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Managing the Nazi Legacy: Contradictory Reconstruction Policies in US-Occupied Germany, 1945-1952

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**Managing the Nazi Legacy:
Contradictory Reconstruction Policies in
US-Occupied Germany, 1945 - 1952**

Rachel Speyer Besancon

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the
Prerequisite for Honors
in Political Science
under the advisement of Professor Stacie E. Goddard

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-Friedrich Nietzsche

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Abstract

This thesis seeks to identify the circumstances in the postwar United States that allowed American foreign policymakers to pursue contradictory denazification programs in occupied Germany. On May 8, 1945, Germany transformed from a sovereign state to an occupied territory. The United States and its Allies were tasked with administering the agreed upon plans for occupation in Germany, predominantly focused on denazification and reconstruction. In the American zone, the Occupying Military Government's plans for denazification and reconstruction affected segments of the population very differently. While low-ranking public officials were banned from public service due to their ties to the Nazi regime, powerful industrialists and governmental leaders were gradually welcomed back into positions of responsibility with the government. How did the US government justify its inconsistent enforcement of the Nazi purge and what enabled them to pursue these policies? I argue that the unsettled narrative landscape of postwar America made such contradictions tenable in a chaotic political climate. Through a cultural study of American popular media from 1939-1950, I identify the three dominant narratives of "the German" in the US during this time and show how each of these narratives were used to legitimate different reconstruction policies in US-occupied Germany.

Glossary

Abbreviations and English Terms:

ACC (Allied Control Council): the four-power occupation organization tasked with managing administrative plans in occupied Germany across all zones

CDU (*Christlich Demokratische Union*): “Christian Democratic Union;” the West German conservative neoliberal party founded under occupation

HiCOG (High Commissioner for Occupied Germany): the top-ranking position in Germany within the US government; position existed from 1949-1955

IG Farben: primary chemical producer in Nazi Germany; produced Zyklon B for Third Reich; after denazification broken down into BASF, Bayer, Agfa, and Hoechst

IMT (International Military Tribunal): court through which the Nuremberg Trials were held

JCS (Joint Chiefs of Staff): group of top-ranked members of military tasked with advising the president on matters of national security and occupation; administered directives that outlined US’ interests in Germany for occupation

KPD (*Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands*): “Communist Party of Germany;” left-wing communist party of Germany founded before the Nazis took power and revived after the war

Krupp Steel: primary steel and arms producer in Nazi Germany; after denazification merged with Thyssen to form Thyssenkrupp

NSDAP (*Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei*): “National Socialist German Worker’s Party;” Nazi Party led by Adolf Hitler

OMGUS (Occupying Military Government of the United States): term used for the occupying US government in West Germany

SED (*Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands*): “Socialist Unity Party of Germany;” the merged East German party consisting of the KPD and the SPD

SPD (*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands*): “Social Democratic Party of Germany;” the left-leaning social-democratic party in West Germany under occupation

Zyklon B: the gas used to kill Jews in the extermination camps; developed and manufactured by IG Farben

German Terms and Phrases:

Anschluss: “connection/joining;” the term for Austria’s joining of the Third Reich

Biergarten: “beer garden;” a (usually outdoor) space to drink alcohol and converse

Der Völkischer Beobachter: “the People’s Observer;” the national Nazi newspaper in Germany circulated during the Third Reich

Deutsche Arbeitsfront: “German Labor Front;” the nationalized sole labor union of Nazi Germany

Deutsches Rotes Kreuz: “German Red Cross;” somewhat controlled by the Nazis during the Third Reich, but still limited by the Geneva Convention

Deutschland den Deutschen: “Germany for Germans;” a slogan of the Nazi Party

Die Todesmühlen: “The Death Mills;” a 1945 film made by the US Department of War to document the genocidal activities that had taken place in the extermination camps

Die Weiße Rose: “The White Rose;” a peaceful, intellectual anti-Nazi organization run by a professor out of the University of Munich

Dirndl: the traditional Austro-Bavarian dress for women and girls one sees at traditional German folk festivals

Einsatzgruppen: a Nazi paramilitary mobile killing squad under the SS, primarily targeting civilians

Entnazifizierungsschlussgesetz: “end of denazification law;” passed in 1949 by German authorities

Fragebogen: plural *Fragebögen*; the 131-item questionnaire distributed by occupation authorities required for employment in public office or major industries

Führer: “leader/father;” term used in regard to Hitler

Geheime Staatspolizei (Gestapo): “Secret State Police;” official police of Third Reich led by Hermann Göring

Gemeinden: “towns;” the smallest municipalities within Germany

Gleichschaltung: “coordination;” the process of the Nazis establishing totalitarian control in Germany by assuming control over all aspects of German society

Grundgesetz: “Basic Law;” the constitution of the Federal Republic of Germany

Hitlerjugend: “Hitler Youth;” the national Nazi youth organization used to indoctrinate children

Junkers: the land-owning nobility of Prussia who employed peasants to work their land

Kreise (Landkreise, Stadtkreise): “counties;” including rural counties and city countries

Land: plural *Länder*; federal states in Germany

Lebensraum: “living space;” the land (and resources) east of Germany that Hitler believed Aryans were entitled to in order to let the master race expand as it was meant to

Lederhosen: “leather pants;” the traditional German leather shorts for men and boys

Machtergreifung: “seizure of power;” an alternative term for Hitler’s ascendancy, more revolutionary-sounding in nature than *Machtübernahme*

Machtübernahme: “takeover of power;” Hitler’s preferred term for his ascendance to the Chancellery in Germany

Meldebogen: plural *Meldebögen*; the two-page questionnaire distributed by occupation authorities required for food ration cards

Reichskulturkammer: “Reich’s Chamber of Culture;” the Nazi organization of all creatives and artists in Germany; a product of the *Gleichschaltung*

Reichstag: “parliament;” German parliament under the Weimar Republic

Ruhr: the heavily industrialized land in northwest Germany near the border with The Netherlands

Saarland: a small territory in West Germany on the border with France that belonged to both countries at different times throughout the century

Schutzstaffel (SS): “protection squadron;” the primary paramilitary organization under the Nazi Party

Sieg Heil: “victory hail;” a verbal salute of sorts, common in Nazi Germany; a phrase shouted in admiration at Nazi Party rallies along with the Hitler salute

Sportpalast: a large convention hall in Berlin that housed multiple Nazi Party rallies

Stunde null: “hour zero;” the myth that there was a clear reset between the end of the Third Reich and the founding of the Federal Republic of Germany

Sturmabteilung (SA): “storm detachment;” Nazi Party’s first paramilitary organization; gradually replaced by the *Schutzstaffel (SS)*

Trümmerfrauen: “rubble women;” term for the women pictured clearing rubble out of bombed out sites after the war; images of them used to support the *Stunde null* myth

Vergangenheitsbewältigung: “get over the past;” term used in reference to process of wrestling with difficult histories of Germany

Wehrmacht: the unified military forces of Germany under the Nazi Party

Chapter 1: Postwar Questions

OCCUPATION BEGINS

On May 8, 1945, Germany announced its unconditional surrender to the Allied forces. Six years of total war had come to a close in Europe as the United States and Japan continued hostilities in the Pacific Theater. Adolf Hitler's dream of German supremacy all but disappeared as the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and the Soviet Union split the nation into four military zones of occupation: the US to the South, the UK to the Northwest, France to the West, and the USSR to the East. As an occupying government, the United States faced a monumental task: rebuilding a nation absolutely destroyed by its own war. Germany's death toll neared eight million people after six years of fighting, its economy was in shambles (destabilized by obliterated industrial infrastructure and calls for postwar reparations), and, perhaps most devastating to the country, Germany had a global reputation left in shatters with little hope of redemption. Regardless of what policies the Occupying Military Government of the United States (OMGUS) adopted in its reconstruction efforts, the US would have to address Germany's Nazi legacy in order to effectively manage the country left in ruins.

The moral reconstruction (as opposed to financial, political, or infrastructural reconstruction) of West Germany manifested through denazification policy. The aim of denazification in the West was "to destroy German militarism and Nazism and to remove all Nazi and militarist influences from public offices and from cultural and economic life of the German people."¹ In theory, denazification would cleanse the German government of any ties to the Third Reich and create a foundation for the new state to build itself upon. In practice,

¹ Robert Murphy, "The Political Adviser in Germany (Murphy) to the Secretary of State" (US Department of State, Office of the Historian, July 7, 1945).

however, denazification policies came about in seemingly contradictory forms, each implying different levels of responsibility for the war among the German populace, and ultimately creating a government with a troublingly significant continuity of personnel.

The most famous (or infamous, to some) denazification effort after the war were the trials of the Nazi leadership. The Nuremberg Trials, beginning in 1945, tried twenty-two leaders of the Nazi Party and military in an International Military Tribunal (IMT). Of these twenty-two, nineteen were found guilty, and ten were executed while the remaining nine served time in prison.² These twenty-two included the Nazi Party Secretary, a co-author of the Nuremberg Race Laws, the original head of the *Gestapo*, the former Deputy *Führer*, the chief commander of the *Einsatzgruppen*, and the head of the Hitler Youth program, among others.

Outside of the original Nuremberg Trials, thousands of less well-known but still powerful Nazis were tried in courts across Europe. In West Germany, the conviction rate for these trials was a mere 6.4%.³ The Europe-wide conviction rate, by contrast, was at least 29%.⁴ These trials were meant to offer justice to victims of the war and Holocaust by holding perpetrators responsible, however, only a fraction of a fraction of the defendants served the entirety of their sentences. While the highly publicized Nuremberg Trials had a very high conviction rate (nineteen of twenty-two), the less well-known trials in West Germany punished very few. What was meant to be a source of closure and justice for victims of the war and Holocaust instead

² David I. Lippert, "The Eichmann Case and the Nuremberg Trials," *American Bar Association Journal* 48, no. 8 (August 1962), 739.

³ Michael Greve, *Der justitielle und rechtspolitische Umgang mit den NS-Gewaltverbrechen in den sechziger Jahren* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2001), 11, as cited in Devin O. Pendas, "Seeking Justice, Finding Law: Nazi Trials in Postwar Europe," *The Journal of Modern History* 81, no. 2 (June 2009), 355.

⁴ Norbert Frei, "Nach der Tat: Die Ahndung deutscher Kriegs- und NS-Verbrechen in Europa—eine Bilanz" in Frei, *Transnationale Vergangenheitspolitik*, 32 as cited in Pendas, 354.

The European average was calculated from Norbert Frei's data which included both those indicted and those investigated. The conviction rate reported here is therefore the quotient of Nazis convicted and Nazis investigated or indicted, making it an underestimate of the conviction rate if only those indicted were considered.

became a failure of the occupying government to adequately hold those responsible accountable for their actions.

Alongside these trials, the “Subsequent Nuremberg Trials” also failed to hold supporters of the regime responsible. The Subsequent Nuremberg Trials focused on members of the Nazi “war machine:” industrialists and leaders of companies that funded the war and Holocaust, and SS subsidiaries like the *Einsatzgruppen*. Companies like IG Farben (the company that developed Zyklon B, the gas used to exterminate millions of Jews in the camps), Krupp Steel (the steel giant that used slave labor to manufacture arms for the Third Reich), and others were tried for their involvement in the Nazi Party and the death they indirectly (or directly) caused.⁵ Again only a fraction of those indicted were found guilty, and of those sentenced to serve time in prison, all were released by American High Commissioner for Occupied Germany (HiCOG), John McCloy, in 1951 if still behind bars.⁶

In contrast to the trials of Nazi criminals lie the denazification policies that targeted the German population as a whole. After establishing themselves as an occupying government, the US released a six-page questionnaire to every citizen, probing their level of involvement in the NSDAP. The questionnaire, known as the *Fragebogen*, was implemented in order to determine whether a person was to be removed or excluded from the position they currently held or sought to hold.⁷ Based on information from the *Fragebogen*, even nominal party members would require additional screening and evaluation before being hired, including approval of the Supreme Commander of US Military Government.⁸ In addition to the questionnaire, a comprehensive reeducation program began in 1945, seeking to reinstitute “universally valid

⁵ Doug Linder, “The Subsequent Nuremberg Trials: An Overview” (The Truman Library, 2000).

⁶ “29 Nazis Leave Prison Today,” *The New York Times*, February 3, 1951.

⁷ Murphy, “July 7, 1945 Telegram.”

⁸ Ibid.

principles of justice” in Germany.⁹ The main objective was to “convince the German people of their defeat in the war and their responsibility for the inhumane manner in which it was conducted.”¹⁰ The *Fragebogen* and reeducation initiatives were designed to act in concert, creating a new moral foundation for Germany built with the consent of a nation purged of its Nazis past. The *Fragebogen* and reeducation policies therefore targeted the entire population, unlike the Nuremberg Trials.

Beyond the questionnaires and reeducation initiatives, the military government also introduced compulsory manual labor for former Nazi party members. The Allied Control Council introduced a series of laws dictating the terms of the new state under Allied command. Control Council Law no. 10 permitted the use of hard labor as punishment for party members found guilty of membership “in categories of a criminal group or organization declared criminal” by the IMT.¹¹ All German citizens were to be registered with the occupation office and could be called upon to perform manual labor at the discretion of the Labor Office if they were found to be unemployed.

Denazification in West Germany under the direction of the US occupying government appears to have targeted Germany with two drastically different scopes. While the court systems and trials targeted specific individuals, each charged with individual responsibility for the war and genocide, the *Fragebogen*, reeducation policies, and compulsory manual labor orders targeted the general public, punishing an entire state. How could the US justify failing to convict and instead releasing high ranking Nazi officials while punishing regular citizens for the actions

⁹ Archibald MacLeish, “The Assistant Secretary of State (MacLeish) to the Secretary of State” (US Department of State, Office of the Historian, July 4, 1945).

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Telford Taylor, ed., “Control Council Law No. 10” (Government Printing Office, 1949), Lillian Goldman Law Library.

of the *Reich* during the war? What enabled policymakers to legitimate such contrary policies simultaneously when these policies clearly painted very different pictures of war guilt?

THE QUESTION

In this thesis, I hope to find this illusive explanation. While the US is no stranger to contradictory policies, it does not pursue these just to confuse political scientists and historians. States act with their interests in mind: though they may not always be successful in achieving their objectives, states are strategic actors. Through my research, I discuss the mechanisms that enabled US policymakers to implement this wide array of denazification policies. Much of the existing literature seeks to answer *why* policymakers sought out such contradictory policies rather than an exploration of *how* they were able to pursue such trajectories in the first place.

From the existing literature on denazification, I have found two main potential motivations of policymakers in pursuing such policies. The first of these potential explanations lies with the foreign policymakers themselves and their own relationships with Germany. After a government is defeated and its citizens remain, it is not always clear who the enemy is anymore: there is not necessarily consensus as to who the group that needs to be held accountable and punished is. Even during the war President Roosevelt changed his rhetoric concerning “the enemy” periodically; sometimes distinguishing between Nazis and Germans, while at other times conflating the two into a general “German” enemy.¹² While some of President Roosevelt’s cabinet saw the German population as victims of a fascist regime, referring to Germans as “under the Nazi yoke,” and as “slaves of the state,” others in the cabinet saw no distinction between Nazis and Germany: Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes said in a 1942

¹² Ronald R. Krebs, *Narrative and the Making of US National Security* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 129.

Cabinet meeting, “the goose-step is a perfect expression of the German character.”¹³ This explanation posits that the variation in understanding of German guilt among policymakers was what led to the variation in denazification policy. The sincerely held beliefs of Presidents Roosevelt and Truman (and their advisors) caused discrepancies in the scope of denazification, ultimately allowing top-ranking Nazis to walk free while regular German citizens suffered under punitive measures for the general public. Following this sincerely held beliefs explanation, the targeted trials of Nazi leadership stemmed from the belief among some officials that Nazis had corrupted the German state and the rest of the population had fallen victim to fascism rather than been willing participants. The broad scope of the *Fragebogen*, reeducation policies, and manual labor punishments then stemmed from the other policymakers who viewed Nazism as an extension of German militarism and a manifestation of values integral to Germany.

A second potential explanation of the motivations behind this contradiction is based in the strategic nature of states. States act strategically to secure their interests and justify these actions through legitimation. If the divide between policymakers was mirrored in public opinion about Germany, this would create an environment conducive to strategic maneuvering. If leaders in the US consciously chose to exploit the internal arguments about the need to punish Germany by implementing a variety of denazification policies, then the strategic moves explanation accounts for this observed discrepancy. With the deterioration of US-Soviet relations, policymakers in the US were more concerned by the threat the Soviet Union posed to US interests than they were of a resurgent fascist Germany, and thus chose to prioritize a strong, stable Germany over substantial denazification efforts that could potentially cripple the country. However, so soon after the war, it was clear that not everyone would realize the strategic need to

¹³ Ibid, 128, 132.

prioritize reconstruction over punishment. By imposing denazification policies that targeted the entire population, the occupying government could appear to hold the entire country accountable for the crimes of the Third Reich while still allowing many high-ranking officials to secretly maintain influence in the new republic. Implementing this range of denazification policies gave the US the ability to strategically and selectively focus on its denazification efforts at opportune times. The strategic explanation accounts for the two contrasting scopes of denazification initiatives by considering the importance of legitimation for the US and the strategic benefits the US enjoyed by adopting these policies.

These two explanations offer potential motivations among US policymakers to implement these contradictory policies. However, my thesis is primarily focused on *how* these policies could be implemented in the same environment rather than *why*. To explain the *how*, I suggest that one must look to the contemporaneous narrative landscape to understand the ability to legitimate reconstruction policies in Germany after the war. The policies available for the US to pursue in rebuilding Germany were dependent on what public understandings of German guilt already existed. While the first two explanations attempt to decipher the motivations of foreign policy officials in the postwar period, this third explanation instead questions whether motivations are even relevant to this discussion. The legitimation process influences how the state identifies threats to its national interests and therefore also influences what solutions are viable choices for the state.¹⁴ Unsettled narrative landscapes lack a single dominant narrative: instead there are multiple narratives in the public sphere each with relatively equal legitimacy in the eyes of the public.¹⁵ In the US at this time, the narrative landscape (an unsettled one)

¹⁴ Stacie E. Goddard and Ronald R. Krebs, "Rhetoric, Legitimation, and Grand Strategy," *Security Studies* 24, no. 1 (2015), 7.

¹⁵ Krebs, *Narrative and the Making of US National Security*, 33.

allowed foreign policymakers to switch between these two scopes of denazification. Regardless of whether US policymakers had sincerely held differences in belief of German guilt or whether personal perceptions of German guilt were irrelevant to their postwar planning, the *public* perception of German guilt (that is, the narrative landscape) impacted what denazification policies could be pursued. The multiple understandings of German guilt after the war allowed President Truman's foreign policy advisors to recommend these policies of different scopes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the existing literature about the reconstruction of Germany after World War II, there are essentially four schools of thought that explain the nature of United States-sanctioned denazification. These three seek to address the motivations of occupying authorities and their plans for Germany in terms of realizing American interests in Europe.

Strategic Denazification through Democratization

The first (and most popular) of these three labels the denazification efforts by the US as a strategic move: the US considered its actions in Germany in the greater context of Cold War politics. With the defeat of the Nazis, the US' most threatening enemy in Europe was now the Communist Soviet Union. What was once an unlikely alliance between capitalists and communists was now void without a common enemy on the continent. US policy in Europe, then, was now defined by the Red Menace.

Thomas A. Schwartz writes about the goals of the US High Commission in Germany (the presiding US government organization), conceding that not all leaders agreed on what the "right" postwar Germany would look like, but that there was consensus about the best outcome for

Germany: it would be “a politically stable, Western-oriented, democratic Germany, with a market-oriented economy and institutionalized protection for individual rights.”¹⁶ His work focuses primarily on the push for the successful democratization of West Germany, a feat the US government believed could only be achieved if the High Commission first restored the economy and bettered US-German relations.¹⁷ Aggressive denazification methods that targeted the entire population were not conducive to winning over the general population and would not make forming a well-staffed government easy: most of the German population was at least in some way connected to the party if not actively involved.¹⁸ In order to manage the Soviet threat in the East, the US believed denazification needed to be sacrificed for the sake of democratization: a counterintuitive notion; what democracy could be secured if it was built on fascist foundations?

Similarly, Arthur D. Kahn uses an example from the trial of Nazi industrialists to show the anti-Soviet (as opposed to anti-Nazi) justification most US officials employed in their treatment of Germans. Richard Freudenberg, the largest shoemaker in Germany and a wealthy Nazi loyalist who served as a regional economic adviser to Bormann and a die-hard Nazi, was brought to German denazification court after being arrested immediately for his involvement in the regime. If found guilty, his personal wealth and positions would be seized by the court and his position of power in industry suspended. Freudenberg was found not guilty of any crimes (a common outcome for many Nazi industrialists), but interestingly the Political Adviser on Germany, Robert Murphy, justified the verdict citing the protection of private property as a foundation of US standards and claiming that to strip Freudenberg of his wealth would be

¹⁶ Thomas A. Schwartz, “Reeducation and Democracy: The Policies of the United States High Commission in Germany,” in *America and the Shaping of German Society, 1945-1955* (Providence: Berg Publishers Inc., 1993), 36.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 35.

¹⁸ Clara Menck, “The Problem of Reorientation,” in *The Struggle for Democracy in Germany* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1949), 306.

reminiscent of the Russians.¹⁹ Again US actions in Germany were a product of anti-Soviet thinking rather than anti-Nazi. The ideological push towards a capitalist democracy and away from communism served as the primary objective for the United States. All denazification and reconstruction policies enacted were implemented as steps to create a capitalist democracy in West Germany under United States supervision.

Lastly, Walter Isaacson and Evan Thomas in their book and Hans Meyerhoff in his chapter discuss the strategic nature of US policy in Germany. The US HiCOG, John McCloy, prioritized his belief that a revitalized Germany was critical to a rehabilitated Europe over his anti-German sentiment leftover from the war. McCloy criticized “the amazing docility and acquiescence of the greater part of the German people toward Nazi outrages,” yet he still advocated for merciful reconstruction policies that would enable the population to form a new government and empower them to embrace Western democracy.²⁰ McCloy is most infamously known for commuting the sentences of Nazi war criminals, releasing them from prison in 1951. With the onset of the Korean War, the Soviet threat was more than just a specter to McCloy and the West: the Soviet Union was now engaged in direct combat with its former ally.

Meyerhoff attempts to account for the seemingly lackluster attempts at denazification within the government and major industries. He begins by outlining the known dilemma for the Allied occupying government: it was easy to identify who in the government needed to go, but harder to determine who was eligible to replace them.²¹ The Allied forces wanted to establish an efficient domestic government quickly, and thus their moral motives (proper denazification)

¹⁹ Arthur D. Kahn, *Experiment in Occupation: Witness to the Turnabout: Anti-Nazi War to Cold War, 1944-1946* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004), 132.

²⁰ Walter Isaacson and Evan Thomas, *The Wise Men: Six Friends and the World They Made: Acheson, Bohlen, Harriman, Kennan, Lovett, McCloy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1986), 516.

²¹ Hans Meyerhoff, “The Reconstruction of Government and Administration,” in *The Struggle for Democracy in Germany* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1949), 199.

were subordinated to ideological and political motives that considered administrative efficiency in making new appointments. According to Meyerhoff, denazification efforts were not as substantial as they likely *should* have been, but were as substantial as they *could* have been.

All of these authors who outlined the democratizing, ideological nature of US involvement in the reconstruction of Germany are able to explain the motivations of the government in ending denazification early and weakening the goal of the initiative, but fail to explain what allowed such a policy to ever be introduced in the first place if adequate denazification would so clearly hamper reconstruction efforts. This literature equates “going easy” on Nazis with allowing Germany to blossom into a democratic and economic power, but are those necessarily the same? Would the German economy really suffer if Richard Freudenberg didn’t get to keep his boat?

Punitive Denazification

A second explanation of US denazification policy in Germany is more punitive in nature, calling denazification efforts a product of anti-German sentiment in the US leftover from the war. Two authors I encountered supporting this punitive explanation focused on the Morgenthau Plan specifically: an infamously vengeful plan for postwar Germany, named after its author, Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau. James Tent depicts Secretary Morgenthau as an irrational man, fixated on punishing Germany indiscriminately for its actions during the war. Under Morgenthau’s plan, Germany would be dismembered into two small states, with its eastern portion ceded to Poland, France gaining control of the Saar in the West, and the internationalization of the Ruhr.²² German industry would be completely torn apart, its ability to

²² James F. Tent, *Mission on the Rhine: Reeducation and Denazification in American-Occupied Germany* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 17.

wage war on the continent obliterated forevermore. The Morgenthau Plan, however, was never adopted by the occupying government and ultimately Morgenthau was delegitimized, accused of not acting in the national interest but rather out of his own desire for vengeance on behalf of his fellow Jews.²³ Tent's discussion of denazification as a punitive measure, therefore, is incomplete without a thorough explanation of the plans that *were* implemented (unlike the Morgenthau Plan).

Konrad Jarausch's work goes beyond Morgenthau's anti-German sentiments, saying such rhetoric could be found throughout United States culture. Jarausch explores the widespread anti-German sentiment in the US, citing comments from President Roosevelt equating Nazism to Prussian militarism and comments from US public figures like journalist Raymond Daniell who said: "Slowly Europe and the world are growing to realize... that the German people themselves, and not just the Kaiser or Hitler, are what we have to contend with, for in any people who can sit idly by and not protest such actions there is some grave moral lack."²⁴ Most interesting, however, is Jarausch's analysis of the achievements and failures of denazification after the war.

He claims that under denazification efforts, the US successfully kept any politician with a significant Nazi past out of positions of major authority and that Nazism as an ideology was thoroughly discredited through the Nuremberg and subsequent trials. How, then, does one explain the rise of Kurt Kiesinger to the Chancellery in 1966? Kiesinger joined the Nazi Party in 1933, quickly rose through the ranks of the Foreign Office, and became the department's liaison with the Propaganda Ministry.²⁵ If Nazism as an ideology was successfully discredited after the sentencing of Nazi war criminals at Nuremberg, what does their release from prison by John

²³ Krebs, *Narrative and the Making of US National Security*, 140.

²⁴ Konrad H. Jarausch, *After Hitler: Recivilizing Germans, 1945-1995* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 47.

²⁵ Ralf Beste et al., "From Dictatorship to Democracy: The Role Ex-Nazis Played in Early West Germany," *Der Spiegel Online*, March 6, 2012, sec. International.

McCloy after less than a decade of serving their time mean? Lastly, Jarausch implies that those who call US denazification insubstantial believe denazification efforts in the Soviet zone *were* because they had a higher conviction rate than the West. One can take issue with both forms of denazification, however; it is well documented that the Soviets purged much more than just Nazis from government.²⁶

Like its strategic counterpart, the punitive explanations of denazification also fail to account for the entirety of the postwar moment. While they explain why denazification started, the desire to punish Nazi Germany cannot explain why many top-ranking officials and industrialists walked free. If foreign policy advisors drafted the denazification initiative with the sole intent to punish the country, they would have (1) embraced the Morgenthau Plan, and (2) targeted the entire populace rather than letting war criminals go free.

Democratization and Punishment in Denazification

The third explanation of denazification is an amalgamation of the first two: it depicts parts of postwar policy in Germany as a strategic move to counter Soviet ideological aggression, and others a product of anti-German sentiment designed to punish the country. Anne Pierce's book is a prime application of this frame of thinking: in it she describes the "reorientation" of US foreign policy from punitive measures in the very early years of occupation, to the strategic call for integrating the German state into the European and world economies.²⁷ According to Pierce, as early as 1946 there were signs of the US prioritizing restoring Germany over punishing it. Officials believed German integration with Western Europe was the best way to curb German

²⁶ Quinn Slobodian, "Blind Spots: Jews and the Nazi Past in East Germany" (Lecture, February 8, 2016).

²⁷ Anne R. Pierce, *Woodrow Wilson and Harry Truman: Mission and Power in American Foreign Policy* (London: Praeger, 2003), 203.

extremism from both the right and the left (Nazis on the right, Communists on the left) and form a healthy, stable, Western democracy.²⁸ Pierce even acknowledges the difficulty in justifying restorative policies towards Germany to the US public, citing a statement from the Department of State in 1948 introducing the objectives of the Marshall Plan: “The fundamental objective of the United States with respect to Germany is to insure that Germany does not again menace the peace of the world and makes a vital contribution to the economic rehabilitation and political security of Europe. It is desirous, in the words of Secretary Marshall, that ‘a peaceful Germany with strong democratic roots, take its place in the European and world community of nations.’”²⁹

Similarly, Harold Zink classifies US foreign policy towards Germany into three distinct phases, each one with its own driving force. From the beginning of occupation until July 1947, US foreign policy was largely administered on a punitive basis, as marked by the implementation of directive JCS 1067.³⁰ The directive prohibited fraternization between US officials and German citizens, prohibited the use of US funds to rebuild German industry, and considered all Germans to be a menace to humanity and guilty of crimes against humanity and the peace.³¹ The second phase, from July 1947 to the Berlin Blockade in 1948 and 1949, was a transitional period that marked a shift from punitive measures towards a more pragmatic approach. It was characterized by the introduction of a new directive, JCS 1779, which outlined more liberal economic provisions while still maintaining restrictions on German remilitarization.³² The third and final phase of German reconstruction policy, from the end of the Berlin Blockade to the end of occupation in 1955, was the final development into a strategic posture towards Germany. The

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid, 204.

³⁰ Harold Zink, *The United States in Germany, 1944-1955* (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1957), 93.

³¹ Ibid, 94.

³² Ibid, 96.

Berlin Blockade showed the extent of the Soviet threat, and the shift in foreign policy after 1949 was a product of this realization.³³ While Zink's classifications neatly isolate some contradictory policies, his timeline does not explain why it took until 1951 for McCloy to release Nazi war criminals nor why responses to the *Fragebogen* (or *Meldebogen*, its successor) continued to be used for employment eligibility after 1947.

Most importantly, between Pierce's and Zink's shifting eras of US intentions towards Germany, there is no explanation of what makes this debate even possible. Regardless of whether foreign policy makers were trying to punish Germany, reeducate it, or stabilize it, there was still this discrepancy in scope of denazification policies. Studies of US intentions do not adequately account for this gap in scope and, ultimately, the debate over intentions is unproductive. In this thesis I explore the significance of narrative landscape in the postwar United States and Germany and explain why shifting intentions were even possible during this time of reconstruction.

Rhetorical Politics

Rhetorical politics is the study of public justifications of policy and attempts at legitimation. Rhetorical political scientists concern themselves with how states and leaders justify and market their desired policies to other groups and the manner in which they present their ideas. Grounded in the principles of constructivism, rhetorical politics relies on the public legitimation of policy for the bulk of its analysis. In my discussions of narrative, I will contribute to discussions of legitimation, outlining the role narratives play in this process and why they should be included in studies of grand strategy formation.

³³ Ibid, 98.

In his book, Ronald Krebs loosely outlines the role narrative landscape plays in legitimation, claiming “unsettled situations” (where a dominant narrative is lacking) are prone to debates of broader scope because politicians and activists can “legitimately, without penalty,” advance a wide range of policy stances grounded in the variety of narratives present.³⁴ The narrative landscapes (or as Krebs calls it, “situations”) affect the legitimation process as they control what policies are eligible for legitimation; in order to effectively legitimate a policy, a corresponding narrative is necessary. Stacie Goddard’s article with Krebs outlines the importance of legitimation in the making of grand strategy, also hinting at the significance of the discursive context under which a policy is legitimated.³⁵ My research builds upon their work about narratives and legitimation, and relate it to the postwar period in the United States and West Germany.

THE SIGNIFICANCE

Much has been written on the nature of Cold War era US foreign policy and grand strategy, generating various understandings of the behavior of the US after World War II. My work with this research adds to the existing literature, linking theoretical understandings of narrative, legitimation, and grand strategy to the empirical data of postwar US German reconstruction debates. The United States has developed a brand that depicts the US as the protector of rights and liberties, giving the country the unquestionable moral high ground in most conflicts with other states. What, then, does it mean for the US’ legacy if its government

³⁴ Krebs, *Narrative and the Making of US National Security*, 33.

³⁵ Stacie E. Goddard and Ronald R. Krebs, “Rhetoric, Legitimation, and Grand Strategy,” *Security Studies* 24, no. 1 (2015), 27.

prioritized stabilizing Germany and creating a strong capitalist ally against the Soviets over adequately addressing the Nazi legacy?

Germany is also often the subject of debate between memory historians in deciding whether the German government has done enough in addressing its past and taking responsibility for the war.³⁶ The word most attributed to this topic, *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, stems from the words *Vergangenheit* (the past) and *bewältigen* (to overcome) and is used to describe the phenomenon in Germany of acknowledging and wrestling with its Nazi legacy. These debates mistakenly identify Germany as the *sole* actor in addressing Nazism and reconstructing the state in the years after the war. With the US and other Allied powers occupying Germany and dictating the terms of reconstruction and denazification, how can we hold Germany solely responsible for the outcomes of these policies? This is not to say Germany had nothing to do with the outcomes of denazification, but it seems it is often unfairly singled out as the sole actor while the US is not forced to consider its role.

The theoretical portion of this thesis explains how narrative landscape affects the generation of grand strategy. Stacie Goddard and Ronald Krebs have written about the role that legitimation (the public justification of a given policy) plays in the generation of grand strategy, but my work will also weave in the significance of the preexisting narrative climate in how policies are legitimized. They touch on the significance of context in determining whether attempts to legitimate succeed or fail, claiming challenges to grand strategy during “settled” times generally fail because these challenges are deemed unrespectable or unworthy of attention. This thesis works to further address how grand strategy emerges during “unsettled” narrative landscapes and how this situation can potentially be exploited for strategic purposes.

³⁶ Wulf Kansteiner, “Losing the War, Winning the Memory Battle,” in *The Politics of Memory in Postwar Europe* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 102–46.

This research challenges how we study the formation of grand strategy and encourages a more holistic view: considering not just policies enacted, but also the narrative environment under which these policies are crafted. I argue that the narrative environment is inherently a factor in the establishment of grand strategy and thus must be considered when analyzing American grand strategy. The second chapter of this thesis explores this link between narrative and policy more thoroughly, showing how narrative landscape enables certain policies to succeed on the public stage.

THE METHODOLOGY

To pinpoint the nature of the “unsettled” narrative environment after the war, I conduct a cultural study of the United States, spanning from the years leading up to the war through the Truman administration: approximately 1939-1952 (1939 because this was the year the war in Europe officially began despite the US not joining the fight until the end of 1941, and 1952 because this was the last full year of the Truman presidency). This cultural study uses newspapers, magazines, and films to identify categories of narratives of Germany and Germans in the United States during this time. Various depictions in the media of the country and its population are indicative of the range of narratives surrounding Germany after the war and thus this cultural study establishes an understanding of which narratives were dominant during this “unsettled” time.

In order to accurately show the use of the narratives identified from the cultural study in the public legitimation attempts by policymakers, access to their correspondence, office memoranda, public documents of occupation, and other relevant papers is needed. Through these documents, I identify the primary narratives they reference in their attempts to legitimate,

and categorize their justification efforts by narrative used. Where multiple, contrasting narratives are used to legitimate a given policy, I show how narrative landscape enables policy pursuance.

Chapter 2: Narrative Theory

Before anything can be said about the Nuremberg Trials or *Fragebögen*, a discussion of narratives and legitimation must be had that outlines the importance of these two in US foreign policy strategy. These denazification policies alone mean nothing without a theoretical background that explains how the US government was able to endorse both measures simultaneously. In this chapter, I explain the concepts of narrative and legitimation, and relate them to the formation of US strategy abroad, specifically in reconstruction-era Germany.

NARRATIVES AND LEGITIMATION

In any given community, there are common understandings that develop over time based on communal beliefs and identities. These understandings serve as a lens through which members of the community relate to information and analyze it. Though they are at times difficult to identify and pinpoint due to their engrained nature, narratives can be deciphered through cultural analyses of mainstream media. The identification of narratives is crucial to understanding foreign policy strategy because narratives enable the pursuit of specific policies: a claim explained further below. But first, a definition of narrative is needed.

Defining the Narrative

“Narrative” is one of those words in the social sciences that seems to mean something different to each author. Marie-Laure Ryan has done most of the work in summarizing these various definitions in her chapter of David Herman’s book *The Cambridge Companion to the Narrative*. She comes to the conclusion that all definitions of narrative in some way relate to a “story” (the “story” including a spatial/temporal dimension as well as a mental one that gives the

characters of the narrative agency), but many go beyond the mere “story” and demand the inclusion of a formal and pragmatic dimension.³⁷ This dimension considers the relationship between the individual and the story, necessitating that the story communicates something meaningful to its audience. For the purposes of this thesis, I include this pragmatic dimension; narratives affect the way audiences think and analyze information, and therefore something meaningful must be relayed to the audience through the story told. I define narrative as the meaningful representation of specific events, people, or ideas; this includes *how* the story is represented as well as the details of the story. While the details are important to how audience members may react, the manner in which this information is relayed (the word choice, the tone and emphasis, the context, etc.) is *also* a key determining factor in how one relates to and analyzes a piece of information. Narrative, therefore, is based in both content and delivery, and narrative analysis must encompass both of these factors.

Markus Kornprobst has developed a four-pronged definition of “composite commonplace” (or for the purposes of this thesis: content). Kornprobst, basing this tetrad off of Kenneth Burke’s dramatic pentad, outlines four components of a story: scene, agent, purpose, and means.³⁸ These four elements of storytelling encompass the content of the narrative. Kornprobst explains “scene” as the environment which the actors operate in, considering what threats and opportunities exist in this environment.³⁹ The “agent” is the primary actor operating in this environment, interacting with other secondary actors as friends or foes.⁴⁰ The “purpose”

³⁷ Marie-Laure Ryan, “Toward a Definition of Narrative,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Narrative* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 22–38.

³⁸ Markus Kornprobst, “Building Agreements Upon Agreements: The European Union and Grand Strategy,” *European Journal of International Relations* 21, no. 2 (2015): 267–92.

Kenneth Burke, *A Grammar of Motives* (Berkeley: University of California Press), 1969.

³⁹ Kornprobst, “Building Agreements Upon Agreements,” 272.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

is the interest of this agent in the scene: the motivations and objectives of the agent.⁴¹ Last is the “means,” which Kornprobst explains as the mechanisms of power the agent uses to realize its interests in the scene.⁴² Together these four components of the story convey the content of the narrative.

These four components of content are only one half of narrative. The other half is based in delivery, of which I have also identified four constituent components, inspired by Goddard and Krebs’ list of factors that affect the success of legitimation attempts.⁴³ Goddard and Krebs’ list outlines five factors that can either make or break an attempt at legitimating policy, but I posit that because legitimation relies on successfully relating a policy to a dominant narrative, their five factors of successful legitimation in fact outline the five components of narrative. One of their factors, however, is content, which I have separated into a category of its own (above). The remaining four components they have identified are based in delivery and I coopt these four remaining components for my analysis of delivery.

The first of these four is the “speaker.” The “speaker” (writer, director, producer, publisher, sponsor, etc.) of the story is responsible for the delivery of the message. The authority and reputation of the speaker affects the power of the message and its reception to the audience. The second component of delivery is the context in which the message is delivered. This is the time and place the message is delivered, as well as the potential references the story may invoke and connotations it may evoke. The context influences how the message is received based on events that have recently happened or are in the public consciousness, the symbolic meaning of the location in which the message is delivered, or any number of other contextual significances.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Stacie E. Goddard and Ronald R. Krebs, “Rhetoric, Legitimation, and Grand Strategy,” *Security Studies* 24, no. 1 (2015), 26.

The third aspect of delivery is the audience which the message is intended for and delivered to. The audience affects how the narrative is received because audiences have different biases and understandings that impact how they relate to and analyze the message. What may resonate with one audience may appear completely foreign to another. The intended audience impacts how the message is crafted and delivered, and the audience to which the message is actually delivered affects the reception and retelling of the narrative. The fourth and final component of delivery is the technique with which the message is delivered. The technique encompasses the tone and placement of emphasis on words when spoken, the acting choices made in a film or play, the lighting and costumes for a scene, etc. The technique is crucial to the formation of narrative as it is the way in which the story is told to the audience and therefore received by the audience.

Together, the content and delivery (and their four respective components each) relay a meaningful narrative to an audience. A speaker effectively gives an account of an event or idea to a specific group by using a particular technique and in a specific setting (who says what when, where, how, and to whom). Once formed, narratives are disseminated through the work they are manifest in: films in theaters, reviews of books in newspapers and magazines, speeches, works of art, etc. But why are these narratives important in analyzing foreign policy strategy and how do they affect what policy options are available to officials?

Legitimation through Narrative

In short, narratives are relevant to discussions of foreign policy because they are the basis of legitimation in grand strategy formation. Goddard and Krebs have written extensively (both together and separately) about the role legitimation plays in international relations. In her latest

book, Goddard succinctly explains the process of legitimation: “A state legitimates its actions when it appeals to recognized norms and rules to justify its demands to its audience.”⁴⁴ Officials seeking to legitimate preferred policies refer to narratives that mimic their line of reasoning in order to justify their positions. In order to ensure the “buy-in” of the public, some kind of public justification is required.⁴⁵

Though her discussion of legitimation focuses primarily on the legitimation of states’ actions to the international community, Goddard’s definition still applies to domestic governments as they must do the same with their own citizenry in order to garner public support. Legitimation is a crucial step in the implementation of foreign policy, depending on the government’s need to mobilize the public and the visibility of the policy in question. Legitimation is necessary whenever mobilization on the behalf of the government is desired (no matter how visible the policy may be within the public sphere), or when there is a reasonable chance that the policy will garner widespread attention even if mobilization efforts are not necessary.⁴⁶ Legitimation is therefore an obstacle officials must conquer on the steps to implementing effective foreign policy. How, then, does narrative fold into legitimation?

First let us look at Goddard’s and Krebs’ definitions of legitimation. Goddard defines legitimation as the appeal to recognized norms and rules to justify a state’s demands to its audience.⁴⁷ Krebs defines legitimation as “the articulation before key publics of publicly acceptable reasons for concrete action and policy positions.”⁴⁸ Both Goddard’s and Krebs’ definitions include the use of “recognized norms” or “acceptable reasons” as integral pieces to

⁴⁴ Stacie E. Goddard, *When Right Makes Might: Rising Powers and World Order* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2018), 18.

⁴⁵ Ronald R. Krebs, *Narrative and the Making of US National Security* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 15.

⁴⁶ Goddard and Krebs, “Rhetoric, Legitimation, and Grand Strategy,” 18.

⁴⁷ Goddard, *When Right Makes Might*, 18.

⁴⁸ Krebs, *Narrative and the Making of US National Security*, 14.

justifying policy: in order to secure public support, officials rely on commonly held beliefs as the basis for their justifications. Justifying policy by referencing a norm that is not shared by the audience will be ineffective because a belief is invoked that is not commonly shared: effective legitimation relies on the use of widely accepted beliefs.

The commonly shared beliefs, norms, or reasons used in legitimation are in fact narratives. Narratives that are concordant with the preferred policies are chosen as a means of appealing to an audience for support. Beyond matching the policy desired, the selected narratives must be widely circulated and believed in order to be effective mechanisms of legitimation. Krebs posits that narratives “channel” political contests, “privileging particular courses of action and impeding the legitimation of others.”⁴⁹ The policies that are discordant with the existing dominant (widely-shared) narrative are deemed illegitimate and therefore are far less likely to be effectively pursued by the government. Narratives are therefore invaluable to the foreign policy strategy formation process because they enable policies to be enacted.

As a mechanism of legitimation, narratives therefore affect the formation of grand strategy. Narratives shape grand strategy by defining the “national interest,” identifying threats, limiting acceptable policy solutions, and mobilizing publics and resources.⁵⁰ Once an issue is identified as a part of the “national interest,” it immediately is seen as legitimate because it has been woven into the narrative of “national interest.” The identification of threats for the state relies on narrative: groups or organizations adopted into the “threat” narrative are then deemed legitimate threats to the state. The narrative landscape also limits what policy solutions are accessible to officials when formulating grand strategy because justifying a policy requires a matching widespread narrative. Lastly, the ability to mobilize publics and resources relies on

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Goddard and Krebs, “Rhetoric, Legitimation, and Grand Strategy,” 9-12.

narrative because without a legitimate cause, mobilization efforts will fail. Grand strategy therefore relies at least in part on the perception of its legitimacy (and therefore narrative capabilities).

Settled and Unsettled Narrative Landscapes

When a single narrative is able to achieve dominance over other related narratives, this is what Krebs calls a “settled narrative situation.” In such a situation, the dominant narrative is used by officials to legitimate their preferred policy, though it does not necessarily secure complete consensus of policy.⁵¹ The scope of policy debate is limited to only options supported by this single narrative, however multiple (similar) policies can be supported using the same narrative. In settled narrative situations, a single narrative is dominant and only a limited number of policies can be legitimated (and these policies are unlikely to heavily contradict one another in objective).

But what happens when there is no single dominant narrative? In complex bodies with members of a diverse range of backgrounds, the establishment of a single dominant narrative that is not challenged by another legitimate, contrary narrative is far from certain. Krebs outlines such a scenario, referring to this as an “unsettled narrative situation.” These situations lack a single dominant narrative and are instead replaced by multiple narratives in the public sphere with relatively equal legitimacy.⁵² In such environments, the scope of debate is much broader because policymakers can legitimately, without penalty, put forth a wide range of policy stances grounded in the existing variety of narratives.⁵³ Unlike in its settled counterparts, unsettled

⁵¹ Krebs, *Narrative and the Making of US National Security*, 33.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

narrative situations can sustain contradictory policies because these can be legitimated via different, contrary, codominant narratives.

Unsettled narrative situations emerge after moments of crisis where existing dominant narratives are challenged by new narratives or where the dominant narrative succumbs to internal fissures stemming from the inherent contradictions.⁵⁴ This thesis considers post-WWII society, specifically the United States and Germany from 1945 to 1952: a time marked by massive changes and crises. During this time, the Soviet Union transformed from an ally to an enemy, and Germany transitioned from the greatest threat to American interests in Europe to a means of securing American interests abroad. Prewar and wartime narratives mixed with this new postwar narrative of “the enemy,” creating an unsettled narrative landscape.

OPERATIONALIZING NARRATIVES

This thesis’ discussion of narrative and legitimation is centered in American foreign policy strategy towards Germany after World War II. To meaningfully discuss the narratives of the time and significance these played in the policies pursued, narratives need to be operationalized. This next section thoroughly explains my methods of identifying and coding narratives of Germany in American culture during the time.

How to Find Them

Because narratives are a product of culture, cultural analyses can be used to identify and analyze them. Narratives manifest in materials of pop culture: films, novels, television and radio shows, plays, works of art, and other pieces of cultural importance. In order to identify

⁵⁴ Ibid, 35.

narratives of Germany, for instance, media that portrays Germans or Nazis in their storyline can be analyzed. Narratives of “the German” are shown in portrayals of Germans and Nazis in mass media because these are the common associations most citizens would have with “the German.” If all Germans in film and television are shown as violent, cruel Nazis, the image of “the German” becomes synonymous with the violent Nazi. However, if Germans are portrayed in a range of roles (Nazis and anti-Nazis, violent and peace-loving, etc.), there may not be a single dominant narrative of “the German” in American media and instead several may persist that contradict one another.

To determine whether a narrative is dominant or instead shares the spotlight with several other codominant narratives, one must consider the level of circulation of the narratives in question. How often are these narratives represented in mass media and how often are they invoked during moments of legitimation? What are the outcomes of those legitimation attempts? Narratives that reach a certain level of popularity and familiarity are more likely to have lasting effects on the society in which they emerge. In the United States, for instance, Germany was demonized before and during the war due to its increasingly aggressive and morally corrupt actions throughout the 1930s and early ‘40s, and these narratives lasted far beyond the end of the war. Though Germany became an important ally in Cold War foreign policy for the United States, the image of the rule-obsessed, fascist-like German remained in many popular portrayals of Germans and Germany. This pattern allows formerly singularly dominant narratives to become codominant with other, newer narratives that are growing in popularity. These times of transition between dominant narratives (unsettled narrative landscapes) are prime times to search for narratives because media materials will contain a number of representations of the same topic.

How to Code Them

Once a narrative has been identified, an analysis is needed to attribute meaning to the narrative. Simply noticing the presence of multiple narratives means nothing without an understanding of what these stories mean in the greater context of legitimation: what do these narratives represent and imply? What kind of policies would these narratives legitimate? Sympathetic or ruthless ones? Targeted or general policies? Aggressive or defensive measures?

To best understand the framework that goes into analyzing narratives, I have developed an analogy. Imagine a narrative as a single wave in the ocean. Waves have three aspects to them to measure: their direction, amplitude, and duration or frequency. The direction being which way it deviates from the water line: positively or negatively, the amplitude being the height of this deviation, and the duration being how long this wave lasts for. In narrative analysis, direction is how the narrative in question portrays the subject studied: positively or negatively. The amplitude is how widespread the narrative is within the society: how well is it circulated and how impactful is it on societal norms and perceptions? Lastly, duration is how long the narrative is continuing to influence the social consciousness. The process of narrative analysis must consider these three aspects of the narrative and seek to measure them (qualitatively or quantitatively, in the case of duration).

The first of these three, direction, considers the nature of the portrayal. This thesis is concerned with the portrayal of Germans, Nazis, and Germany in American media of the 1940s, and thus my cultural analysis considers the portrayal of characters that fit into these categories. Were these characters in the role of protagonist, antagonist, or both? Were they portrayed in a sympathetic manner to the audience that showcased a human side or were they one-dimensionally evil? Did the characters' motives appear justified through the plotline? Did their

motives or personality change over the course of the story? These kinds of questions shed light on the nature of the portrayal and what they show about the subject considered, ultimately determining whether the portrayal is a positive or negative one.

After direction is amplitude. One must consider how widespread the story is in popular culture and the reactions the audience had to the portrayal. Were these narratives represented in multiple forms of media from a range of authors? A single portrayal of the subject studied does not necessarily mean the narrative significantly impacts societal understandings and perceptions of the subject studied. Even if this single story is widely consumed, it is unlikely to be a dominant (or codominant) narrative if it has not spurred other stories that depict the subject in a similar manner. Other questions to ask are whether audiences reacted positively to the narratives, believing their depictions of the subject studied. If it was a sarcastic or satiric representation, did audiences realize this when watching or was it taken at face value? The extent of circulation and reactions to the narrative are important to analyzing the amplitude of its impact on society.

Lastly, a timeline of the narrative must be established in order to identify its duration: how long was this portrayal impactful on societal perceptions of the subject? This step is rather straightforward, but an important one because it is what determines whether the narrative is singularly dominant or instead codominant with another narrative (or two). Were multiple narratives widespread at the same time or was there a transition from one to another? When multiple waves interact with one another, there is interference: waves with opposite directions can cancel each other out, otherwise identical waves that are out of sync can create aberrations in amplitude as they overlap, or other modes of interference. The same occurs when multiple narratives are codominant at a given time. As explained earlier, unsettled narrative landscapes

have far more diverse discussions of potential policies to pursue because there is a wider breadth of policies that can be legitimated due to the range of narratives in play. Settled narrative landscapes, however, are limited to policies that can be legitimated from the same singularly dominant narrative and thus are less likely to differ greatly in their objectives.

CONCLUSION

This chapter theorized the importance of narratives in discussions of foreign policy strategy. Much has been written about the role legitimation plays in the formation of grand strategy, but this thesis seeks to take this one step further, postulating that narratives are the rhetorical basis of legitimation. Discussions of the legitimation of foreign policy are therefore incomplete without a study of the relevant narrative landscape and analysis of how these narratives connect to policies pursued.

Narratives, the basis of storytelling and argumentation, are formed by popular portrayals of a subject in the media. Narratives consist of two aspects: content and delivery. Content can be broken down into four constituent parts: scene, agent, purpose, and means. Delivery can also be separated into four factors: speaker, context, audience, and technique. Once formed and widely circulated, these portrayals become a part of the social fabric, influencing how people relate to and react to new information. In order to identify popular narratives of an era, a cultural study must be conducted that collects and analyzes mass media (films, newspapers and magazines, novels, art, etc.) and assesses the portrayal of the subject studied. The analysis of these narratives is based in measuring (qualitatively or quantitatively) the direction, amplitude, and duration of the narrative.

Discussions of the postwar moment in the United States must include an analysis of the narrative landscape because these stories were what informed the public justification of policies relating to Germany. As explained in the previous chapter, there are essentially three schools of thought that explain motivations of US reconstruction efforts in West Germany. All three theories, however, fail to explain *how* contradictory reconstruction and denazification policies could coexist. In the next chapter, I outline in detail what these denazification and reconstruction policies were and who they affected. In the fourth chapter, I show the results of my cultural study and begin a thorough discussion of the narrative landscape in the United States during this time. In my fifth and final chapter, I relate these policies to the narratives used to legitimate them, showing how the two are inherently connected and discussions of policy without discussions of narrative are incomplete.

Chapter 3: Rebuilding from the Ground Up

As the United States assumed control of Germany alongside the other victorious powers (the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union, and France) after the war, its foreign policymakers were tasked with the mammoth responsibility of reconstructing Germany while ensuring it atoned for crimes committed during the war. As their alliance from the war became obsolete, US-Soviet relations degenerated and the US began to perceive its greatest threat in Europe to be, instead of Nazis who had by now been conquered, the Soviets. Though the US, UK, and France had learned to cooperate relatively well among their respective sectors, to the East, the Soviet Union had molded East Germany into an extension of the Kremlin's power: a move seen as fundamentally threatening to the existence of Western influence in Germany. The prospect of German reconstruction had thus become entangled in US-Soviet relations and considerations of the "Red Threat" were inherently linked to any reconstruction or denazification policies in Germany.

Alongside the considerations of Soviet-occupied East Germany, the memory of World War I and the Treaty of Versailles were also in the minds of policymakers. The treaty had been a source of power for nationalist resentment in Germany during the interwar years and had become a major rallying point for the Nazi Party. US policymakers were not eager to make the same mistakes again during this round of postwar negotiations and reconciliation. This meant the occupation policies pursued would have to strike a balance between punishment and reconstruction: too harsh and the German people would continue to hate the West for its vengeful spirit, but too ineffectual and a resurgence of Nazism would be possible. This balance in punishment and reconstruction, however, did not require the implementation of inherently contradictory policies. As I will show below, even in the very early years of occupation, there

were simultaneous efforts by the occupying forces to give more responsibility to Nazi leaders while also claiming Germans were inherently untrustworthy and too irresponsible to run their own matters. This tension between punishment and reconstruction did not find a solution throughout the years of occupation and ultimately leaders within the Nazi Party were able to return to positions of power in the new republic while nominal members were punished for allowing these men to be elected in 1933.

ADMINISTRATIVE PLANS FOR GERMANY

To begin the reconstruction process, the US and its allies founded the Allied Control Council (ACC), tasked with overseeing all decisions affecting Germany as a whole. Via unanimous decisions between the four powers, the ACC held jurisdiction over Germany's military, waters, skies, transportation, political spheres, economic and finance matters, reparations, deliveries and restitution payments, internal affairs and communications, laws, and prisoners of war and other displaced persons, among others.⁵⁵ The ACC acted as the main governing body for the Allies, setting objectives for reconstruction and leading the policymaking process from above.

In conquering lands during the war that did not belong to it after the Treaty of Versailles was signed, Germany was forced to accept changes to its borders by the ACC. The German conquest of the Ruhr Valley and Saarland created the call for a return to the pre-WWII borders, and the potential internationalization of the Ruhr and Saar. The French delegation was particularly interested in the concession of the Ruhr to France in order to (1) exploit mining

⁵⁵ Allied Control Council, "Statement by the Governments of the United Kingdom, the United States of America, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the Provisional Government of the French Republic on Control Machinery in Germany" (German Historical Institute, June 5, 1945), German History in Documents and Images.

rights in this resource-rich area, and (2) secure the status of a diminished Germany.⁵⁶ The Morgenthau Plan, a plan introduced by Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau, called for the complete dismantlement of Germany as a state and the reincorporation of the land into several agricultural farms with no industrial capabilities or centralized governments.⁵⁷ Though this proposal was not enacted due to its inability to garner support in DC, the plan was still proposed by a high-ranking US official with close ties to Presidents Roosevelt and Truman and parts of it later inspired future policies. Eventually, the four powers agreed to a four-way split of Germany, with the UK to the North including Bremen and Hamburg, France in the center-west with the Saar and part of the Rhineland, the USSR to the East with eastern Prussia, the US to the South with Munich and Frankfurt, and the four-way split of the capital city Berlin.⁵⁸

US occupation policy directly after the war can best be summarized by an excerpt of Joint Chiefs of Staff Directive 1067 (JCS 1067): “Germany will not be occupied for the purpose of liberation but as a defeated enemy nation. Your aim is not oppression but to occupy Germany for the purpose of realizing certain important Allied objectives.”⁵⁹ As an occupied nation, Germany was not a target to be “saved” but rather the spoils of war: its wealth of natural resources were to be exploited for Allied interests and its population were under the unchecked authority of the four Allied governments.

This exploitative objective for Germany was best represented in the demilitarization process for Germany and the deindustrialization process connected to war industry. JCS 1067

⁵⁶ Michael Creswell and Marc Trachtenberg, “France and the German Question, 1945-1955,” *Journal of Cold War Studies* 5, no. 3 (Summer 2003): 5–28.

⁵⁷ Frederick H. Gareau, “Morgenthau’s Plan for Industrial Disarmament in Germany,” *The Western Political Quarterly* 14, no. 2 (June 1961): 517–34.

⁵⁸ Joint Chiefs of Staff, “Directive to the Commander in Chief of the United States Forces of Occupation (JCS 1067)” (US Department of State, October 21, 1945), Volume 13, p. 596, The Department of State Bulletin. Most of Prussia was ceded back to Poland under this arrangement as well.

⁵⁹ Joint Chiefs of Staff, “JCS 1067.”

called for the dissolution of the armed forces and paramilitary organizations like the *Wehrmacht* (German Army), *Sturmabteilung* (SA), and *Schutzstaffel* (SS) as well as the liquidation of German “war plants.”⁶⁰ Factories were classified as “war plants” by the US occupation authorities and, due to bureaucratic discrepancies, many factories were placed in this category that could easily have been used for peaceful purposes.⁶¹ For example, fertilizer factories in West Germany were dismantled and their parts shipped to the Soviet Union (as a part of an international reparations agreement with the Soviet Union) despite the demand for fertilizer in Germany for crop production (to feed a starving population of civilians).⁶²

Of the factories permitted to remain intact, caps were introduced on the amount these industries could produce, particularly among heavy industry. By 1946, the occupying government was heavily regulating the production outputs of German industry: the production of gasoline and oil, rubber, aluminum, and radio transmitting equipment were outright banned; the chemical industry was limited to 40% of its 1936 production capacity; the electrical industry limited to 50% its 1938 production levels; and the locomotive industry limited to repairing existing stock as opposed to producing new vehicles.⁶³ The production limitations were implemented to both limit German war-waging abilities as well as weaken competition for industries the Allied governments relied on for exports. Without German cars in the vehicle production market, American car producers could thrive without competition.

⁶⁰ US Department of State, “Department of State Policy Statement” (Government Printing Office, August 26, 1948), 1298-1320, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1948, Germany and Austria, Volume II*.

⁶¹ Orland Armstrong, “German Destruction at Our Expense,” *Reader’s Digest*, 1948.

⁶² Editorial Board, “A New Policy for Germany,” *LIFE Magazine*, December 15, 1947.

Though the Morgenthau Plan’s boundaries were ultimately rejected, the call for a push towards an agrarian instead of industrial state was somewhat embraced, as the removal of all industries related to war or major production were destroyed.

⁶³ Robert Murphy, “The United States Political Adviser for Germany (Murphy) to the Secretary of State” (Government Printing Office, March 8, 1946).

Ultimately, the nationwide policies affecting German infrastructure (both military and industrial) targeted these sectors in order to limit German capabilities in waging war. By eliminating the German army (*Wehrmacht*), Germany would have no official mechanism of fighting occupying forces. Without a paramilitary organization like the SS or SA to bolster support among civilians through intimidation, Germans would be less likely to organize against the occupying governments and instead follow the rules set down by the ACC. With the destruction of any industrial capabilities (both war-related and otherwise), German industry would be significantly hampered and the country would have neither the production means nor the funds to wage war. These limitations on German military capabilities would act in tandem to ensure control over the defeated nation.

Lastly, the administrative system called for the expulsion of Germans from Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland: all countries conquered by the Nazis and which had had their native populations forcibly removed by the Nazi government to make room for the incoming German population.⁶⁴ Article XII of the Potsdam Agreement of 1945 called for the “orderly and humane” transfer of German populations out of these countries into Allied-occupied Germany.⁶⁵ The removal of Germans from Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland created a larger drain on Germany’s already restricted resources and further reminded the German people of their status as a defeated nation: an objective listed in JCS 1067.

⁶⁴ R. M. Douglas, *Orderly and Humane: The Expulsion of the Germans after the Second World War* (Yale University Press, 2012), 1.

The removal of non-Germans from these areas to make room for ethnic Germans was a crucial principle to Nazi ideologies of domination, and was known as “*Lebensraum*,” or living space. *Lebensraum* served as the justification for the forced removals, as it claimed Germans needed the natural resources in Eastern Europe in order to reach their full potential as the “master race.”

⁶⁵ Clement Atlee, Harry Truman, and Joseph Stalin, “Potsdam Agreement,” August 1, 1945, NATO Archives.

THE DENAZIFICATION PURGE

When the Nazis came to power in 1933, they successfully systematically reoriented all societal institutions towards the Nazi ideology. This process, known as *Gleichschaltung*, affected every facet of German society, encompassing the economy and trade associations, media, education systems, and even German culture.⁶⁶ Because the ideology had been so engrained in the native culture, the process of purging Nazism from society had to be all-consuming in order to adequately remove any remnants from German life. Every government official was a member of the Nazi Party (some more involved than others) and essentially every civilian was also a member. This meant that the occupying authorities had millions of people to register and determine their level of responsibility for the Nazi regime in order to properly wrestle with the Nazi legacy in Germany.

Were you a Nazi?

The first step in implementing the purge was the use of the *Fragebogen*, a 131-item questionnaire administered to every single German adult to be filled out and returned to occupation authorities. These questions included personal information (like name, address, identifying marks, religion, etc.); schooling information (name and type of school and degree received); professional or trade examinations taken; employment and military service history (position and rank, duties and responsibilities, location of service if outside Germany, military honors received, and reasons for “cessation of service”); organization membership (Nazi Party membership or Party-related organizations like the SS, SA, *Reichskulturkammer* (Nazi organization of culture), *Deutsches Rotes Kreuz* (German Red Cross, both an extension of the

⁶⁶ Christoph Strupp, “Only a Phase: How Diplomats Misjudged Hitler’s Rise,” *Der Spiegel Online*, January 30, 2013, sec. International.

Party as well as a Geneva-Convention-compliant organization), or any other organizations besides the more than 50 identified by the questionnaire); the membership of any family members to these organizations; one's voting record from the November 1932 election and March 1933 election which brought the Nazis to power; part-time service with any organizations not already mentioned above; writings and speeches given since 1923 (subject matter, date, and circulation or audience); income and assets since 1931; travel or residences abroad (countries visited, dates, purpose of journey, origin of funds used for travel, persons or organizations visited); and any other additional information the person wished to report.⁶⁷ This six-page questionnaire was required for any German adult who wished to work, or to continue to work, in a public or semi-public position of responsibility or in a leading private enterprise.⁶⁸ Public office would mean anywhere in government, whereas the leading private enterprises included civic, economic, and labor organizations; corporations and other organizations in which the German government or subdivisions have a major financial interest; industry, commerce, agriculture, and finance; education; and the press, publishing houses, and other agencies disseminating news and propaganda.⁶⁹ Those who refused to fill out the questionnaire would be forced to accept lower paying jobs in positions that did not require the completion of a *Fragebogen*, mainly involving manual labor.

In addition to the *Fragebogen* which was required among German adults, the completion of a *Meldebogen* was required for access to food ration cards.⁷⁰ Every resident over 16 years of age filled out the *Meldebogen*, a two-page questionnaire similar to the *Fragebogen* but not as

⁶⁷ William Mikkel Dack, "Questioning the Past: The Fragebogen and Everyday Denazification in Occupied Germany" (Doctor of Philosophy Thesis, University of Calgary, 2016), 329-334.

⁶⁸ Ibid, 4.

⁶⁹ Joint Chiefs of Staff, "JCS 1067."

⁷⁰ Dack, "Questioning the Past," 167.

extensive in nature.⁷¹ The information gathered from these questionnaires was cross-referenced with Party papers and documents, and classified respondents into one of five categories (major offenders, offenders, lesser offenders, followers, and exonerated persons).⁷² Once placed into a category of criminal, the respondent would be subject to punishments for that category (ranging from fines and employment/travel restrictions to a life's sentence in prison or execution).⁷³ These questionnaires were used across all four zones of occupation (though each zone's questionnaire varied slightly) and became the face of bureaucratic denazification efforts in Germany.

In order to combat the post-war labor shortage in Germany, the Allied Control Council also ordered the registration of all persons capable of work and the assignment of these people to manual labor of some manner.⁷⁴ All men aged 14-65 and all women aged 15-50 were required to report to a registration office to show proof of employment or incapacity to work.⁷⁵ If Germans were not working, they would be assigned to manual labor.⁷⁶ For those who refused to fill out a *Fragebogen*, this meant they would likely be assigned manual labor and thus this employment requirement worked as an enforcement mechanism for the questionnaire.

⁷¹ Ibid, 358.

⁷² R. Noiret et al., "Control Council Directive No. 38: The Arrest and Punishment of War Criminals, Nazis and Militarists and the Internment, Control and Surveillance of Potentially Dangerous Germans" (Government Printing Office, October 12, 1946), Volume 5, p. 12-26, Enactments and Approved Papers.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Eugene Davidson, *The Trial of the Germans: An Account of the Twenty-Two Defendants Before the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1966), 518.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

Pictures of young women clearing sites ruined from war bombings emerged in the years after the war which were used by Germans to tell perpetuate the *Stundenull* (hour zero) myth. These women were known as *Trimmerfrauen*, or "rubble women."

In Search of Justice

Alongside these questionnaires were the most infamous denazification events of the time: The Nuremberg Trials. This series of trials, held under the jurisdiction of an international military tribunal (IMT), tried 22 identified “major offenders” (among them a co-author of the Nuremberg Race Laws, the Nazi Party Secretary, a head of the *Gestapo*, the former Deputy *Führer*, the chief commander of the *Einsatzgruppen*, and the head of the *Hitlerjugend*).⁷⁷ As the most widely publicized symbol of denazification, the judgments in Nuremberg were critical to the legitimacy of the denazification process: these men on trial were presumably the worst of the worst offenders and their punishments would symbolize the status of denazification in Germany under Allied occupation. Of the twenty-two tried, nineteen were found guilty and sentenced to years in prison or death (nine sentenced to prison time, ten executed).⁷⁸ With a conviction rate of 86%, Nuremberg seemed to signify a success for the punishment of a conquered people. These men would never have been allowed to remain in positions of power in German government, but their public punishments paved the way for international criminal law and symbolized a successful denazification purge for Allied forces.

Though this series of trials was most famous, there were thousands of other denazification trials that lasted throughout the postwar era and these numbers were less than damning. Within the western occupied zones of Germany, only 6.4% of those tried for Nazi crimes were found guilty.⁷⁹ This conviction rate is of course lower due to the fact that not every person tried was a known war criminal as in the original Nuremberg Trials. However,

⁷⁷ Ben S. Austin, “The Nuremberg Trials: Brief Overview of Defendants & Verdicts,” Archive, Jewish Virtual Library, n.d.

⁷⁸ David I. Lippert, “The Eichmann Case and the Nuremberg Trials,” *American Bar Association Journal* 48, no. 8 (August 1962): 739.

⁷⁹ Michael Greve, *Der justitielle und rechtspolitische Umgang mit den NS-Gewaltverbrechen in den sechziger Jahren* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2001), 11, as cited in Devin O. Pendas, “Seeking Justice, Finding Law: Nazi Trials in Postwar Europe,” *The Journal of Modern History* 81, no. 2 (June 2009), 355.

considering the fact that the conviction rate for all of Europe was 29%, this low rate for the western sectors seems rather low.⁸⁰ Obviously conviction rates are not directly indicative of justice served: the Soviet Union had astronomically high conviction rates in its occupied zone because beyond Nazis, the Soviet authorities targeted political enemies criticizing the Communist state. However, a 6.4% conviction rate does seem awfully low considering this meant only this small subset of people were forced to pay fines or worse. The trials of “the rest” included a range of people from Nazi officers, to shopkeepers, to industry executives: only 6.4% of whom were found guilty of some crime relating to their involvement in the Nazi Party.

Among those who *were* sentenced to prison time, none served extended sentences. In 1951, US HiCOG, John McCloy, released all Nazis still serving time in prisons even if their sentences were not yet completed.⁸¹ McCloy commuted these sentences amidst much controversy, claiming it was a practical measure necessary to winning over popular German support despite the fact that these men were guilty of war crimes.⁸² Combining these troubling statistics, one sees that a small fraction of the population was convicted of crimes related to their involvement with the party, and among this small fraction, some portion were sentenced to an extended prison sentence, and none of those sentenced to prison served longer than seven years.

Get Out of Jail Free Card

The role of the military-industrial complex in the denazification purge was particularly peculiar as large industry giants who had supported the Nazi war effort (and in turn been

⁸⁰ Norbert Frei, “Nach der Tat: Die Ahndung deutscher Kriegs- und NS-Verbrechen in Europa—eine Bilanz” in Frei, *Transnationale Vergangenheitspolitik*, 32 as cited in Pendas, “Seeking Justice, Finding Law,” 354.

⁸¹ “29 Nazis Leave Prison Today,” *The New York Times*, February 3, 1951.

⁸² Thomas A. Schwartz, “Reeducation and Democracy: The Policies of the United States High Commission in Germany,” in *America and the Shaping of German Society, 1945-1955* (Providence: Berg Publishers Inc., 1993), 37.

supported by the Nazi Party) were on trial for their crimes while also being tasked with improving the German economy as the nation rebuilt. Companies found guilty of involvement with the Party were subjected (at least initially) to dismantling, decartelization, or confiscation as agreed to at Potsdam in 1945.⁸³ Due to the *Gleichschaltung*, the Nazi Party was strongly tied to the industry giants of the day and thus a purge of the Party meant a purge of the executives running the largest companies. However, alongside denazification processes were reconstruction processes that aimed to stabilize the country and recover some of Germany's economic capabilities. How would the Allied occupation authorities balance the call for punishing those responsible with creating an efficient and effective economic powerhouse for the new country?

One of the most notorious Nazi industry giants complicit in Nazi war crimes was the Krupp steel company. Krupp Steel funded much of the armament production aiding the war effort and employed slave labor from Auschwitz in the production of this weaponry.⁸⁴ Though the denazification policies affecting Krupp Steel forced it to break apart into its constituent branches, the loss in profits of this restructuring was a drop in the bucket for Alfried Krupp (the CEO of Krupp during this time). Even after being sentenced to prison (and being released in 1951 to a champagne breakfast), he remained the wealthiest man in Germany (and likely Europe) until his death in 1967 after having returned to his post as CEO in 1951 upon his release from prison.⁸⁵ Krupp Steel later went on to produce trucks for the occupation authorities and eventually merged with Thyssen to become Thyssenkrupp Steel in 1997; the company now serves as one of the largest steel companies in the world.⁸⁶

⁸³ Frederick Taylor, *Exorcising Hitler: The Occupation and Denazification of Germany* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2011), 247.

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 245.

⁸⁵ Walter Isaacson and Evan Thomas, *The Wise Men: Six Friends and the World They Made: Acheson, Bohlen, Harriman, Kennan, Lovett, McCloy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1986), 517. Taylor, *Exorcising Hitler*, 355.

⁸⁶ Andreas Zilt and Ralf Stremmel, "History," Company Website, Thyssenkrupp, 2018.

Alongside Krupp Steel, IG Farben was the other most infamous company from Nazi industry that went through a very public denazification process. IG Farben was the largest chemical producer in Germany, and the company that developed Zyklon B: the gas used by Nazis in the gas chambers that killed over one million people in the concentration camps.⁸⁷ The gas was developed, produced, and sold by IG Farben to the various concentration camps by the ton; one ton of the gas had the capacity to kill well over 300,000 people.⁸⁸ After the war ended and Allied forces gained control of the country, the directors of the company were arrested and brought to trial. These trials were a portion of the “Subsequent Nuremberg Trials,” held from 1947-48 and saw twenty-three IG Farben directors indicted. Of the twenty-three, thirteen were convicted of crimes and sentenced to prison time, ranging from one and a half years to eight years.⁸⁹ Just as with Alfred Krupp, the directors still serving their sentence in 1951 were released by HiCOG John McCloy and went on to enjoy highly profitable and respected post-release careers.⁹⁰ As for the company itself, IG Farben was required to break down into its constituent parts: BASF, Bayer, Agfa, and Hoechst.⁹¹ BASF is now the largest chemical producer in the world, specializing in the production of chemicals and plastics.⁹² Bayer is the

The Thyssenkrupp website has a lengthy page outlining the history of the two companies, beginning in 1811. The portion describing the actions of Krupp Steel during WWII is highly sanitized, only briefly mentioning the imprisonment of Alfred Krupp, and does not explain the crimes committed by the Krupp family or company that put the CEO in prison in the first place. Also, if anyone is interested, the company that maintains Wellesley’s elevators is Thyssenkrupp Elevators, a subsidiary of Thyssenkrupp Steel.

⁸⁷ Taylor, *Exorcising Hitler*, 245.

⁸⁸ Peter Hayes, *Industry and Ideology: IG Farben in the Nazi Era* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 352.

⁸⁹ The United Nations War Crimes Commission, “Law Reports of Trials of War Crimes. Volume X: The IG Farben and Krupp Trials” (His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1949), 63.

⁹⁰ Taylor, *Exercising Hitler*, 355.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² BASF, “Who We Are,” Company Website, BASF Global, 2019.

Like Thyssenkrupp, BASF has a section on its company site about the company’s history and includes information about its role in the war effort from 1939-1945, mentioning the forced labor used in Ludwigshafen, Oppau, and the IG Farben factory in Auschwitz. They also include a page dedicated to the chemical warfare agents and Zyklon B produced by the company.

other most powerful of these subsidiary groups that still exists today, specializing in pharmaceuticals and agricultural science, specifically pesticides and herbicides.⁹³ Despite the fact that IG Farben was required to separate into its constituent companies as a punishment, these individual companies did not struggle to continue to make a profit and continued to operate as a cartel after the initial dissolution process.

Though Krupp Steel and IG Farben were the most well-known industry giants working with the Nazi government, many other businesses benefitted from their close ties with the Nazis and went through denazification processes as well. The Hugo Boss fashion brand was not always known solely for its men's suits: Hugo Boss was an avid Nazi supporter, joining the party in 1931, far before it had amassed control of the German government.⁹⁴ In 1933, Hugo Boss began manufacturing Nazi uniforms and continued this production throughout the war, relying on forced labor in the later years of the war.⁹⁵ After the war ended, Hugo Boss was classified as an "offender" (category 2) under Control Council Directive No. 38, until he was reclassified as a "follower" (category 4) and forced to pay a fine for his crimes during the war. The Hugo Boss brand continued to be known as a respected label and make millions of dollars in profit after the war, a product of getting its first large contract with the Nazi government.

Beyond the manufacturing industries of Nazi Germany, the banking world supported the Nazi regime by lending the funds necessary to the construction companies tasked with building

⁹³ Bayer, "This Is Bayer," Company Website, Bayer Global, October 19, 2018.

Bayer's company site also includes a section on the company history, however it includes no information from 1939-1945 other than the mention of a labor shortage that resulted in the use of "foreign and forced labor." The page states that concentration camp prisoners were not used in the factories.

Another interesting fact about Bayer: In 2018 Bayer bought Monsanto in a \$66 billion deal despite difficulties from US anti-trust laws. To allow the merger, the US Justice Department required the selling of Bayer's seed and herbicide branch. For this sale, Bayer sold this branch for \$9 million to, you guessed it, BASF.

Brian Fung and Caitlin Dewey, "Justice Department Approves Bayer-Monsanto Merger in Landmark Settlement," *The Washington Post*, March 29, 2018, sec. Business.

⁹⁴ The Associated Press, "Hugo Boss Acknowledges Link to Nazi Regime," *The New York Times*, August 15, 1997.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

Auschwitz.⁹⁶ The bank serviced accounts for the Gestapo, depositing proceeds from auctions of property confiscated from deported Jews.⁹⁷ As punishment, Deutsche Bank was forced to dissolve into 10 separate regional banks, however by 1950 these separate banks had coalesced again into Deutsche Bank: the European powerhouse we know today.⁹⁸

German industry and finance undeniably supported the Nazi war effort throughout the 1930s and war, and the denazification process sought to hold these organizations responsible for their collaboration. The accountability process consisted of trying the executives most responsible for the actions of the company, sentencing them to prison, releasing them in 1951 to return to their position on the executive board, and allowing the company to go on to make a sizeable profit. This process targeted specifically these high-ranking executives most responsible, but the punishments for their crimes failed to truly hold these men accountable because there were no lasting consequences. While the questionnaires and manual labor requirements affected the entire population, the trial process targeted those on top but failed to create long-term costs for Nazi-involvement.

Ultimately, this meant regular civilians were initially punished just as much as those who had committed or helped commit war crimes, but these high-ranking executives had million-dollar companies to return to and Allied government contracts to benefit from while civilians starved on ration cards and were forced to work manual labor sites due to their ties to the Nazi regime. Regular citizens had the same swastika-shaped stain on their *Fragebögen* as the industry executives did but lacked the leadership positions that made such stains a selling point. The best

⁹⁶ John Schmid and International Herald Tribune, “Deutsche Bank Linked to Auschwitz Funding,” *The New York Times*, February 5, 1999, sec. World.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Leora Bilsky, “Corporate Accountability and Collective Guilt,” in *The Holocaust, Corporations, and the Law: Unfinished Business* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2017), 25.

Nazi to be after the war was the second most powerful man in the room: too high ranking and they would land in Nuremberg, too low and they would not have the skills or connections to lend towards rebuilding Germany. The US wanted the educated, skilled Nazis capable of planning and benefitting from genocide to rebuild Germany, not a secretary too incompetent to benefit from war crimes.

DEMOCRATIZING GERMANY

Though the Nazis rose to power in a democracy, their prompt elimination of the democratic system convinced the occupying US forces that a return to democratization would rid the country of any fascist tendencies. Alongside denazification efforts was the major push towards democratization, rooted in the American tradition. This meant that as the US claimed most Germans were not trustworthy enough to work in public office, they were granted the ability to vote in elections for public office. This tension between denazification and democratization was one of many contradictions in postwar German reconstruction. Democratization efforts would entail the formation of political infrastructure and a constitution, and the reeducation of the public.

Legalizing Political Infrastructure

In 1947, Secretary of State George Marshall outlined the basic principles of democratization in five points.⁹⁹ Firstly, a uniformly effective guarantee of human rights “in all parts of Germany” was required: even under the western-oriented liberal democracy of the

⁹⁹ US Department of State, “Department of State Policy Statement” (Government Printing Office, August 26, 1948), 1298-1320, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1948, Germany and Austria, Volume II.

Weimar Republic, the respect of human rights was not central to the constitution.¹⁰⁰ The second principle protected the freedom of political action for recognized political parties whose leaders were democratically elected by and responsible to their members.¹⁰¹ The legalization and support of political parties that respected the democratic process would prove fundamental to the foundation of a new politically engaged Germany. The third principle outlined the significance of freedom of action in all parts of Germany for free and democratic trade unions.¹⁰² Directly after the war, the freedom to assemble had been suspended by the Allied government until some form of order was established on the ground. Under the Nazi regime, trade unions had been integrated into a single organization: the *Deutsche Arbeitsfront* (German Labor Front) which was the single largest mass-membership organization under the Nazi government at 25 million people.¹⁰³ The legalization of independent trade unions was a concrete way of undoing the work of the National Socialists.

The fourth principle outlined by Secretary Marshall was the free circulation throughout Germany of information and ideas by all media of information, subject only to needs of military security and prevention of Nazi or militarist resurgence.¹⁰⁴ The protection of free press and speech in Germany was another method of distancing the new nation from its Nazi past, allowing Germans to print and say what they please. The fifth and final principle protected the freedom of movement for persons and goods throughout Germany, limited only by the requirements of military security. All of these principles specified their applicability to “all of Germany,” therefore including East Germany. As a product of the Cold War, the foundation of the Federal

¹⁰⁰ Edmund Spevack, “American Pressures on the German Constitutional Tradition: Basic Rights in the West German Constitution of 1949,” *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 10, no. 3 (Spring 1997), 411.

¹⁰¹ US Department of State, “State Dept. Policies for Germany.”

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Jisc Archives Hub, “Deutsche Arbeitsfront,” Digital Archive, Jisc Archives Hub.

¹⁰⁴ US Department of State, “State Dept. Policies for Germany.”

Republic of Germany (the unified West German nation) was in part based in its contrast to its eastern neighbor. By unifying the three western zones into one country, many were concerned of the potential negative impact on reunification prospects.¹⁰⁵ For this reason, these democratization principles were meant to also apply to the East, forcing the Soviet's hand to acquiesce to seemingly basic democratic principles.

The shift by the Allied forces towards a democratic society signaled a change in how Germans were viewed by the Allied administration: previously the Germans were considered too dangerous to have the authority to run government, but now they were allowed (if not encouraged) to take control of their nation. The immediate postwar Germany was not considered capable of democratic thought, but after a mere two years, a universal push towards democratization had taken hold among occupying authorities. How could a country where much of the public was banned from holding public office possibly create and participate in a robust democracy?

Forming a Constitution and Government

Firstly, Germany needed a constitution to organize its government with. The German *Grundgesetz*, or Basic Law, began its development under the occupying western powers (the US, UK, and France) in July 1948. These three hoped to bring West Germany together under a western-oriented democracy that could combat the Communist threat in the East. The Western Allied powers required some basic principles to be included in the document and reserved the right to approve or reject the set of laws as a whole, but generally outsourced the rest of the

¹⁰⁵ Spevack, "American Pressures on the German Constitutional Tradition," 429.

development to West German political elites.¹⁰⁶ A committee was founded by the German *Land* (state) government, populated predominantly by politicians and lawyers from the Weimar era because many of the younger generation had been banned due to their involvement in the Nazi regime.¹⁰⁷ Allied authorities told the Parliamentary Council that the new Basic Law should prioritize the protection of human rights, outline a parliamentary democracy governmental structure for Germany, be based on a form of federalism that would centralize the German government, create the Federal Constitutional Court, and preserve the outlined governmental structure by forbidding any fundamental changes to the essential tenets of the Basic Law after the constitution is ratified.¹⁰⁸

This constitution outlined a governmental structure for Germany that would democratize from the bottom up. Government began at the local level with *Gemeinden* (towns) run by a mayor or town council, then *Kreise* (districts, either *Landkreise*/rural districts or *Stadtkreise*/urban districts) encompassing several *Gemeinden*, and finally *Länder* (states).¹⁰⁹ The *Land* governments would adopt state constitutions, drafted by popularly elected assemblies and ratified by electorates. The basic principle of Allied-ordered democratization was that administrative authority and responsibility would be transferred to Germans at all levels, with the military government retaining only the right of general surveillance to insure the achievement of occupation objectives.¹¹⁰ A provisional centralized German government would be created to

¹⁰⁶ Andreas Niederberger, “Reconstituting the Federal Republic? Constitutional Law and Politics before and since 1989,” in *Virtual Walls? Political Unification and Cultural Differences in Contemporary Germany* (London: Boydell and Brewer, C. Hurst & Company, 2017), 42.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 42-43.

¹⁰⁹ US Department of State, “State Dept. Policies for Germany.”

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

address pan-German problems and policies, focusing especially on matters of the economy and finance.¹¹¹

The transfer of authority from Allied hands to German ones was a gradual process that forced the readmittance of former Nazi Party members into the fold of public service. By 1949, an American report found that 85% of civil servants originally removed by denazification policies were back, and 30-60% of the Bavarian (the state in which Nazism first emerged) *Land* elected officials were ex-Nazis, in charge as the constitution was written and ratified.¹¹² By 1950, 25% of all departmental heads in Bonn ministries were ex-Nazis.¹¹³ In 1951, the Christian Democratic Union (CDU, the German conservative neoliberal party) and Socialist Democratic Party of Germany (SPD, the German socialist liberal party) passed the *Entnazifizierungsschlussgesetz* (law to end denazification) with bipartisan support which allowed all but categories I and II (major offenders and offenders) to return to their jobs in civil service.¹¹⁴ By 1952, two-thirds of officials in the foreign ministry were ex-Nazis.¹¹⁵ Over the course of four years, the German government had been transferred from the Allies back to the Germans, and those previously banned from public office were welcomed back. The population had changed from the greatest threat to US interests in Europe, to an important democratic ally against the Soviets.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Taylor, *Exorcising Hitler*, 354.

¹¹³ Ibid, 355.

¹¹⁴ Ibid, 354.

1951 was also the same year John McCloy released Krupp and the other notable industrialists from prison.

¹¹⁵ Ibid, 355.

A Lesson in Civics

Lastly, to ensure a full shift to a democratic society, the US employed a series of reeducation initiatives in Germany to reorient the population towards the desired ideals. The US occupying government sought to create a new Germany by teaching the population a new set of values and norms.

The first way this began was through the school system itself: Hitler had controlled an entire younger generation through his *Hitlerjugend* program, and the US saw the potential to coopt this strategy for democratization instead of Nazification. To reorient the German education system, the US relied on removing teachers and materials related to the Nazi regime and replacing them with US-approved personnel and curriculum.¹¹⁶ Based on a 1946 report on reeducating Germany, the occupation authorities completely changed the structure of the German education system, eliminating the “track” system from a young age that would determine whether a student would go on to study at a university as early as the age of nine.¹¹⁷ This system, the report found, “cultivates attitudes of superiority in one small group and inferiority in the majority members of German society, making possible the submission and lack of self-determination upon which authoritarian leadership has thrived.”¹¹⁸ In place of such a structure, the report called for the integration of the various tracks into one comprehensive secondary school that all pupils would attend for another six years (after six years of elementary school): by creating a common core curriculum for all Germans, they hoped this would create a common culture for all students and thus become the basis for a robust democracy. The new curriculum

¹¹⁶ Jaimey Fisher, *Disciplining Germany: Youth, Reeducation, and Reconstruction after the Second World War* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2007), 69-70.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid*, 71.

¹¹⁸ George Zook, “Report of the United States Education Mission to Germany” (Government Printing Office, 1946), Hathi Trust Digital Library, 19.

under US occupation introduced democratic social studies as either a teaching principle or an actual subject taught in classrooms.¹¹⁹

Alongside the schools themselves, the occupying authorities also employed the use of films in the reeducation process for greater Germany. Though school children were an important demographic to win over (as they would be in charge of the democracy one day), the adult population would be voting in elections in the years to come and would need to be taught the nature of democracy. To begin this, the US introduced mandatory film screenings in many cities, using documentary footage of the war and Holocaust as a way to force the public to wrestle with the atrocities committed under the guise of “nationalism.” Mandatory screenings of *Die Todesmühlen* (The Death Mills, 1945) showed the German public documentary footage of the Nazi death camps, forcing Germany to watch as bodies left behind after the SS fled the camp as soldiers approached, were bulldozed into mass graves by American GIs.¹²⁰ These film screenings were used not just as a reeducation tool, but also as a shaming mechanism, designed to guilt the Germans into compliance.¹²¹ At screenings of this film, the OMGUS employed social scientists to collect and interpret viewers’ reactions of the film in order to measure the status of reeducation in Germany.¹²² Interpreters found, however, that German audiences did not appear as moved by such documentaries as many had hoped, and the reeducation-through-atrocity-film strategy did not appear to be as effective as expected. The US then shifted away from an openly political agenda to mass manipulation by harnessing the power of cultural imports. They could promote political and economic interests far more effectively by holding re-

¹¹⁹ Konrad Jarausch, “Review: Re-Education in Post-War Germany,” *History of Education Quarterly* 22, no. 3 (Fall 1982): 387.

¹²⁰ Sabine Hake, *German National Cinema*, National Cinema Series (Routledge, 2008), 94.

¹²¹ Ulrike Weckel, “Disappointed Hopes for Spontaneous Mass Conversions: German Responses to Allied Atrocity Film Screenings, 1945-46,” *Bulletin of the GHI*, Fall 2012, 39-40.

¹²² *Ibid*, 40.

releases of films from old Hollywood.¹²³ Films were used as a reeducation tool, first to elicit sensations of guilt or remorse, then to draw parallels between German and American cultural interests and values.

CONCLUSION

The story of denazification in Germany is one of contradictions. While the US called for the reconstruction of Germany, it simultaneously stripped its industrial capabilities and shipped its factories out of the country. While those most responsible for the war were released from prison to return to their high-paying jobs in German industry, regular citizens continued to struggle to make ends meet after their party membership had banned them from their previously held jobs. Though denazification policy outlined a process for the private sector (which had undeniably colluded with the Nazi Party), it seemed to only ever truly reach political offices.

The most significant takeaway of this outline of denazification is the discrepancy in who the policies affected and how it affected them. The employment restrictions stemming from the *Fragebogen*, the manual labor requirements, and the ration cards administered from Allied Command created a very low standard of living within West Germany in the years directly after the war. JCS 1067 had ordered that US forces “take no steps looking toward the economic rehabilitation of Germany [nor steps] designed to maintain or strengthen the German economy.”¹²⁴ When JCS 1067 was replaced by JCS 1779 in 1948, three years of suffering under the brutal Carthaginian peace had already created a resentful German population. Meanwhile, the trial system had failed to convict many of the people responsible for the war, and of those put behind bars, many were released early in 1951 if not sooner. The industries that had most

¹²³ Hake, *German National Cinema*, 94.

¹²⁴ Joint Chiefs of Staff, “JCS 1067.”

supported the Nazi regime were barely punished for their role in war and genocide, and their executives quickly returned to positions of power and wealth after a swift prison sentence. How could US officials call the general populace too untrustworthy to work in public office while allowing industrialists to run free, tasked with running German industry?

There was a constant push throughout the denazification process to give Germans more responsibility in their own country, all the while assuming Germans were fundamentally anti-democratic and would only assume democratic responsibility after being shamed and indoctrinated into the tradition. How could US officials push for democratization and open markets while also enabling war criminals to fund this rebuilding? Most importantly, what explains these differences in scope between policies? What was it about the situation that allowed policymakers to pursue these different policies? This is not a discussion of why these policies were enacted, but rather how multiple policies that contradicted one another could be legitimated at the same time.

Chapter 4: “The German”

Given the variation in reconstruction and denazification policies enacted in Germany after the war, what enabled the occupying government to legitimate such a wide array? As explained in Chapter 2, narrative landscape is a key determiner in legitimating policy. The United States’ foreign policy options in West Germany depended upon the US population’s views of Germany and its people. If Americans universally believed all Germans were evil and incapable of atonement, the State Department would have a difficult time explaining why the courts had released many war criminals from custody. On the other hand, if Americans identified regular German citizens as victims of the Nazi regime, State would need another way of justifying their employment and ration restrictions on most German citizens beyond a punitive explanation. So, what did Americans think of Germany and its people during the war and the years after?

CULTURAL STUDY METHODOLOGY

To attempt to understand the narrative landscape of the time, I conducted a cultural study of the United States from 1939 to 1950: spanning from the start of World War II (though before the US had entered the war) well into Truman’s second term in office and into the US’ occupation of Germany. As explained in Chapter 2, narratives can be identified through the analysis of popular media. This media can include periodicals, films and television, novels, and art among other things. Because this chapter focuses on the narratives surrounding Germans (namely the US public perception of Germans and Germany), my media analysis focuses primarily on media with depictions of Germans throughout the 1940s. Though the policies considered in Chapter 3 were all enacted after the war ended, narratives from during the war

were the ones that would be most salient after V-E Day. Postwar reconstruction policies relied on narratives of Germans and Germany from during the war in order to legitimate their postwar plans. The depictions of Germans and Germany in the years after the war are also important for analysis, however, because these could also be used for legitimation once circulated enough. For this cultural analysis, I looked at various films (explained in greater detail below) and articles from three popular magazines of the time.

Films in the 1940s were a staple of general consumption in the US: Hollywood's film industry was both a window through which citizens could see past their immediate world, and a mirror which the public could use to better understand their own communities. Film was (and still is) an incredibly effective way of influencing opinion through narrative storytelling or documentary formats. The influence of film in US culture cannot be understated, especially its motivating power in the later years of the war such as the documentary series *Why We Fight* (1942-45) which was based off of Leni Riefenstahl's Nazi-sponsored "documentary" of the Party Convention in Nuremberg, *Triumph of the Will* (1935). Film propaganda was used in earnest by both sides during the war as a means of connecting the home front with the men fighting and vice versa. Film is an excellent source of narratives for this study because these were widely circulated pieces that informed their audiences about Germans and Germany. Depictions of the two in film were one of the few ways the majority of the American public would interact with them and access was easy enough that films could be well circulated easily. I compiled a list of films ranging from 1939 to 1946 that depicted Germans or Nazis which I then analyzed in order to identify narratives of Germany from the time.

The first five films on this list were released before the US ever joined the war. The first of these films, *Confessions of a Nazi Spy* (1939), is a spy thriller and the first anti-Nazi film

produced by a major Hollywood studio. Though the US had not yet joined the war effort, the threat of Nazi Germany was growing in the international sphere and had spilled over into Hollywood's purview. *Confessions of a Nazi Spy* follows the illegal actions of an underground Nazi spy ring running out of New York City and sensationalizes the propagandic strategies of the Third Reich. The second of the list, Charlie Chaplin's iconic 1940 hit *The Great Dictator*, was especially controversial in its outright mockery of Hitler and Mussolini and its calls against anti-Semitism. Chaplin's film follows the life of a Jewish barber who fought for "Tomainia" (Germany) in the first world war and awakens to find his beloved homeland has been taken over by a dictator named Hynkel (Hitler) who conveniently looks exactly like him (both the barber and the dictator are played by Chaplin).

The third film, a melodrama entitled *The Man I Married* (1940), follows an American woman and her German husband's trip to Germany in 1939. While there, her husband is seduced by a fervent Nazi woman and leaves his American wife for the Nazi Party and the Nazi woman. The fourth, the Three Stooges famous 1940 slapstick short *You Nazty Spy!* (1940), explains how the industrialists in "Moronika" (Germany) artificially create a dictatorship with a puppet dictator in order to boost arms sales. Their chosen dictator, "Hailstone" (Hitler) is a bumbling fool who maintains power through the help of his Field Marshall and Minister of Propaganda. The fifth and final film of this era is *Underground* (1941), an American film depicting the German anti-Nazi resistance movement from the perspective of two brothers caught on opposite sides of the fight. One brother leads the resistance through his illicit radio broadcasts while the other, a Nazi soldier, has just arrived home from the front after losing his left arm.

The next three films of my list were produced while the US was actively engaged in the war or in the years immediately after. The first, and arguably most famous film produced during the war, is *Casablanca* (1942), which follows the cynical expat Rick, running a café in Morocco which is frequented by refugees trying to leave fascist Europe. Though there are few Germans in the film, the relationship between Nazi officer Strasser and the Vichy forces is of particular interest to me as it sheds light on the degrees of responsibility Americans may have been attributing at the time. The second film from during the war, *Address Unknown* (1944), tells the story of a San Francisco-based German expat gallery-owner who moves back to Germany and joins the Nazi Party while there, isolating himself from his lifelong German friend back in San Francisco. This film is especially interesting for its distinction between Nazis and Germans and the effect being in the “fatherland” apparently has on Germans.

The last film on the list was produced after the war ended, depicting postwar life and politics. Orson Welles’ *The Stranger* (1946) follows a war crimes investigator tracking down an escaped Nazi convicted of genocidal war crimes. The Nazi flees to a small town in Connecticut and has set up a new life for himself there while the investigator attempts to identify “the stranger” in the town. *The Stranger* is also the first melodrama to use documentary footage of the concentration camps, documenting the gas chambers and human destruction ordered in the camps.

Alongside these films, I also analyzed various issues of popular periodicals of the time, specifically *Reader’s Digest*, *The New Yorker*, and *Life*. These magazines were catered to the home front, delivering news as well as opinions to the general population. Writing about issues of interest and relevance to “the average Joe,” magazines had the power to set agendas and inform public opinion. *Reader’s Digest* in particular was marketed specifically as a general-

interest family magazine, unlike *Life* and *The New Yorker* which had more journalistic and artistic inclinations. The sixteen articles I considered from these three periodicals range from 1940 to 1950, incorporating editorials, excerpts from non-fiction books, and op-eds of the time, all relating to Germany, Germans, Nazis, and/or reconstruction policy.

Through my analysis of these different films and articles, I considered specifically how Germans were depicted and what mechanisms were used to paint Germans in this certain light. Using the definition of narrative I explained in Chapter 2, I considered both the content of these films as well as the delivery of them: the public response to them, the direction choices, etc. As in Kornprobst's explanation of the content tetrad, I analyzed the scene, agent, purpose, and means of the German in each film. What role did the German play within the plot of the story told: were they the protagonist, antagonist, or perhaps merely an obstacle to the protagonist? What were the German's motivations in their actions and how did they present themselves? Were they written or directed as a sympathetic character: flawed but human, or wholly evil through and through? For the delivery of the film, I considered the circumstances in which the film was produced and screened, the directorial and acting choices made, the audiences the films were designed to be shown to (predominantly family-oriented commercial audiences), and the people most obviously related to the film.

Throughout the cultural narrative analysis, I was especially interested to see in what scenarios a distinction was made between Nazis and Germans and in what scenarios such a separation was not made. The American understanding of the German psyche was a fascinating thing to discern and painted a chaotic view of *who* "the German" was. This study is not included to determine which of these representations was *correct*, but rather to outline what kind of

depictions of Germans Americans were faced with each day during this time and therefore what narratives were available to policymakers for legitimation attempts.

WHO IS “THE GERMAN?”

Unsurprisingly, there was no single view of who “the German” was. Before the US and Germany were at odds in the twentieth century, Germany was considered the motherland for many German-Americans and German immigrants living in the states. Germans had brought with them concepts like kindergarten, Christmas trees, and hot dogs: all important pieces of American culture then and now. As one of the largest immigrant populations in the United States, German culture and identity quickly became intertwined with American culture and identity. After the US joined the war effort against Imperial Germany in 1917 and again against Nazi Germany in 1941 however, Germany also had a new meaning in American lexicon: “the enemy.” Given its both positive and negative connotations in American culture, how did Germany’s image shift over time? Did one replace the other or was it possible for the two to coexist? My cultural study of the United States in the 1940s depicts the narrative landscape of Germans and Germany in the eyes of the average American.

In my study, I found three categories into which depictions of Germans in mass media can be sorted. The first of these made no distinction between “the German” and “the Nazi.” This association of Germans and Nazis was at times explicit, but more often than not was implicit: most authors equating the two would not even mention Nazis and simply describe the atrocities *Germans* were committing in the name of their *Führer*. The second of these categories was just the opposite: those that made a clear delineation between “the German” and “the Nazi.” These authors and directors made distinctions between the cruelty of the Nazis and the passive

actions of the Germans, painting active Nazis as evil but the general German populace as staunchly ideologically opposed to Hitler's fascism. The third and most complicated of the categories was something in between, manifested in several ways. Authors and directors in this category made a partial distinction between Germans and Nazis by using some sort of caveat or asterisk. Some did this by depicting Nazis as evil beings apart from the select few who could be rehabilitated through exposure to empathy or democracy: two things sorely lacking in the Third Reich. Others made the distinction between Germans and Nazis partial by showing some Germans who will fall for fascism by being in Germany but other Germans who are safe from this seduction by remaining in the United States. In both cases it was exposure to these American values that saved the German from becoming a Nazi: in the first it is a cure to Nazism that has already taken root, while in the second it is a preventative measure that helps the German resist Nazism altogether.

Germans are Nazis are Germans are...

This first depiction of Germany and its population was consistently used throughout this time period, spanning from before the US joined the war through the beginning of the reconstruction process in West Germany. The militaristic stereotypes of Prussia and the wicked cruelty of Nazism were attributed to German traditional values and culture. The evil of Nazism was portrayed as a linear progression of German militarism, things intrinsic to each German citizen. This narrative of equating all Germans to the evil Nazis regularly mentioned in the news effectively made all Germans responsible for the decisions of the top tier.

The two films that most embodied this depiction were Irving Pichel's 1940 film *The Man I Married* and Orson Welles' 1946 film *The Stranger*. In *The Man I Married*, Carol Cabot, a

successful American art critic working in New York City, visits Germany with her husband, Eric Hoffman, a German immigrant living in the US for a decade, and their seven year old son, Ricky.¹²⁵ While visiting, Eric reconnects with an old childhood friend of his, Frieda. Frieda, a vision of Aryan beauty with her blonde hair and blue eyes, is an avid Nazi Party member and enthusiastically shows Carol and Eric around the Berlin political scene. Throughout their visit, Carol becomes more concerned that Eric is falling for Frieda and her politics, consistently confronting Eric about his feelings for her (and the Party). Eventually Eric tells Carol he plans to divorce her and marry Frieda so he can stay in Germany and support the Nazis as they achieve global dominance. Throughout the film Eric transforms from a seemingly kind, supportive husband to a frenzied Nazi interested in nothing but the preservation of his “home” (no longer in New York but instead in Germany).

There are several moments throughout the film that show Eric’s fixation on the success of Germany at any and all costs. Before even leaving for Germany, Carol mentions the rumors of the conditions in the German camps, but Eric brushes her off saying he is not convinced such camps even exist. Once in Germany, Eric acknowledges the camps exist after it is discovered the brother of a friend of theirs in New York has been imprisoned in Dachau for philosophizing against the Nazi regime. Carol wants to find a way to free their friend’s brother, but Eric warns her that this brother deserves to be imprisoned for speaking out against Hitler.

While driving through a “Czech neighborhood” (Jewish ghetto) in Berlin with an American journalist she meets in Germany, Carol witnesses firsthand the abuse of these civilians at the hands of Nazi soldiers. She is appalled and tells Eric what she has seen but he dismisses her again, saying “What do you expect? Soft music? This is a revolution, certainly a few people

¹²⁵ Irving Pichel, *The Man I Married* (20th Century Fox, 1940).

get pushed around... Look at the roads and factories they've built!" That evening Eric, Frieda, and Carol attend a rally in the *Sportpalast* and Carol finds herself in a sea of frenzied Nazi salutes and "*Sieg Heil!*"s, including, to her horror, Eric. Even after this Carol still believes that if she can get Eric out of Berlin he will come to his senses and see the insanity and injustice of the Nazi regime.

Late that night Eric comes home after attending an event with Frieda and tells Carol he can divorce her on grounds of treason: Carol's lack of support for the *Führer* is reason enough for a German man to divorce his wife. He intends to keep Ricky in Berlin and raise him as a German as is his birthright. Eric's father comes in and tells him to reconsider his decision and, when Eric refuses, he informs him that Eric's mother was "a Jewess!" Frieda hears this and is disgusted, leaving Eric behind as Carol and Ricky leave for New York together, without Eric.

Every German in *The Man I Married* is either a fanatic Nazi or Jewish. This film leaves no room for "Aryan" anti-Nazis, making it very clear that even seemingly good Germans who have lived in the US for a decade are not safe from their subconscious sympathy for the fatherland. Eric had not been to Germany since coming to New York and (seemingly) happily enjoyed his life there, but the moment Germany was criticized in New York he defended it, instantly calling the rumors of cruelty merely American propaganda trying to diminish German industry. No distinction is made between Germans and Nazis in the film, in fact Nazism is tied directly to German nationalism and industry. Despite his many years spent in the US, Eric's Germanness cannot be separated from his self and it is what ultimately enables his seduction into the Nazi Party and Frieda's arms. His obsession with German pride is so strong it overwrites his own self-preservation instincts as a half-Jew.

The Man I Married was not very popular at the box office upon its release in 1940. Making only \$1.7 million in its first year, the New York Times suggested that perhaps anti-Nazi propaganda films such as *The Man I Married* were not popular because audiences were bored by the constant evil acts of the Nazis or they objected to “having a philosophic attitude rammed down their throats.”¹²⁶ After its release to theaters, the German Consul contacted Twentieth Century-Fox demanding the film be removed from theaters due to its negative portrayal of Germany and Germans.¹²⁷ The Consul threatened to refuse the distribution of any Twentieth Century-Fox films in Germany should they not comply, and eventually the film was pulled shortly after its release in an attempt to remain neutral in the then-European conflict.¹²⁸

New York Times reviewer Bosley Crowther delivered a positive review of the film, despite his apparent dislike of the anti-Nazi film genre: “If we are bound to have a succession of anti-Nazi propaganda pictures – and there is reason to expect that we are – let’s hope that they all may be as restrained in their emotions, as frank and factual in their reports and as generally entertaining cinematically as... ‘The Man I Married.’ ... For here is a ‘hate’ film which, at least, lets the villains speak a word for themselves... The few anti-Nazi films which have come along so far have tended toward blind indignation and incipient hysteria.”¹²⁹ Because of the time of its release, it seems the immediate reaction to films like *The Man I Married* in the US was generally negative due to the largely isolationist attitude in the US during this time: no matter how cruel the actions of Germany may be, it is not the responsibility of the US to involve itself in European

¹²⁶ American Film Institute, “The Man I Married,” Webpage, AFI Catalog of Feature Films, 2017.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Bosley Crowther, “‘The Man I Married,’ a Drama of Inside Germany, at the Roxy,” *The New York Times*, August 3, 1940, sec. Amusements.

conflicts. However, the making of this film also shows a more active anti-Nazi sentiment growing in the United States even before the US had joined the war effort.

The second film that affords no distinction between Germans and Nazis is Orson Welles' 1946 picture *The Stranger*.¹³⁰ As an investigator for the Allied War Crimes Commission, Mr. Wilson tracks down known German war criminal Franz Kindler to Harper, Connecticut. The only problem is, he does not know what Kindler looks like and Kindler has been in Connecticut for some time, likely having created a cover story for himself there. While there, Mr. Wilson meets a man named Charles Rankin who is an important pillar of Harper society: a local history school teacher and upstanding town citizen, in charge of fixing the clock on the church bell tower. As his investigation continues, Wilson realizes that Charles Rankin is in fact Franz Kindler and convinces Rankin's wife, Mary, to turn on her husband and catch the man who supposedly planned the Holocaust.

The Stranger leaves no room for a distinction between Germans and Nazis, as the one German immigrant shown (Mr. Rankin/Franz Kindler) who appears to be a fine, upstanding man, is in fact an unrepentant genocidal maniac still capable of murder. Throughout the film, Rankin/Kindler kills two beings: another Nazi fugitive who finds him in Connecticut and his wife's dog; he also attempts to kill his wife. It is clear his Nazi tendencies are still a crucial part of who he is. While on the phone with Mary to lure her to her death, he absentmindedly draws a swastika on the notepad beside the phone before drawing over it with boxes and 'X's. In order to throw Wilson off his scent after being asked of his opinion of Germany, Rankin/Kindler says, "For the German, the messiah is not the prince of peace. He is another Barbarossa. Another Hitler." Mr. Wilson responds, "Well then you have no faith in the reforms that are being

¹³⁰ Orson Welles, *The Stranger* (RKO Radio Pictures, 1946).

affected in Germany.” Rankin/Kindler responds saying, “I can’t believe that people can be reformed except from within. The basic principles of equality and freedom never have and never will take root in Germany... Marx wasn’t a German, Marx was a Jew... [The solution is] annihilation. Down to the last babe in arms.” Even while overcompensating for his pride in Germany by calling for genocide against all Germans, he still makes the fatal error of othering Marx for his Jewish ancestry. It is this error that tips Wilson off and allows him to identify Kindler as the man he is searching for.

The Stranger was the first film to use documentary footage from the Nazi concentration camps in its storytelling, and therefore the first time many Americans would see this footage if they chose not to attend documentary screenings. While trying to convince Mary that her beloved Charles Rankin is in fact the infamous Nazi Franz Kindler, he shows her harrowing footage from the camps (which Kindler is responsible for in this story), including an enormous pile of rotting, emaciated dead bodies, images from inside the gas chambers, and a pit where men, women, and children were buried alive. When Kindler is caught by Wilson and Mary, he defends himself, claiming, “It was all their idea. I followed orders... I only did my duty.” This excuse was very common in the years after the war and viewers would have recognized the familiarity of such a claim. Orson Welles’ film made the connection between Germans and Nazis impossible to understate and put the horrors of Nazi crimes on full display for audiences across the United States.

In terms of reception, *The Stranger* was a true box office success. In its first six months in theaters, the film grossed \$2.25 million in US rentals.¹³¹ Reviews were largely positive, and

¹³¹ “60 Top Grossers of 1946,” *Variety*, January 8, 1947.

the film even received an Oscar nomination for best original story (though it did not win).¹³² The sole negative contemporary review came from the New York Times' film critic Bosley Crowther who felt Welles' portrayal of Kindler "gave no illusion of the sort of depraved and heartless creatures that the Nazi mass-murderers were."¹³³ This is an interesting switch from his tone in 1940 in regards to *The Man I Married*. He went from suggesting that Hollywood was unfairly harsh on the Nazis in 1940 to claiming the film industry failed to truthfully depict the wickedness of the Nazis after the war ended. This reviewer's change of heart in regard to the Nazis mirrors the evolution of popular opinion on Nazis: in 1940 the demonization of Germany had begun but was not necessarily widely accepted, but by 1946 it was far more widely accepted that the Germans had done evil things in the past decade and deserved serious repercussions.

Beyond the films of the era, many of the pieces an American might read in their favorite magazine would make damning ties between Nazism and Germanness as well. Like the films, these articles were not limited to a specific moment: I found articles ranging from 1940 to 1946 that unabashedly conflated Germans and Nazis. The articles written during the war (1940-1945) generally focused on the threat Germany posed to the United States: either from its fascist tendencies, the duplicity of the German people, or traditional German conservatism. One writer wrote explicitly about the fervent hatred Germany had for the US because the United States' existence disproved Nazism's racial and economic theories.¹³⁴ Citing the shady business dealings Hitler used leading up to the war, he concluded that the US cannot trade with "Germans" (not Nazis) ever again due to their lack of moral compass.¹³⁵ He also cited an

¹³² Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, "The 19th Academy Awards, 1947," Webpage, Experience Over Eight Decades of the Oscars, 2019.

¹³³ Bosley Crowther, "Ding Dong Bell: A Passing Regret on the Cinematic Decline of Orson Welles," *The New York Times*, July 14, 1946.

¹³⁴ Douglas Miller, "You Can't Do Business with Hitler," *Reader's Digest*, 1941, 98.

¹³⁵ *Ibid*, 102.

editorial in the national Nazi newspaper, *Der Völkischer Beobachter*, that said, “Justice and good nature should be limited to one’s own people;” effectively showcasing the moral corruption of *Germans* using their own words.¹³⁶

One fascinating piece spoke about the threat Germany posed, not from the Nazis, but from the anti-Nazi traditionalists like the *Junkers* (land owning nobility from Imperial Germany). The author, Henry Taylor, claimed that while Nazis were seeking unfettered expansion to all corners of the world at breakneck speed, this expansion was less threatening than that supported by the *Junkers* because Nazism would inevitably fail as it became stretched too thin while the *Junkers* would bide their time for a more favorable opportunity and continue the fight when convenient.¹³⁷ Though he acknowledged that some Germans may not support the Nazi strategy, he implied that all Germans were still striving for global domination and were inherently evil in this endeavor. He continued, ironically claiming the racial component of German superiority “is not directly related to Hitler,” but in fact “in their blood.”¹³⁸ While he called the basis for German superiority unfounded for its basis in race, he condemned all Germans to this moral degradation through their bloodline.

In general, many of these pieces written during the war used “German” and “Nazi” interchangeably, seamlessly equating the two without having to explicitly state the steadfast connection implied. The two articles that addressed the complicity of the population in enabling Hitler’s rise to power focused especially on the common “did as they were told” myth (referenced in *The Stranger*), undermining this claim by pointing out the enthusiasm rather than cowardice of the German population under Hitler.¹³⁹ One author claimed that because Germans

¹³⁶ Ibid, 100.

¹³⁷ Henry Taylor, “Getting Rid of the Nazis Is Not Enough,” *Reader’s Digest*, 1943, 71.

¹³⁸ Ibid, 72.

¹³⁹ Malcolm Bingay, “It Could Happen Here,” *Reader’s Digest*, 1945, 45.

will always prefer order over revolution, and obedience over liberty, they embraced Hitler because he “reestablished authority – which they prefer to responsibility. Here was a man after the people’s heart: he did all thinking – and voting – for them, as kings and Junkers had done from time immortal.”¹⁴⁰ Again the connection was made between Nazis and Germans, outlining the specific parts of the German psyche that made them most susceptible to the call of fascism.

After the war ended, however, most articles written about Germany and Germans related to the nature of reconstruction and denazification policy and thus no longer spoke of the threat Germany posed to the United States. Those that still maintained no distinction between Germans and Nazis, however, still spoke to the threats Germans posed to Americans even as an occupied nation. One article of this nature was one which talked about the state of West Germany and reconstruction efforts in the occupied zone. This tell-all made several bold claims about the German psyche, culminating in the statement: “[Germans] dream of revenge against the people who bombed their cities to rubble and upset their profitable domination of Europe. And they cling, without contrition, to arrogant militarism, anti-Semitism, and other Nazi ideas.”¹⁴¹ This piece and those like it used explicit fear mongering tactics to call for an end to German freedom in the name of US national security.

Media throughout the 1940s had a clear and consistent narrative portraying Nazism as an inherently German phenomenon, though the narrative grew in popularity as the war continued and after it ended. These films and articles stressed the origins of the Third Reich and its ties to Prussian militarism while skimming over the manipulative and coercive tendencies of Nazism. However, this narrative of conflation, while dominant, was not the only major representation of Germans at the time. Alongside these articles and films that drew connections between Nazism

¹⁴⁰ Emil Ludwig, “The Moral Conquest of Germany,” *Reader’s Digest*, 1945, 117-118.

¹⁴¹ Frederic Sondern Jr., “We Are Bungling the Job in Germany,” *Reader’s Digest*, 1946, 87.

and German values were other pieces of work that explicitly made very clear distinctions between the two.

Brown Shirts Don't Go with Lederhosen

The second common depiction of Germans in mass media of the time was that which severed Nazism from its German heritage. In this narrative, Nazism was considered a perversion of traditional German values and Hitler's evil stemmed from his own fascist leanings rather than his country of origin (especially considering Hitler was Austrian, not German). In discussions after the war, the actions of the Nazi regime were attributed to the leaders at the top of the hierarchy rather than implicating the entire populace for giving consent. Debates over the origins of Nazism created a completely new birth story that left out the elections that brought the Nazi Party to power in the *Reichstag* and discussions of war responsibility that used this narrative made a very clear distinction between classes of criminals (namely Nazis rather than Germans).

There were two films that embodied this narrative extremely well. The first, Anatole Litvak's 1939 film *Confessions of a Nazi Spy*, follows the workings of a Nazi spy ring operating out of New York City.¹⁴² FBI agent Ed Renard is assigned to identify the members of the spy ring and stop their intelligence gathering missions. He finds that Nazi rallies are being held in a local New York *Biergarten* (a German bar) with waitstaff wearing traditional German clothes like *Lederhosen* and *Dirndls* and identifies several Nazi spies working to steal US military secrets. Using his clever interrogation tactics, Agent Renard manages to get the Nazi spies to divulge their secrets to him through flattery and several spies are arrested by the federal

¹⁴² Anatole Litvak, *Confessions of a Nazi Spy* (Warner Brothers, 1939).

authorities. Those that manage to escape the FBI and flee back to Germany are faced with treason sentences by the Nazis who suspect they have divulged secrets and are ultimately tortured there.

Throughout the film there is an underlying theme of discerning the difference between Germans (specifically German-Americans) and Nazis. While the head of this spy ring, Dr. Karl Kassell, is holding a Nazi rally in the *Biergarten*, several spectators start to call out, criticizing him. One German-American heckler calls out, saying, “I am an American of German birth and there are hundreds of thousands like me who stand absolutely against you Nazis! ... We fight side by side for democracy!” The other German-Americans in the *Biergarten* follow suit, and a riot breaks out between the German-American Nazis and German-American democrats.

While three Nazi followers are sitting at a table in the *Biergarten* discussing their opinions of the party, one shows his reluctance towards the party and tension between his love of Germany and the actions of The Party: “I love my fatherland as much as anyone, but how can Americans possibly have decent cultural relations with a regime whose aim is to destroy the very best of German culture?” Again this tension between Nazism and German culture is showcased, effectively distancing the evil ideology from its German roots. The Nazis in the film try to tie themselves back to Germany in order to secure support and legitimacy, claiming “No one, no matter where he is, can call himself a German unless he is a *Nationalsozialist*,” but they are disproved time and again by the German-Americans calling for an end to Nazism in their beloved fatherland.

Confessions of a Nazi Spy demonizes all Nazis for their deceitful propaganda campaigns trying to garner support in the States, while redeeming Germans for knowing to call out fascism when they see it. Nazis are consistently portrayed as hypocrites as well: they rave about the

wonders of the fatherland but when sent to Germany by the Party to speak to their superiors, every single Nazi is visibly terrified: one even exclaims his fear of the Gestapo specifically. It is also important to realize this film was made before the war even started in Europe (released in May of 1939) and long before the United States joined the fight. There is a consistent call to arms as Litvak's Nazi propaganda sequence shows the spread of Nazi ideology spreading across the Atlantic to the United States, infecting the country like a disease. The constant mention of democracy and liberty further cements the damnation of Nazism while absolving non-Nazi Germans who demand democracy in their fatherland.

The film's director, Anatole Litvak, was himself a refugee of Nazi Germany and sought to show the American public the horrors of Nazi Germany despite the fact that until this film, no anti-Nazi feature film had yet been made by a major studio. Similarly to what would happen with *The Man I Married* one year later, after news of the film's production was released, the German Consul contacted Warner Brothers demanding the film cease production.¹⁴³ An official from Paramount told the producers that if the film were made, Warner Brothers would have "on their hands the blood of a great many Jews in Germany."¹⁴⁴ Despite these threats and warnings, Warner Brothers went on with production, only to have the Production Code Administration (a subsidiary organization of the Motion Pictures Producers and Distributors of America) warn the producers that, though the script did not technically violate any provisions of the Production Code, it still may be rejected by censor boards out of fear that showing the film would incite public disorder or rioting.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴³ American Film Institute, "Confessions of a Nazi Spy," Webpage, AFI Catalog of Feature Films, 2017.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

Casting the film also proved extremely difficult, as no Hollywood stars wanted to risk their reputation on such a controversial film.¹⁴⁶ The film enjoyed record-breaking box office business around the world, despite being banned in Japan, Germany, Italy, Ireland, Denmark, Norway, Argentina, Costa Rica, Sweden, Belgium, Brazil, and others.¹⁴⁷ In 1941, both Jack and Harry Warner were subpoenaed to a Senate subcommittee hearing to testify on behalf of the company after allegations that they had created multiple propaganda films in the studios, one of them being *Confessions of a Nazi Spy*.¹⁴⁸ *Confessions of a Nazi Spy* was easily the most controversial film within my cultural study due to the fact that no film like it had ever been made before. War in Europe had not yet begun but Mr. Litvak was determined to tell the stories of Nazi evil and warn the rest of the world of the horrors committed across the Atlantic. The controversy surrounding this film stemmed from its negative portrayal of Nazis: it did not condemn the entire population of Germans in the world. Despite its hopeful ending that implied true Germans knew better than to support the Nazis and that the Nazis would fail in their endeavors, many members of the public found its condemnation of the Nazis too direct for peacetime cinema. However, this belief would change over time as the war began: Litvak's film was the first of its kind to outwardly spurn the Nazis and inspired a slew of directors to do the same in the years following.

The second film that used this distinction narrative was Vincent Sherman's 1941 film *Underground*.¹⁴⁹ This film was especially interesting to me as it followed the (supposedly extremely popular) anti-Nazi resistance movement based in Germany. *Underground* tells the story of two brothers caught on opposite sides of the fight for Germany. Eric works in the

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Vincent Sherman, *Underground* (Troma Entertainment, 1941).

underground anti-Nazi movement, broadcasting anti-Nazi news to Germans via an illicit radio station. Kurt is a soldier in the *Wehrmacht* and has recently come home after losing his left arm at the front. Kurt has no idea of Eric's work with the resistance and the two are very close, maintaining a strong fraternal bond (despite Eric knowing he disagrees with his brother's politics). Kurt meets a beautiful young woman named Sylvia and falls in love with her, not knowing she is also a member of the resistance movement and works with Eric regularly. When Sylvia tells Kurt she works with the resistance, he is concerned for her safety rather than angry she is working against his party. Seeing her at a meeting with resistance members, he collects her and calls the *Gestapo* to arrest the rest of them, believing this is the only way to save her from herself. However, he does not realize he has called the police on his own brother until it is too late and he witnesses his brother's violent arrest and interrogation at a Gestapo prison facility. Witnessing the violence used against his brother, Kurt realizes the cruelty of the Nazi Party and joins the resistance movement to replace his brother after he is executed by the authorities.

Firstly, the film depicts a resistance movement that has widespread support, including several spies that have infiltrated the top ranks of the Nazi regime. It is well documented that German resistance to Nazis was not widely popular, and was never formally organized apart from a few isolated groups like *Die Weiße Rose* or the several assassination attempts of Hitler. Though the story is clearly fictitious, it does imply that anti-Nazi resistance was popular even in the very early years of the war when the Nazis appeared unstoppable in their war effort.

A neighbor of the brothers visits their father and the two question the point of fighting such a war but Kurt interrupts them saying the point is "to restore Germany's place in the world!" At the start Kurt is depicted as an unquestioningly loyal young man who loves his

country and family but perhaps does not fully understand the nature of the side he has pledged allegiance to. As he learns about the practices of the Nazis, Kurt realizes his support of the Nazis protects neither his family nor country the way he once believed it to and the National Socialist German Worker's Party is not the party of the German family. Just as in *Confessions of a Nazi Spy*, the Nazi ideology is shown in direct contrast to the interests of Germans and German values of family.

The unquestioning Nazis depicted in the film, like Colonel Heller, are only ever shown in their relation to the Party: it is as though they have no families or life outside the party. Colonel Heller is shown only ever in his office, surrounded by swastikas and imperial eagles. Meanwhile his secretary, who is spying for the resistance, is often speaking to resistance members outside the office, maintaining her connections to the world outside the Reich. It is Kurt's ties to his family that saves him from the moral corruption of Nazism. Colonel Heller even freely admits his loss of morals, saying "If I concern myself with problems of ethics, I'll soon be out of a job." His world revolves around the party and thus has lost all perspective and his ties to the fatherland are instead weakened: love of the *Führer* replaces love of country.

Decades after *Underground* was released, director Vincent Sherman wrote about his time working on the film in an autobiography. Regarding the research process that went into the development of the core storyline of anti-Nazi resistance in Germany, Sherman wrote "I dug up what I could and persisted in the belief that there were decent people in that country who were trying to resist Hitler and his gang. (Years later I, along with others, was appalled at how few had the courage to resist and how monstrous was the behavior of the Nazis.)"¹⁵⁰ Evidently, director

¹⁵⁰ Vincent Sherman, "Moving Up," in *Studio Affairs: My Life as a Film Director* (University Press of Kentucky, 1996), 92.

Sherman merely *felt* resistance in Germany must be widespread because he could not conceive of a population not pushing back against such cruelty sponsored by the government.

The New York Times review of the film was lukewarm at best, saying the film was too needlessly violent in its portrayal of Nazis: “The characterization of the Gestapo agent is in the film too coldly inhuman to be credible, and his actions frequently pass the limit beyond which brutality can be shown on the screen. Beyond that borderline the drama ceases to move the heart and instead results simply in visceral shock.”¹⁵¹ Interestingly, the New York Times review desired a more sanitized depiction of Nazi violence in Germany despite the fact that much of *Underground*’s violence was an accurate portrayal of Nazi norms. *Underground* did not experience the same public backlash as *Confessions of a Nazi Spy* did, likely because the war in Europe had begun by this time and its general depiction of Germany was far more forgiving than *Confessions*’ portrayal. However, this film was still produced before the US had joined the war effort and isolationism was not gone from public consciousness: though Nazi crimes were less deniable than they had been before war broke out in Europe, the responsibility of the US to do something about Nazi aggression remained to be seen.

Alongside these two films, there were also several magazine articles that made clear distinctions between Germans and Nazis, disputing the ties Nazism claimed to Germany. The first of these, an editorial written by the editorial board of *Life* in May 1945 spoke specifically about the role of the court system in reconstruction and denazification in US-occupied Germany. The editorial board spoke about the meaning of “justice” in a conquered territory and questioned the impartiality of US courts in sentencing Nazis. They claimed the US National Guild of Lawyers was prepared to “prove any German guilty of anything,” including charging directors of

¹⁵¹ “‘Underground,’ a Film Dealing with Radio Anti-Nazi Activities, Seen at the Globe,” *The New York Times*, June 23, 1941, sec. Amusements.

IG Farben with crimes as serious as those of SS men (a conclusion the board clearly found reprehensible).¹⁵² Ultimately they decided “it is far, far better that some guilty men escape than that the idea of law be endangered. In the long run the idea of law is our best defense against Nazism in all its forms.”¹⁵³ The board consistently stressed that the top-ranking officials who were making the actual decisions ought to be punished but the rest of the population was not responsible for the crimes committed during the war and thus should be spared by the courts. Oddly, industry executives were not included among the list of people responsible who should be punished. By continuing to use “Nazis” when speaking about criminals and “Germans” when referring to the general population, their distinction between the two groups was quite clear.

Another article speaking to the denazification policy in place in West Germany also criticized its lack of delineation between those at the top and the rest of the populace. Though there were five categories for Germans to be placed under within the criminal system (the fifth category being innocent), the author still found the separation between each tier too subjective and the implementation of categorizing to be inconsistent depending on the city.¹⁵⁴ According to Lochner, the occupying government had failed to understand the nature of fascist society and their arrest of any Nazi Party member was a waste of time. Because anyone in a totalitarian state is *forced* be a member of the (single) party, he claimed the classification system would be unfairly targeting victims of the Nazi regime: the German populace.¹⁵⁵ Lochner’s delineation between Germans and Nazis focused less on the value systems but rather the overreaching nature of fascist governments: because all citizens were essentially required to support the party, there

¹⁵² Editorial Board, “War Crimes,” *LIFE Magazine*, May 28, 1945.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ Louis Lochner, “The Idiocy of Our Denazification Policy,” *Reader’s Digest*, 1948, 133.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

was no way of showing they were truly supportive of the regime and its crimes unless they were active participants in the planning of genocide (Lochner believed such men *should* be sentenced).

The final article I encountered that made this distinction between Germans and Nazis was a piece of prose depicting the state of Berlin in 1950. In his piece, Joseph Wechsberg pointed to the reaction of German audiences to a film as proof that Germans had put Nazism behind them and were potentially never truly supportive of the regime. This film, *Wonderful Times*, used fifty-years-worth of newsreel footage about or in Germany (including the Kaiser, Greta Garbo, Hitler, Charlie Chaplin, Josephine Baker, and Mussolini among others), accompanied by a running commentary that was “one of ridicule and sarcasm, not nostalgia.”¹⁵⁶ This film, popular among Berlin audiences, had Germans laughing at themselves: an action often stereotyped to be impossible for Germans. He writes, “the Berliners are not sorry for themselves. On the contrary, they like to laugh at their own shortcomings, which, they admit, are not few.”¹⁵⁷ Wechsberg points to the differences between the German people and the serious manner of Nazis to distinguish between the two. The fact that Germans enjoy laughing at the failures of German militarism (both with the Kaiser and Hitler) shows how un-Nazi-like the population must be.

This distinguishing narrative relied on finding alternative explanations for the rise of Nazism that would remove German agency (and therefore responsibility) from the story. The careful use of “Nazi” when speaking about crimes and “German” when discussing the future of the country built upon traditional values was crucial to its efficacy. Emphasizing the fascist, totalitarian nature of the regime made room for a narrative that painted regular Germans as victims of Nazism rather than willing, if not enthusiastic, participants. The stories used to support this narrative were engaging, appealing to the love of liberty and freedom in US culture

¹⁵⁶ Joseph Wechsberg, “Letter from Berlin,” *The New Yorker*, August 5, 1950, 32.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

and painting Germans in US-occupied cities as eager for the spread of democracy but who have struggled through a fascist regime before reaching that promised land. The first and second popular narratives of Germany have now been discussed, but a third existed at this time as well that fell somewhere between these two.

Saving the Nazi with Democracy

The third and final category is the most difficult to pinpoint the nature of because it is used in different ways depending on the source and time period. In the end, however, all uses of this narrative did the same thing: a partial delineation was drawn between Nazis and Germans which suggested that Nazis can be saved under the right circumstances. These “right circumstances” generally meant exposure to democracy and empathy: two things sorely lacking in the Third Reich. However, the nature of this exposure varied: in some cases it was an after-the-fact treatment that would make Germans change their mind about Nazism while in other cases it was a preventative measure that would save the German from ever falling into the clutches of Nazism.

The first film that exemplified this cure narrative was William Cameron Menzies’ 1944 film *Address Unknown*.¹⁵⁸ In this melodrama, two childhood friends Max Eisenstein and Martin Schulz own and run an art gallery in San Francisco. The two immigrated to the United States from Germany with their wives decades prior, but Martin is now set to return to Germany to live there for several years. Martin’s son Heinrich and Max’s daughter Griselle are madly in love and intend to get married after Griselle’s acting career takes off. In order to do this, however,

¹⁵⁸ William Cameron Menzies, *Address Unknown* (Columbia Pictures, 1944).

Griselle decides she must accompany her “Uncle Martin” to Germany and work in the theaters in Austria while Heinrich stays with his “Uncle Max” in San Francisco to help run the art gallery.

While living in Germany, Martin befriends a Nazi official and decides to join the party, quickly rising through its ranks. Martin writes a letter to Max back home telling him they will no longer remain friends because Max is Jewish, saying, “It is impossible for me to be in correspondence with a person of your race, even if it were not that I have an official position to maintain.” Heinrich, Martin’s son, reads this with Max and is disgusted with his father’s new politics. Meanwhile, Griselle gets in trouble with the Nazi authorities for refusing to censor lines from her play and is forced to flee the theater, seeking refuge with Martin. Martin, seeing the Nazis closing in on her and wanting to avoid trouble for himself, shuts the door in her face and listens as she is shot dead by the Gestapo.

After notifying Max and Heinrich of Griselle’s death, Martin tells Max he cannot receive any more letters from him because the government would not approve of his constant correspondence with an American Jew. Despite his request, Martin continues to receive coded messages from San Francisco that brings him at odds with the Nazi authorities. Convinced Max has betrayed him and that the Gestapo believe he is a traitor, Martin contemplates suicide but eventually chooses to flee his home and escape punishment. As he leaves his estate he is caught by the Nazis and presumably captured. The film ends with Max in San Francisco receiving a letter that failed to be delivered to Martin and him turning to Heinrich, confused, wondering why a letter was sent to Martin because he had not written to him since Martin had asked Max stop. Heinrich then reveals it was he who continued to write the letters to his father, knowing it would put Martin in fatal danger with the authorities.

Address Unknown is a fascinating take on the connection between supporting Nazism and German heritage as it shows members of the same “Aryan” family caught on opposite sides of the fight due to their different environments. Martin, a German Aryan begins to support the Nazis after returning to Germany, whereas his son, Heinrich, another German Aryan does not feel the same calling because he has stayed in the United States, surrounded by liberty and justice. Nazism is therefore not an ideology that spreads by blood as Henry Taylor claimed in his opinion piece for *Life*, but instead a cultural phenomenon that can be cured.¹⁵⁹ Loyalty is a theme again as it was in *Underground*, but this time it is loyalty to justice and the protection of democracy rather than loyalty to friends and family that saves Heinrich from falling to the Nazi allure. As an Aryan he “should” be enticed as his father is, but his foundation of democracy and justice protect him from being seduced. Martin, on the other hand, puts himself and the Party before all else, allowing Griselle to be killed and isolating himself from a lifelong friend.

Address Unknown received a very positive review from the New York Times, with the paper saying the film was “not just another anti-Nazi film” but instead this film is “rewarding dramatically” and the changes from the book to the film had made it an even more thrilling story to see.¹⁶⁰ Though access to the film’s box office records is limited, like *Underground*, it seems *Address Unknown* did not suffer the same controversy as *Confessions of a Nazi Spy* did upon its release. This is likely due to the fact that the US had by now joined the war and were actively fighting the Nazis, and thus a negative portrayal of them in film was hardly uncommon. With generally positive reviews from critics and little in the way of controversy, *Address Unknown* was widely viewed within the US and brought the question of the German’s ability to act morally further into the mainstream. The film therefore lay the groundwork in 1944 for a narrative that

¹⁵⁹ Taylor, “Getting Rid of the Nazis,” 72.

¹⁶⁰ “Address Unknown,” *The New York Times*, April 17, 1944, sec. Amusements.

would be useful after the war in rebuilding Germany: though Nazis were evil people who must be stopped and cannot be reasoned with, the rest of the population could be saved with democracy and a focus on the true German values of family and loyalty.

A second film that used this partial distinction was The Three Stooges' 1940 slapstick comedy *You Nazty Spy!*¹⁶¹ Instead of revolving around the family, *You Nazty Spy!* follows dictator Hailstone and his two cronies as they seize control of Moronika from King Herman the 6th and 7/8^{ths}. Under King Herman, Moronika was at peace, but the arms manufacturers in Moronika were eager to increase profit so they installed Hailstone and his henchmen in power to start an unnecessary war. The crowds unquestioningly follow Hailstone, Field Marshal Gallstone, and Minister of Propaganda Pebble until the King stages a coup and an angry mob drive Hailstone and his men out of the palace and into a lion den where they are eaten.

Obviously the world of Moronika is analogous to Germany, where Hailstone is Hitler, Gallstone is Göring, Pebble is Goebbels, and King Herman is the Weimar-era democracy. With talking points like “Moronika for Morons!” (a play on Hitler’s slogan *Deutschland den Deutschen*), Hailstone plays the role of the inept but dangerous dictator capable of controlling masses with the help of Gallstone’s fist and Pebble’s tongue. Despite falling susceptible to Hailstone’s tricks initially, the people of Moronika are able to overthrow the dictatorship and demand the return of the peaceful king. The film therefore portrays Germans as susceptible to the lies and tricks of Nazism and complicit in the rise of the dictatorship (since it was Moronik/German industrialists who put Hailstone/Hitler in power), but still capable of saving the country if they realize the wrongs of the regime and push back enough. They portray

¹⁶¹ Jules White, *You Nazty Spy!* (Columbia Pictures, 1940).

Hailstone/Hitler as not as strong and intelligent as Pebbles/Goebbels portrays him and, in the right scenario, easy to take down.

You Nazty Spy! was one of two Three Stooges films made that mocked fascism in Europe. This film was also the first of its kind to outwardly mock Hitler on the big screen through obvious parody and impersonation (Charlie Chaplin's famous *The Great Dictator* was released nine months later).¹⁶² Despite its outward mockery of Hitler prior to the US joining the war effort, *You Nazty Spy!* escaped the attention and criticism of isolationists, perhaps due to its short nature (instead of a feature-length film, this piece was only roughly twenty minutes). Though the trio released other political shorts including another anti-Nazi short titled *I'll Never Heil Again*, *You Nazty Spy!* was universally acknowledged as their best work in World War II propaganda.¹⁶³

Beyond these two films, a large number of magazine articles of the era also outlined the rehabilitative opportunity for Nazis. These articles, all written after the war ended, outlined how Germany had changed since the Nazi regime was in power while still acknowledging the role the population played in allowing the regime to be rise in the first place. The oldest of these four, an opinion piece by Reinhold Niebuhr, outlined the craving Germans had for democracy. Citing their rejection of the Soviet-sanctioned SED (Socialist Unity Party of Germany) in Berlin and requests from the populace for a commitment from the United States to ensure German democracy, Niebuhr concluded that Germans had learned their lesson in the last regime and were eager to turn over a new leaf.¹⁶⁴ Niebuhr called for the US to adopt a more economically pragmatic strategy for Germany, saying, "The American identification of democracy with free

¹⁶² Don B. Morlan, "Slapstick Contributions to WWII Propaganda: The Three Stooges and Abbot and Costello," *Studies in Popular Culture* 17, no. 1 (October 1994), 35.

¹⁶³ *Ibid*, 37.

¹⁶⁴ Reinhold Niebuhr, "The Fight for Germany," *LIFE Magazine*, October 21, 1946, 65, 67.

enterprise is a luxury which Europe cannot afford. There is no possibility of saving freedom in Europe except by the support of political forces which stand to the left of American liberal thought.”¹⁶⁵ The fall of Nazism left Germany in shambles and, though terrible crimes were committed in this country against both its own people and populations outside its borders, Niebuhr saw the Soviet threat of expansionist Communism as far more pressing in Germany. In his eyes, the US needed to shift its German policy not just because of the Soviet threat but also because Germans were *asking* for American ideological and economic aid. He concluded, saying “It is better to face the facts and to avoid the mistakes made in confronting the last tyranny.”¹⁶⁶ To Niebuhr, the German had learned his lesson since the war ended, so the United States ought to have too.

In December of 1947, the *Life* editorial board wrote another piece in defense of Germany, this time calling for new occupation policies that reflected the nature of the new German-American relationship. Consistently referring to Germany as a former enemy of the US, they make it clear that the days of German Nazism were far behind them and the country had adopted a new direction. The board goes so far as to call Germany’s new status as an occupied nation both the “spearhead of Communism” (in the East) and the “outpost of democracy” (in the West).¹⁶⁷ While also justifying their policy suggestions with economic pragmatism that would save the American taxpayer money, a significant portion of their justification rests in trusting Germany to be able to handle the responsibility of democracy again.

The last article that best represented the optimism of saving the Nazi through democracy and law was Kay Boyle’s 1950 piece for *The New Yorker* that chronicled the trial of Heinrich

¹⁶⁵ Ibid, 70.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid, 72.

¹⁶⁷ Editorial Board, “A New Policy for Germany,” *LIFE Magazine*, December 15, 1947.

Baab. Heinrich Baab, known as “The Terror of the Frankfurt Jews” was an SS trooper accused of participating in 56 murders in Frankfurt from 1938 to 1943.¹⁶⁸ His trial, finally seeing a courtroom in 1950 due to extensive administrative red tape, was handled completely by Germans: a German judge, a German jury, and German laws.¹⁶⁹ Boyle wrote: “It was as if the will of the German people were finally putting on trial in a German courtroom... the ambiguousness of German duality.”¹⁷⁰ Baab represented the Nazi past: his crimes were committed while acting in official capacity as a government official and with the legitimacy of the people. His crimes were well documented and known to the public, as proved by the witnesses who came in to testify against him, and yet it was not until after the Nazis lost the war that his actions were considered criminal. The outcome of the trial would be an indicator of German remorse. After five weeks of trial with 157 witnesses and five days of deliberations within the jury, it was announced Baab was found guilty of 55 counts of murder, 21 counts of attempted murder, 30 counts of assault and battery (mixed with six counts of employing coercion), five separate counts of employing coercion, and lastly, 22 counts of deprivation of liberty.¹⁷¹ Sentenced to hard labor for the rest of his life, Baab was taken away and imprisoned. Boyle’s account of the Baab trial was a harrowing discussion of Nazi crimes that culminated in the atonement of the German people: the German court system had successfully put a Nazi behind bars without the help of occupying forces.

This third category of narrative both condemned the complicity of the German population in the crimes of the Nazi regime while also offering an opportunity for the population to redeem itself. Unlike the previous two narratives which were absolute in their condemnation of Nazis

¹⁶⁸ Kay Boyle, “The People with Names,” *The New Yorker*, September 9, 1950, 37, 39.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 37.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid*.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid*, 76-77.

(and Germans in the case of the first category), this depiction of the Nazi/German allowed room for hope of recovery and reconciliation. While it seemed to grow in popularity after the war ended and discussion of reconstruction policy took center stage in relation to Germany, the roots clearly existed before the war ended in the two films discussed, from 1944 and 1940, respectively. As the Soviet specter loomed large after the war, unforgiving denazification policies fell in popularity and criticism grew. This narrative of redemption was used as a means of legitimating these criticisms, as will be explored in the next chapter.

CONCLUSION

There was no single depiction of “the German” in popular media throughout the 1940s. While some authors and directors told stories of evil Germans, determined to wipe democracy and liberty off the face of the planet, others told stories of evil Nazis targeting German civilians, bullying them into submission. While essentially all stories included in popular media in the United States could agree on the wickedness and cruelty of the Nazi regime, some outlined a light at the end of the tunnel that held promise for the future of Germany.

All three narratives were widely used throughout the entire decade, never allowing a single one to assert total dominance over the other narratives. As explained in Chapter 2, foreign policy requires a concordant narrative in order to garner legitimacy. Having a wide range of potential narratives to choose from allows for a wide range of policies to be put forward that can be legitimated if tied to a corresponding narrative. In unsettled narrative landscapes like that of the 1940s, it is possible for a range of reconstruction and denazification policies to be pursued in Germany. The reconstruction and denazification process in Germany involved a number of policies that seemed to contradict one another in the precedent they set: some punishing all

Germans for the war, while others punished only middle-ranking Nazi officials. By utilizing the uncertainty surrounding the identity of Germany throughout the postwar era, these contradictory denazification policies could be enacted simultaneously by relying on different codominant narratives.

Chapter 5: Legitimizing Nazis

In Chapter 2, I explained how narratives are crucial to the analysis of policies due to the role narratives play in legitimation. In Chapter 3, I described the range of reconstruction policies implemented in West Germany after the war under American occupation authority. In Chapter 4, I showed the narratives of “the German” at play during the postwar moment and how varied they were. In this chapter, I consider how these narratives relate to one another in terms of the policies that were enacted in West Germany. How were the narratives actually used to legitimate policy? What do these narratives show about the legitimation process and limitations of “legitimate” reconstruction policies that US officials could pursue?

USING THE INDISCRIMINATE NARRATIVE OF GERMANS

The first narrative I explained in Chapter 4 was that which made no distinction between Germans and Nazis, equating the two and implying that the entire country was universally guilty for atrocities committed during the war. This narrative was used extensively by occupying authorities, particularly for legitimating punitive measures that would create a harsh occupation for the German people. Harsh reconstruction and occupation policies would be easily justified to the American public if all Germans were portrayed as wholly evil individuals keen on rebuilding the Third Reich and resuming their quest for racial domination. In what *specific* instances was this narrative invoked, however?

American Occupation

Firstly, the United States’ occupation of Germany needed to be framed in a legitimate light to the people of the United States. In the first document outlining American objectives for

Germany, JCS 1067, the occupying government explained their immediate plans for Germany. JCS 1067, drafted in part under the leadership of Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau, created a harsh peace for US-occupied Germany. This directive justified the occupation of Germany as a spoil of war, claiming the US occupied Germany not to liberate “but as a defeated enemy nation” and their primary aim in Germany was to realize “certain important Allied objectives.”¹⁷² The US was to take no steps in rehabilitating the German economy or bettering living conditions in Germany.¹⁷³ Specifically, the occupying authorities were barred from making conditions in Germany better than conditions in neighboring countries.¹⁷⁴

In a telegram from Political Adviser for Germany Robert Murphy, he explained how much the German people hated Americans and still posed a great threat to American interests. “Large segments of the population have not had a change of heart. These people continue to hate all democratic institutions and believe that [the] Military Government was established to reduce all Germans to abject poverty to further our own selfish aims... They have become more bitter as denazification progresses and are frantically searching for some loophole through which to escape their compromised past. A resurgence of German national feeling is also notable... with a desire to compare Nazi regimentation and efficiency with the present unsettled state of affairs during the transition.”¹⁷⁵ In this passage from a telegram he sent to Secretary of State James F. Byrnes, Murphy made no distinction between the beliefs of the Nazis now incarcerated and the rest of the German population: they all hated the Americans and democracy, and all longed for a return to the efficiency of the Third Reich despite the atrocities that government committed. By

¹⁷² Joint Chiefs of Staff, “Directive to the Commander in Chief of the United States Forces of Occupation (JCS 1067)” (US Department of State, October 21, 1945), Volume 13, p. 596, The Department of State Bulletin.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Robert Murphy, “The United States Political Adviser for Germany (Murphy) to the Secretary of State” (Government Printing Office, November 26, 1945).

building upon the preexisting narrative of Germany as a fascist stronghold with a population of fanatical supporters, the legitimization process of harsh occupation conditions easily followed: Germans were evil individuals incapable of being left to their own devices due to their engrained hatred of democracy.

The portrayal of Germans as inherently anti-Semitic, fanatical fascists was not a narrative limited to 1945 either. In 1949 (the year the denazification process was tasked to German officials with limited oversight of Allied officials), HiCOG John McCloy warned the US occupation personnel below him in Germany of the “renewal of Nazism and anti-Semitism” in their zone and the hardening attitude towards occupation within the general population.¹⁷⁶ He insinuated that perhaps Germany was not as democratized as many hoped, due to its tendency towards extremes both Left and Right. McCloy claimed that perhaps the best way to better the political situation in Germany was with “firmness and determination to act whenever necessary.”¹⁷⁷ Despite the call for democratization by McCloy and other officials during this time, the continued occupation of Germany and oversight of the new democracy was justified by emphasizing the fascist tendencies of the populace.

Lastly, the justification of the differences in occupation for Germany and Austria had to be addressed by officials. For background, Austria joined the Third Reich in 1938 in the *Anschluss*, or “connection/joining” in English. The *Anschluss* is often described as an hostile annexation of Austria by the Nazis, however more critical historical analyses of the *Anschluss* have shown that Austria welcomed its union with Germany.¹⁷⁸ After the war ended, however, Austria was treated as a victim of Nazi aggression rather than a complicit member of the Third

¹⁷⁶ Drew Middleton, “M’Cloy Urges Halt to Rise in Nazism,” *The New York Times*, October 5, 1949.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁸ Matti Bunzi, “Myths and Silences,” in *Myths and Silences: Jews and Queers in Late-Twentieth-Century Vienna* (University of California Press, 2004), 30.

Reich. Occupying authorities therefore had to justify the large differences between occupation of Germany and Austria. In a speech by Secretary Byrnes at Stuttgart in 1946, he mentioned the state of Austria, saying, “Austria has already been recognized as a free and independent country. Her temporary forced union with Germany was not a happy event for either country and the United States is convinced that it is in the interest of both countries and the peace of Europe that they should pursue their separate ways.”¹⁷⁹ By framing the *Anschluss* as an aggressive move made by Germany rather than a welcome union on behalf of the Austrians, a harsher occupation policy for Germany could exist while Austria’s occupation lasted only one year.

Disarmament and Demilitarization

To justify the significant disarmament initiatives begun under US occupation authority, Germany had to appear as a clear and present threat to American interests in Europe. Germany would have to be considered too irresponsible to maintain a military not under the direct control of Allied forces. In JCS 1067 drafted by Morgenthau, the US was to stop Germany from ever becoming a threat to Europe again by eliminating “Nazism and militarism in all their forms,” apprehending war criminals, disarming and demilitarizing the country, and completely controlling Germany’s capacity to make war.¹⁸⁰ Even when JCS 1067 was replaced for being too harsh in 1947 by JCS 1779, this new directive still called for disarmament, claiming the only way to achieve lasting peace in Europe was to impose restraints on Germany that would ensure Germany unable to revive its “destructive militarism.”¹⁸¹ No relaxation of disarmament and

¹⁷⁹ Associated Press Radiophoto, “Text of Secretary Byrnes’ Speech on U.S. Policy in Germany,” *The New York Times*, September 7, 1946, TimesMachine.

¹⁸⁰ Joint Chiefs of Staff, “JCS 1067.”

¹⁸¹ Joint Chiefs of Staff, “Directive to Command-in-Chief of the United States Forces of Occupation, July 11, 1947, Superseding JCS 106716 of April 1945” (Staff of the Foreign Relations Committee, July 11, 1947), 552-562, *A Decade of American Foreign Policy: 1941-1949*.

demilitarization policy was to be introduced even years after hostilities had stopped and the US had begun to introduce democratization measures. In a State Department policy paper released in 1948, officials again cited the possibility of German aggression in justifying the continued limitations on a German military.¹⁸² Because the USSR was no longer demilitarizing East Germany in the way the US had hoped it would, alternative means needed to be found “to provide security against any possible revival of German aggression.”¹⁸³ Legitimation of demilitarization policy relied on the portrayal of Germany as a militarist nation eager to overthrow its occupiers through a military uprising.

Reeducation Policy

The reeducation process also required a justification as well, one that would show how crucial it was for Germans to understand the error of their ways. The indiscriminate narrative that equated Germans and Nazis would, when speaking about reeducation, specifically imply that Germans needed to understand their own responsibility in the crimes committed, not just the scale of the crimes committed by Nazis. JCS 1067 included an objective based in reeducation that entailed teaching Germans that their own “ruthless warfare and the fanatical Nazi resistance [to occupation authorities] have destroyed the German economy and made chaos and suffering inevitable and that the Germans cannot escape responsibility for what they have brought upon themselves.”¹⁸⁴ Reeducating Germany using this narrative revolved around teaching guilt to the entire populace and forcing regret into the minds of Germans everywhere. Fortunately for

¹⁸² George Marshall, “Memorandum by the Secretary of State to the President” (Government Printing Office, February 11, 1948).

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Joint Chiefs of Staff, “JCS 1067.”

occupying authorities, this was precisely what they sought to do in Germany in order to better achieve compliance among the population.

War Crimes Trial Process

Justification of the trials of Nazis did not require much convincing in principle, but a system of legitimating the different rounds of trials (Nuremberg versus Subsequent) was necessary in order to distinguish between the two while still framing the two as legitimate and just trials of Germany. In a memorandum by Green Hackworth, a legal adviser to the Secretary of State, he outlined the difficulties in charging the entire nation for crimes committed. While Hackworth assumed the general population was uniformly guilty of war crimes, he recognized that a strategy was needed to put men behind bars while there were very few witnesses to testify against them.¹⁸⁵ According to Hackworth, atrocities committed before the war began were technically not in violation of international laws of war because they were committed during peacetime. However, he emphasized the need to prosecute these crimes anyway due to the evil nature of such atrocities. For this reason, he suggested splitting the trial system into two tiers. The first round, known now as the Nuremberg Trials, would target the obviously guilty criminals high up in the chain of command for whom there was significant incriminating evidence. Once these men were sentenced, the subsequent trials could begin which would target the members of the organizations the leaders of Nuremberg had overseen and make it so membership alone would be enough to incriminate and yield a sentence of hard labor for a number of years. If additional proof of participation in specific atrocities presented itself, the member could be

¹⁸⁵ Green H. Hackworth, "The Legal Adviser (Hackworth) to the Secretary of State" (Government Printing Office, January 22, 1945).

punished further, perhaps with a death sentence depending on the severity of participation.¹⁸⁶

Hackworth's telegram shows the urge to convict *en masse* while retaining a semblance of legitimacy in the trial process.

In a memorandum by Under Secretary of State James Webb¹⁸⁷ to President Truman, Webb outlined the five ways a person can be charged in relation to genocide using the internationally agreed upon laws regarding genocide determined by the United Nations. Article III of the Genocide Convention bans genocide in five forms: the crime of genocide itself, the conspiracy to commit genocide, the direct and public incitement to commit genocide, the attempt to commit genocide, and complicity in genocide.¹⁸⁸ Using these five charges of genocide in the trials of the Germans, many could be imprisoned. Webb's telegram also shows the push to convict the entire population of war crimes (either directly or indirectly through complicity) and force the country to atone in this way.

Yes, "All Germans"

There already existed similar narratives in the media that depicted Germans as heartless Nazis with a desire to kill any and all Americans they encountered, and this narrative was most useful when justifying harsh, punishing measures for Germany after the war. As I explained in Chapter 3, however, not all policies enacted by the military government were punitive in nature. In fact, many were based on the principles of reconstruction and welcoming Germans and Germany into the fold of Western Europe. Which narratives, then, were used to legitimate the

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ For whom the James Webb telescope is named after

¹⁸⁸ James E. Webb, "The Acting Secretary of State to the President" (Government Printing Office, June 9, 1949).

more positive policies enacted? And what about policies that seemed to fall somewhere in between?

USING THE DISTINGUISHING NARRATIVE OF GERMANS

The second narrative I outlined in Chapter 4 of “the German” was that of a victim of Nazi aggression. This German is inherently a peaceful individual, overpowered by the fascist, who is foreign to German traditions. Though this narrative was less widely circulated by the end of the war and was less effective in the legitimation process (due to the fact that it essentially completely absolved every German of war responsibility and left very few people to blame for a war that had killed millions), it was still used on occasion to legitimate policy. Specifically, this narrative was most useful in justifying policies that allowed more leniency and independence for the German people.

Bringing Germans into Positions of Leadership

Firstly, the reintegration of Germans into positions of leadership after the initial purge could easily be justified using such a narrative. In a telegram sent by Political Adviser Murphy to Secretary Byrnes, Murphy explained the difficulty occupation authorities had in identifying the differences between “Nazis and non-Nazis.”¹⁸⁹ He suggested enlisting the help of non-Nazis in this task, as the locals had found fault in the denazification process because they found it to be simultaneously doing not enough and too much. Local Germans, he reported, were unhappy that denazification had not adequately purged all Nazis from positions of leadership while also

¹⁸⁹ Robert Murphy, “The United States Political Adviser for Germany (Murphy) to the Secretary of State” (Government Printing Office, September 8, 1945).

unfairly removing those who were innocent from leadership.¹⁹⁰ The distinguishing narrative was easily applied to legitimating the welcoming of Germans into positions of power again because in this narrative Germans were wronged by Nazis who had seized power in Hitler's *Machtergreifung* (meaning "seizure of power" as opposed to *Machtübernahme* meaning "takeover of power," another term used throughout the 1930s depending on who was speaking). If the Nazis were never legitimate leaders of Germany due to their failure to represent the true German, the general populace was safe to bring into positions of leadership.

The New Party System

Another policy this narrative was used to legitimate was the new democratic system of parties. In 1946, there was a push within the Soviet zone of Germany to combine the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) and the Communist Party of Germany (KPD) into a Socialist Unity Party (SED). In a telegram sent by Adviser Murphy, he explained that the merger should not happen in the East nor be forced upon party members in the Western zones because such a merger would not be the will of the people and would use undemocratic methods of coercion.¹⁹¹ He claimed the "present SPD opposition to [the] merger has been tremendously fanned by the undemocratic methods which are being used in this part of Germany to achieve the merger. Many SPD members have reacted strongly, pointing out that they didn't go through the last years of Nazi domination to submit again to such methods."¹⁹² Murphy drew a clear distinction between the members of true German democracy (Social Democrats) and the illegal usurpers that destroyed democracy in Germany (Nazis). Murphy's anti-Soviet stance on the

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Robert Murphy, "The United States Political Adviser for Germany (Murphy) to the Secretary of State" (Government Printing Office, March 20, 1946).

¹⁹² Ibid.

merger and the recommendation that the US does not follow suit in their zone was legitimated by depicting non-Nazi Germans as victims of Nazi fascism.

The Victimized German

Though the distinguishing narrative was not widely used in legitimation attempts of policy, it was still invoked on occasion. Most policies that granted Germans some semblance of independence relied on the third narrative for the legitimation process. This third narrative, explained further below, gave a more nuanced view of “the German” and therefore was more favorable for attempts at legitimation because it offered both a negative and positive portrayal of German actions during and after the war. The distinguishing narrative, however, could only be effectively used to legitimate policies that imposed no guilt upon the general populace. Because most reconstruction efforts acknowledged German war guilt in some manner, the first and third narratives were more popular for legitimation.

USING THE DEMOCRATIZING NARRATIVE OF GERMANS

The third and final narrative used to legitimate reconstruction policy was that which promised hope of redemption for the German people. It acknowledged that regular German citizens were complicit in the crimes committed during the war for supporting these leaders, but it also suggested that such followers could be saved if taught democracy and empathy and if given a chance to prove themselves worthy of international respect and trust again. This narrative was extremely effective for legitimating reconstruction policy because it acknowledged the wrongs of the German people while also leaving room to justify reconstructing the country. It was also flexible enough to serve as a mandate for American occupation in the first place

because it did not specify at what point Germans would have learned democracy to a satisfactory level and therefore could allow the US to remain in Germany as occupation authorities for as long or as short as the US desired.

Democratization

To legitimate the extensive democratization efforts in the US zone of Germany, this narrative was extremely important. Though JCS 1067 imposed harsh conditions of occupation in Germany and used the indiscriminate demonizing narrative (as explained above), it also used the democratization narrative to justify its simultaneous push towards the democratization of Germany. JCS 1067 claimed that Germany suffered due to its own ties to Nazism and militarism, but that it was the United States' duty to begin preparations "for an eventual reconstruction of German political life on a democratic basis."¹⁹³ The democratization of Germany was crucial to the reconstruction of Germany because without it, Germany would fall back to its fascist ways and with it, Germany would become a center of democracy in Europe.

In a telegram sent by Secretary Byrnes the same month JCS 1067 was implemented, Byrnes pointed out the difficulty in holding democratic elections while banning portions of the population from voting. Byrnes directed occupation officials to continue to limit suffrage of active Nazis while allowing nominal Nazis to vote again in order to ensure the "greatest number of Germans possible" participating in democratic procedures.¹⁹⁴ In a memorandum from Secretary of Mission Brewster Morris, Morris discussed the German support of the current ban on political parties. He claimed that Germans were in support of the ban because they knew they

¹⁹³ Joint Chiefs of Staff, "JCS 1067."

¹⁹⁴ James F. Byrnes, "The Secretary of State to the United States Political Adviser for Germany (Murphy)" (Government Printing Office, October 11, 1945).

were not prepared to fully participate in a democracy after twelve years under Nazi control.¹⁹⁵ He also advocated for a push on behalf of the occupation authorities to relax the non-fraternization and non-reconstructive policies put in place under JCS 1067 because he believed too much suffering and chaos in Germany would turn voters towards the extreme Right (Nazis) or Left (Communists).¹⁹⁶ He did not find fault in the harsh conditions of occupation because they were too mean to the German population, but rather that it would be strategically beneficial to keep the Germans happy with the United States if they were to vote “correctly” in a democratic election.

Secretary Byrnes’ speech in Stuttgart did not solely use the indiscriminate narrative of Germany to legitimate US occupation policy: he also relied heavily on the democratization narrative. His opinions of the future of Germany are best summated in this excerpt: “Freedom from militarism will give the German people the opportunity, if they will but seize it, to apply their great energies and abilities to the works of peace. It will give them the opportunity to show themselves worthy of the respect and friendship of peace-loving nations and, in time, to take an honorable place among members of the United Nations.”¹⁹⁷ Byrnes put his faith in the ability of the German people to overcome their past once they substantially atoned for mistakes made and acknowledged their fascist traditions. Once democracy took root in Germany, Byrnes believed it would be ready for a central government led by German representatives.¹⁹⁸ Byrnes told his audience in Stuttgart that Germans deserved the chance to learn democracy and begin taking responsibility for their own country, over a year after hostilities ceased.¹⁹⁹ Though Germany had

¹⁹⁵ Brewster Morris, “Memorandum by Mr. Brewster Morris, Secretary of Mission, Office of the United States Political Adviser for Germany” (Government Printing Office, July 16, 1945).

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Associated Press Radiophoto, “Secretary Byrnes’ Speech.”

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

attempted to upend the *modus vivendi* in Europe three times in the past seventy years (the Franco-Prussian War, WWI, and WWII), he claimed it was capable of doing better and for this reason a push to democratize was justified.

In a telegram by Secretary Byrnes to the President, he addressed the manner in which the US would install democracy in Germany. By guaranteeing civil rights, the rights of political parties, the rights of free trade unions, the freedom of press and radio, and the freedom of movement of persons and goods, democracy would effectively take root.²⁰⁰ He claimed the establishment of such rights was necessary in order to revitalize German economic and political life. Again, the democratization of Germany was justified as a means to restore Germany as an economic power in Europe able to benefit the rest of the continent. Similarly, Political Adviser Murphy referenced the benefits of German rehabilitation in terms of European recovery in a telegram he sent to Secretary Byrnes months later.²⁰¹ Not only would a productive Germany ease the burden on the rest of the continent, a hearty democracy in West Germany could also undermine the Soviets in the East and lead to reunification, making Germany a political pawn in the Cold War between the United States and Soviet Union.²⁰²

HiCOG John McCloy released a policy directive in November 1949 intended to replace JCS 1779 which had been enacted in July 1947 to replace JCS 1067. This new directive said the “German people should be enabled to develop their political independence along democratic lines in close association with the free peoples of Western Europe. They should be fully integrated into the common structure of a free Europe, to share in due time as equals in its

²⁰⁰ James F. Byrnes, “The Secretary of State to the President and the Acting Secretary of State” (Government Printing Office, March 14, 1947).

²⁰¹ Robert Murphy, “The Political Adviser for Germany (Murphy) to the Secretary of State” (Government Printing Office, June 30, 1947).

²⁰² Ibid.

obligations, its economic benefits, and its security.”²⁰³ He claimed “the German people should be accorded the fullest possible freedom to shape their democratic future. The restraints imposed upon German freedom of action by the Occupation Statute are considered essential to the further realization of United States purposes in Germany. They represent a minimum of control without which the interests of the European community cannot be adequately safeguarded. They are not designed, however, to hamper the legitimate development of German political, economic and cultural life, nor to authorize the imposition of alien patterns of thought or behavior upon the Germans.”²⁰⁴ McCloy justified the limitations on German democracy as a necessary element to the transition from an authoritarian government to a democratic one. The redemption narrative was flexible enough to justify democratizing the country while also limiting suffrage and maintaining control of elections: two decidedly undemocratic things. He vowed to “encourage the Germans to take an increasingly active part in the political and economic organization of free Europe” while also limiting the extent to which they would enjoy such an “active” role.²⁰⁵ McCloy again invoked this narrative of redemption again one year later, claiming Germans were capable of installing a liberal democracy if given the opportunity. He said Germans must do some of the democratization process themselves in order to win back the international trust after allowing “Hitler’s regime” (as he put it) to rise to power.²⁰⁶ By referring to the Third Reich as “Hitler’s regime,” McCloy distanced the rest of the population from the crimes committed in Hitler’s name while also acknowledging the responsibility the general populace had in supporting his rise to power.

²⁰³ John J. McCloy, “Policy Directive for the United States High Commissioner for Germany (McCloy)” (Government Printing Office, November 17, 1949).

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ John J. McCloy, “The United States High Commissioner for Germany (McCloy) to the Acting Secretary of State” (Government Printing Office, May 7, 1950).

Government Structure

The new structure of the German government was a task largely tied to the push towards democracy and therefore heavily relied upon the redemption narrative to legitimate such policies. As explained in Chapter 3, the occupation authorities had begun to set up a government beginning at the most local level with townships (*Gemeinden*) and gradually increasing the size of incorporation until eventually federal states (*Länder*) could be established and a central government could be installed. JCS 1779 justified this push towards centralization by referencing the progress Germany had made under occupying leadership towards democracy and saying “the ultimate constitutional form of German political life should be left to the decision of the German people made freely in accordance with democratic processes.”²⁰⁷ A centralized German government would be acceptable to install once the country was satisfactorily democratized.

Bringing Germans into Positions of Leadership

With a legitimate centralized government put in place, the occupying forces needed people to staff it. The denazification purge had made millions of people disqualified from serving in public office, and thus the new policies that began to welcome Nazi Party members back into the democratic fold needed to be justified publicly. JCS 1067 justified putting Germans in charge at the most local level (under strict oversight by occupation authorities) because this would allow “any breakdowns in those controls [to] rest with... German authorities.”²⁰⁸ This directive justified welcoming former Nazis back into public service by framing it as a strategic move: any issues the German public took with policies enacted by the

²⁰⁷ Joint Chiefs of Staff, “JCS 1779.”

²⁰⁸ Joint Chiefs of Staff, “JCS 1067.”

new government would be directed to the German locals rather than the US occupation authorities on top and introduce democratic accountability.

In his speech in Stuttgart, Byrnes also acknowledged the difficulty in claiming a hearty democracy while banning large swaths of people from public service. He said “the Allies could not leave the leaders or minions of Nazism in key positions, ready to reassert their evil influence at first opportunity. They had to go. But it was never the intention of the American Government to deny to the German people the right to manage their own internal affairs as soon as they were able to do so in a democratic way, with genuine respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.”²⁰⁹ Byrnes justified the initial denazification purge as a necessary step in democratization, while also leaving room to bring those banned back into public service due to the need to give Germans the opportunity to redeem themselves. For this reason, the redemption narrative was invaluable in legitimating such reconstruction policies.

In a telegram sent by General Joseph McNarney to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, there was discussion of harnessing the power of German scientists by bringing them to work for the US military and space programs (many of whom ultimately did). Occupying authorities had asked General McNarney if exceptions to the employment ban could be made for German scientists in order to use their expertise to beat the Soviets instead of allowing the scientists to defect to the Soviet zone.²¹⁰ General McNarney decided that “those scientists and technicians who are determined to have attained unusual military significance in fields which may be detrimental to United States security, were their services to become available to other nations, be screened from the lists furnished by Washington and moved, together with their families, from Germany to the

²⁰⁹ Associated Press Radiophoto, “Secretary Byrnes’ Speech.”

²¹⁰ Joseph McNarney, “The Commanding General, United States Forces, European Theater (McNarney), to the Joint Chiefs of Staff” (Government Printing Office, July 17, 1946).

United States or United Kingdom.”²¹¹ The Soviet threat of scientific superiority was used to legitimate the expatriation of German scientists into Western Allies’ nations. McNarney implied that such scientists were too valuable to purge from government and important enterprises and could be trusted enough to work for the United States if they volunteered to do so.²¹²

Reeducation Policy

Byrnes also spoke at length about the importance of the reeducation policy in West Germany. In a telegram sent to Political Adviser Murphy, Byrnes emphasized the need to remove Nazi and militarist literature from the public sphere, but warned against doing so in fascist-like ways reminiscent of Nazism. Instead, Byrnes encouraged the use of positive programs of “democratic teaching and democratic example rather than attempting to suppress.”²¹³ The reeducation policies introduced under occupation were legitimated with reference to the part they would play in bringing Germany toward a democratic path. In his speech in Stuttgart, Byrnes said Germans must see that Hitler and his minions tortured and exterminated millions of people with *German* arms.²¹⁴ The hardships in Germany were therefore “inflicted upon her by the war which her leaders started.”²¹⁵ One of the most common themes of reeducation policies was the push to show the public that they were in this position due to their own actions; if Germany was to be mad about their living conditions, they should hunt down the Nazis that put them there rather than the Allied occupation authorities seeking to reconstruct the

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ James F. Byrnes, “The Secretary of State to the United States Political Adviser for Germany (Murphy)” (Government Printing Office, October 11, 1945).

²¹⁴ Associated Press Radiophoto, “Secretary Byrnes’ Speech.”

²¹⁵ Ibid.

country. This frame of thinking was crucial to the occupation mandate and was drawn upon often for legitimation attempts.

War Crimes Trial Process

The trial process was incredibly difficult for reconstruction because once convicted, it would be extraordinarily difficult to justify bringing a convicted war criminal to work for the government or accept government subsidies and contracts. However, this did not stop OMGUS from strategically considering their plans for prosecution. In a telegram sent by Political Adviser Murphy in 1945, he noted that the numbers potentially implicated in war crimes trials could exceed 100,000: a number far too large to handle and process.²¹⁶ Murphy suggested that, pending the decisions in Nuremberg (which was currently happening at the time of the telegram), perhaps zone commanders could be allotted wide discretion in determining the extent to which prosecutions would take place under Article II of the Genocide Convention which banned genocide and its various forms.²¹⁷ Murphy cited the administrative difficulty in prosecuting such a large number of individuals in his justification, however the reconstructive benefits for limiting such prosecution were also substantial.

From Deindustrialization to Reindustrialization

I explained at length in Chapter 3 the inconsistencies in deindustrialization policies and how after not long many of the executives in charge of the largest industries returned to their positions of power after serving prison time. This shift from deindustrialization policy to

²¹⁶ Robert Murphy, “The United States Political Adviser for Germany (Murphy) to the Secretary of State” (Government Printing Office, November 21, 1945).

²¹⁷ Ibid.

reindustrialization was legitimated through constant reference to the need of an economically productive Germany. In this infamous speech in Stuttgart, Secretary Byrnes claimed the Ruhr Valley (the resource-rich center of industry in Germany) was among the last “to succumb to Nazism” and, though “without the resources of the Ruhr Nazism could never have threatened the world,” the Ruhr “must now be used to rebuild a free, peaceful Germany and a free, peaceful Europe.”²¹⁸ This defense of the Ruhr allowed Byrnes to justify a policy of economic rehabilitation under the leadership of executives convicted of war crimes due to their role in the Holocaust. Byrnes legitimated the return of industrialists to positions of power by claiming the German economy could not recover without them and tying German rehabilitation to European rehabilitation.

The Redeemable Nazi

The democratization/redemption narrative was crucial to legitimating most reconstruction policies because it offered the most control for the United States as an occupying power. The indiscriminate narrative that equated Nazis and Germans made the country a lost cause: if all Germans were in fact wholly evil as that narrative suggested, there would be no purpose to reconstruction efforts because the best plan to minimize German war potential would be to completely demolish it. The distinguishing narrative was not widely used for occupation or reconstruction either because it did not aid the US’ mandate of occupation: if Germans were in fact victims of fascism and know better, then the occupation of the United States would not be necessary. The democratization narrative allowed the United States to determine for themselves what constituted “democratic enough” and what could be sacrificed for the sake of

²¹⁸ Associated Press Radiophoto, “Secretary Byrnes’ Speech.”

reconstruction efforts. For this reason, it was by far the most widely used narrative among policymakers of the time.

CONCLUSION

This chapter finally brought together the policies and narratives outlined in earlier chapters and spoke to the manner in which narratives were used to legitimate such policies of reconstruction in Germany. The three major narratives I explored in this thesis could have been used to legitimate essentially any postwar policy for Germany: harsh programs like the Morgenthau Plan would rely on the first narrative, extensive reconstruction programs like the Marshall Plan could rely on the second narrative, and long-term occupation programs relied on the third narrative.

One may note that in one document or speech, the author might switch back and forth between multiple narratives of Germany. For instance, in the initial list of US objectives for Germany in JCS 1067, the second bullet point specifies that the US is not there for liberation but instead to occupy Germany as conquered territory and to realize American aims in Europe. The third bullet point, however, outlines the plans to prepare Germany for a transition to a democracy. This is a significant shift from “not here to liberate” to “we must democratize,” especially considering “liberation” by the United States seems to always entail democratization in some manner. Secretary Byrnes’ speech in Stuttgart also switched back and forth throughout in which narrative of Germany it employed to legitimate policies suggested by the Secretary.

There was a wide range of policies pursued by the Occupying Military Government after the war, and this was made possible by the multiple narratives available for use in the legitimization process. The unsettled narrative landscape in the postwar United States allowed

policymakers to pursue a range of policies in Germany because these policies could be legitimated using the various narratives in play. The ability to draw from multiple narratives was what also enabled the implementation of contradictory reconstruction policies in Germany: policymakers could shift from one narrative to another with ease while there was no single dominant narrative that they were limited to legitimate from.

This chapter has shown why narratives are so important to understanding the implementation of policies. Without an understanding of what narratives policymakers were using to justify the programs they sought to implement, justifications of these policies would appear even more hypocritical than they already do. The identification of the underlying narratives at play during this time account for the ability of policymakers to switch between narratives in order to legitimate their desired policies. Without the study of narratives, it would be extremely difficult to explain how these leaders were able to legitimately pursue such contradictory policies simultaneously.

Conclusion

My interest in German reconstruction initially began during my first year at Wellesley. In the Spring of 2016 I took Quinn Slobodian's class, "Postwar Europe and the Three Germanies," about East, West, and Reunified Germany, spanning from 1945 to the present. The very first lecture in that class introduced me to the differences in reconstruction that occurred in East and West Germany, and included a discussion about the United States' decision to keep the majority of German industry intact in order to harness this economic power for reconstructive purposes. I remember being very flummoxed about the US' decision to purge nominal Nazi members from government while allowing industrialists to remain in positions of power, and wondering how they could have possibly justified such decisions to the American public.

I then spent a year studying politics and history at the University of Oxford, taking tutorials in International Relations and twentieth century European history. Among the many essays written that year was one about French myths of national resistance and victimhood in World War II, exploring the extent of collusion between the French government and the Third Reich. I was fascinated by the success of France in rewriting its history of World War II, rebranding itself as solely a victim of Nazi aggression and ignoring the existence of Vichy France. I remember having a conversation that year with a friend of mine who was hesitant to spend her tourist dollars in Germany, but did not have such qualms in visiting Austria, Italy, or France. This made me continue to think about how legacies of war and narratives of war guilt live on decades past the actual conflict. It made me wonder why we are more willing to forgive some countries over others, despite the common ties to fascism and genocide many of them have. The process of reconstruction has always fascinated me, thinking about how a country is rebuilt and rebranded after an international war.

I therefore initially began this thesis process looking to answer *why* contradictory policies were enacted under Allied supervision in West Germany. Why were high ranking Nazis released from prison to return to their positions but the general population continued to suffer in poor and oppressive living conditions? Along the way to write this thesis and after several discussions with Professor Goddard, I decided to change my question from the “why” to the “how:” How were US policymakers able to justify these contradictory policies? Regardless of why officials in the US sought different punishments for Nazi Party members, no satisfactory explanation of how these contradictions were legitimated exists. I believe this thesis offers an accurate explanation of the enabling mechanisms for American policymakers in the postwar United States and West Germany.

There are several major takeaways that I hope readers will garner from my work. The first of these is, in my opinion, the most important: in discussions of the work Germany has done to address its fascist past, the role of the United States must be considered. Whether a criticism or a commendation, the United States must be acknowledged as the primary actor in the early years of the republic. Though the Federal Republic of Germany was founded in 1949 as a sovereign state, the United States remained involved in the internal and external workings of the state for long past 1949. John McCloy’s position in Germany, High Commissioner, existed from 1949 to 1955, to serve as the primary head of occupation and internal affairs on the ground. It was after all McCloy, an American official, who released famed industrialist Krupp from prison in 1951. When the international community therefore blames Germany for the Nazis that escaped prosecution, they must also condemn the United States who ran these trials and released early those convicted with prison time. Too often I find that discussions of German

reconciliation are too small in scope, failing to account for external influences on the denazification and reconstruction process.

Another conclusion I hope readers will understand after reading this is the extent to which the United States failed to properly purge Nazis from government and the capitalist/democratic justifications they made for this decision. Though US-Soviet relations worsened steadily in the years following World War II, the United States' push towards democratization in Germany (justified as a necessary step in countering Soviet aggression) came at the cost of substantial denazification. The United States was so threatened by a rival economic system (namely communism) that the leaders in charge of reconstruction in Germany chose to overlook the role high-ranking Nazi officials played in genocide and instead welcome these Nazis back into positions of power in order to harness their leadership capabilities. There are many reasons the United States does not deserve the unconditional moral high ground it often claims in the name of democratization, but its failure to acknowledge the continuity between the Third Reich and the early years of the Federal Republic is one of them.

There were lasting consequences to incomplete denazification as well. In 1966 when Kurt Kiesinger was elected to the Chancellery, it was revealed that Kiesinger was a Nazi Party member from 1933 through the end of the war.²¹⁹ Beyond membership, Kiesinger served in the Foreign Office as well as the Propaganda Ministry; his work with the Nazi Party served as a rallying point within the student movement of the late 1960s in Germany. The generational divide between students and their parents of the 1960s was a major destabilizing force in a decade of tension and turmoil: young people saw a failure to rid the German government of its

²¹⁹ Ralf Beste et al., "From Dictatorship to Democracy: The Role Ex-Nazis Played in Early West Germany," *Der Spiegel Online*, March 6, 2012, sec. International.

ties to fascism as they were blamed for the crimes committed by their parents during the war.²²⁰ By not effectively ridding the government and industries of Nazis in the years directly after the war, the United States made Germany more susceptible to accusations of fascism and ultimately undermined its claims to democracy.

The fourth and final major takeaway I hope readers will gather from my work is the importance of narrative in analyzing foreign policy decisions. Though the content of the policy presented is crucial to analysis, the context in which the policy is introduced is also essential. The content of the contradictory denazification policies alone did not offer a clue as to how these policies could coexist: it was in the context of the policies (the narratives used to legitimate them, specifically) that offered the necessary information for analyzing the decision making process. Academics of rhetorical politics are already aware of the need to study legitimation techniques, and this thesis has shown why narratives are a crucial part of this field.

As this is an undergraduate thesis, limited to roughly nine months of research and writing, there is much more still to be said on this topic. In January of 2019 I flew to Missouri with the intention of conducting archival research at the Truman Presidential Library and Archive in Independence, Missouri. Much to my chagrin, after I arrived, I realized the federal government shutdown would affect my abilities to study at the library and archive: both were shutdown until further notice, awaiting orders from DC to end the shutdown. I promptly flew back to Boston that night after a brief six hour stay in Missouri, and emailed Professor Goddard about a new plan of action. Though I was able to conduct much of my research online through online databases and archives, there are still many documents not digitized to the Truman Library online archives and one doing further research on this subject would do well to visit the

²²⁰ Quinn Slobodian, “1968 in East and West” (Lecture, March 28, 2016).

library in Missouri when the federal government is not shutdown. There were some reconstruction policies that I reference in Chapter 3 that I could not find referenced in relevant correspondence but I believe some of these documents may be in the boxes in Missouri.

World War II and the Cold War are the two most studied time periods in recent history, and for this reason it can be difficult to convince others that there is still more to be said and discovered about these times. This thesis has shown that this is still a field of study rich with new material for analysis (especially as more documents become released to the public and digitized) and that old analyses of the decision making process during this time can develop stronger arguments with studies of the narrative landscape.

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