involvement in the world.

Yet at the same time, Americans realized that for all the public relations value that the Berlin and the Wall provided, things could spiral out of control. The shooting of Peter Fechter, one of the most famous victims of the wall, proved the inherent instability of the situation. On a Friday afternoon in August 1962, 18 year old Peter Fechter was shot while trying to jump the barrier. Fechter did not die immediately; rather he was left to suffer for over an hour in East Berlin territory, as horrified Allied personnel and West Berlin citizens looked on. American reports out of Berlin indicated that angry West Berliners were taking matters into their own hands through mob activity, particularly against Soviet buses near Friedrichstrasse. From Paris, General Norstad expressed concern that "we cannot let mobs dictate actions in a time of such sensitivity and on a

\textsuperscript{290} Ibid. 438.
matters of such importance.”²⁹¹ In Washington, Clay worried that such “recent developments had hurt us with the people primarily because of [a] lack of reaction on our part.” From the mission in Berlin, Arthur Day cabled Frank Cash, telling him his belief that “we should keep the initiative with the Soviets and keep the pressure on them which resulted from this incident.”²⁹²

Whenever such an event happened, American officials immediately tried to spin it as an example of Soviet perfidy. In the case of Fechter, all agreed that, as Norstad put it, “the particular characteristics of Friday’s incident have understandably caused a reaction not only in Berlin, but throughout the world.”²⁹³ In a discussion between Secretary of State Dean Rusk and Ambassador Dobrynin, Rusk lectured that the “building of the wall” was the “major cause for the sense of deep dismay and anger felt by both West and East Berliners.”²⁹⁴ The Fechter incident, he noted, had initiated a “wave of revulsion and horror” throughout the world. Rusk hoped that this incident would help “the Soviet and Western Commandants get together to deal with the problem of tensions in the city.” In blaming the wall, and highlighting the suffering of Peter Fechter, in particular, Rusk placed American foreign policy on a righteous plane.

²⁹¹ Telegram from the Supreme Allied Commander, Europe (Norstad) to Secretary of Defense McNamara, August 21, 1962, FRUS 1961-1963, 15: 139.
²⁹³ Telegram from the Supreme Allied Commander, Europe (Norstad) to Secretary of Defense McNamara, August 21, 1962, FRUS 1961-1963, 15: 275.
In addition to worrying that the Wall could provoke a dangerous instability in the Cold War, the United States also feared that the Wall would have a deleterious effect on Berlin's economic well-being. As a result, the United States established a number of Berlin viability projects, measures designed to stimulate the Berlin economy and convince the Berliners that the Americans would never abandon them. These measures were intended to supplement the projects that the Federal Republic had already established to strengthen ties with Berlin. Together, the United States and the Federal Republic sought to intensify the cultural connections between West Berlin and the outside world, through increased opportunity for exchange in education, art, and music. Both worked together to establish a center for Lesser Developed Countries in West Berlin in an effort to centralize West Berlin in the West's attempts to promote reform in the Third World. The United States also sought to encourage American investment in Berlin, using private public relations firms to encourage American interest in the beleaguered city. Through these efforts, the United States and the Federal Republic sought to stabilize one of their most important assets in the struggle for Cold War legitimacy.295

The German Government

The Kennedy and Johnson administrations were not the only ones to recognize the power of Berlin and the Berlin Wall. The Germans found that the Wall exponentially

increased the power of Berlin to present a favorable impression of the Germans and the West in the Cold War. Much like the Berlin Airlift two decades ago, the Wall offered a simple, visceral, and powerful narrative of the Cold War to the American people. But this event, unlike the Airlift, was neverending. Every week, it seemed, brought a new tale of woe or heroism associated with the Wall. And just as before Germany could not be understood without Berlin, now Berlin could not be understood without the Wall. What could better demonstrate the bankruptcy of the communist system than the construction of a wall designed to keep the East Germans from fleeing to the West? The Federal Republic widely denounced the criminality of this act, and publicized the various means that East Germans undertook to circumvent the Wall and begin a new life in the West.

The newly created German Information Center found that the American appetite for the Wall was insatiable--but it took every opportunity possible to try and surfeit it. The GIC supplied information to countless numbers of newspaper and magazine articles. Replacing the Roy Bernard Co. as the clearinghouse of information on the Federal Republic of Germany, (see more on the GIC below) the GIC offered information and story ideas to any and all that approached it. It distributed thousands of pamphlets on the continuing saga. It also oversaw the creation of a number of films that depicted various aspects of the new barrier. It distributed these films to various civic and religious groups around the country, and it hired Sterling Pictures to broadcast many of these films on television networks. It also distributed these films directly to American politicians. A German embassy official reported, for example, that the Republican Congressional
Committee could not get enough film on the Wall. In all cases, it noted that the effect of this material was most favorable to Germany and Berlin.²⁹⁶

The City of West Berlin was also very active in publicizing the Wall. Its Press and Information Office created a traveling exhibition on the nature of Berlin, complete with a voice-recorded guided tour of the city by none other than the Mayor of West Berlin himself. Visitors could see a large map of the city, with various points of interest highlighted by Brandt. The wall, of course, dominated the tour. The City of West Berlin also constructed a number of pavilions for display at various fairs around the world. In these endeavors, West Berlin's public relations film, the Roy Bernard Co, assisted greatly.

But for the most part, Roy Bernard and the West Berlin government found that the Berlin Wall did not require assiduous public relations work. American journalists were all too happy to provide periodic reports on the horrors of the Berlin Wall on their own. Moreover, in the last half of the 1960s, the American government was skittish about overtly using the Berlin Wall for propaganda purposes, recommending, for example, that a proposed exhibition on Berlin drop a re-created Checkpoint Charlie that contained authentic equipment and uniforms. They preferred that the exhibit concentrate on more "positive" aspects of Berlin, such as the Liberty Bell. Still, American reporters,

novelists, and filmmakers were fascinated with the inherent drama of the wall and continued to produce works centered on it.297

Indeed, the human interest stories associated with the wall all but sold themselves. As one journalist put it, "it becomes grotesquely apparent how the big Berlin problem, the worldwide conflict, basically consists of lots of small family affairs, of tiny details, of seeming trifles...the worldwide conflict is reflected in the most private issues." One correspondent noted that for every Peter Fechter there were dozens like him who never had their stories told. In this way, the press often provided spontaneous uncoerced consent and support for the messages of both the Americans and the Germans. Occasionally, the Germans would find stories so good in the American media that they would appropriate them for their own propaganda.298

Indeed, once the City of West Berlin and Roy Bernard were able to enter into an agreement in 1961, they focused on other things. Stephen Goerl continued to work for the Berlin Tourism Office, and the Roy Bernard Co. was hired to promote the economy of West Berlin in the United States, as well as function in political capacities where needed. In this arrangement, the Roy Bernard Co. performed many of the same services that it had in its previous relationship with the Federal Republic. It arranged the visits of prominent Berliners to the United States. It placed information about Berlin in leading

298 Dieter Hildebrandt, "Wedding Guest Crosses the Wall," *New York Times Magazine*, November 22 1964, 36-37, 148-149, 152, 156. E. von Kuegelgen, "Wall: Three Years
American periodicals, and it circulated films about Berlin among American organizations and television stations.

The firm also helped out in other ways. Roy Bernard played a crucial advisory role in a couple of Berlin exhibitions in the United States, one in New York in late 1961 after the construction of the Berlin Wall and the other at the World Fair in Seattle in 1964. Roy Bernard was instrumental in the conceptualization and construction of Berlin Houses in New York and other prominent American cities. Roy Bernard established a policy of inviting one prominent journalist a month to Berlin to write a story on some aspect of the divided city. It issued periodic reports on the state of American domestic politics and culture to Berlin officials. It also published the *Berlin Business Barometer* for circulation in American business circles. In these ways, Roy Bernard promoted the interests of Berlin in the United States.299

One of the primary conscious aims of public relations work on behalf of Berlin was to cultivate relations with the American Jewish community. To that end, Roy Bernard proposed a series of visits to Berlin by prominent Jews. It also suggested that the City of Berlin fund visits by Jewish refugees and their children, although it later acknowledged that prioritizing certain refugees over others contained inherent risks. It also facilitated other contacts between the City of West Berlin and the American Jewish

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community. These efforts often paid off handsomely. Benjamin Epstein of the Anti-
Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, for example, notified Roy Blumenthal in 1969 that his
organization intended to support the Berlin Senate's plea to the Allies for a dissolution of
the National Democratic Party (NPD), a right-wing reincarnation of the Nazis.300

As was the case with Roy Bernard's involvement with the Federal Republic, a
number of former American government officials were appointed to work on West
Berlin's account. In 1965, Blumenthal hired Dr. Edwin Kretzmann, a former Deputy
Assistant Secretary of Public Affairs. In 1969, he hired Warren Blumberg, who worked
for the State Department for over 20 years in several capacities, with his most prominent
being the Deputy Chief of the Political Section of European Affairs. Roy Bernard's
biggest coup was the hiring of General Frank Howley, formerly of Aitken-Kynett, to
work on the Berlin account. Howley's intimate familiarity with Berlin without question
pleased Berlin officials.301

Roy Bernard also occasionally served as a political liaison for West Berlin
politicians (a product, no doubt, of Roy Bernard's choice in personnel). Berlin officials
asked Roy Bernard to schedule meetings for the Governing Mayor when he came to the
United States. Once, Ted Kaghan, an employee of Roy Bernard, served as a back

Grassmé, July 18, 1966, B Rep. 002/3415, LAB. Meeting at Roy Blumenthal

300 Letter, Spangenberg to Bahr, July 6, 1964, B Rep. 002/3376/1, LAB. Meeting at Roy
Memorandum, Blumenthal to Herz, February 6, 1969, B Rep. 002/6355, LAB. Letter,
Benjamin Epstein to Blumenthal, June 12, 1969, B Rep. 002/6355, LAB.
channel for the West Berlin government in its relations with the Hungarian Government. He had a brief discussion of West Germany's growing movement for Ostpolitik with a Hungarian charges d'affaires, in which he promoted the virtues and advantages of such a shift in policy. After this meeting, Roy Bernard informed West Berlin officials that it would be happy to forward along any additional information that the government wished the Hungarian official to have.

The Tunnel

While the American press could sometimes serve the interests of both American and German officials, it could also threaten the uneasy peace that both struggled to maintain. The American appetite for information about Berlin, and especially the human drama associated with the various efforts by East Germans to escape westward, occasionally drove the media to indulge in activities that did not help the causes of either nation. No better illustration of this fact exists than the competition between NBC and CBS to chronicle the desperate efforts of Germans engaged in an attempt to tunnel under the Berlin Wall.

In late spring of 1962, the American government was informed separately by NBC and CBS that each sought to participate in the construction of a tunnel under the

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303 See Newspaper clipping, "Who's in Charge, Washington Asks?", October 13, 1962, B 145, BAK.
wall to East Berlin, through which East Berliners could escape. When State Department officials told them that they believed such involvement was "dangerous and irresponsible," CBS desisted but NBC pushed on. NBC completed the film and intended to air it in the fall of 1962.\(^{304}\)

Both the Federal Republic and the City of West Berlin strongly protested the exhibition of this film. Both felt that it would be injurious to German interests and would expose participants or relatives of participants in East Berlin to harsh reprisals. Both also felt that the film would make great hay for Soviet propagandists, who would argue that the West was actively seeking to undermine the sovereign, legitimately constituted regime in Pankow. At the same time, however, the government encouraged American interest in the Berlin tunnel, because the desperate story of East Germans tunneling westward ostensibly demonstrated the superiority of the West. German officials gave their stamp of approval to MGM's production of *Escape from East Berlin*, and the GIC significantly aided a CBS special on the original tunnel.\(^{305}\)

In attempting to suppress this initiative, the West Germans enlisted the help of the Americans, who had their own reasons for discouraging the networks from pursuing such

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a story. Fearful that private initiatives such as those proposed by CBS and NBC posed a threat to the delicate stability reached in Berlin, the State Department sought to dissuade both networks from continuing with the stories. It also feared for the safety of the camera crews potentially involved. Once the film was completed, however, the State Department took pains not to publicly censure NBC, instead opting to praise CBS for its responsible and patriotic decision to drop the story. After viewing it, State realized the propaganda value of the piece, and in a letter to NBC, Secretary of State Dean Rusk sympathized with the network's desire to broadcast the story, noting that it was a "moving human document." His only worry was if other "adventurous journalists" attempted to emulate the "fortunate success" of the crew." 306

In the end, the dramatic nature of the story was able to win over the Germans as well. NBC promised to edit the film so as to camouflage the identities of those who participated. Moreover, the network forcefully argued that the tunnel was already underway when it began filming its progress. Ultimately, its assertion to the German embassy that "The Tunnel' [is] one of the most compelling human documents ever

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produced for television, celebrating as it does, man's unconquerable drive to be free" convinced the Germans that any possible damage was done, and that they should swing their support behind the film. ⁴⁰⁷

Overall, the Wall presented American and German officials with a powerful symbol of the Cold War, and they wasted no time in using it to further their own objectives. Although events occasionally threatened to get out of control, both American and German officials believed that Berlin properly symbolized the struggle of both nations against the Soviet Union and despotism.

The Reception of Berlin

Reception of Berlin and the Berlin Wall was for the most part unified. The simple power of the "human stories" associated with the Wall simplified the nature of the Cold War for many. One American, for example, wrote to his congressman with the suggestion that all young leaders of new countries should be provided with a tour of Berlin so that they properly understand the nature of the Cold War. Many Americans continued to believe that, as President Kennedy said in an address, the Berlin Wall "is the obvious manifestation, which can be demonstrated all over the world, of the superiority of our system." ⁴⁰⁸

⁴⁰⁸ Letter, Frederick Dutton to Congressman Randall, May 26, 1964, EDX 15 GER W, Subject Numeric Files, RG 59, NA.
The fracturing of the Cold War consensus during the course of the 1960s threatened this unified understanding of Berlin. Pinpointing an exact time for the breakdown of this consensus in an almost impossible task; instead it is more useful to think of it as a process spurred on by great changes in society. The outbreak of an effective African-American civil rights movement represented the first real crack in the Cold War consensus. It was not that the methods and strategies of organizations like the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) were radically anti-American. Rather it was the fact that, with the help of the new medium of television, Americans in the north came face to face with a cruelty and savagery that many would never have imagined in their fellow citizens. Martin Luther King's strategy of non-violent resistance exposed the rabid and irrational fear that many Southerners held of African-American equality. And yet as the decade wore on, the focus and mood of the Civil Rights movement turned angrily toward de facto segregation in northern and western states. In the process, northern whites went from disapproving moralizers to desperate defenders of the status quo. The struggle over racial equality in the United States revealed a nation not nearly as perfect as it was led to believe.

As African-Americans pushed for full participation in American society, a growing number of young affluent whites became intent upon refashioning it. Drawing from the malcontent Beat generation of the 1950s, the New Left, under the direction of Tom Hayden and others, criticized contemporary American society for its impersonal, bureaucratic nature. They assailed all of the cherished beliefs of the liberal Cold War consensus, charging that contemporary America denied Americans the power to affect
their own lives. Included in this broadside against American society was a scathing indictment of American foreign policy in the Cold War. While he did not condone the repressive conduct of the Soviet Union, Hayden, author of the Port Huron Statement, the manifesto of the Students for a Democratic Society, accused the United States of morally bankrupt policies in the Third World, in the process mocking the notion that the United States headed a "free world." Hayden and others lambasted the bruising conformity of Cold War anti-communism, arguing that it blinded Americans domestically to racial and ideological injustices and internationally to post-colonial pain and inequality in the Third World.309

As the decade wore on, the war in Vietnam became the lightning rod for such sentiments. Indeed, as the futility of the war in Southeast Asia became apparent and the conflict appeared increasingly immoral and unwanted, Vietnam became the symbol of another, far different historical narrative. Rather than casting the United States as the defender of the free world, this new historical narrative portrayed the United States as an imperialistic nation bent on world domination. This new historical narrative drew from American participation in the Third World, highlighting the ways in which the United States sought to paralyze underdeveloped nations as permanent vassals of American capital. Historians of the New Left looked to American involvement in the Western

hemisphere and Asia, and the quest for global markets for the American capitalist system's insatiable appetite. By far, the most influential of these works was William Appleman Williams's *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*, which used the literary trope of tragedy to underscore the betrayal of American ideals in American foreign policy toward the Third World. Rather than point to the American Cold War experience in Berlin, Williams and his Wisconsin school forged a new Imperial narrative, dependent heavily of the notion of expansionist tendencies in American-style capitalism, to explain the conduct of American foreign policy. In this new narrative, Berlin became irrelevant and the issue of West German revival became a stain on the American conscience. By the end of the decade, a growing number of Americans viewed their country in an unfavorable light.\footnote{William A. Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (Cleveland: World Pub. Co., 1959).}

In this new climate, Berlin retained its moral power, but disenfranchised and disenchanted Americans ripped the Wall from its historical context and appropriated its power and outrage for their own domestic purposes. And sometimes these appropriations proved embarrassing to American officials. African Americans, for example, used the power and imagery of the Wall in their struggle for civil rights. In Selma, Alabama, African American demonstrators authored an impromptu song entitled "Berlin Wall" to describe a clothesline that Selma police had strung across Sylvan Street to keep them from leaving their designated area. Part of the lyrics went:

> A clothesline is a Berlin Wall,
Berlin Wall, Berlin Wall,

A clothesline is a Berlin Wall,

In Selma, Alabam'.

In Los Angeles, African-Americans used the power of the wall to attack de facto segregation. Referring to a street that marked the beginning of an all-white neighborhood, one black resident remembered, "we used to say that Alameda was the Berlin Wall." For African Americans activists, the use of Berlin or the Berlin Wall to describe their own situation demonstrated the changing understandings of the struggle of the Cold War.311

American leaders also had a difficult time manipulating how other leaders understood Berlin. In discussions with Prince Sihanouk of Cambodia, for example, State Department officials learned Sihanouk had read the German question differently. While paying tribute to Khrushchev for his "sincere desire" to solve Berlin, he had nevertheless publicly called for the "strict and sincere application of the self-determination principle for Berlin as well as all other conflicts." Sihanouk believed that a "solution should also envision German reunification and neutralization, thus creating a neutral buffer between the opposing blocs analogous to the neutral buffer he has advocated in Southeast Asia."312 Whereas Sihanouk cast the German problem in terms of neutralizing Vietnam,


Dutch diplomats used Berlin to justify Dutch policy in West New Guinea. In a discussion between the Kennedy administration and Dutch Foreign Minister Luns and Ambassador van Roijen over the Dutch position, the Foreign Minister maintained that "there is no difference in principle between maintaining self-determination for the population of West Berlin or West New Guinea." The ambassador remarked that "the Dutch could not sacrifice national honor anymore than the United States could run out of West Berlin." As the Cambodia and Dutch examples illustrate, the American officials could not always control the reception of Berlin in foreign relations discourse.

The construction of the Berlin Wall seemingly provided visceral proof of American claims in the Cold War. The Wall further illustrated the belief that the communist system was a failure, and could only keep citizens loyal to it through coercion and terror. Yet the pure, primitive power invested in Berlin could be used against American society to great effect, and it was once the Cold War consensus began to break down.

The construction of the Berlin Wall also further cemented Germany's place in the West. This became especially apparent when discussion on Germany's past was renewed during the 1960s, as the next chapter demonstrates.

CHAPTER 7

"THE ANTI-GERMAN WAVE"

"This office is not particularly happy to see Germans in general depicted as brutes and hateful characters, but we had hoped that at least the series would not automatically identify the young Germans and the Germany of today with the Nazis of the past." 314

Letter from Joseph Thomas, Director of the German Information Center, to Leonard Goldenson, President of ABC

"The pictures from Selma were unpleasant. The juxtaposition of the Nazi Storm Troopers and the Alabama State Troopers made them unbearable."

Warren Hinckle and David Welsh, on the ABC telecast of Judgment at Nuremberg315

314 Letter, Thomas to Leonard H. Goldenson, April 21, 1964, B 145/3004, BAK.

Already a major international figure, the man that stood at the front of the theater had seen his popularity increase ten-fold in the last few months. After the Berlin Wall was constructed in August 1961, his relentless invectives against it, those who created it, and (occasionally) those who permitted it to exist, had been beamed into homes across the world. His growing stature lent an air of importance and mystery to the event in which he was about to participate. The international assemblage of major military figures, diplomats, and journalists waited anxiously for his opening comments.

The man was Willy Brandt, the Governing Mayor of West Berlin. The event was the world premiere of Stanley Kramer's *Judgment at Nuremberg* on December 14, 1961. The place was the Congress Hall of West Berlin, located just seven hundred yards from the new wall. Kramer and United Artists had spared no expense in planning and funding this premiere. United Artists had flown reporters from around the world into West Berlin. They had also invited representatives from a hundred different nations. Kramer and United Artists intended to make full use of the setting to promote their film.

Once they had learned of this planned event, American and German officials had hoped to prevent it. Representatives from both governments had viewed the film, and they all worried that the film could have serious international repercussions. The specially appointed Berlin Task Force had explored ways to cancel the premiere. When they realized that this was impossible, the members of this American organization switched gears and began brainstorming for ways to spin the film. Stunned at Brandt's willingness to host the premiere in the first place, West German officials inquired into the
possibilities of rescheduling or relocating the event. Ambassador Wilhelm Grewe counseled the Federal Republic to avoid any official acknowledgment of or participation in the premiere. All thought that it could be disastrous for American-German relations.\textsuperscript{316}

Besides the fact that the international situation was extremely delicate at the moment, American and especially German officials worried that the premiere would damage the image of Germany in the world. Since the late 1940s, American and German representatives had assiduously worked to rehabilitate Germany's image in the Western World. The United States had labored to rebuild their new Cold War allies in a democratic mold, and American officials desperately wanted the American people to believe their exertions had borne substantial fruit. They had helped censor negative representations of Germans, while facilitating the distribution of positive images of the Germans. The Germans were even more active. In addition to their direct efforts to curry American favor, they had hired a number of public relations firms to act on behalf of the German people. One firm, in particular, had served as the FRG's representative in all matters relating to Germany's public image. Everyone feared that \textit{Judgment} could undo years of hard work.

In this way, the world premiere of *Judgment at Nuremberg* in the Congress Hall of West Berlin on December 14, 1961 dramatized two conflicting narratives of the German people in the American imagination. On the one hand, the film about the Nuremberg trials helped resurrect a World War narrative of the German people that described them as arrogant, servile, cruel, and ultimately unrepentant for their crimes in World War II. On the other hand, both the location and the host of the premiere--West Berlin and its Governing Mayor, Willy Brandt, respectively--presented a Cold War narrative that portrayed the Germans as a heroic people standing firm on the front line of the Free World. This event represented in microcosm the larger shifts that were occurring in American society during the 1960s.

For as the 1960s wore on, German officials became convinced that *Judgment at Nuremberg* constituted only one element of a larger manifestation in American mass culture, what they called *die antideutsche Welle* or the "anti-German wave." Tracing this wave as far back as the publication of Anne Frank's diary, many Germans detected a recognizable pattern of anti-German material coming from film, television, and the print media in the U.S. In addition to *Judgment at Nuremberg*, officials cited the televised trial of Adolf Eichmann and the publication of William Shirer's *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* as major elements in this push.

This chapter illustrates the concerns of West German officials. But, building on the previous chapter, it argues that the fracturing Cold War consensus rendered the anti-German wave impotent. It attempts to illustrate how American certainty regarding the
sins of the Germans evaporated as the American people were polarized in the face of war and domestic unrest.

"The Anti-German Wave"

In the early 1960s, German officials began to worry that a rash of anti-German films, documentaries, and books would poison American opinion against the Germans, thus ruining much of their hard work in favor of the German people. Concern over this issue was so great that Adenauer brought it up with Kennedy in 1961, and German Foreign Office (AA) officials vigorously debated whether or not Erhard should bring it up with Johnson in 1965.\textsuperscript{317}

Real life events appeared to spur the anti-German wave. The first major event to rekindle American indignation at the Nazis was the televised trial of Adolf Eichmann. Captured by Israelis in Argentina, Eichmann was tried in an Israeli court of law for crimes against the Jews. The trial lasted over a year and was broadcast around the world. Confronted with a Nazi from the past, Americans began to reflect on the horrors of the Third Reich.

The prominence of the Eichmann trial led to a renewed worry over a revival of the right in Germany. With Israel's "forthcoming trial of Adolf Eichmann...forcing attention again on the enormity of what the Nazis were," Edward Grusd, Chief of the \textit{New York Times} bureau in Bonn wondered, "who speaks for the new Germany?" Was it


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Konrad Adenauer and others "conscious as they write that their readership includes watchful foreigners" or was it "swastika daubers and the furtive souls who creep anonymously into cemeteries to smash tombstones and wreak still more vengeance on the dead?" Officially, he notes, Germans appear determined to confront their past, bombarding their children with facts about the Third Reich. But he uneasily observed that another crisis could renew German nationalism. This unease was amplified five years later, when the NPD, the new rightist party of Germany, gained a significant 2% of the popular vote. British journalist James Cameron interviewed Adolf von Thadden, leader of the NPD movement, for New York Times Magazine. Von Thadden charged that the Germans had been puppets in the hands of the Americans and Soviets and that the theory of collective guilt has been paralyzing.

In the New York Times Magazine Richard Lowenthal reported that the "Germans are beginning to feel like Germans again." Lowenthal pointed out that after the war, Germans had subordinated everything to economic reconstruction. In the process, they tried to fill the "spiritual void" left by the collapse of the "Nazi myth" with the hope of Western European integration. When De Gaulle destroyed that hope, the Germans began to think in national terms again. Other factors such as the re-establishment of contacts with Eastern Germans following the Berlin crisis, and the "dramatized" meaning of national partition in the Berlin Wall bolstered this trend. Lowenthal feared that if the

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United States did not take a firm stand in settling the European problem, the Germans might strike out on their own.320

From the perspective of German officials, one of the most troubling news reports was CBS' "The Germans," which premiered in 1967. Even Joseph Thomas, a German official at the German Information Center, who admittedly did not express the same level of concern that other Germans did over the anti-German wave, was incensed by it. "The Germans" focused on life in Nuremberg, and drew a number of controversial conclusions from its examination of the city. Among them, it charged that the danger of neo-Nazism was much greater than the Foreign Office and the Press Office believed it to be. German officials also found much of the factual reporting to be tendentious. Joseph Thomas wrote a detailed letter to CBS, outlining their grievances against the program.321 German officials were joined in their outrage by the citizens of Nuremberg, who did not take kindly to the implications of the program. Officials saw the anti-German wave in several different segments of the mass media.

The anti-German wave also appeared in major works of history. German officials argued that William Shirer's *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* had, and continued to have, a far more negative impact on American public opinion than any exhibition of atrocity film could ever exert. After its publication at the beginning of the decade, they


believed that *Rise and Fall* became the standard work in the public mind on the Nazi period. The most disastrous parts of the book, from the point of view of the German Foreign Office, came not from the descriptions of the activities of the Nazis, but from the introduction, in which Shirer argued that the Nazi regime was the logical outgrowth of the German national character. A correspondent in Berlin during the Third Reich, Shirer enjoyed great deal of legitimacy on the Germans and the Third Reich, and his book and opinions were disseminated widely.322

The second work was written by a German, and appealed more to professional historians. Fritz Fischer's *Griff Nach Der Weltmacht* (*Grasp for World Power*) made an instant splash in the Federal Republic and the United States. Fischer's work, based on a staggering amount of archival work, contained a relatively simple argument: the Central Powers were responsible for the outbreak of World War I. In this way, Fischer's thesis rehabilitated the war guilt clause of the Versailles treaty, angering many Germans who preferred to think of their involvement in World War I as morally equivalent at worst and morally superior at best. It also offered a powerful revision to the American understanding of World War I, which also tended to blame the Allies for the Great War. Unsurprisingly, Fischer encountered a great deal of criticism in both Germany and America, but the strength of his research led many to reevaluate their understanding of World War I.323

322 Aufzeichnung, January 24, 1966, B 145/2973, BAK.

323 Report, Amconsul Hamburg to Department of State, June 22, 1964, EDX GER W-US, Subject Numeric Files, RG 59, NA.
A number of motion pictures also made up the anti-German wave. Among these were *The Battle of the Bulge, The Blue Max, Is Paris Burning,* and *The Ship of Fools.* German officials objected to the ways in which Germans were stereotyped in these films. Since these films often took place during the Third Reich, they more often than not appeared to equate Nazism with Germanism. Of greatest concern in this regard was Stanley Kramer's 1961 *Judgment at Nuremberg.* German officials railed against films that seemed to impute that Nazism formed a constitutive part of German culture.\(^{324}\)

While these books and films were of great concern to German officials, the German Foreign Office and the Federal Press Office were more concerned about the anti-Germans aspects in American television. Programs like *Combat!, Rat Patrol,* and *Hogan's Heroes,* they felt, portrayed the Germans as a dumb, vicious, and cruel people. They were especially concerned about the effect that these television programs were having on children. Having banked on the hope that wartime portrayals of the Germans would fade away with time in the 1950s, they were alarmed to see that new programs were being created that started the defamation all over again. They also worried about the effect that these programs were having in the Third World. On a number of occasions, German officials reported that these programs were breeding hate for the Germans in Latin America.\(^{325}\)

\(^{324}\) Report, Generalconsulate Boston to the German Embassy, February 10, 1966, B 97/356, BAK.


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German officials posited a variety of reasons for the anti-German wave. Most believed that Americans for some reason still nurtured a lingering hatred of the Germans, who despite their steadfast alliance with the United States, could not start fresh with the American people. Another official blamed powerful Jewish liberals in the United States, Jews who exercised a "great influence in the modern communication industry." This official expressed his belief that the Jews targeted Nazism in Germany while privately harboring sympathy for the communists. But officials in the German embassy offered the most reasonable explanation. They thought that the recent revival of interest in Nazism was a byproduct of a greater rediscovery of World War II. Stories that dealt with World War II would naturally portray the enemy in a very unfavorable light. The Eichmann trial and the victory of the NPD, these officials pointed out, only spurred this revival along. That Americans would subconsciously view West Germany in light of its Nazi past was unsurprising, a fact indicated in a TV guide survey that demonstrated that 30 documentaries on Germany existed in 1962, while only 11 were on American problems.326

German officials tried a number of tactics to stem the tide of the anti-German wave. They found to their chagrin that they were alone in these endeavors, for the American government appeared maddeningly indifferent to helping them. German officials felt that to log an official protest against a particular film or program would only

serve to provide it with free publicity, and so their preferred initiatives were often private initiatives. The German Foreign Office encouraged German-American groups to protest the defamation of Germans in the American media. Along these lines they supported the idea of a German Anti-Defamation League. They wrote private letters of protest to executives of media outlets, asking for their cooperation in improving the images of Germans on television. And in at least one instance, Thomas wrote a major columnist to suggest an idea to her for an anti-Communist movie (as opposed to an anti-Nazi film) that she could perhaps pass along to someone in power in Hollywood.327

But the Federal Republic's primary response to the anti-German wave was to step up German cultural and social representation in the United States through the creation of the German Information Center (GIC). West German officials did not believe that Roy Bernard was doing enough to stem the tide of the anti-German wave, and so the proposed GIC took on many of the duties and responsibilities of the Roy Bernard Co. Jointly administered by the Foreign Office and the Federal Press Office, the GIC's primary function was to serve as a source of information on the Federal Republic. But it was also expected to place information in major American periodicals. German officials chose Dr. Joseph Thomas as its director, a German who had served as Press Officer as well as Deputy Chief Director of the American Desk in Bonn. The GIC began operations in late

1960 and continues to serve as a source of information for American journalists. In this new configuration, Roy Bernard's role was reduced to advisor to the Federal Republic.\textsuperscript{328}

In addition to this more positive approach to the anti-German wave, the Foreign Office occasionally moved more forcefully. Sometimes such actions had disastrous results, as it did when the Foreign Office cut funding for a lecture circuit planned by Fritz Fischer. As one American official put it, "the controversy over Fischer has unquestionably undone years of effort by the representatives of the Federal Republic in the United States to encourage a favorable image of the new Germany." The basic contours of the story are clear. Fischer had received funding from the Goethe-Institut to present a series of papers in the United States on his recent work \textit{Griff nach der Weltmacht}. In the fall of 1963, the German government informed the universities that Fischer had refused the invitation. Since he was personally in contact with some of the members of the faculty, the lie was readily discovered. The Goethe-Institut then informed Fischer and the universities that a mistake had been made, and that funds were unavailable. American professors reacted angrily, embarrassing even Fischer with the strident tone of their missives to the German Foreign Office. In due course, these American professors convinced the American Council of Learned Societies to fund Fischer's trip. Once it became aware of the availability of these funds, the Foreign Office

dispatched a high official to Hamburg to plead with him not to go. According the American report, "he made a strong appeal to Fischer's German patriotism and tried to show Fischer that his trip to America would harm the favorable image the Germans had been trying to create in the United States." Fischer tried to convince him that at this point it would be more damaging not to go. Eventually Fischer came to the United States and gave his lectures. The American consulate in Hamburg was left to conclude that "one can only agree with the general evaluation of the American professors on the stupidity and lack of comprehension of the German Foreign Office demonstrated by its activities in the Fischer affair...Now, too many Americans will agree with William Shirer, that 'the Germans never change.'"

And yet despite their damaging experience in the Fischer controversy, Foreign Office officials considered even more drastic measures to bring American film and television producers to heel. They strongly considered an embargo on firms or sponsors who were affiliated with products with anti-German undertones. They noted that this strategy had worked well for Japan in the early days of its new government. As a result of this Japanese action, the Motion Pictures Association of America (MPAA), they reported, practically forbade the production of films with anti-Japanese themes or

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329 Report, Amconsul Hamburg to Department of State, June 22, 1964, EDX GER W-US, Subject Numeric Files, RG 59, NA. Brief, Schröder an Dr. Fritz Fischer, March 7, 1964, B 96 (IV 7)/783, AA.
representations. Yet before they took this radical step, they needed proof of the negative effect that these films were having on the American people.  

What evidence did the Federal Republic already possess, and what did it say? Did these cultural products serve as sites of collective memory in which Americans reflected on the barbarism of the German people? Anecdotal evidence to this effect trickled into the BPA and the AA. A concerned German passed along a letter from his son who was studying in the United States. His son reported that his classmates often asked him if he was a Nazi or a Communist, despite the fact that he was born in 1949. His son blamed American television, which contained several programs on the World War II era that, according to him, portrayed the Germans as "hard, unscrupulous, vicious, and always ready to say 'Heil Hitler' or 'Jawohl.'" In a later letter, he expressed frustration for having to carry this heavy burden, when he himself had "done nothing bad." A German-American living in California warned Bundeskanzler Kiesinger that American children were being educated by the television, and that the television was teaching children that the German was a "stupid, brutal animal. No other land in the world is similarly propagandized in the US as the Germans." Another German wrote the

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BPA on his conversation with an American on a plane about German in mass culture. His conversation echoed these concerns.331

The German Foreign Office decided that anecdotal evidence was not enough to move forward with serious measures, however. They wanted to know when anti-German programs were shown on television, where on television they could be found, and who was sponsoring them. And more importantly, they wanted to know if American attitudes had changed as a result of these cultural works. Officials in the embassy wanted concrete data before they decided to recommend economic sanctions or suggest that the Chancellor speak with Johnson about the matter.332

The results of this survey were a great relief to German officials. The poll found that the Germans were second only to the British of "best-liked" people. Most encouraging to the BPA was the fact that the anti-German wave had virtually no effect on public opinion. A mere seven percent of respondents said that the anti-German programs reflected their true feelings. Twenty-four percent said that there was no relationship between the depictions of the programs and present-day Germany. The other seventy-six percent apparently had not even recognized a possible connection. Graf Schweinitz of


the BPA wrote exultantly to a member of the Free office that this poll, and not the apparent anti-German wave, revealed the true feelings of the American people. Given the state of affairs at the end of the war, Graf Schweinitz claimed that this poll indicated the outstanding success of the BPA is affecting American public opinion. By the end of the decade, Joseph Thomas was reporting that *Rat Patrol* and *Combat* had been cancelled, and that humorous depictions of Germans in *Hogan's Heroes* and *Laugh-In* did not have an adverse effect on the image of Germany. The anti-German wave had not affected the American understanding of Germany.  

**Contextualizing the Anti-German Wave**

Was Graf Schweinitz's analysis accurate? Was the American resistance to the anti-German wave simply a product of persistent public relations work? Or was something else going on here? Other public opinion polls from the period offer some clues. The Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan surveyed 1300 people on their attitudes toward the Germans in the late spring/early summer of 1962, just after the publication of *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, the trial of Adolf Eichmann, and the release of *Judgment at Nuremberg*. The results were remarkably similar. Sixy percent of respondents had a good impression of the Germans, while only fifteen percent held a negative view. When asked if their opinions of the Germans had changed over the

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last few years, seventy-two percent said no, fifteen said it had gotten better, and only four percent said that it had become worse. Only three people mentioned the Shirer book, and only one discussed the Eichmann trial. A majority of Americans thought that the Germans were dependable allies, and an overwhelming majority thought that the United States should stay in Berlin.334 Again, a hardy resistance to the anti-German wave.

But this survey probed a little deeper, and asked respondents to explain their answers. What is remarkable in these explanations is the towering shadow that the Cold War cast across the American understanding of West Germany. The most popular reason for liking Germany? Germany's role in the Cold War. Most popular reason for trusting Germany as an ally? "They know and dislike Communism and Russia." The second most popular reason? "They know and like us." The most popular reason for defending West Berlin? Four out of five said to stop communism.335

From these responses it is clear that just as in the 1950s, the Cold War remained the decisive prism through which Americans understood the world around them. But in the 1960s, the common understanding of that conflict and America's place in it, the Cold War consensus, broke down. And if Americans understood the Cold War differently during the 1960s, then that means that they understood West Germany differently too. During the early years of the Cold War, the heyday of the Cold War consensus,
Americans understood West Germany as a nation in transition from despotism to democracy. The Cold War consensus saw the United States as the highest form of government, and in this scheme Americanizing West Germany was the best means of reconstructing it. In the 1960s, the understanding remained, but as the Cold war consensus fractured, the ways in which Americans understood Germans fractured as well. Although the polarization of the body politic did not alter the general public approval of the Germans, it did alter the public understanding of the Germans, or, perhaps put more accurately, it splintered the public understanding of them.

The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich and Judgment at Nuremberg

This fracturing consensus can be witnessed in American responses to the some of the principal elements of the feared "anti-German wave," and in the process help explain how Nazi Germany was highly visible in the United States without having a negative impact on American opinions of West Germany. In particular, an examination of the reactions to William Shirer's *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* and Stanley Kramer and Abby Mann's *Judgment at Nuremberg* illustrate how anti-Nazi and indeed anti-German texts functioned as sites of memory in which Americans remade relations between Nazis, Germans, and their own society.

William Shirer's *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* has been hailed as the "best selling historical work ever written in modern times." Shirer, the former correspondent of Nazi Germany, had enjoyed previous publishing success with his *Berlin Diary* before he took it upon himself to write a synthetic history of the rise and fall of Hitler's regime. Shirer began work on his history in the mid-1950s despite dire warnings from his
publisher and agent. Indeed, his agent maintained that there was very little interest in the Third Reich or Adolf Hitler. Shirer plowed on, and five years later, in October 1960, his massive tome was released and immediately shot to the top of the bestseller list. In its first year it sold over 1 million copies. Shirer's work continued to sell well, shocking many naysayers, including his own agent.336

As previously mentioned, Shirer's work was not only anti-Nazi but anti-German. Still a firm believer in the "Luther-to-Hitler" theory of the German people that he formed from his days as a correspondent, Shirer fashioned a narrative of the Third Reich that portrayed it as the logical outcome of the German character. As he put it, the "Germans imposed the nazi tyranny on themselves." From this vantage point, it is understandable that Shirer's work implied that the collapse of the Third Reich did not mean a collapse of German character, and thus that the New Germany, that is West Germany, could not necessarily be trusted. More than anything else, it was the political implications of Shirer's thesis that alarmed both West German and American officials.337

American response to the work fell into two main camps. Perhaps spurred by other elements of the anti-German wave, Shirer's opinions resonated with several writers of American magazines. Largely composed of journalists and British leftist academics, this group applauded Shirer's efforts to awaken the American people from their state-
sanctioned historical slumber. Other Americans, on the other hand, subscribing to the dominant notion of totalitarianism, suggested that Shirer's work distorted the nature of Nazism by casting it as a uniquely German phenomenon. To make such a charge, they believed, ignored the totalitarian nature of the Soviet Union and suggested that Shirer himself was a communist sympathizer. They roundly condemned the book for its hostile appraisal of the Germans and their fledgling democracy.  

Despite this real difference over Shirer's main thesis, however, a consensus remained as to the nature of the debate. Both groups debated Nazism in a European context. Their main point of difference lay in the nature of Nazism and the progress that Germans had made it shedding their fascist past. No one, at this point, seriously considered universalizing the Nazi experience to include the United States. Americans in the early part of the 1960s were still confident as to the superiority of their civilization.

Shirer's book, although a seemingly eternal source of knowledge on the Third Reich, only had a brief window of public discourse on its impact. A better case for examining the changing ways in which Americans understood the Germans is the differing receptions of Stanley Kramer's *Judgment at Nuremberg*, which focused on the experiences of an American judge, Dan Haywood, who came to Germany to preside over the trial. The movie followed Haywood as he listened to the arguments of the lawyers,

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338 Galveston adequately lays out the two opposing camps, but fails in his larger aim to demonstrate that most Americans were sympathetic to Shirer's rendition. His argument that high sales figures ultimately equated with acceptance is facile and clearly disproven by the above cited public opinion polls on the anti-German wave and the following discussion of *Judgment at Nuremberg*.  

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contemplated the actions of the defendants, kept company with a beautiful German widow determined to prove to him and all Americans that not all Germans are monsters, and mingled with the Germans in an effort to understand them and why they allowed National Socialism to happen. In the midst of the trial, the Berlin Blockade began, and the American military started pressuring the prosecuting attorney and Judge Haywood to go easy on the German judges because the United States needed the Germans for the developing Cold War. Both refused and the judges were sentenced to life in prison.

In *Judgment* scriptwriter Abby Mann and director-producer Stanley Kramer said that they wanted to challenge prevailing American attitudes toward the Federal Republic of Germany. When Mann first began writing *Judgment* he remembered, "it was considered a breech of good manners in polite society to bring up the subject of German guilt or the victims of the Third Reich."339 For Mann, this repression stemmed from an American desire to whitewash the German people in the name of Cold War expediency. As evidenced in his screenplay, Mann believed that there was no "ground zero" in which Germany democracy was reborn. Most of the Germans in his film come across as servile, arrogant, or cruel. For example, in one of the most powerful moments of the film, the German defense attorney approaches Judge Haywood after the conviction of his clients and informs him that, despite his ruling, his clients will go free in five years. Haywood compliments the young lawyer for his logical mind, but sternly lectures him that because it is logical does not mean that it is right. In the script, Mann writes that the

339 "Souvenir Program from Berlin Premiere," "Judgment at Nuremberg" Clippings File, MHL.

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defense attorney "is a little stunned. HAYWOOD has stopped him for a moment, making him think. But only for a moment. It is not long until the old rationalizations come into his face. He is indeed the symbol of the new Germany."340 In this way, Mann's screenplay echoed the sentiments of Shirer's work.

And yet Mann maintained later that the film was not even really about Germany. In a sense, Mann believed that he failed in his effort, because, as he said later in an interview, "I wasn't writing about Germany, I was writing about patriotism, to say that patriotism is evil." This intent can be seen in the way that he juxtaposed certain unsavory episodes in American history with elements of Nazism. Perhaps the most obvious (and the one that several German viewers noticed) was the German defense lawyer's invocation of the widespread American belief in eugenics, as propounded by Oliver Wendell Holmes, in the early 20th century. Others existed also, including the very fact that American military personnel were ready to subvert justice for national advantage in the Cold War. Clearly, Mann's prey was the United States as much as Germany.

An advanced preview of Judgment held on August 12, 1961 (the day before construction began on the Wall) offers an excellent opportunity to explore how Americans understood the film. After the film Kramer asked spectators to fill out a response card. These cards asked the audience members to rate the film from fair to

340 Abby Mann, "Judgment at Nuremberg: Revised Final," Stanley Kramer Papers, UCLA, Department of Special Collections, Los Angeles, California (hereafter SKP).
excellent and then offered a space for additional comments.341 From an analysis of these cards, it is possible to generalize interpretive strategies that spectators used in making sense of the film.

Although a few Americans focused on the misdeeds of the Americans, the overwhelming number of spectators focused on the degree of guilt that average every-day Germans bore for the Holocaust. Many of these viewers believed that the message of the film, as one put it, “did need to be said.” For those who interpreted the film as a righteous effort to tackle the issues of the Holocaust, Judgment “outlined and detailed the German character perfectly in their denial of knowledge and or responsibility.” On the other hand, others believed that this was an “old story revisited,” a “rehashment [sic]” that “many would like to forget.” They believed that World War II and the Holocaust should remain in the past, that there was no need to dredge up these awful memories. Their attitudes were summarized by one individual who wrote, “Why not save resentment for the communist[s], instead of a party that is no longer in power? Let us live in the present not in the past.”

Yet despite these sharp differences over the responsibility that contemporary Germans bore for the Holocaust, these spectators shared a remarkable homogeneity in their interpretation of what the main issue actually actually was. For the most part, these Americans were still part of the Cold War consensus that evinced confidence in the supremacy of American ideals and the desirability of the American way of life. For

341 These cards may be found in the Stanley Kramer Papers, UCLA, Department of Special Collections, Los Angeles, California.
them, the Holocaust remained a German event, and the main terms of the debate revolved around how much progress the Germans were making in shedding their past and reaching that exalted state of American style democracy and capitalism. As evidenced by these response cards, some believed that the Germans were still unrepentant Nazis, others believed that Nazism died out a long time ago, but all believed that Nazism, if it was a problem at all, was a German problem.

In contrast to this viewing of Judgment in San Francisco, which was probably far more representative of the type of exhibitions of Judgment that Americans experienced, was the world premiere of Judgment at Nuremberg. The premiere took place in West Berlin on December 14, 1961. Kramer set December 14 as "der Tag" for the world premiere before he began rehearsals the previous year, and even he, cagey publicist that he was, could not have foreseen the fortuitous constellation of events that would make his premiere international news. For in December of 1961, the city of Berlin was still in the throes of crisis over the Berlin Wall, and the Adolf Eichmann trial was rapidly reaching its conclusion in Israel. The premiere was held at the home of the Berlin Film Festival, the Congress Hall of West Berlin, a futuristic building given to the Germans by the Americans and located just 700 yards from the new wall. In addition to Kramer, Mann, and most of the stars, correspondents from Berlin, Germany, the United States, and around the world attended, as well as General Lucius Clay, President Kennedy's personal representative in Berlin, Major General Albert Watson, the American commandant, 20 ambassadors from various countries and officials of the Bonn government. As one
American reporter put it, "Mr. Kramer and his associates found themselves in the ideal position of having an attraction and a locale of unparalleled interest."³⁴²

The meaning that American reporters drew from the world premiere of Judgment at Nuremberg in Berlin was heavily conditioned by this environment. Brandt warned that "it will probably be difficult for some of us to watch and hear this film." Yet he maintained that "the roots of the present position of our people, our country and our city lie in this fact, that we did not prevent right from being trampled underfoot during the time of Nazi power." He welcomed the premiere of this difficult film, calling it an "important political event" and believing that its occurrence in West Berlin underscored the importance of "Berlin as a center of spiritual conflict." Through such powerful rhetoric, Brandt made a pitch for Berlin as the place of reconciliation, the area in which Germans were willing to come to grips with the sins of their past. Moreover, by comparing the brutality of the Nazis with the evident brutality of the East German regime in the construction of the Berlin Wall, he cast the East Germans as the heirs to Hitler's National Socialism.³⁴³ Buttressed by tours of the Wall and East Berlin given to foreign visitors by the Berlin Senate, Brandt's words colored the interpretation of American reporters in attendance, drawing their attention to the city--and present day Germany by extension--as much as the film itself.

³⁴² Martin Quigley, "An Important Political Event", Motion Picture Herald, "Judgment at Nuremberg" Clippings File, MHL.

³⁴³ Brandt, "Address of Governing Mayor Brandt at World Premiere of 'Judgment at Nuremberg,'" Publicity—Horwits, Al Correspondence, SKP.

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As a result of their environment, American reporters explicitly related context with text. For them, this exhibition of *Judgment* became a litmus test for the political maturity of the Germans, and they, along with Kramer and the rest of his staff, curiously awaited the response of the Germans. On the whole, they were impressed with the willingness of most Germans to face up to the damning film. Reporters noted that the Germans were "grim," or sat through the film in "stoic silence." Others described the Germans as "stunned" or "dazed" by the film. Although a few Berliners denounced the film, according to the reviewers, most hailed it for its "piercing honesty." Discussed in the context of Brandt's speech and the circumstances of the city of Berlin itself, these reports of the German reaction suggested that Berliners would lead the rest of the country into an honest appraisal of the German past.\(^4\) In this reading of *Judgment*, then, the emphasis on the bravery of present day Germans in facing the Communists and their own horrific past suggested that Germany had made substantial progress in its effort to become like the United States.

This reception of the film differs sharply from the responses generated by the television broadcast of *Judgment* on Sunday night, March 7, 1965. This Sunday, "Bloody Sunday," as observers of the Civil Rights came to know it, witnessed a shocking clash between peaceful marchers and overzealous Alabama state troopers at a bridge in Selma, Alabama. Millions of viewers received their first images of "Bloody Sunday"

when *Judgment* was interrupted by ABC news that night to display footage of the carnage. Many viewers believed that the footage of Selma was actually a part of the film. Andrew Young, member of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, wrote that "the violence in Selma was so similar to the violence in Nazi Germany that viewers could hardly miss the connection." The meaning that many Americans drew from this exhibition of *Judgment* disturbed them greatly. "The pictures from Selma were unpleasant," wrote Warren Hinckle and David Welsh of the publication *Ramparts*. "The juxtaposition of the Nazi Storm Troopers and the Alabama State Troopers made them unbearable."\(^5\)

As a result of this accident of programming, those who saw *Judgment at Nuremberg* that evening drew a radically different meaning from it than did previous viewers. Rather than use the film as a basis to judge Germans, they used the film as a basis to judge themselves. As one concerned citizen from Wisconsin wrote to his senator, "Are we seeing the days of Hitler lived in our own country? Disregard politics—fight for human rights, stop all Federal money going to Mississippi and Alabama." Partly as a result of this meaning drawn from the film, mainstream Americans began to view the civil rights struggle in terms not unlike those used to describe World War II and the Cold War. Walter Mondale, senator from Minnesota, worried that "this is totalitarian oppression at its worst—it is what we fought against in World War II and it is what we are

\(^{345}\) Warren Hinckle and David Welsh, "Five Battles of Selma," *Ramparts* 4 (June 1965), 36.
fighting against in the cold war today. In the increasingly difficult decade of the 1960s, Americans stopped worrying about Germany becoming like America and started worrying about America becoming like Nazi Germany. As the brutality in Selma seemed to indicate, Americans did not seem fit to sit in judgment of the Germans.

These different understandings of Germans from the same cultural document illustrate that American attitudes towards themselves were changing. While some Americans continued to understand Germany in terms of the Cold War consensus, more Americans began to universalize the Nazi experience as the decade wore on and their own flaws became more apparent. This process of universalizing the Nazi experience was aided in part by the power of Berlin to make Germans appear like Americans. It was also assisted by the increasing unrest in American society and the growing power of Vietnam to suggest alternative narratives of American participation in the world.

During the 1960s, the American Cold War consensus fractured. Along with this ideological breakdown came an attendant splintering of understandings of Germany and Berlin. The 1950s had witnessed a period of conformity, in which all lines pointed to the superiority of American civilization. Now, as many Americans reconceived and reimagined America, this period of happy consensus ended. Although a large number of Americans continued to cling to the consensus view of the United States, a significant number of Americans became critical of the United States and its mission in the world.

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346 Congressional Record 1965, 111: 4351, 4639.
For these Americans, both Germany and Berlin became powerful rhetorical devices. They used the powerful emotions associated with the former to suggest that the United States was no better than Third Reich. They inverted the power that American officials invested in the Berlin Wall to suggest that the United States had become the oppressor that it battled in the Cold War. In both instances, critics of America argued that the United States had become the antithesis of its ideals—that it had in fact become its own "other."

These terms were not merely descriptive. This is why their effects were so significant. Both the Third Reich and Berlin functioned as cognitive metaphors that shaped American understanding of the world and the past. Together, these metaphors presented a strong positive image of the United States. Yet, when ripped free of their more immediate historical contexts, they could serve as moral benchmarks to highlight the shortcomings of present-day American society. And because these metaphors were such important and constitutive elements of American identity, their use by critics brought home the criticisms more forcefully.

As the 1960s drew to a close, American society was in the throes of crisis, the likes of which had not been seen for a generation. Although the revolution died, the furor created during the 1960s would reverberate for the rest of the Twentieth Century.
CHAPTER 8

"FREEDOM DAY"

On November 9, 1999, the U.S. Congress took a break from the sometimes tedious day-to-day administration of the country to spend a few moments commemorating a "transcendent" moment in America's recent past. Introduced in the House of Representatives by Representatives Benjamin Gilman (NY), Christopher Cox (CA), and Tom Lantos (CA), House Concurrent Resolution 223 called both for the celebration of a Freedom Day each year in the United States and upon the United States to join with other nations, "specifically including those which liberated themselves to help end the Cold War, to establish a global holiday called Freedom Day." The Resolution glided through the House, passing by a vote of 417-0. Later that day, the Senate passed a concurrent resolution.\(^{347}\)

A movement for designating November 9 as Freedom Day began with the work of Ben Wattenberg, a syndicated newspaper columnist and Senior Fellow at the American Enterprise Institute. In December 1991, Wattenberg proposed a new national holiday to commemorate the end of the Cold War. He set up a contest in which he asked

\(^{347}\) Congressional Record 1999, 145: H11763.
readers to give it a name, designate a date, and propose a method of celebration. Several hundred people provided suggestions. Some of the names offered were "Ronald Reagan Day," "Gorbachev Day," "Thaw Day," "Peace Through Strength Day," "E Day" (which stood for "Evil Empire Ends Day"), "E2D2 Day" (which stood for "Evil Empire Death Day") and "Freedom Day." One of the dates suggested was June 5, Adam Smith's birthday, but most gave November 9, the date in 1989 that the Berlin Wall fell. Based on the overwhelming number of people suggesting Freedom Day as a name and November 9 as the date, Wattenberg proclaimed it as such and called upon legislators to recognize it. Representative Cox heeded his words, and asked Wattenberg to draft a bill.\textsuperscript{348}

The preamble to H. Con. Res. 223 is so striking that it deserves consideration in its entirety:

Whereas on November 9, 1989, the Berlin Wall was torn down by those whom it had imprisoned;

Whereas the fall of the Berlin Wall has become the preeminent symbol of the end of the Cold War;

Whereas the Cold War, at its essence, was a struggle for human freedom;

Whereas the end of the Cold War was brought about in large measure by the dedication, sacrifice, and discipline of Americans and many other peoples around the world united in their opposition to Soviet Communism;

\textsuperscript{348} Ibid., H1768.
Whereas freedom's victory in the Cold War against Soviet Communism is the crowning achievement of the free world's long 20th century struggle against totalitarianism; and

Whereas it is highly appropriate to remind Americans, particularly those in their formal educational years, that America paid the price and bore the burden to ensure the survival of liberty on this planet...

While this list contains a number of truisms–few, for example, have disputed the role of Eastern Europeans in bringing about the demise of communism, and almost all recognize that the Berlin Wall has been the preeminent symbol of the Cold War since its erection—a number of historically contested issues are conveniently elided. The essence of the Cold War has long been debated among Americans, and the suggestion that it was primarily a struggle over freedom serves to prioritize one narrative of the Cold War over others. The end of the Cold War remains a highly politically charged issue and the role of the American state in bringing about its demise is still vigorously questioned. Whether Soviet communism can be equated with Nazi totalitarianism or imperial autocracy remains up for debate; in any event, portraying the end of the Cold War as the "crowning achievement" in such an ongoing struggle simplifies the differences attending these various authoritarian threats. And of course, what kind of legacy Americans pass on to their children, and how they should educate their descendants on the Cold War in specific, remain hotly contested issues. Regardless of one's position on these critical
questions, it is clear that resolutions such as 223 serve to quell debate in favor of nationalism and patriotism.\textsuperscript{349}

What is also clear in such a document is that the Berlin Wall has emerged as the primary signifier of the Cold War, and, as such, plays a decisive role in how we remember and discuss the Cold War. Invoking the "fall of the Berlin Wall" has become shorthand for the complex, cataclysmic process involved in the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War. Such shortcuts invariably divest an incredibly complicated and diverse event such as the Cold War of its subtlety and nuance, reducing it to a morality play between good and evil, democracy and Communism. The power of the wall has not lessened with its passing; indeed, more fragments of the wall are memorialized in the United States than in any other nation, including Germany. The wall and the fall of the wall provide Americans with a comforting narrative of their nation's past, present, and future.

But during the last thirty years, the role of the wall, and Berlin in general, has not been so powerfully pure. Indeed, the Nixon administration tried to transform the meaning of Berlin in light of its strategy of détente from a symbol of confrontation to a harbinger of cooperation. Carter, as was typical of his entire foreign policy, was caught between a moralistic reading of the Wall and his desire to continue with the principles of détente. Only with Reagan's return of the Cold War did Berlin regain official sanction as

the battleground between East and West. After the fall of the Wall and the demise of communism, Berlin's status as symbol of the Cold War has become even more firmly entrenched.

The subtext underlying all these changes in presidential politics was the growing power of the New Right. Overshadowed at the time by the more radical and flamboyant movements on the left, the rise of the New Right during the 1960s has been recently recognized as perhaps the most important movement of the decade. The New Right attacked the Cold War consensus from a conservative vantage point, denouncing state involvement in the economy and preaching a more aggressive foreign policy abroad. Rather than presenting a cautionary tale, Vietnam taught them that the United States had to be more forceful in its campaign against the Soviet Union. During the last quarter of the century, their ideas would come to dominate American discourse on the United States and its place in the world.350

Nixon's Revolution

The United States during the 1970s represented an aberration in the post-World War II world. As the revolutionary fervor of the 1960s climaxed in 1968, the protest movements began to further fragment and, within a shockingly short amount of time, died. In this post-1960s world, Americans fumbled for some sort of new identity.

Disenchanted with their nation's involvement in Vietnam, many Americans were confused and distressed over their nation's mission in the world. Shaken by economic crises that threatened the seemingly inevitable prosperity of the United States, some Americans questioned the future of their nation and sought to reinvent themselves in the ashes of the tumultuous sixties.

The new Nixon administration tried to offer a new, clearheaded vision for American foreign policy. Popularly known as détente, American foreign policy in the Nixon administration sought a relaxation of tensions between the United States and the communist world. A major intent of this new strategy was to de-emphasize the moral aspects of America's struggle against the Soviet Union. The Nixon administration conceived of the Cold War not as the conflict of rival ideologies or civilizations, but as a conflict of great powers, both of whom had valid interests and concerns in the larger world. Nixon and his chief advisor, Henry Kissinger, himself a outspoken supporter of Realpolitik, attempted to find possible areas of agreement between the superpowers that would enable them to take some of the edge off the rivalry, while not conceding their respective basic interests.351

In this framework, Berlin became a major test for the Nixon administration and its new policy. Because of the tension and unpredictability that had surrounded Berlin during the Cold War, Nixon and Kissinger rightly perceived that an agreement stabilizing Berlin would make an excellent beginning for their larger aim of détente. A number of

international developments had occurred by the late 1960s to make the Soviets more amenable to a wide-ranging solution on the Berlin question. Most significant of these were the emergence of the Sino-Soviet rift and a genuine belief on the part of the Soviets in the willingness of the Americans to negotiate.352

To their distress, however, Nixon administration officials found that they were not the only ones interested in a relaxation of tensions. In Europe, they found a counterpart familiar to all Americans -- West Berlin's former mayor, and the Federal Republic's current chancellor, Willy Brandt. Brandt initiated what became known as Ostpolitik, which sought to recognize the status quo in Eastern Europe in the hopes of reducing the likelihood of war and increasing commercial contacts between the Federal Republic of Germany and Eastern European nations. He negotiated two substantial treaties designed to ease tensions between West Germany and the communist world. The first treaty, with Poland, sought to stabilize the territorial status quo. The second pact, with the Soviet Union, pledged non-aggression between the two countries. For his efforts in improving relations between East and West, Brandt received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1971.353

Brandt's credentials in the United States certainly enabled his turn eastward. Americans still remembered him as the brave mayor of West Berlin, who had courageously stood up to the Soviets during the dark and dangerous days of the 1960s. As a result, Berlin became Germany in a real sense through the personage of Berlin's

352 Ibid.
353 For more on this subject please see, Raymond L. Garthoff, Détente and Confrontation (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1985) and Bundy, Tangled Web.
erstwhile Burgermeister. Nixon said as much when he welcomed Brandt to the United States for the first time as Chancellor: "Mr. Chancellor, you have been to our country many times, but most Americans welcome you and remember you, as I do, because you were the Mayor of Berlin—and we think of Berlin, that great and free city, as we welcome you today." The warm remembrances of many Americans afforded Brandt considerable initial leeway.

On the surface, it seems that the Nixon administration had every reason to support Brandt. Both Ostpolitik and détente shared a similarity of objectives, in that they both sought to reduce the tension associated with the Cold War. Indeed, bolstered by the intellect of Henry Kissinger, the Nixon administration drew considerable parallels between détente and Ostpolitik. In the Second Annual Report to Congress, the Nixon administration flatly stated that "East-West conflict in Europe springs from historical and objective causes, not transient moods or personal misunderstandings." Over the last quarter century, "opposing national interests and contrary philosophies" had generated "the military confrontation of opposing coalitions, the division of Germany, the situation in and around Berlin, the nature of relations between Western and Eastern countries and institutions, and the barriers to travel and cultural and intellectual discourse." Like Brandt's Ostpolitik, Nixon and Kissinger's détente sought to reach an accommodation with the Soviet Union. They explicitly supported the policies of the Brandt government.

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and viewed "its anguish at the unnatural division of the German nation with profound compassion."\(^{355}\)

Privately, however, Nixon and Kissinger did not trust him. They feared that he might run ahead of their plans, and they were concerned that he might provide the Soviets with a potent bargaining chip in negotiations. More importantly, like many of his predecessors, Kissinger nurtured a strong fear of German neutralism, and suspected any West Germans who promoted stronger ties with the East. Both Kissinger and Nixon harbored private contempt for Brandt and his policies, despite their public support of him.\(^{356}\)

Despite these differences, the Berlin negotiations proved to be a substantial step for both détente and Ostpolitik. In the talks, the Nixon administration's objectives, publicly stated, were "the assurance of unhindered traffic to and from Berlin, Soviet acknowledgment of the existing and entirely legitimate ties between Berlin and Bonn, and improved communications and travel in and around Berlin." The resulting agreement promised Western access to Berlin and allowed West Berliners 30 days each year to visit family in the East. For the Soviet Union, the West conceded that Berlin was not a "constituent part" of the Federal Republic, and, significantly, banned the practice of parliamentary meetings held in Berlin to elect the president of the Federal Republic. The Western allies also agreed to hold a European Security Conference to confirm the


\(^{356}\) Bundy, Tangled Web.

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postwar boundaries of Europe, an aim that the Warsaw Pact countries had been pursuing for some years.\textsuperscript{357}

With the successful negotiation of the Quadripartite Agreement, the Nixon administration sought to inscribe new meaning on the city of Berlin. Whereas previous administrations had invoked Berlin as one of the most important symbols of America's commitment to stand up to communism, Nixon and Kissinger described Berlin as an example of the growing détente between the Soviet Union and the United States. Thus in public utterances, Berlin was uncoupled from references to Laos, Vietnam, and Cuba, and reattached to references of successful negotiations with the Soviet Union. As the Berlin talks were progressing, for example, Nixon listed "significant progress on Berlin" along with "good progress on SALT" and continuing discussions on the Mideast in a news conference with reporters.\textsuperscript{358} After the agreement was reached, this stock list of successes was joined by agreed bans on biological weapons and the use of seabeds for nuclear weapons.\textsuperscript{359}

Indeed, as the Nixon administration's policy of détente appeared more successful, Nixon increasingly credited the Berlin Agreement with making everything else possible. Immediately after the agreement was reached, Nixon remarked that this agreement of "historic significance" moved "us to conclude that now was the time for a summit

\textsuperscript{358} Ibid. 852.
\textsuperscript{359} Ibid. 328, 1064.
meeting."\(^{360}\) In a televised conversation with Dan Rather on CBS in January 1972, Nixon again claimed that "what broke the back [of resistance] as far as having the Moscow summit was concerned...was the Berlin agreement" because it "indicated that the United States and the Soviet Union, agreeing on that critical area, might find a possibility of agreeing on other problems, where our interests might run in conflict--possibly the Mideast, possibly arms limitation, certainly trade and other areas."\(^{361}\) Just prior to the summit, Nixon reminded reporters again that "perhaps the single event which brought about the decision on the part of the Soviet leaders and our decision to go to the summit was the success of the understandings on Berlin. We thought that if we had made progress in that very critical area for both of us that we should try with some hope of success of making progress in other areas that were also difficult."\(^{362}\) In a letter to the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Armed Services, Nixon used the Berlin Agreement to demonstrate that the United States was making significant headway in its negotiations with the Soviet Union, and argued that a troop reduction would jeopardize this progress.\(^{363}\) Before a group of veterans, he claimed that the "historic agreement on Berlin" proved that he was working to make the "present generation of American war

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\(^{360}\) Ibid. 328.


\(^{362}\) Ibid. 603.

veterans the last generation of American war veterans. In the Third Annual Report to Congress on United States Foreign Policy, he boasted that "we and our British and French allies reached an agreement with the Soviet Union on Berlin to end the use of the citizens of West Berlin as Cold War hostages, and to reduce the danger of Berlin once again becoming the focus of a sharp and dangerous international confrontation." In the Fourth Annual Report to the Congress on United States Foreign Policy, he trumpeted that "the negotiations over Berlin were an initial opportunity to explore whether East-West relations could move away from the rigidities of the Cold War."

Indeed, once the Quadripartite Agreements were signed, normalizing the status of Berlin, Roy Blumenthal's agency, in the employ of the City of West Berlin, worked tirelessly to convince Americans of the virtue of the accord. In the process, the agency found itself in competition with the inflexible Axel Springer and his American allies, who believed that détente was nothing but a sellout of Western aims in the Cold War. Roy Blumenthal and his associates believed that they needed to place stories and pictures in periodicals that emphasized the "human implications" of the Berlin agreement. They also believed that the new Berlin agreement could encourage more tourism to Berlin. They

364 Ibid. 1063,1064.
thought they could pitch West Berlin "as a unique window on to life in a communist
country, but with harassment and tension now erased."367

The mainstream media viewed Brandt's Ostpolitik and the Berlin Agreement
favorably. Observing that "time and again, the city has been the scene of ominous tests
of will between East and West--the Soviet Blockade of 1948, the 1953 uprising in East
Berlin, the construction of the infamous wall in 1961 and the chronic Communist
crackdowns on the Autobahn," the Berlin Agreement "seemingly marked an important
step along the long path to East-West détente." The article agreed with American
officials that the United States gained the most in the agreement. The Soviet guarantee of
unimpeded access to the city, the continued West German governmental presence in
Berlin, the attainment of Bonn's right to represent West Berliners abroad, and permitted
visits by West Berliners to family in East Berlin far outweighed the opening of a Soviet
consulate in West Berlin and the end of a "full-dress parliamentary session in Berlin" to
elect West Germany's president. Newsweek reported that the Soviets sought to secure
their western flank because they feared a revived China.368 Time stated that "the draft
agreement is a plus for the West, neutralizing a pressure point that the Communists have
squeezed on and off as their interests required since the Berlin blockade of 1948."369

Accounts differed as to where the breakthrough in negotiations came. Time claimed that the Soviet Union's agreement to ensure access to Berlin broke the impasse.

1972, 1972, B Rep. 002/8266, LAB.
368 "An End to Berlin Crises?," Newsweek, September 6 1971, 27.
The Soviet Union did this because it wanted to clear the "last remaining hurdle for their cherished European Security Conference, aimed at nailing down the status quo in Eastern Europe and getting international recognition for East Germany." Newsweek differed, arguing that the major breakthrough came when the three western powers renounced West Germany's claim to West Berlin as an "integral" part of the Federal Republic. Commenting that "on the face of it, the plan appeared to be a major concession by the West," it argued that "the concession was more apparent than real, for the allies have never recognized Bonn's constitutional claim to West Berlin but only the existence of "naturally grown" ties between the isolated city and the Federal Republic."

Famed realist Hans J. Morgenthau was uncharacteristically ebullient over the agreement. "It would be premature to proclaim the end of the Cold War right here and now," he wrote in the New Republic, "but it is safe to say that the end of the Cold War is in sight." Believing that the Cold War was essentially over territorial disputes left unresolved by World War II, he contended that these agreements liquidated "the heritage of the Second World War" and stabilized "the Soviet Empire in East Germany."

The Rise of the New Right

It is perhaps fitting that Morgenthau exhibited such exuberance over the Berlin Agreement. It was he, after all, in his famous primer Politics Among Nations, who had

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370 "Breakthrough on Berlin," Time, August 16 1971, 27.
advocated for years the removal of "moralistic universalism" from the conduct of U.S. policy. In their conduct of diplomacy over the morally invested city of Berlin, Nixon and Kissinger had achieved precisely this goal, and in their subsequent rhetoric they had attempted to remake Berlin as a symbol of cooperation rather than confrontation. It was an amazing effort.373

Yet what of those who continued to subscribe to a moralistic understanding of the Cold War, Americans who refused to understand the Cold War as anything but a struggle between good and evil, light and darkness? More specifically, what of those conservative Republicans, who had managed to capture control of the GOP in the 1960s? In its 1955 credenda, the editor of the highly conservative National Review, William F. Buckley, laid out a number of themes that his journal would carry which foreshadowed this divergence: in addition to claiming that the lone "job of centralized government [is] to protect its citizens' lives, liberty, and property" and that the "profound crisis of our era is, in essence, the conflict between the Social Engineers, who seek to adjust mankind to conform with scientific utopias, and the disciples of truth, who defend the organic moral order," the credenda stated that "the century's most blatant force of satanic utopianism is communism." According to Buckley, his group would "consider 'coexistence' with communism neither desirable nor possible, nor honorable; we find ourselves irrevocably

at war with communism and shall oppose any substitute for victory." It should come as little surprise, then, that the *National Review* had grievous misgivings about Nixon's policy of détente.

In truth, however, Buckley and his cohorts faced a dilemma. Nixon was a Republican, and, historically, a red-baiting one. But as President he was pursuing a policy designed for "coexistence" with the Soviet Union, a policy that the *National Review* had previously stated was "neither desirable nor possible, nor honorable." For conservatives, who had counted on his dogged anti-Communism, Nixon's overtures to China and compromising attitude toward communism came as a great shock. After two years of patient waiting, conservative Republicans finally broke away from Nixon. Citing among other things his permissive attitude toward Brandt's *Ostpolitik*, members of the editorial staff of the *National Review* and other conservative organizations such as the American Conservative Union, the Conservative Book Club, and the Young Americans for Freedom officially "resolved to suspend" support for his administration. They undertook this act, they stated, out of fidelity to the conservative anti-communist Richard Nixon and with the hope that he would one day return to his true beliefs.

The *National Review* 's take on Berlin perfectly captured the ambivalence of American conservatives. In an article, Anne Armstrong noted that the Berliners cheered wildly for Kennedy, but now, ten years later, felt sold out. The once "gay and gallant

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Berliners... seem less gay, and only by a formidable act of will, gallant." To the outside world, Berlin appeared to be an "urban paradise" with clean subways, bright boutiques, and a bustling populace. And yet, the Berliners, she reported, were uneasy. Many were worried about the radical students and professors, who had "organized a red cell, a cadre of revolutionists that seeks to dominate all decisions of its faculty and to control all elections." "Tension between town and gown grows," she observed, "and to many average Berliners 'student' has become an epithet." The greatest threat, however, was "Willy Brandt's Ospolitik," which threatens to drag everyone under. But, strangely enough, Nixon escapes censure. He is, Armstrong notes, "the kind of man admired by the typical Berliner. He is hard working, conscientious and displays a quiet seriousness. These are Prussian virtues." The editors, too, tried to portray the Agreement as a significant granting of concessions by Moscow to the West.  

The opportunity offered to West Berliners to visit relatives in the East for Easter in 1972 proved to be an instructive episode for American conservatives. For conservative Americans the scene was a singularly instructive one. Writing for the National Review, watched as East met West at Checkpoint Charlie. For him the "look of West Berliners, of whatever age, is simply different from that of those who live in the East." "I know it's unfashionable these days--my President tells me so, in many ways--to use the terms 'free world' and 'Communist world,'" he confessed. "Yet Berlin is the perfect symbol of the meaning of those terms. The West is a lively, gay, thriving city of people doing what

they please, confined within their city unless they take a plane out, but safe, safe at present, thanks to Allied forces. The eastern part of the beautiful old capital city of Germany is a Socialist Paradise, desolate, to me artificial, its wind-swept Karl Marx Allee and even the once-brilliant Unter den Linden as barren in their sterile neatness as hospital corridors." He warned that Willy Brandt's Ostpolitik threatened to destroy the prosperity in the Federal Republic.378

The opening of the wall for Easter in 1972 proved equally powerful for the mainstream media. And here really was the rub: despite their clear sympathy for détente and Ostpolitik, mainstream media outlets continued to find the visceral power of Berlin compelling. When confronted with a situation that ostensibly contrasted the two systems, as was evident in this particular Easter episode, journalists of all stripes were drawn to the inherent drama and tragedy found in Berlin. Time noted that West Berliners trudged past the "tank traps, the death strip, the watchtowers" and most of all the Wall "the concrete monstrosity that divides the city." Visitors from West Berlin found the "large lifeless squares and sterile Marxist-modern, glass-sheathed buildings...utterly foreign."379 Newsweek emphasized the political, rather than altruistic, reasons undergirding the East German government's decision briefly to open the wall. By making West Berliners grateful for the opportunity, the East German government hoped to secure West German

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379 "Crack in the Wall: Easter Passes to West Berliners," Time, April 10 1972, 29.

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support for Ostpolitik. The socialist mayor of Berlin, Klaus Schutz, thought that it proved the wisdom of a policy designed for the relaxation of tensions.\textsuperscript{380}

In its discussion of Berlin's role in the Cold War, the American Congress largely eschewed the more balanced assessments found in the mainstream media. Like other arch-conservatives angry with Nixon, conservative members of Congress used every opportunity to denounce détente, Ostpolitik, and the Berlin Agreement. Their outrage over the perceived cowardice and stupidity of both the Nixon and Brandt administrations was by no means uniform. But their comments were primarily based on elements of the Cold War narrative.

Most of the discussion of Willy Brandt's Ostpolitik in Congress was negative. These criticisms of Brandt accused him of both stupidity and duplicity. Congressman Derwinski of New York, for example, claimed that Brandt "plunged into his new version of détente just as naively or even more so than all his predecessors." The Soviets, Derwinski warned, "are of a mind to pressure Brandt, and it is even more evident that Brandt does not possess the capacity to handle the situation."\textsuperscript{381} Derwinski hoped that Brandt's recent meeting with Nixon "will bring him and his Government back to reality. Reality is that the Soviet threat in Eastern Europe is greater than ever."\textsuperscript{382} Congressman Allott had a letter to the editor of the \textit{New York Times} from historian Jean Edward Smith read into the record, in which Smith argued that "Brandt's urgent need to show results

\textsuperscript{380} "Hands Across the Wall," \textit{Newsweek}, April 10 1972, 31-32.
\textsuperscript{381} \textit{Congressional Record} 1971, 117: 16530-16531.
\textsuperscript{382} \textit{Congressional Record} 1971, 117: 19929.
brings the West, not the East, to the brink of dangerous concessions on Berlin.\textsuperscript{383} Congressman Spence warned that Brandt's "hasty political gestures toward the Soviet Union and other Communist countries" jeopardized the system of Western security.\textsuperscript{384} Congressman Wilson probably carried his allegations the farthest, harboring "serious doubts about the sincerity and good intentions of the present West German Government."

In a naked political swipe, he cautioned that we see "West Germany slipping slowly into the Socialist camp," an aim that "could not be achieved under a Christian Democratic Government."\textsuperscript{385} Citing recent election defeats for the SPD, Congressman Scherle asserted that Brandt acted without domestic support. He concluded: "Obviously, his foreign policy is based on very shaky assumptions of support from his constituency, and the United States should be wary of backing him."\textsuperscript{386}

At the same time, members of Congress continued to emphasize the inhumanity of the Berlin Wall. Representative Blackburn of Georgia made a concerted effort to remind members of Congress of the frightful statistics associated with the Wall. According to his figures, over 451 people had died attempting to escape over the Berlin Wall by 1974. These figures were comparable to the Soviet suppression in Hungary in 1956, and the casualties of the Korean War.\textsuperscript{387} Representative Kemp claimed that this

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{383} Congressional Record 1971, 117: 3612. \\
\textsuperscript{384} Congressional Record 1971, 117: 37421. \\
\textsuperscript{385} Congressional Record 1972, 118: 13890. \\
\textsuperscript{386} Congressional Record 1972, 118: 5591. \\
\textsuperscript{387} Congressional Record 1974, 120: 16185. 
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wall—"built to divide not only Germans but the family of man"—represented the truly
tyrannical nature of communism.  

It is instructive, however, that these invectives against Brandt and détente did not
draw metaphorically from the Third Reich. Even those who believed that Brandt was
selling out the West did not compare him to Hitler or refer to his actions as another
"Munich." Conservative Americans did not choose to compare the Federal Republic to
the Third Reich because to do so would pollute their appropriation of the Wall. This was
especially true in the case of Brandt himself, for the Chancellor had been hailed for his
brave anti-communism by all quarters when he was the Governing Mayor of West Berlin.
No matter how unwelcome Brandt's activities might have been, conservative Americans
were unwilling to tar Brandt with the same brush that they used on the Soviets.

As for Nixon, conservatives never felt that he was one of them. His willingness
to engage in statist solutions at home and his desire to find some sort of modus vivendi
with the communist nations abroad irrevocably severed him from his more conservative
past. Conservatives would have to wait a few more years for one of their own to capture
the highest office in the land.

In some ways, the loss of the White House afforded conservatives an opportunity
to clarify their position on foreign policy. Largely in response to the perceived duplicity
and secrecy associated with the Nixon administration as a result of the Watergate scandal,

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the American people elected Jimmy Carter, a former governor of Georgia, as president. Carter interpreted his election victory as a mandate to engage in a wide-ranging revision of American foreign policy that included, among other things, an awareness of the Third World and an emphasis on human rights.

But it was Carter's decision to make human rights a centerpiece of his foreign policy, while at the same time continuing along the path of détente, that proved his undoing. Early on in his administration, an emphasis on human rights had proved to be a unifying force in American political life: liberals hoped that the administration would censure right-wing dictators while conservatives demanded that Carter denounce the abuses of the Soviet Union and other communist countries. As it turned out, however, Carter rarely engaged in the former, unless it coincided with U.S. national interests, and his policy of détente made it impossible to carry out the latter effectively. As a result, Carter found himself trapped in contradictory policies that over time rendered his administration futile at best and haphazard at worst.\(^{389}\)

Carter's ambivalence can be seen in his public utterances on Berlin. On the one hand, Carter clearly subscribed to the Cold War symbolism of Berlin, because it seemed to epitomize everything that he espoused about America's role in the preservation of human rights. In remarks at a wreath laying ceremony at the Airlift Memorial in Berlin in July 1978, Carter recognized the airlift as a "time when people everywhere began to understand that the dispute over Berlin was not a local issue, but a great defense of

freedom and democracy, with permanent worldwide interest and significance." Later, in a question and answer session with Berliners, Carter claimed that nothing "can hide the image of the deprivation of human rights exemplified by the Wall," citing the familiar refrain that this was the first time that a wall had been constructed to keep its people from escaping.  

At the same time, however, Carter tried to depict the 1971 Quadripartite Agreements on Berlin as an excellent validation of détente. During the same visit, Carter declared that "Berlin and the Quadripartite Agreement are symbols not only of the values that can never be compromised nor negotiated but also of the practical improvements that can be achieved by those who are willing patiently to negotiate." Carter suggested that détente could make significant compromises that would vastly improve the lives of those directly affected by the Cold War. Claiming that core values could be maintained while negotiating with the enemy, Carter attempted to synthesize both the ideological and realpolitik traditions of his forebears.

Carter's attempted synthesis gave conservatives the opportunity that they were looking for. Ronald Reagan and others were more than happy to point out the inconsistencies and failures of Carter's foreign policies. In the end, Carter's inability to convince Americans that he was strong enough to lead contributed to his defeat. Reagan promised a return to the moral years of the Cold War, when Americans knew what they

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391 Ibid. 1294.
were doing and knew that it was right. Reagan's declaration that he would restore America's confidence included harsh rhetoric against the Soviet Union. In some of his more infamous early speeches, he used millenial rhetoric to denounce the "evil empire." It was clear to all that Reagan's presidency represented a return to the Cold War.392

Conservatives Conquer

Under Reagan, Berlin again became a powerful weapon in the Cold War. Typical was conservative George F. Will's invocation of the Berlin Wall in a rant against détente. Arguing that "the Soviet empire is based on murder," Will referred to the Wall as "a state-of-the-art killing machine with automated firing devices." The fact that an American embassy existed on the other side of such a murderous wall indicated to him the moral bankruptcy of détente. Will's sentiments captured perfectly the thoughts of his fellow conservatives against compromise with the Soviet Union.393

A string of commemorations further illustrated the Cold War narrative of Berlin and Germany. The fortieth anniversary of World War II in 1985, for example, prompted American musings on the German role in World War II, but these thoughts rarely intruded upon American conceptions of the Cold War. In a special to the San Diego Union, for example, Robert Zimmerman reported that Berlin was placed in an unusual position for the upcoming celebration of V-E Day. Observing that the celebration only

392 For more on Reagan, see Dumbrell, American Foreign Policy: Carter to Clinton and Beth A. Fischer, The Reagan Reversal: Foreign Policy and the End of the Cold War (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1997).
reminded West Berliners that they were still technically under the jurisdiction of the Allies, he quoted one West Berliner as saying "We are tired of being told to feel guilty." These problems of guilt paled in comparison, he reported, to the forced celebration in East Berlin, in which the Soviets attempted to celebrate the imposition of "a Communist system so oppressive and lacking in rewards that only the wall, barbed wire and minefields prevent mass defections to the West."\(^{394}\) Although the story commented on the reasons for the division of Berlin, the focus clearly was on the different systems placed on East and West Berlin--in effect, on the Cold War itself.

The twenty-fifth anniversary of the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1986 offered another opportunity to reflect on the Cold War implications of the Wall. While it was commemorated in different ways by East and West Berlin, observers in the United States continued to focus on the personal drama associated with the Wall: separated families, restricted movement, and spectacular escape attempts. The *Los Angeles Times* urged visitors to Berlin to tour the Checkpoint Charlie Museum, which documented many of these escape attempts. Many of the major newspapers provided remembrances of some of the more famous efforts to escape, including those employing hot air balloons, arrows and pulleys, tunnels, and fake uniforms. In the *New York Times*, Krista Weedman detailed life from East Berlin, outlining the various ways in which the Wall had wormed itself into the psyche of children, whose artwork and playtime often centered on

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representations of imprisonment.\textsuperscript{395} That same year, the world witnessed numerous escape attempts, as twelve East German reservists tried to reroute a subway train west, three East Germans rammed a dump truck through a checkpoint, and a teen-age couple swam to safety in the West.\textsuperscript{396}

The commemoration of Berlin's 750\textsuperscript{th} anniversary in 1987 offered perhaps a better opportunity for a more nuanced reflection on Germany's past. Instead, many Americans remained engaged in the Cold War narrative. Some editors reflected on the reason for this division in the first place. Richard Reeves, columnist for Universal Press Syndicate, commented that "Berlin" was a "monument to arrogance and desperation and stupidity that led Germany to provoke World War II," and that it was "new generations of Germans" who were "doomed to pay the price of postwar conflict." The bulk of the editorial, however, outlined how Berlin was not a city, but a "political message." West Berlin hoped to broadcast the message of "prosperity" with a "great (and deserved) propaganda victory" during this anniversary.\textsuperscript{397}

President Reagan used the occasion of this anniversary as an opportunity to address the inhumanity of the Berlin Wall. Reminding some of Kennedy's "Ich bin ein Berliner" speech, Reagan stood in the shadow of the wall and demanded, "Mr.


\textsuperscript{396} A cursory scan of the major newspapers revealed these stories and more.

\textsuperscript{397} Richard Reeves, "Berlin: the City is a Message" \textit{San Diego Tribune} (May 10, 1987), C-2.
Gorbachev, tear down this wall." Although some were impressed by this speech, 398 many found it hollow and self-serving. Some even defended the gradual pace of Gorbachev's reforms. While initially unheralded, Reagan's speech would benefit from ensuing events and come to join the pantheon of great speeches delivered by American presidents at the Berlin Wall.

Although many Americans expressed cynicism at the President's words, few questioned the primacy of the Cold War narrative in the Berlin context. Some World War II veterans and American Jews, it seemed, were the only ones still adhering to its alternative. In a letter to the Los Angeles Times, John T. Kelly of Long Beach, for example, "vigorously" disagreed with Reagan's "challenge to the Soviet Union to tear down the Berlin Wall." Believing Germany "guilty of starting two world wars in my lifetime and causing much loss of life and property throughout Europe," he argued that "the wall should stay put well into the 21st Century as a daily reminder to all German people that they are not to try to conquer the nations around them ever again." Moshe Kam of Philadelphia called the Berlin Wall "Cain's Mark," arguing that the wall "is a central part of the punishment cast upon the German nation for its World War II atrocities." Worried that the stories of Germany's victims would become "normalized" when the survivors pass away, he felt that "the only memorial and warning sign will be the continuous partition of Germany, and its ugly symbol - the wall." Speaking from

398 "Let the Wall Come Tumbling Down" San Diego Tribune (June 15, 1987), B-6.
different perspectives, these individuals nonetheless adhered to a similar, albeit marginalized, narrative.399

For some, the Berlin Wall had become so visceral that it was removed from its geopolitical context altogether and became synonymous with danger and intrigue. In Los Angeles, for example, the Berlin Wall shop specialized in "New Wave" clothes. Since the Berlin Wall was something to be escaped from, went the German owner's facile reasoning, a store offering escape from mundane fashion was worthy of the name. In addition to "bondage pants" (another striking paradox), which seemed to be the primary staple of the New Wave devotee in 1985, the store offered several shirts with an Adolf Hitler motif for sale. One shirt was adorned with a picture of the Der Fuehrer on the front, and "Adolf Hitler's European Tour, 1939-1945" written on the back, with the notice that its visit to Great Britain visit had been canceled. When questioned about the appropriateness of these shirts, the young proprietor shrugged, "The T-shirts are just designed for the wearer to call attention to himself or herself." Even when denuded of their historical contexts, it seemed, the German elements present in both the World War and Cold War narratives still signified exotic escape.400

At first blush, the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 did not drastically alter American understanding of the Cold War or Germany. To be sure, Americans, as a whole, were very happy and excited about the episode. In a Harris Poll taken a few

weeks after the Wall was breached, ninety percent of Americans felt that "the tearing down of the Berlin Wall" was "one of the most exciting and encouraging signs for peace in the world in years." In the same poll, seventy-six percent of the respondents favored German reunification. A CBS poll conducted on November 30 echoed these findings. When questioned about reunification, sixty-seven percent of respondents believed that East and West Germany should be reunited, with the most popular reason being that the "German people should be together." Seventy-three percent said that they did not fear German revanchism.

At the same time, polls conducted right after the fall of the Wall reveal that Americans did not believe that the end of the Cold War was nigh. In a Harris poll, fifty-nine percent did not believe the Cold War was over. Even more telling, only six percent of the respondents felt that the United States had won the Cold War. While enthusiastic about the direction of world affairs, Americans at the time, it appears, did not feel that the fall of the Cold War's preeminent symbol translated into the end of the Cold War, and certainly not into a clear-cut American victory.401

Amidst the general euphoria surrounding the fall of the Wall, a few soberly noted the fate of the Wall, a fate which would foreshadow the widespread disillusionment with the promise of 1989. With the permitted destruction of the Wall came a whole new industry dedicated to profiting from it. Street vendors rented hammers so that tourists

400 Growald, "Is the Berlin Wall a fashionable escape or escaping fashion?" The San Diego Union-Tribune (December 12, 1985), B-3.
401 Harris poll, November 13, 14, 15, 1989.
could break off chunks for themselves. In fact, by Christmas new companies offered pieces of the Wall for sale in the United States. The rapid dismantling and consumption of the Berlin Wall alarmed the East German government, whose benevolence was being taken advantage of, and by capitalists, no less. Accurately realizing that the fruits of its hard labor were being sold at a monstrous profit by its longstanding antagonist, the East German government attempted to throttle the burgeoning industry. Although many seemed somewhat sickened by the avarice of these Wall entrepreneurs, few Americans acknowledged that such practices were part and parcel of the capitalist system that they had been promoting for years in the city.

It is difficult to determine when the fall of the Wall became the primary signifier of the end of the Cold War. Clearly, however, the transition began after the Soviet Union dissolved in December 1991. Prior to that moment, the fall of the Berlin Wall had signified the permissiveness of Gorbachev's regime; after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the fall of the Wall began to signify the end of the Cold War, and in time, American victory in the Cold War. Since the Cold War was posited by many as an ideological struggle between democratic freedom and communist despotism, the dissolution of the Soviet Union could mean nothing less that the righteous victory of American ideals.

The recognition of the 10th anniversary of the fall of Berlin Wall illustrates this triumphalistic mood. As one man from Centerville, Ohio wrote on occasion of the anniversary to the Dayton Daily News:

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Much more important [than presidents] in ending communist rule were generations of American servicemen and servicewomen who braved numbing coldness and dangers against great odds in Korea, who faithfully fought communist forces in Vietnam, who quietly served aboard our planes and ships risking their lives in anonymity during the Cold War and who never asked for anything in return.

While many people attended college, pursued their careers or debated politics, many others sacrificed to make that way of life possible in a free country. They did such a good job of preserving our free country that today, many Americans cannot even perceive that there were and still are threats to our welfare that constantly must be faced.

And don't forget the generations of nameless bureaucrats, families of veterans and plain old U.S. taxpayers who supported the struggle for freedom, which eventually caused the communist system to recognize its failure.

There always will be politicians who would take credit for all the work and sacrifice of others. Don't let them do it. The hero is us.402

In addition to claiming victory in the Cold War, Americans insisted that American victory in the Cold War had translated into a better life for those formerly under the yoke of communism. While celebrating the tenth anniversary of the fall of the wall on


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November 9, 1999, major outlets such as The Washington Post, The New York Times, and The Boston Globe noted the positive changes wrought by the fall of communism. They noted "improved living standards" and increased "prosperity and freedom." They observed that those states, such as Poland, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, who "bit the bullet first" by closing inefficient industries and reducing state subsidies immediately fared the best. According to these publications, those who had not fared as well were to blame for their misfortune by not embracing capitalism completely and fully. The Boston Globe observed that there was a "misplaced nostalgia growing in former communist countries for the certainties of tyranny," but reduced and ridiculed the sentiments of those unhappy with the changes brought about by the onslaught of capitalism. In this way, Americans blamed eastern European nations who remained economically backwards for their plight, never thinking perhaps on the faults and inadequacies of the system that they forced on them.403

Thus thirty years later, mainstream America had returned to a familiar place. Recognizing the bankruptcy of the Cold War consensus, Nixon and Kissinger had attempted to transform American political culture on the Cold War. But they found that Americans needed a moralistic understanding of foreign policy, something that both Carter and Reagan provided. The manner and timing of the dissolution of the Soviet Union, especially in light of the fall of the Berlin Wall, confirmed this moralistic

understanding of the conflict, so much so that evaluations of former East Bloc countries years later blamed them (and the old communist system) for their economic difficulties without considering the possible flaws in the capitalist system foisted on them. In this respect, mainstream America of the 1990s was not unlike mainstream America of the 1950s.

It was, and remains still, a heady and dangerous time.
CHAPTER 9

"THE HOLOCAUST INDUSTRY"?404

On April 11, 1985, President Ronald Reagan's staff announced that Reagan, as part of his upcoming visit to West Germany, would lay a wreath at a German war cemetery in Bitburg where many Nazi soldiers were buried. Criticized by Germans for their exclusion from D-Day celebrations in 1984, Reagan sought to make a gesture to the German people emphasizing German-American friendship. When it was discovered that the cemetery also contained the remains of SS troops, Reagan's visit became a hotly contested issue both in the United States and in the Federal Republic.

Almost immediately the Reagan administration suffered withering fire from Jewish groups, veterans groups, and both political parties. Reagan's position was further compromised when his decision to visit the German cemetery was juxtaposed with his previous admission that he deliberately left a visit to a German concentration camp out because he did not want to engender feelings of "guilt" in the German people. Even

404 This is the title of Norman Finkelstein's controversial book on the exploitation of the Holocaust by Zionist Jews. I like the title better than the book; as such, this chapter does not replicate his arguments. See Norman Finkelstein, *The Holocaust Industry: Reflections on the Exploitation of Jewish Suffering* (New York: Verso, 2000).
Reagan appointees such as Elie Wiesel felt compelled to criticize the President and urge him to cancel his trip. Reactions from the Jewish community varied from the politely dissenting (the national director of the Anti-Defamation League of B’nai B’rith) to the caustic (the associate executive director of the American Jewish Congress). One of Reagan’s staunchest supporters, the American Legion even denounced the President’s plan to commemorate the lives of Nazis.405

Despite heavy domestic opposition, the President persevered with his plans, primarily because he felt that canceling the trip would be tantamount to criticizing the Germans. As a halfhearted concession, Reagan included in his itinerary a plan to visit a former concentration camp. Yet domestic opposition remained incredibly strong. Reagan only fueled the fire, when, on the defensive, he justified his decision to visit Bitburg by saying that the soldiers there were "victims of Nazism also." Reagan’s steadfast determination to honor the Germany of the present, at the expense of the German victims of the past, illustrated the emphasis some were willing to place on the Cold War narrative of the German people.406

But at the same time, as this episode illustrates, the power of the Holocaust grew incredibly during the last thirty years of the twentieth century. At the same time that Berlin was regaining, and indeed, even building upon its power to shape American perceptions of the Cold War, the Nazi destruction of European Jewry gradually became

the defining moment of the Third Reich as well as the Second World War. Like Berlin, the Holocaust became a powerful "moral metaphor" in American life. Unlike Berlin, however, which symbolized heroism and ultimately triumph, the Holocaust emerged as the benchmark for victimization in the United States. "The murder of European Jewry," observes Alan Mintz, "became the ultimate standard for speaking of the victimization of peoples in the modern period in spheres that had no necessary connection to the Jews."407

In focusing on the victims, those persecuted by the Nazis, instead of the perpetrators, the emphasis in popular culture has moved from the causes of the Holocaust to its effects, subsuming, in a sense, the Third Reich to its most heinous act. In laying bare the Third Reich's basest actions and depredations, the Holocaust has become a series of heartrending emotional icons and anecdotes, representing the depths of human suffering and despair.

Americans first encountered the Holocaust in a major way in 1978, with the broadcast of NBC's miniseries Holocaust. Received in a time of uncertainty in the United States, the broadcast ostensibly impressed upon Americans the importance of preventing such an act from occurring again. The universalization of the Holocaust in a low period of American history demonstrated the fear and ambivalence Americans possessed about themselves and their place in the world. In a time of triumphalism fifteen years later, by contrast, Americans reinterpreted the Holocaust through Schindler's

List and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum to prove the superiority of American values and actions.

Thus while acknowledging and concurring with the importance of the Holocaust, Americans, at the same time, largely resisted the efforts of liberals to universalize the Holocaust in another, related way. Beginning with Raul Hilberg and gaining steam with Christopher Browning, American academics in the post-1960s era increasingly argued or implied that the structural and systemic factors that underlay the Holocaust are present in most industrialized societies, and thus a similar event potentially could happen anywhere, including the United States. Whereas conservatives used Berlin to celebrate American life and values, liberals, of every stripe, used the Holocaust as a cautionary tale to point out the shortcomings of American society.408

Mainstream Americans largely eschewed such a nuanced explanation—that is when they have considered the reasons for the occurrence of the Holocaust at all. Americans preferred to view the conflict as a morality tale between good and evil, and many believe that the destruction of Nazis spelled the end of any such an event occurring again.

Whether it was the liberal perspective or the mainstream view, the Germans escaped censure. On the one hand, popular opinion, in equating the death of the Nazis

with the death of Nazism, contended that the Federal Republic is constitutively different now, that it has become "like us." On the other, liberals, who point to the potentiality of the United States to succumb to Nazism and racial genocide, suggested that we could become "like them." Arguing both sides, in a sense, of the same coin, this debate illustrated that Germany achieved its ultimate aim: it had rejoined the Western world.

This chapter briefly describes a few specific sites of public memory to demonstrate how American understandings of the Holocaust have progressed during the last thirty years. It looks at the public discourse surrounding each event, and argues that together they present a convincing portrait of this shift in American perceptions of the Holocaust.

**Holocaust**

In April 1978, NBC broadcast a four-part miniseries entitled *Holocaust*. By far the most important site of memory regarding the Third Reich of the decade, *Holocaust* was viewed by an estimated 120 million American viewers. In major markets around the country, at least one-third to one-fourth of Americans were tuned in to the series at least momentarily, making *Holocaust* the second-most watched program in television history at that time, second only to *Roots*. Because of its widespread popularity, many scholars of the Holocaust view NBC’s production as a seminal event.

*Holocaust* followed the fortunes of two German families during the rise and fall of the Third Reich. The Weiss clan, a Jewish family, witnessed a steady erosion of its prestige, and eventually the gradual elimination of its members, as the full extent of Hitler's genocidal plans became realized. The Dorf family, headed by a quiet, frustrated
German, on the other hand, took advantage of the new regime to move progressively higher in society. Erik Dorf, the head of the family, became one of the most important directors of the Holocaust, as he trained his considerable logical powers on the problem of efficiency in mass murder to great effect. By personalizing the Holocaust in such a way, the screenwriter sought to have a major impact on the viewers.

*Holocaust* was the brainchild of network executives who believed that the time was ripe for an extensive exploration into the Holocaust experience. The network spared no expense in promoting the show. Written by respected author Gerald Green, the story was serialized in several American periodicals and published as a paperback version. Sunday, April 16, the first day of the miniseries was "unofficially" proclaimed Holocaust Sunday, and several organizations dedicated that week to a remembrance of the Holocaust. NBC published a study guide for the series and encouraged other organizations to do the same. The network also shrewdly timed the event to coincide with a couple of major Jewish events: the final episode aired on the 35th anniversary of the Warsaw Uprising, one week before the beginning of Passover. As *Moment* magazine stated, "for Jews, the watching has about it the quality of a religious obligation."409

Reactions to the film varied, but the greatest debate revolved around the appropriateness of television as a medium for such a horrific historical event. Elie Wiesel led the criticism against the film, arguing that it trivialized and vulgarized the

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suffering of millions. Others blanched at the sight of Lysol commercials promising to
wipe out germs amid images of concentration camp efforts to rid the Aryan race of the
disease of Judaism. While recognizing the shortcomings of the medium, supporters
nevertheless praised the miniseries for its desire to bring the issues of the Holocaust to
the forefront of America's consciousness.

But beyond this bombastic and visible debate existed a growing consensus on the
nature of the Holocaust. The overall interpretive strategy that Americans used illustrated
that during the late 1970s, the "crisis of confidence" period of postwar American history,
many understood the Holocaust to have universal implications. Unlike, say, the reception
of Judgment at Nuremberg in August of 1961, in which Americans largely identified the
Holocaust as a German phenomenon, the reception of Holocaust demonstrated that
Americans in the 1970s viewed the Nazi crimes against the Jews against the larger
backdrop of the Western world. After viewing the miniseries, a congressional
representative from Oklahoma, for example, read the Holocaust as a cautionary tale
against "big government:" "In each case these murders, by the thousands and by the
millions, were made possible by...governments so large and so powerful that they had
the ability to direct the lives of others and to end those lives if they chose."410 Indeed, the
plans for a march by American Nazis in Skokie, Ill. at the same time of the broadcast of
the series reinforced the notion that Nazism was a disease that could infect anyone.

Despite the discomfort associated with watching the series, a congressman believed that

410 Congressional Record 1978, 124: 10988.
the "story needed to be told" in light of the national attention that the American Nazis were receiving.\footnote{Congressional Record 1978, 124: 12812-12813.}

The most common reading of Holocaust was to view it as one of the many kinds of violence that humans might commit against one another. Everyday Americans, as well as several members of Congress, found that, in fact, multiple Holocausts were happening in their day. One individual wrote to the editor of The Washington Post that Jews should be aware of "injustices committed in other parts of the world, such as South Vietnam, South Africa, Argentina, or the Philippines."\footnote{Dolores Ebert, "Letter to the Editor," Washington Post, April 23 1978, D6.} While claiming that he could not "offer any judgment of the people that stood by" while the extermination of the Jews occurred, he pointed to Cambodia and expressed his "outrage that we would ever permit such an event to happen again."\footnote{Congressional Record 1978, 124: 12231.} Another American wrote that Americans, as they "relived the horrifying history of the Third Reich in our homes," should be aware of the Kurds, Ugandans, and others "threatened by mass hatred and destruction."\footnote{Bernard White, "Letter to the Editor," Washington Post, April 23 1978, D6.}

Senator William Proxmire was the most vocal in this regard. Proxmire used the occasion of the broadcast to launch a renewed campaign for the passage of the Genocide Convention. The convention was drafted to make genocide an international crime. On several different occasions, Proxmire recounted poignant or telling scenes from the miniseries to drive home the point that such crimes should never be permitted to happen

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\footnote{Congressional Record 1978, 124: 12812-12813.}
\footnote{Dolores Ebert, "Letter to the Editor," Washington Post, April 23 1978, D6.}
\footnote{Congressional Record 1978, 124: 12231.}
\footnote{Bernard White, "Letter to the Editor," Washington Post, April 23 1978, D6.}
again. He argued that the ratification of the convention would help prevent future atrocities. "My interest in the series is strong," he declared, "because it demonstrates what I have asserted on the floor of the Senate for the last 11 years."415

In these ways, Americans during the late 1970s began to appropriate and universalize the Holocaust. Increasingly, the event was no longer tied specifically to German history (or even Jewish history for that matter). And this was a point that many believed was crucially important to make. As one American wrote to the New York Times, "if there is a lesson to the Holocaust, it is the depths of good and evil that exist in us all when we separate ourselves on the basis of race or religion, or when we consider other people on any basis except that of our common humanity."416

Schindler's List

Holocaust caught an American populace uncertain of itself. Sill experiencing the aftereffects of the revolutionary Sixties, Americans universalized both the emotions and the causes of the Holocaust, believing that such an event could happen in the United States. By the 1990s, things had changed. Inspired by the conservative ascendancy in the United States and the absence of domestic conflict, the mainstream American public, while still recognizing the Holocaust as the ultimate benchmark for victimization, came to view the destruction of Europe's Jews as a historical event, one which had happened in the past but was unlikely to happen again, especially in the United States. However,

academics, for the most part, remained wedded to the 1960s-1970s understanding of the Holocaust, railing against the American desire to reduce the event to a simple morality tale between Nazi evil and American good.

When *Holocaust* hit the American airwaves, it was the first substantial encounter many Americans had with German extermination of Jews. As such, *Holocaust* occupies an honored place in studies of the Holocaust in America. Yet, for all of its novelty, the miniseries was not a cinematic triumph. It was straitjacketed by the limited talents of the producers, the demands of television, and the gross intrusion of commercials. It remained for a celebrated Jewish director of action films to capitalize on the dramatic attributes inherent in the tragedy of suffering of Europe's Jews and elevate Holocaust representation to art.

Steven Spielberg's *Schindler's List* captured American attention in such an incredible fashion that it threatened to rewrite all that Americans understood about the Holocaust. No lesser figures than Oprah Winfrey and President Clinton claimed that watching the film was a necessity. Jeffrey Katzenberg, head of Walt Disney, made the outrageous claim that dissemination of the film could bring "peace on earth." The film claimed seven Oscar in 1994 and was declared film of the year by *Newsweek* magazine. Needless to say, millions of Americans filed into the theaters to watch it.


417 Consult any work on the "Americanization of the Holocaust" and you will be sure to find heavy discussion of this miniseries.
To its viewers, Schindler's List offered a redemptive tale of one German's transformation from profligate industrialist to concerned (even tortured) humanitarian. Oskar Schindler begins the film as a unconcerned Nazi, but by the end of the film he becomes a savior of several of his Jewish employees. His counterpart is the evil Amon Goeth, who tortures and kills Jews out of malevolent boredom. The conflict between the two plays itself out against the larger backdrop of the Holocaust, and it is through both of their lives that the viewer sees and understands the extermination of the Jews.

The reception of Schindler's List in some ways mirrored that of Holocaust. Much of the criticism focused on the ability of a commercial film to represent a horror of such epic proportions. Several of the critics pointed out that Spielberg, like the producers of Holocaust, profaned the Holocaust by subjecting it to the Hollywood treatment. They disputed the representativity of Schindler's tale in the larger event, and suggested that Spielberg was, at base, unwilling to deal with the horror at the core of the Holocaust. Taken together, these criticisms echoed those of Holocaust in their suggestions that films could never do justice to the destruction of European Jewry.

In addition, however, to these aesthetic criticisms, many reviewers chose to focus on the content of the film. The debate itself reflected the growing divide between academic and popular audiences. For the most part, the majority of the movie-going public found the film enchanting and useful. Positive reviewers praised Spielberg for dropping his customary use of artifice and allowing the essential drama of the Holocaust to shine through. They particularly liked his decision to leave Schindler's conversion unexplained, suggesting that heroism is often ineffable. Their greatest compliment,
however, was that Schindler's List had transcended the status of film and become a moving monument to the destruction of the Jews. Along this line, some reviewers claimed that the film better represented the Holocaust than any other cultural or scholarly document.

The case against Schindler's List was made most forcefully by American academics. Many of their substantive criticisms stemmed from their damnation of the film as the "Hollywoodization of the Holocaust." First and foremost, they pointed out that the film provided a happy ending to an event that, if any historical event warranted it, deserved a depressing ending. But as one academic pointed out, "virtually every character in whom the audience has emotionally invested lives!"418 That all of the primary characters should survive in a situation in which the overwhelming majority of Jews most assuredly did not seemed to distort the nature of the Holocaust and rob the event of its larger significance. This raised the question for many as to whether or not this specific story of the Holocaust was representative enough to stand for the entire event.

Too, many academics had problems with the focus of the film resting on Oskar Schindler and Amon Goeth. By focusing on two Germans, one ultimately good and the other eternally bad, the film reduced the Holocaust to a simple morality tale between good and evil, thus obfuscating the technological and bureaucratic aspects to the destruction of Europe's Jews. In a similar vein, academics despaired at the heroization of

418 Tim Cole, Selling the Holocaust: From Auschwitz to Schindler: How History is Bought, Packaged, and Sold (New York: Routledge, 1999), 70.
Schindler, and his characterization as almost a Christlike figure. In focusing on the efforts of a single individual to save Jews, the film implied that individuals could make a difference, even in something as overwhelming as the Holocaust. Also, in depicting Schindler, a Christian, as savior of the Jews, it overemphasized the role of Gentiles and minimized the role of Jews in resisting the Nazi pogrom. Together, these criticisms suggested that Schindler's List missed much of the significant import of the Holocaust, while distorting and romanticizing its more tangential aspects.419

At the same time that the release of Schindler's List demonstrated the growing divide between scholarly and popular interpretations of the Holocaust, it also confirmed the Holocaust as the ultimate benchmark of suffering and victimization in the United States. A leader in the Nation of Islam known for his anti-Semitic remarks, Khalil Muhammed observed after watching the film: "that was a Holocaust but African-Americans pay a hell of a cost." Later, after touring the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Muhammed claimed that "we were given swindler's list." Frustrated with the overwhelming presence of Jewish victimhood, African-Americans expressed anger at the relative marginalization of their own group's suffering.420

In these ways, the varied receptions of Schindler's List illustrated the growing reconstitution of consensus on the nature of the Holocaust. The mainstream universalized the suffering of the Holocaust, while narrowing its causes to a historically

419 Ibid.
specific time and place. Outside groups exhibited exasperation at this phenomenon, but proved powerless to stop it.

*Hitler's Willing Executioners*

This growing divide in interpretations of the Holocaust between popular audiences, who were increasingly affected by the conservative resurgence in American life, and academics, who for the most part remained faithful to the heritage of the 1960s, was evidenced most acutely in the debate over Daniel Goldhagen's book, *Hitler's Willing Executioners.*\(^{421}\) Goldhagen's book prompted a polarizing debate between popular audiences, who for the most part loved it, and academics, who for the most part loathed it. Popular audiences found it a refreshing and stimulating glimpse into the visceral nature of the extermination of the Jews. Academics found it a hackneyed and fraudulent simplification of the Holocaust.

It must be said that the debate over Goldhagen's book was not the first "historian's debate" over the Holocaust. Indeed Reagan's visit to Bitburg initiated a wrenching debate in West German society over the nature of the Holocaust. Known as the *Historikerstreit,* it engulfed the German people in a tortuous trial, as German intellectuals fought bitterly over the "normalization" of German history. Some argued that the Holocaust should be placed in proper historical perspective—in comparison to other atrocities committed at

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other times, they claimed that the Holocaust was not unique. Others, led by Juergen Habermas, feared that such rationalization downplayed the evils of the Nazi regime and allowed Germans to forget the Third Reich.\(^{422}\) Given the uproar in the United States over Reagan's visit, it might have been expected for the United States to have a similar experience, but nothing of the sort happened.

The debate over Goldhagen's book was different. Coming on the heels of Schindler's List and the opening of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum (see below), it found an America interested in understanding why the Holocaust happened. The answer that Goldhagen provided was simple: the Germans did it because they adhered to an "eliminationist anti-Semitism." In essence, Goldhagen argued that the Germans were programmed by centuries of cultural indoctrination to hate the Jews and desire their destruction. To make his case, Goldhagen sketched a number of vignettes that ostensibly revealed the murderous intent of the Germans toward the Jews.

For Americans, Goldhagen's narrative was comforting. Goldhagen offered an explanation of the Holocaust that confined it to a German phenomenon. He explained the Holocaust as a function of an abnormal German society, one in which "irrational" values flourished and thrived. Jane Caplan has noted that Goldhagen offered American readers


a "seductive counterimage of themselves." In positioning the Nazis of World War II against the "we" of contemporary America, Goldhagen invited Americans to "identify themselves as the heirs of Enlightenment values and to distinguish themselves from the Germans about whom he writes, from their alien values and 'radically different' culture." Omer Bartov has also suggested that Goldhagen's simple assertion of German guilt ignored antisemitic traditions in other countries. It also conveniently insisted on the absence of this sentiment in postwar Germany, thus providing an "important safety valve" for "America's loyal ally." In these ways, Hitler's Willing Executioners reinforced notions of both Germany and the United States that trumpeted the virtues of American society. 423

Academics, by contrast, had become more comfortable with a more subtle, multicausal view of the Holocaust. Beginning with Raul Hilberg's Destruction of the European Jews and continuing with Christopher Browning's Ordinary Men, scholars began emphasizing other aspects of Nazi Germany besides antisemitism. Some focused on the mindless, bureaucratized nature of the Holocaust, while others emphasized the importance of peer pressure. Whatever the aspect emphasized, these scholars increasingly implied that the factors that gave rise to the Holocaust could be found in other, industrialized states, including the United States. The lesson, forged in the fires of

the 1960s, suggested that not only should Americans maintain a watch on the Germans, but on themselves as well.424

The emergence of Goldhagen's book thus violated the increasing complexity that surrounded the Holocaust in academic discourse while reaffirming the great morality tale that shaped popular understandings of Nazi Germany. This division was clearly demonstrated at a public symposium at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in 1996 attended by Goldhagen and other top historians on the Holocaust. When Goldhagen spoke he received excited applause from members of the audience. When other historians criticized him, the audience remained silent or murmured angrily.425 Scholars puzzled at this mixed reaction, while lay Americans believed that academics were attempting to silence the truth.

Scholars have increasingly come to understand the Goldhagen phenomenon as part-and-parcel of American triumphalism in the wake of the Cold War. Omer Bartov has admirably summed up this viewpoint, saying that "the argument that after the fall of Nazism the Germans became 'just like us,' and that therefore they are as unlikely to perpetrate genocide again as 'we' are, can produce an excessive sense of complacency not merely about postwar Germany but about the rest of "us."426 Jane Caplan has further suggested that the Holocaust has emerged to provide an identity to post-Cold War America in the absence of a defining struggle. But Caplan is only partly right: when the

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Goldhagen phenomenon is viewed against the backdrop of larger postwar discourse on Germany and the Holocaust, it becomes clear that this view is less the product of a post-Cold War world than the consensus view of Americans that reemerged after the fractious Sixties.\textsuperscript{427}

**U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum**

The official space for commemorating the Holocaust in the United States supports this nationalistic view of the attempted extermination of Jewry. The opening of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in 1993 represented the culmination of a decade-and-a-half of tireless working and lobbying on the part of several American organizations. In the wake of the furor created by the *Holocaust* miniseries, President Carter established a commission to examine ways to commemorate the atrocity visited upon Europe's Jews. Although it took fifteen years to complete, the museum has rapidly become one of the most popular tourist destinations in Washington.

The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum portrays Americans as liberators who confront unspeakable and un-American horrors. According to its director, Michael Berenbaum, the museum narrates the story of the Holocaust as the "negation of American ideals." At the beginning of the exhibit, visitors are invited to adopt the identity of the American liberator, through the recorded testimony of an American GI. The GI attempts to describe the scene with great difficulty, stuttering his way through an observation that

\textsuperscript{426} Bartov, "Reception and Perception," 43.
\textsuperscript{427} Caplan, "Reflections on the Reception of Goldhagen in the United States," 151-162.
he has never seen anything like this before and a protestation that nothing of this sort could ever happen in the United States. By identifying visitors with the American liberators, the museum makes the Holocaust part of American history, while at the same time insisting that such an event runs counter to everything that is American.

Placing the museum on the Mall makes the effect even greater. As visitors emerge into the daylight, they are confronted with familiar symbols of American democracy such as the Washington Monument and the Capitol. This jarring juxtaposition between "an anti-museum...of Nazi racism, intolerance, dictatorship, and persecution" and these treasured hallmarks of "pluralism, tolerance, democracy, and human rights" heightens the contrast and enhances the effect. The result, according to Michael Berenbaum, is an understanding of the Holocaust as the "violation of every essential American value." A journalist more cynically noted that "a proper dose of the Holocaust, the thinking goes, will build up the needed antibodies against totalitarianism, racism, state-sponsored mass murder."^428

Conclusion

At the end of the millenium, American confidence was high. This confidence was reflected in the ways that Americans interpreted the Holocaust. Unlike the early postwar period, the Holocaust was a very visible part of cultural life. But in a period of American history similar to the early postwar period in terms of confidence and pride, the Holocaust became a defining event that illustrated the superiority of American values and

^428 Cited in Cole, Selling the Holocaust, 152-158.
ideas. For those angered at the prominence or the interpretation of the Holocaust, not much could be done. Their rants only proved the growing gap between the mainstream and their marginalized perspectives.

When viewed in combination with Berlin and the Cold War narrative, the Holocaust helped solidify positive perceptions of modern Germans. Throughout the decade of the 1990s, Americans continued to view the unified German state in a positive light. Even when questioned in the context of World War II, most Americans continued to view Germany in terms of the Cold War. In a 1991 poll, for example, when asked if they still considered Germany an enemy because of World War II, eighty-six percent of Californians said that they believed all of that was in the past. A 1995 poll found that seventy-seven percent of Americans found Germany to be a close ally or very friendly toward the United States. Only among certain groups did the increased interest in the Holocaust have a negative effect. A 1997 poll conducted by the American Jewish Committee, for example, found that thirty-five percent of Jews had an unfavorable attitude toward Germans. For some Jews, the Holocaust reflected badly on the Germans, but for most Americans it was an event in the past that helped demonstrate the superiority of American ideals.
CHAPTER 10

CONCLUSION

Throughout the Cold War period and beyond, Germany has played a major role in how Americans have understood themselves and the world around them. In both its past and its present, Germany has presented Americans with a comfortable notion of themselves, one in line with traditional American understandings of the United States mission in the world. With the concept of totalitarianism, mainstream America found a schema for understanding the apparently dramatic about-face in Germany during the early Cold War period. This concept of totalitarianism continued to resonate powerfully throughout the rest of the Cold War.

Americans did not reach this consensus alone. Both the American and German governments worked to convince Americans that Germans were now dependable allies. The Public Affairs branch of the State Department and the Foreign Office and Federal Press Office of the Federal Republic promoted a favorable view of Germany in the United States. They also suppressed or distorted dissenting narratives that sought to revive World War II interpretations of Germany. The most crucial actor in support of Germany's desire to remake itself in the United States was an American public relations firm. The Federal Republic hired the Roy Bernard Co. in 1951 to serve as public
relations counsel, and Roy Bernard effectively managed representations of Germans for much of the Cold War.

Nor was this consensus entirely hegemonic. Even during the heyday of the Cold War consensus, a sizable group of Americans clung to a World War II understanding of the Germans. This World War II understanding of Germany gained credence in the 1960s, as it became a tool of the New Left, civil rights groups, and radicals, who sought to use Nazi Germany as an effective weapon with which to bludgeon the U.S. Even though the consensus on America's mission apparently reasserted itself in the Reagan administration, marginalized groups were left out. In this new era of "identity politics," the Holocaust became the signal event of the Third Reich and the new benchmark for suffering and victimhood.

In these ways, this dissertation illustrates how the meanings of powerful symbols associated with Germany have been contextually determined. Throughout the Cold War, Americans appropriated the Wall and the Holocaust for different purposes and drew radically different interpretations from them. With insights from the study of reception and collective memory, this dissertation has demonstrated the contingent nature of some of the most invoked symbols and images of the last fifty years.

At the same time, the dissertation has attempted to use the notion of "interpretive communities" to group and generalize American responses to these powerful signs. It has employed the notion of "narratives" to understand and portray how Americans have interpreted representations of Germans. It has argued that images of Germany and
Germans were embedded in Cold War and World War narratives that changed and adapted over the course of, and after, the Cold War.

Given that the meaning and power of these representations of Germany have been contextually determined, what will be their fate in a post-9/11 world? It is difficult to determine the composition and course of future interpretations, but it is fair to say that American remembrances of Cold War and World War II will continue to have meaning as long as the United States is involved in the world. And as long as these conflicts play some role in American self-definition, representations of Germans will likewise remain important to American identity.
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