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Shock Treatment: American Wartime Psychology and the Reeducation of Germany

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Shock Treatment: American Wartime Psychology and the Reeducation of Germany

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B.A., University of Tennessee, 2016

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An abstract of

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Abstract

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By Kelsey Fritz

Focusing on the period during and immediately after the Second World War, this thesis examines the work of American journalists, officials, and intellectuals who assumed the role of wartime psychologists, attempting to use the methods of psychology and psychoanalysis to gain a better understanding of Germany and the German people. Convinced that this knowledge was essential to winning the war and successfully reeducating Germany, these wartime psychologists sought to "know" what lay within the German mind. Through a study of their published writings, including books, pamphlets, and newspaper and magazine articles, this thesis investigates what the wartime psychologists' particular approach to the "German problem" produced, both in terms of specific "diagnoses" of German psychological pathology and broader preconceptions about the Germans' mindset and behavior.

This project explores how the wartime psychologists drew upon the language of mental illness to describe the Germans as a deviant, pathological people in need of "treatment" for a host of dangerous psychoses. It also seeks to uncover the consequences of their conception of the Germans as a mentally ill people, focusing specifically on the ways in which it shaped American reeducation policy and narratives of German history and national development. Organized in three chapters, this thesis first explores the formulation of the wartime psychologists' diagnoses of German psychological pathology, as well as the analysts' plans for the "treatment" of Germany's national mental illness after the war. It then turns to the question of effects, investigating the long-term influence of ideas and models derived from the wartime psychoanalysis of Germany.

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Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of 1944, looking optimistically ahead to the end of the war and an anticipated Allied victory, journalist T.E. Murphy wrote in the *Saturday Evening Post* that Americans had begun to wonder how Germany should be treated once the war was won. Should there be a "soft" or a "hard" peace? Should the United States reeducate Germany or dismember it as a nation? For his part, Murphy believed he had the answer. Germany, he argued, was a nation suffering from a "mental crack-up" and "mass psychosis." Given these symptoms, Murphy told his readers that there was just one possible solution: only "shock treatment," the preferred method of "curing schizophrenia in the individual," could effect Germany's restoration to health.[1] The year before, psychiatrist Richard M. Brickner had contended that Germany "has long behaved startlingly like an individual involved in a dangerous mental trend" and diagnosed the nation with "paranoia, as grim an ill as mind is heir to."[2] Articles published in major American newspapers and magazines wondered if Germans, as a people, were insane; pondered how German minds might be "disinfected" during a military occupation; and described Nazism as a "German disease."[3] One American commentator even went so far as to question whether the Germans were fully human, before concluding that, at the very least, they were "two entirely different kinds of person": both "Herr Doktor Jekyll" and "Herr Hyde."[4]

However shocking these writers' assertions that Germany and the German people were mentally ill might appear to twenty-first century readers, they were far from alone among their contemporaries in arguing that Germany suffered from some kind of psychological pathology.

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[1] T.E. Murphy, "Will Shock Treatment Cure Germany's Ills?," *Saturday Evening Post*, 1 January 1944, 76.
[2] Richard M. Brickner, *Is Germany Incurable?* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1943), 30.
[3] Albert Lernard, "Are Germans, As A People, Insane?," *Washington Post*, 9 May 1943, L5; "Disinfecting German Minds," *New York Herald Tribune*, 18 July 1945, 30; George N. Shuster, "Nazism, A German Disease," *New York Times*, 4 April 1943, BR9.
[4] Wallace R. Deuel, *People Under Hitler* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1942), 22. The first chapter of Deuel's book is entitled "The Germans: Are They Human?."

Indeed, Murphy, Brickner, and the other commentators mentioned above were part of a larger group of American journalists, officials, and intellectuals, among others, who, during the Second World War, assumed the role of wartime psychologists.[5] For the most part amateurs who drew upon popular conceptions of psychology and mental illness, these wartime psychologists sought to use the methods of psychology and psychoanalysis in order to "know" their enemy – to gain a better understanding of Germany and the German people. In their quest to deepen their knowledge of the Germans, the wartime psychologists joined a diverse array of Americans who, throughout the war, strove to gather all possible information about Germany, information which they believed was essential for the Allied war effort.[6] Why, exactly, had the Germans supported Hitler and the Nazi party? Why did they continue to fight the war, despite the Allied bombing campaign and, after 1943, increasing Allied advances on the battlefield? And, most importantly, what were the Germans thinking and where might the chinks in their mental armor be? While some Americans turned to political science, sociology, or history in order to answer these questions, the wartime psychologists argued that psychology was the best way to discover what made the Germans "tick" and, thus, to tackle the "German problem," as it would enable them to uncover the secrets of the German mind.[7]

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[5] The wartime psychologists, as I call them, included journalists, government officials, historians, writers, filmmakers, ordinary citizens, and even a few professional psychologists. For the most part, these analysts were American by birth; however, a few were German émigrés, such as Emil Ludwig and Werner Richter, who wrote in English, for an American audience. Most of the analysts, unsurprisingly, were men. The few female analysts tended to be journalists, such as Dorothy Thompson and Tania Long.

[6] For an examination of the wide-ranging American wartime effort to gather information about Germany and the German people in order to aid both the Allied cause and the planning of a future occupation of Germany, see Michaela Hoenicke Moore, *Know Your Enemy: The American Debate on Nazism, 1933-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

[7] The "German mind" and the "German national character" are problematic terms, implying a monolithic national population with consistent characteristics that can be catalogued and studied. While these terms have fallen out of favor today, they were the preferred, standard terms used by writers in the late 1930s and 1940s. Because of this, I will use these terms, both to promote consistency with my sources and to emphasize the psychological framework that Americans applied to the "German problem."

Winning the War, Engineering the Peace

Why did the analysts examined in this thesis place so much emphasis on discovering what lay within the German mind, rather than on exploring German socioeconomic or political motivations for supporting the Nazis and their war effort? The wartime psychologists' belief that "knowing" the German mind would best enable Americans to solve the "German problem" was, in part, a product of their memories of the previous postwar period, especially their conviction that the peace after the First World War had failed due to an imperfect understanding of the German mind and national character. For instance, the *Pocket Guide to Germany*, a handbook for American troops published in 1944, reminded GIs that they were fighting Germany because their "fathers forgot so soon what the war was about last time," taking it "for granted that the friendly reception the Germans gave them after the Armistice in 1918 proved that Germany meant well after all."[8] In other words, according to the *Guide*, after the First World War, American leaders, both civilian and military, had lacked sufficient knowledge of the German mind to understand that Germany was still committed to its deviant goals of conquest and domination, thus dooming the peace settlement to failure.

Indeed, several analysts warned the American reading public that, unless they acquired a better understanding of the Germans, history could very well repeat itself after the end of the current war. Émigré author Emil Ludwig argued that the Second World War could have been prevented had the Allies had a "thorough knowledge of the German character" during the previous world war and at the peace negotiations in Versailles. If the Allies did not acquire a better understanding of the German mind before the end of the current war, he cautioned, a second Allied victory could very well end in a second Allied failure to solve the "German

[8] Army Service Forces, Information and Education Division, *Pocket Guide to Germany* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1944), 6–7.

problem."[9] Driven by this fear of repeating the mistakes of 1918 and 1919, the wartime psychologists were determined to understand the inner workings of the German mind, which they assumed to be uniform across the population. Convinced that national behavior conformed to patterns of individual behavior and, thus, that individual psychological pathologies could be mapped onto an entire nation, the analysts believed they could pinpoint what had gone "wrong" in the German mind to make the German people support the Nazis, their plans for Germany and Europe, and the war. Moreover, if they could uncover this information, they could contribute significantly to the Allied war effort, as American officials would know, precisely, where the Germans were most vulnerable psychologically and, accordingly, would be able exploit that information to defeat the Third Reich.

However, contributing to the war effort was not the wartime psychologists' only motivation for embarking on the project of uncovering what lay within the German mind. Rather, they also intended their studies to aid American officials and others engaged in planning the postwar world. By psychoanalyzing Germany and exposing the pathologies of the German mind, the analysts believed that their findings would help American officials to determine what needed to be "fixed" in Germany during the anticipated occupation and, thus, to design scientifically-grounded, effective policies that would precisely target those areas. Psychology and psychoanalysis, therefore, would be the means through which the future American military government could achieve its ends efficiently, avoiding yet another failed peace. As the wartime psychologists formulated this belief that information acquired through psychoanalysis could be used to engineer a successful occupation of Germany, they drew upon ideas about the benefits of harnessing the social and behavioral sciences to reform projects that circulated in the United

[9] Emil Ludwig, *How to Treat the Germans*, trans. Eric Mann (New York: Willard Publishing Company, 1943), Introduction (n.p.).

States throughout the early twentieth century, finding their most recent expression in the New Deal. Viewed through this lens, the analysts followed in the footsteps of earlier groups of Americans – of similar professional makeup – who sought to engineer "better" citizens through social housing projects and other welfare programs or to modernize society through various development projects.[10]

The Scope of the Thesis

As we have seen, the wartime psychologists were convinced that psychology and psychoanalysis would help them – as well as American officials – acquire the deeper understanding of Germany and the Germans they believed to be vital to winning the war and engineering a successful occupation. Several questions emerge in this context. What did the wartime psychologists' particular approach to the "German problem" produce, both in terms of specific "diagnoses" of German psychological pathology and broader preconceptions about the mindset and behavior of the German people? How did the analysts' psychological approach to the "German problem" affect American interactions with actual – rather than theoretical – Germans during the occupation? How did American occupation officials and other observers account for deviations from the analysts' theories and "diagnoses"? Finally, what impact did the wartime psychologists' findings have on the writing of German history? This thesis explores these questions, investigating how the wartime psychologists used the language of mental illness

[10] Daniel T. Rodgers has noted the progressive "prehistory" of many of the New Deal's social programs, i.e. the connections between New Deal social programs and social reform efforts of the early twentieth century. Furthermore, Rodgers also notes that, during a crisis such as the Great Depression (or, one could argue, the Second World War), as conventional wisdom "unravels," social policy experts are "given a more attentive hearing," as they "enter the political arena with satchels full of prepared solutions." Daniel T. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge, M.A.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998), 413-416; quotes on p. 414. In terms of social engineering, Kiran Klaus Patel highlights the work of the Resettlement Administration in particular as an example of attempted New Deal social engineering. Kiran Klaus Patel, *The New Deal: A Global History* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2016), 209-215.

to describe Germans as a deviant, pathological people in need of "treatment" for a host of dangerous psychoses. It also seeks to uncover the short- and long-term consequences of their conception of the Germans as a mentally ill people, focusing specifically on the ways in which it shaped American reeducation policy and narratives of German history and national development.

The structure of this thesis reflects the questions of articulation and consequences outlined above. Chapter 1 explores the formulation of the wartime psychologists' theories of German psychological pathology, as well as the analysts' plans for the "treatment" of Germany's mental illness during the occupation period. Given the limitations imposed by psychoanalyzing an entire nation from afar, as well as their general lack of clinical psychological experience, the wartime psychologists sought to align their evidence of Germany's pathology – evidence often heavily colored by stereotypes, propaganda, or other inaccuracies – with well-known diagnoses of individual mental illness. I argue that they were particularly drawn to "severe" diagnoses, such as paranoia or schizophrenia, which appeared to possess the greatest power to explain Germany's deviant behavior and "abnormal" national character, both allegedly so different from the norm. Over time, as the analysts employed the language of mental illness as an explanatory tool, they increasingly concluded, ahead of real interaction with Germans, that the German people were mentally ill and in need of treatment for their dangerous psychoses. This foregone conclusion would have numerous consequences, not only as Americans entered occupied Germany, but as they contemplated the place of National Socialism within the larger course of German history.

Accordingly, Chapters 2 and 3 examine the question of consequences, seeking to uncover the short- and long-term effects of the wartime psychoanalysis of Germany. Focusing on

American efforts to reeducate German youth during the occupation period,[11] Chapter 2 argues that, before the occupation began, the wartime psychologists' diagnoses of German psychological pathology came together to form a certain paradigm for American interaction with young Germans. As a result, American officials brought with them into occupied Germany a pre-formed image of how German youth would behave and, more importantly, how they had been taught to think, which colored their relations with young people in Germany and often worked to blind them to the deeper complexities of those young Germans' psychological state and worldviews. As a result, the occupiers were left with preconceived ideas about the rapidity with which reeducation and psychological change would occur among German youth, ideas that were not often matched by reality.

Demonstrating the wide-ranging influence of the wartime psychologists' theories, Chapter 3 shifts the focus from American reeducation policy to the intellectual arena, specifically, to narratives of German history and national development. It argues that, influenced by the wartime psychologists' diagnoses of German psychological pathology, a group of American analysts turned to history in an attempt to locate the origins of that pathology. Guided by their preconceptions of German deviance, these analysts contended that, for several centuries at least, Germany had consistently followed a different historical path from other Western nations, leading it to value militarism and authoritarianism, thus preparing the ground for the rise of National Socialism. These theories of German historical deviance, I argue, continued to circulate after the Second World War, influencing the work of postwar historians of Germany as they began to wrestle with the task of explaining the rise of the Third Reich. Indeed, there is a

[11] German youth were among the first to be targeted by American reeducation policies, partially because they were considered more receptive to reeducation than adults, due to their age, and partially because they were believed to have received the greatest dose of Nazi indoctrination. Petra Goedde, *GIs and Germans: Culture, Gender, and Foreign Relations, 1945-1949* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2003), 127, 164.

remarkable intellectual continuity between the wartime analysts' assertions that Germany had consistently deviated from the normative path of national development and the historiographical interpretation developed by the postwar historians, aptly called the *Sonderweg* ("special path"), i.e. the notion that Germany deviated from the Western path to modernity.

As an examination of the American wartime psychoanalysis of Germany, this thesis makes contributions to several bodies of literature connected with the American occupation of Germany, as well as engaging with German historiography more broadly. By drawing attention to American analysts' psychological approach to the "German problem," this thesis explores the wartime psychologists' use of the language of mental illness and deviance to explain the rise of the Nazis, German responsibility for the Second World War, and the brutality of Nazi war crimes.[12] Previous studies of American wartime and postwar efforts to understand the Germans, by contrast, have given the psychological studies of Germany and, thus, the use of psychological language to describe Germany, only limited attention. For instance, Michaela Hoenicke Moore offered a brief discussion of the psychological approach to understanding Nazi Germany as part of a much larger, all-encompassing history of American wartime analyses of Germany and the German people.[13] Furthermore, histories of American psychology, as a discipline, have largely overlooked the psychological approach to the "German problem" adopted by the wartime

[12] In this thesis, I use the generalized term of "Nazi war crimes," rather than distinguishing between the Holocaust, the killing of Roma and Sinti, and the murder of non-Jewish civilians in Europe, in order to maintain continuity with my sources. With very few exceptions, the wartime psychologists did not differentiate between Hitler's victims, to the point that they often played down the specifically Jewish identity of many of those victims in favor of a universalized image of murdered "Europeans." For greater discussion of this point, see Chapter 3, note 64.

[13] Moore, *Know Your Enemy*, 217–33. Moore's discussion of the psychological approach to understanding Nazi Germany focused mainly on analyses published by medical practitioners, such as Dr. Richard M. Brickner, instead of widening the lens to include the numerous psychological/psychoanalytical analyses authored by writers, journalists, and other non-professionals. Moreover, Moore was not alone in focusing attention on Brickner when discussing the psychological approach to the "German problem." Jeffrey K. Olick, for instance, cited only Brickner in his discussion of psychological analyses of Germany and, furthermore, barely delved into Brickner's diagnosis, methods, or assumptions. Jeffrey K. Olick, *In the House of the Hangman: The Agonies of German Defeat, 1943-1949* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 58-64. Brickner's contribution to discussions of the "German problem" will be discussed at greater length in Chapter 1.

psychologists in favor of studying the activities of professionals in the field during the Second World War.[14] Other historians focused their attention on the future implications of the wartime psychological analyses of Germany, arguing that they were a prelude to later psychohistorical studies of the Third Reich published in the 1970s and 1980s.[15]

However, thus far historians have not attempted to analyze the language of mental health and mental illness that the authors of the wartime psychoanalytical studies employed to distinguish between the "normal," healthy nations of the world and the "sick," psychologically deviant nations, the latter of which they believed Germany to be. Moreover, examinations of "harsh" or "radical" American ideas vis-à-vis the treatment of Germany after the war, especially by American historians, tend to address only the Morgenthau Plan and its political, economic, and territorial dimension. The Plan held that the postwar "agrarianization of Germany," to be achieved through deindustrialization and demilitarization, was necessary to prevent Germany from ever starting another war.[16] Such scholars are often quick to note, as Richard Bessel does, that "less extreme views prevailed" within the U.S. government, which ultimately articulated a rather idealistic view of postwar Germany as a "country re-educated, its political and economic structures reformed and decentralized, so that it would become more like the United States."[17]

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[14] For studies of professional psychologists' contributions to the American war effort, see Louise E. Hoffmann, "American Psychologists and Wartime Research on Germany, 1941-1945," *American Psychologist*, February 1992; and Uta Gerhardt, "The Medical Meaning of Reeducation for Germany: Contemporary Interpretation of Cultural and Institutional Change," *Paedagogica Historica* 33, no. 1 (1997): 135–55. For broader studies of American psychology that discuss psychologists' activities during World War II, see Ellen Herman, *The Romance of American Psychology: Political Culture in the Age of Experts* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); and James H. Capshew, *Psychologists on the March: Science, Practice, and Professional Identity in America, 1929-1969* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

[15] For studies of the perceived connection between the wartime psychoanalysis of Germany and psychohistorical analyses of Nazism, see Peter Loewenberg, "Psychohistorical Perspectives on Modern German History," *Journal of Modern History* 47 (1975); Louise E. Hoffmann, "Psychoanalytic Interpretations of Adolf Hitler and Nazism, 1933-1945: A Prelude to Psychohistory," *Psychohistory Review* 11 (1982); and Joseph Bendersky, "Psychohistory Before Hitler: Early Military Analyses of German National Psychology," *Journal of the History of Behavioral Sciences* 24 (April 1988).

[16] Richard Bessel, *Germany 1945: From War to Peace* (New York: Harper, 2009), 282.

[17] Ibid., 283, 285.

By contrast, this thesis, through its exploration of the psychological frame that the wartime psychologists applied to the "German problem," offers a reminder that the Morgenthau Plan was not the only "extreme" vision of postwar Germany articulated in the United States. Rather, Americans often drew upon the language of mental illness to describe Germany as a "deviant" nation, caught in the grip of dangerous psychoses and in need of shock treatment. Indeed, this language was deemed so harsh by some contemporary critics that they argued that dividing Europe into psychologically "healthy" and "sick" segments bore more than a slight resemblance to Nazi rhetoric which divided European countries and peoples into inferior and superior, sick and healthy.[18] Furthermore, focused as it was on pathology and treatment, the wartime psychologists' use of medicalized language put the United States in the position of "doctor" and Germany in that of "patient," thus defining an asymmetric power relationship between the two that nevertheless was conceived as benevolent, as doctors seek to cure their patients' symptoms.

Many American officials carried this psychologically-influenced mindset with them into occupied Germany, where it affected early American-German interactions and American occupation policies. However, previous studies of American reeducation efforts in occupied Germany have not devoted close attention to the ways in which American officials and commentators framed the process of reeducation as an inherently psychological one. Instead, the focus has largely been on educational policy reform and reeducation through organized sports.[19]

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[18] "What Shall We Do With Germany: A Panel Discussion of 'Is Germany Incurable?,'" *Saturday Review of Literature*, 29 May 1943, 7. This particular critique of the psychological approach in general, and Brickner's diagnosis of paranoia specifically, was written by Gregory Zilboorg, a psychiatrist.

[19] For a classic study of American reeducation policy, see James F. Tent, *Mission on the Rhine: Re-Education and Denazification in American Occupied Germany* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982). For recent work on the connection between sports and reeducation, see Heather L. Dichter, "Sporting Democracy: The Western Allies' Reconstruction of Germany Through Sport, 1944-1952" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Toronto, 2008); Heather L. Dichter, "Rebuilding Physical Education in the Western Occupation Zones of Germany, 1945-1949," *History of Education* 41, no. 6 (2012): 787–806; and Heather L. Dichter, "'We Must Devote Our Main Attention to German

Moreover, many histories of the American zone of occupation emphasize the intertwined processes of denazification and democratization without exploring the psychological frame that Americans often applied to these processes.[20] This thesis highlights the fact that many American officials believed that democratization would only succeed if Germans – especially young Germans – were provided with an entirely new psychological foundation from which to build new, democratic lives.

In its exploration of American efforts to reeducate and reorient German youth after the Second World War, Chapter 2 of this thesis draws heavily upon the work of Tara Zahra, who has led the way in conceptualizing and writing the history of postwar youth rehabilitation programs.[21] Zahra's work focused on the psychological rehabilitation programs implemented by

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Youth': The Western Allies' Reconstruction of Germany Through Sport," *Journal of Olympic History* 14, no. 3 (2006): 96–98. For work on educational reform and other avenues of cultural democratization, see Brian M. Puaca, *Learning Democracy: Education Reform in West Germany, 1945-1965* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009); Kathleen J. Nawyn, "Banning the Soldier Hero: American Regulations, German Youth, and Changing Ideals of Manhood in Occupied Wurttemberg-Baden, 1945-1949," in *Gender and the Long Postwar: The United States and the Two Germanys, 1945-1989*, ed. Karen Hagemann and Sonya Michel (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2014), 119–44; Kathleen J. Nawyn, "'Striking at the Roots of German Militarism': Efforts to Demilitarize German Society and Culture in American-Occupied Wurttemberg-Baden, 1945-1949" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2008); and Harald Leder, "Americans and German Youth in Nuremberg, 1945–1956: A Study in Politics and Culture." (Ph.D. diss., Louisiana State University, 1997). For the connection between youth activities and the improving American-German diplomatic and political relationship, see Goedde, *GIs and Germans: Culture, Gender, and Foreign Relations, 1945-1949*.

[20] For recent work on democratization efforts in the American zone of occupation, see Rebecca Boehling, "U.S. Military Occupation, Grass Roots Democracy, and Local German Government," in *American Policy and the Reconstruction of West Germany, 1945-1955*, ed. Jeffry M. Diefendorf (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Jeremy DeWaal, "Heimat as a Geography of Postwar Renewal: Life after Death and Local Democratic Identities in Cologne, 1945–1965," *German History* 36, no. 2 (April 27, 2018): 229–51; Alexandra F. Levy, "Promoting Democracy and Denazification: American Policymaking and German Public Opinion," *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 26, no. 4 (October 2, 2015): 614–35; Diethelm Prowe, "German Democratization as Conservative Restabilization: The Impact of American Policy," in *American Policy and the Reconstruction of West Germany, 1945-1955*, ed. Jeffry M. Diefendorf (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); and 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*, ed. Michael Ermarth (Providence: Berg, 1993), 35–46. For a study of democratization from the German perspective, see Konrad H. Jarausch, *After Hitler: Recivilizing Germans, 1945-1995*, trans. Brandon Hunziker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006). For a study of democratization in the context of film, see Heide Fehrenbach, *Cinema in Democratizing Germany: Reconstructing National Identity After Hitler* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995).

[21] See Tara Zahra, *The Lost Children: Reconstructing Europe's Families After World War II* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011); Zahra, "Lost Children: Displacement, Family, and Nation in Postwar Europe," *Journal of Modern History* 81, no. 1 (2009): 45-86; and Zahra, "'The Psychological Marshall Plan': Displacement, Gender, and Human Rights after World War II," *Central European History* 44 (2011): 37–62.

humanitarian organizations, such as the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), in postwar Europe, who worked mainly with young displaced persons and children in formerly Nazi-occupied areas of Europe. In the aftermath of the war, these youth were those most likely to be considered by Allied officials and humanitarian organizations as the victims of the war and the sufferers of psychological trauma. This thesis builds upon Zahra's work by expanding the scholarly lens to include German youth, caught in a gray zone in American eyes between acknowledgement as Hitler's victims, because of their indoctrination from early childhood with Nazi values, and condemnation as Hitler's willing servants because of their loyalty to the very ideology with which they had been indoctrinated. Expanding upon Zahra's work, this thesis intends to demonstrate that German youth were not excluded from discourses about the need for mental reorientation and psychological change in postwar Europe. Rather, these were continent-wide discussions, spanning both the liberated and occupied sections of Europe.

The existence of American programs for the psychological rehabilitation of the Germans also speaks to a broader history, that of the Federal Republic of Germany. The historiography of the Federal Republic has been profoundly shaped by the perception of the Federal Republic as a "phoenix from the ashes," a stable, prosperous, and enduring democracy, appearing to advantage all the more when contrasted with the Nazi era and the "failure" of East Germany.[22] Against the near-teleology of this success narrative, American fears for the future of Germany if its population could not be democratized are an important reminder that major points of contingency existed in the course of the Federal Republic's development. By exploring the ways in which the American occupiers thought about – and sought to solve – the problem of youth in

[22] Frank Biess and Astrid M. Eckert, "Introduction: Why Do We Need New Narratives for the History of the Federal Republic?," *Central European History* 52, no. 1 (2019): 4-5.

occupied Germany, this thesis seeks to complicate the narrative of success that dominates the history of the Federal Republic.

Beyond studies of the occupation period or the Federal Republic alone, in the broader sweep of German historiography, this thesis highlights the connection between the wartime analyses of the German mind and a prominent school of German historiography: the *Sonderweg*. During the Second World War, American writers, journalists, and historians looked to German history, hoping to find the origins of Germany's alleged national mental illness. In doing so, they formulated arguments that, throughout its history, Germany had developed along very different lines than the other major Western nations, choosing authoritarianism and militarism over democracy and parliamentarism. This thesis argues that there is a distinct resemblance between these wartime theories of German historical deviance, which rested on the assumption of a "normal" path of national development that Germany failed to follow, and the *Sonderweg* interpretation of German history developed by postwar historians, which asserted that Germany consistently deviated from the Western path to modernity.[23] By tracing the connections between the wartime analyses of German history and the later *Sonderweg* school of German historiography, this thesis intends to demonstrate the circulation and long-term influence of ideas about German deviance and "abnormal" national development. Before the impact of these

[23] For in-depth discussions of the development and content of the *Sonderweg* argument, see Jürgen Kocka, "German History before Hitler: The Debate about the German Sonderweg," *Journal of Contemporary History* 23, no. 1 (1988): 3–16; Konrad H. Jarausch and Michael Geyer, *Shattered Past: Reconstructing German Histories* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), especially chapter 3; and Richard J. Evans, *The Third Reich in History and Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), especially chapter 2. For examples of *Sonderweg*-influenced histories of Germany, see, among others, A. J. P. Taylor, *The Course of German History: A Survey of the Development of Germany Since 1815* (New York: Coward-McCann, 1946); William L. Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1960); Hans Kohn, *The Mind of Germany: The Education of a Nation* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1960); Fritz Fischer, *Germany's Aims in the First World War* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1967); and Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *The German Empire, 1871-1918* (Leamington Spa: Berg Publishers, 1985). For a well-known critique of the *Sonderweg* argument, see David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley, *The Peculiarities of German History: Bourgeois Society and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984).

theories of German deviance and “abnormal” development can be gauged, however, the origins and content of them must be probed. That is the subject of the first chapter.

CHAPTER 1
A Nation in Need of Shock Treatment?: The Wartime Psychoanalysis of Germany

In February 1946, Brigadier General Edwin L. Sibert, an Army intelligence officer writing in the *New York Times*, argued that the Germans possessed a "mental attitude which was not easy for an outsider to understand."[1] Because of this, Sibert noted, Americans had had "to investigate the German mind, as complex an instrument as any modern mechanism of warfare," both during and after the Second World War. They discovered that that "instrument" consisted of "two entirely separate elements which are merged only occasionally and then with disastrous effects."[2] On the one hand, the German mind was characterized by "reason – methodical, cold, unimaginative and often exceedingly dull." However, on the other hand, it was also characterized by "fanatical emotion – blind, overwhelming, without restraint and frequently unconscious." Germany, therefore, had a split personality: while the reasonable side of its personality "designed beautiful machines and structures," the fanatical side "designed Buchenwald."[3] However, this split personality, according to Sibert, was merely a symptom of a more serious psychological pathology: schizophrenia. Indeed, he argued that, when ordinary Germans, apparently unaware of their fanatical side, disclaimed responsibility for Nazi crimes, that behavior "surely is the final proof of their schizophrenia." That is, Germans were like "the poor lunatic who argues … in his 'good moments' that he should be released from his padded cell because *he* does not know that in his fits he is dangerous."[4]

At first glance, Sibert's diagnosis of Germany might seem rather bizarre – nothing more than an imaginative way of expressing anti-German sentiment. However, by employing the

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[1] Brig. Gen. Edwin L. Sibert, "The German Mind: Our Greatest Problem," *New York Times*, 17 February 1946, 7.
[2] Ibid., 7.
[3] Ibid., 7.
[4] Ibid., 7.

language of mental illness in his discussion of the German mind and the "German problem," Sibert actually followed in the footsteps of a number of American journalists, intellectuals, and other commentators who had argued that Germany suffered from some kind of psychological pathology. During the Second World War, these analysts had assumed the role of amateur, wartime psychologists, seeking to use the methods of psychology and psychoanalysis in order to uncover what was "wrong" with Germany. In other words, convinced that understanding the inner workings of the German mind was the key to solving the "German problem," the wartime psychologists attempted to pinpoint what had "gone awry" within the German mind, i.e. to diagnose its particular mental illness. Hampered by the limitations of psychoanalyzing an entire nation from afar, these analysts sought to align their evidence of Germany's pathology – evidence often heavily colored by stereotypes, propaganda, or other inaccuracies – with well-known contemporary diagnoses of individual mental illness. This being said, the wartime psychologists were especially attracted to "severe" diagnoses, such as paranoia or schizophrenia, which seemed best able to account for Germany's deviant behavior and "abnormal" national character, as well as the extent of Nazi war crimes. Indeed, the wartime psychologists consistently invested their diagnoses of German psychological pathology with the power to explain German support for the Nazis, their plans for Europe, and their war effort.

Over the course of the Second World War, as the analysts employed the language of mental illness as an explanatory tool, they increasingly concluded, ahead of any real interaction with Germans, that the German people were mentally ill and in need of treatment for their dangerous psychoses. This "treatment," the wartime psychologists believed, would need to be administered after the anticipated Allied victory, as part of the occupation and reeducation of Germany. Already thinking ahead to this occupation during the war, they argued that their

conclusions, exposing as they did the pathologies of the German mind, could have a significant, positive impact on the formulation of American occupation policy. In the analysts' view, their studies would help American officials determine what reeducation and reorientation the Germans would need during the occupation in order to become mentally "healthy," enabling the U.S. military government to implement scientific occupation policies that would precisely and effectively target the "diseased" areas of the German mind, speeding up the process of "healing" Germany.

This chapter is organized into three sections. The first two sections examine the various diagnoses of German psychological pathology advanced by the wartime psychologists, exploring in particular the development of their assertions that Germany, as a nation, suffered from schizophrenia and that German culture contained a definite paranoid trend. The final section examines the wartime psychologists' belief that their psychological profiles of Germany could help American officials design effective, scientifically-based occupation policies that would precisely target the areas of the German mind in need of "treatment."

A Schizophrenic Nation?: Germany's Split Personality

Given the constraints of psychoanalyzing an entire nation from afar, the wartime psychologists attempted to align what they knew – often heavily colored by prejudices, propaganda, or other inaccuracies – about the German mind, the German character, and German behavior with contemporary diagnoses of psychological pathology. Indeed, one of the earliest diagnoses advanced was the assertion that Germany, as a nation, suffered from schizophrenia. As the advocates of this diagnosis analyzed German history, society, and culture, they perceived a pattern which they believed to be indicative of mental illness. Germany – in their view – had

long been pulled in opposite directions by two starkly different tendencies, causing it to develop a split personality. For instance, Wallace R. Deuel explicitly argued that "the German is at one and the same time two entirely different kinds of person … he is Dr. Jekyll and he is also Mr. Hyde."[5] Influenced by popular conceptions of mental illness, particularly the Jekyll/Hyde notion that a split personality was symptomatic of schizophrenia, American wartime psychologists such as Deuel concluded that Germany, as a nation, suffered from that condition.[6]

The first articulations of the schizophrenia diagnosis focused on the perceived conflict between two distinct currents in German history: on the one hand, the embrace of authoritarian rule and militarism and, on the other, the promotion of culture and science.[7] For instance, in a letter to the *Christian Science Monitor*, Robert Peel argued that "the spirit of Potsdam and the spirit of Weimar" had "long been at war" in Germany.[8] The former was the tendency toward "ruthless militarism and political authoritarianism," represented by Frederick the Great, while the latter was "the spirit of humane liberalism and cosmopolitan culture," symbolized by the cultured court of Weimar in the late eighteenth century.[9] Like Peel, émigré analyst Emil Ludwig also noted the characteristics of Germany's alleged split personality, what he termed a "double history."[10] Germany's "double history," in Ludwig's view, was characterized by a "discrepancy

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[5] Wallace R. Deuel, *People Under Hitler* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1942), 24.
[6] As a matter of fact, the idea that a split personality, otherwise known as multiple personality disorder, is a symptom of schizophrenia, is a popular misconception, popularized, in large part, by Robert Louis Stevenson's 1886 novella *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. Neel Burton, M.D., "A Brief History of Schizophrenia," Psychology Today, 11 September 2017, accessed 21 February 2019, https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/hide-and-seek/201209/brief-history-schizophrenia.
[7] By the time of the Second World War, speaking of the "divided" nature of the Germans, i.e. thinking of German history and culture in binary terms (literature/science/music vs. brutality/violence), was already a well-established trope, one which had been quite popular in Allied propaganda during the First World War. However, by connecting this idea of the Germans' divided nature to a diagnosis of mental illness, the wartime psychologists took this trope further than earlier anti-German writers and propagandists had.
[8] Robert Peel, "'Is the German National Character Warlike?,'" *Christian Science Monitor*, 23 May 1941, 26.
[9] Ibid., 26.
[10] Emil Ludwig, *The Germans: Double History of a Nation*, trans. Heinz Norden and Ruth Norden (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1941), viii.

between State [politics and power] and spirit [culture], which "distinguishes German history from that of all other nations." Furthermore, this divide between state and spirit was so stark that, throughout German history, "German culture was hardly ever represented by the governing classes; it was created by the governed." For that reason, Ludwig concluded, it was "possible for the people of Goethe, Beethoven and Kant to be relapsing forever into barbarism," as the conflict between the two halves of Germany's national personality was hardly ever resolved in favor of "spirit."[11]

While Peel and Ludwig focused their attention on the struggle between two allegedly sharply different tendencies in German history and culture, other wartime psychologists focused on the conflict they perceived to be inherent within the German soul, which divided the German nation against itself, a variation on the diagnosis of a split personality. Analyzing the German mind in the summer of 1941, ahead of the American entry into the Second World War, journalist Douglas Miller argued that the "German soul is in conflict with itself," as the Germans, suffering from extreme national insecurity, had not "arrived at a stable and balanced attitude toward life or toward the world in general."[12] Just as an individual might cover up their insecurity through boasting, Miller asserted that the Germans attempted to mask their "inner uncertainty" with "assertiveness." This practice, in Miller's view, eventually led to the rise of the Nazis, who sought to prove to the Germans "that they are really a great people" by conquering and occupying large sections of Europe. For Miller, this kind of thinking did "not seem quite healthy or sane," but rather appeared to be the work "of a warped and diseased mind" divided against itself.[13]

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[11] Ibid., viii.
[12] Douglas Miller, "Why Germans Act As They Do," *New York Times*, 31 August 1941, SM5.
[13] Ibid., SM5.

Miller was not the only American commentator to focus attention on the perceived conflict within the German soul and the pathologies that it produced. Wallace R. Deuel also pointed to the Germans' "inner insecurity" as a major causal factor of their mental illness, as national uncertainty left Germans "deficient in natural feeling … for balance and control," causing them to be "chaotic and violent." The German mind, therefore, was the "battleground of opposing and furiously contesting qualities," with its multiple personalities in constant conflict.[14] Similarly, Dorothy Thompson, a journalist-turned-wartime-psychologist, argued in her 1942 study that "the German nation as a whole has never to this day made up its mind" on the question of "what is Germany?."[15] At various times in its history, Germany had attempted to be a "mythological and mystic realm," a "state which is the General Headquarters and instrument of a Prussian military caste," and "a modern national state." For that reason, Thompson asserted, to ask the question "what is the *true* Germany?" was "to ask a question which cannot be answered historically," but only "by a shrug."[16] Divided against itself, unable to decide what it meant to be German, the German mind became pathological. As Thompson put it, if national historical confusions, such as Germany's, were never "resolved by decisions … to take this course or that, a nation, like a person, suffers from schizophrenia."[17]

As was true of mentally ill individuals, she continued, this national psychological confusion brought about "a mental breakdown expressing itself in physical outbreaks." That is, schizophrenics, such as the German nation, preferred to "make up their wills" rather than making up their minds and to "imagine their world," a world in conflict with reality. In the case of Germany, that world was the Third Reich, which Thompson described as "the Reich that never

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[14] Deuel, *People Under Hitler*, 24-25.
[15] Dorothy Thompson, *Listen, Hans* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1942), 17.
[16] Ibid., 17. Emphasis in the original.
[17] Ibid., 17-18.

was on land or sea. It is not even placed in time," with "one foot in the Middle Ages and one foot in the twenty-first century."[18] Turning her attention to the proper "treatment" for this pathological state of mind, Thompson concluded that any treatment administered by the United States would have to involve force of some kind. Indeed, she stressed that, in order to cure Germany's national schizophrenia, Americans would need to resolve Germany's historical confusions and, thus, "to force the German mind to make itself up." In doing so, the treatment program would need to direct the German mind "into that one of its conflicting directions" most in harmony with "the direction of the rest of the world."[19] What, precisely, her proposal for treating Germany would mean in terms of occupation policy, Thompson did not clarify.

Writing in the *Saturday Evening Post* several years later, journalist T.E. Murphy echoed the claims made by the earlier analysts, arguing that the conflicts and paradoxes inherent in the German mind had caused Germany to become pathological. Because Germany was "both a nation of poets and of warriors," Murphy asserted that "there now exists in Germany a national split personality which physicians would describe under the diagnostic label of schizophrenia," again demonstrating the influence of popular conceptions of mental illness upon the wartime psychologists. Germany's psychological breakdown, he continued, "is the tale of the individual man multiplied several million times over … duplicated with monotonous regularity in every mental hospital in the world."[20] Anticipating criticism of his application of an individual diagnosis to the entire German nation, Murphy noted that "the diagnosis of Germany's illness as mass psychosis might seem to be a specious generality," if not for the fact that "the syndrome of schizophrenia" was "so complete and so fully corroborated by facts." One of those facts was

[18] Ibid., 19-20.
[19] Ibid., 21-22.
[20] T.E. Murphy, "Will Shock Treatment Cure Germany's Ills?," *Saturday Evening Post*, 1 January 1944, 76.

"the type of leader to whom the German people have turned in their sickness," as "there could be no hysterical, schizophrenic Hitler as leader of the German nation" unless he was a "reflection of the mental turmoil of his people."[21]

At the end of his analysis, Murphy, as Thompson had earlier, turned his attention to the problem of treating Germany's psychological pathologies, arguing that "because Germany is mentally ill, it does not follow that her restoration to health can be achieved through sweet reasonableness, subsidies, [or] kindness."[22] After all, psychiatrists agreed that the "most effective remedy for schizophrenia is shock treatment," as "only repeated shocks over a long period of time" had been "effective in curing schizophrenia in the individual." Germany, therefore, required shock treatment in order to be restored to mental "health," the first application of which it was currently receiving, in the form of the Allied bombing campaign.[23] Like his fellow analysts, Murphy thus concluded that the Germans were a mentally ill people with serious psychoses that had to be "treated" before Germany could behave in the manner of a "normal" nation. Furthermore, these wartime psychologists' assertion that Germany suffered from schizophrenia was the product of their attempt to align what they knew about Germany – specifically, its dual identity as "a nation of poets and of warriors" – with recognized diagnoses of mental illness. Accordingly, the opposing tendencies in German politics, society, and culture became evidence of a split personality, and the conflict between those tendencies was seen as proof of schizophrenia. Moreover, some kind of force, perhaps in the form of shock treatment, would be required to "cure" Germany's schizophrenia and return the nation to mental "health."

[21] Ibid., 76.
[22] Ibid., 76.
[23] Ibid., 76.

The German Cultural Paranoid Trend

While the proponents of the schizophrenia diagnosis believed that they had identified Germany's particular psychological pathology, other wartime psychologists pursued an alternative explanation, arguing instead that Germany suffered from paranoia. Indeed, according to the advocates of this diagnosis, given the evidence of German history, culture, and politics, Germany, as a nation, had long behaved in a manner strikingly similar to that of a paranoid individual. Unlike the schizophrenia diagnosis, which was not associated with one analyst in particular, the idea that Germany suffered from paranoia was inextricably linked with Richard M. Brickner, a psychiatrist by profession, who first articulated it. Believing that behavioral scientists were best equipped to "know" the German mind, Brickner turned his years of clinical experience with mentally ill individuals to the "German problem," seeking to diagnose the Germans' particular psychological pathology.[24] Eager to share the results of his inquiry, Brickner set out his diagnosis of Germany in a 1942 article in the *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, followed the next year by the book *Is Germany Incurable?*, written in layman's terms in order to make his findings accessible to the reading public, which, Brickner hoped, would include government officials and others in a position to decide what to do with Germany after the war.[25]

For Brickner, Germany's psychological pathology was clear: it was "paranoia, as grim an ill as mind is heir to, the most difficult to treat, the only mental condition that frightens the psychiatrist himself."[26] Brickner insisted that he used the term paranoia as a "responsible

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[24] Richard M. Brickner, *Is Germany Incurable?* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1943), 27-29.
[25] Richard M. Brickner, "The German Cultural Paranoid Trend," *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 12 (1942): 611–32, and Brickner, *Is Germany Incurable?*. Orthopsychiatry is the branch of psychiatry concerned with the study and prevention of mental and/or behavioral disorders.
[26] Brickner, *Is Germany Incurable?*, 30.

medical diagnosis," not an "epithet," noting that he had arrived at the diagnosis of paranoia only after studying "the characteristic behavior of the German nation as a group," rather than simply the behavior of Hitler and other Nazi elites.[27] However, not all reviewers of *Is Germany Incurable?* agreed with this assertion. For instance, Kimball Young argued in the *American Journal of Sociology* that, contrary to Brickner's claims that he utilized paranoia as a "diagnostic tool," the "term is employed almost entirely as a descriptive label," applied to "every aspect of Germany's history or contemporary life."[28] Like Young, Frank Kingdon, writing in the *Saturday Review of Literature*, argued that Brickner's book "is not really scientific," but "merely the translation of chauvinism into pseudo-scientific terms." Kingdon further noted that "as a contribution to a campaign of hate [the book] has much to recommend it," but as a "permanent contribution to planning a stable relationship among nations it is inadequate in diagnosis and dangerous in prescribed therapy."[29] Both reviewers thus concluded that Brickner's application of a psychiatric diagnosis to the German nation crossed the line from scientific to pejorative, highlighting the ways in which the language of mental illness could be used to fan the flames of anti-German sentiment in the United States.

In contrast to Young and Kingdon, émigré psychoanalyst Erich Fromm had no objections to Brickner's attempt to diagnose Germany's national psychological pathology. Indeed, Fromm, convinced that "psychology can make a significant contribution to our understanding of group behavior," welcomed the "renewed interest in this problem as expressed in Dr. Brickner's book."[30] This praise of Brickner's psychiatric approach to the "German problem"

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[27] Ibid., 31-33.
[28] Kimball Young, "Review of *Is Germany Incurable?*," *American Journal of Sociology* 49, no. 5 (March 1944), 488.
[29] "What Shall We Do With Germany: A Panel Discussion of 'Is Germany Incurable?,'" *Saturday Review of Literature*, 29 May 1943, 9.
[30] Ibid, 10.

notwithstanding, Fromm critiqued his methods of gathering evidence of Germany's pathology, arguing that Brickner read "mainly reactionary and nationalistic writers, taking them as representative of all German writers." As a result, Fromm maintained that being "correctly informed about the German character" would require "more knowledge of the Germans and a better method than is applied in Dr. Brickner's book."[31] Not all critics of *Is Germany Incurable?*, therefore, took issue with Brickner's overarching contention that nations could be psychoanalyzed and diagnosed with specific mental illnesses. As we shall see, many American commentators welcomed his psychiatric analysis of Germany, believing that his diagnosis of paranoia concisely explained everything that was "wrong" with Germany.

Having diagnosed Germany with paranoia, although not without criticism, Brickner, as would any doctor examining a patient, sought to locate the origins of this psychological pathology. He maintained that psychiatrists and psychologists must look beyond the Nazis in order to fully understand the nature and scope of Germany's mental illness. Indeed, Brickner argued that the Nazis were merely "symptoms, not causes, of Germany's trouble" and should be viewed "as we do the smallpox vesicles on the body of the patient, or the delusions in a psychosis."[32] Accordingly, the "ejection of Hitler and his band would constitute merely symptomatic treatment" and would not eliminate "the danger inherent in … German paranoia."[33] If Hitler and the Nazis were merely symptoms of Germany's paranoia, what were the true origins of this psychological pathology? To answer this question and, in doing so, gain valuable information about the development of his "patient's" mental illness, Brickner looked to German history, arguing that the scattered German communities in Europe contributed to the rise of the

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[31] Ibid, 10.
[32] Brickner, *Is Germany Incurable?*, 37; "The German Cultural Paranoid Trend," 623-624.
[33] Brickner, "The German Cultural Paranoid Trend," 623-624.

paranoid trend in German culture. In the medieval period, Brickner asserted, many Germans migrated to central and eastern Europe "in search of fresh lands," where they established "closely knit communities" and "avoided mingling or intermarriage with the local populations."[34] Facing the opposition of "local peoples" to further German expansion, these "self-hemmed-in German colonies … found themselves encircled and fed back into Germany bitter complaints against being choked and surrounded." Furthermore, this suspicion of their non-German neighbors was "reflected outside in increased bitterness against them" on the part of those neighbors and, Brickner concluded, "the familiar vicious paranoid cycle was well on its way to formation."[35]

This "vicious paranoid cycle," according to Brickner, engendered certain distinctive personality traits in individuals, including megalomania, the need to dominate, a persecution complex, and the tendency toward retrospective falsification, all of which he described as "the accepted paranoid symptoms."[36] To justify diagnosing Germany with paranoia, Brickner sought to "match" these accepted symptoms "against the collective voice of Germany" by analyzing the writings of German historians, philosophers, and politicians, among others. Reminding his readers that the diagnosis of paranoia rested "strictly on descriptive data," Brickner argued that "these Germans' testimony is *illustration* of a tendency – a tendency finally so strong that … only one conclusion is possible."[37] In other words, striving to thoroughly analyze his "patient," Brickner read German history and culture through a clinical psychological lens, attempting to fit the German nation, a collective body, into a diagnosis typically applied to individuals. However,

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[34] Brickner, *Is Germany Incurable?*, 142-143. Brickner first advanced this argument about the origins of German paranoia in his article in the *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*. See "The German Cultural Paranoid Trend," 619.
[35] Ibid., 144.
[36] Ibid., 162-163.
[37] Ibid., 162-163.

while Brickner concluded that the "collective voice of Germany" matched the accepted symptoms of paranoia, his body of evidence was more than a little incomplete. For instance, with the exception of his analysis of medieval German emigrants' role in supposedly stimulating the German paranoid trend, he limited his study to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries alone. More importantly, Brickner seems to have cherry-picked his evidence, reading "testimony" from Germans who were unabashed German nationalists, pan-Germanists, anti-Semites, and anti-democrats, such as Ernst Moritz Arndt, Heinrich von Treitschke, Houston Stewart Chamberlain, Oswald Spengler, and, of course, Hitler.[38] Neither his book nor his article indicate whether he considered the "testimony" of a different group of Germans, one that could include, among others, Goethe, Friedrich Schiller, Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, August Bebel, Rosa Luxemburg, and Gustav Stresemann.

While Brickner was not without critics, such as Young, Kingdon, and Fromm, other American psychologists and psychiatrists, unconcerned by the limitations of his analysis, enthusiastically endorsed his findings, keen to showcase the contributions that behavioral scientists could make to the war effort. These analysts held Brickner's studies up as examples of a responsible, insightful psychoanalysis of Germany and the German people, praising his application of an individual diagnosis of mental illness to the German nation. For instance, in an introduction to *Is Germany Incurable?*, psychiatrist Edward A. Strecker praised Brickner's clinical methodology, arguing that he had "marshaled his premises carefully and thoroughly," adding that "his conclusion is a reasonable one."[39] Furthermore, he maintained that psychiatrists

[38] For Brickner's analysis of these – and other – German writers, see *Is Germany Incurable?*, chapter 10. Few contemporary commentators remarked on Brickner's use of evidence. Indeed, as noted earlier, émigré psychoanalyst Erich Fromm was among the minority in noting the limited nature of Brickner's "testimony." Given the strongly anti-German climate in the wartime United States, many commentators likely believed that Brickner's circumscribed evidence was, in fact, representative of German writers.

[39] Edward A. Strecker, M.D., "Introduction," in Brickner, *Is Germany Incurable?*, 18.

were "the best informed and equipped" to make diagnoses such as this, as they "have served a long apprenticeship," analyzing and treating "individual mentally sick patients."[40] Similarly, responding to a discussion of Brickner's book in the *Saturday Review of Literature*, a group of psychiatrists and neurologists, including Strecker, stated that they found Brickner's conclusions to be "wholly valid, both scientifically and practically." Moreover, they recommended his book to American officials engaged in planning the anticipated occupation of Germany, contending that "all of those who are considering these problems [of what to do with Germany] seriously" should give it "thoughtful consideration."[41]

In addition to Brickner's fellow behavioral scientists, non-professional reviewers, such as journalists, and ordinary Americans eagerly embraced his diagnosis of paranoia, which appeared to be a succinct way to explain what was "wrong" with Germany, encompassing both its allegedly "deviant" behavior and "abnormal" national character. As these commentators discussed Brickner's diagnosis in the American press, they increasingly associated the language of mental illness with Germany, viewing the Germans as a people suffering from serious mental illness. Writing in the *New York Times*, George N. Shuster noted that Brickner regarded the German people "as more than mildly insane" and the "basic characteristics of German society" as "pathological." While Shuster argued that the German "disease" was not just psychological, but also moral, he concluded that anyone who read Brickner's book "cannot help concluding that modern Germany has been desperately ill," thus endorsing his overarching contention.[42] Likewise, in a *Washington Post* article tellingly entitled "Are Germans, As A People, Insane?," Albert Lernard also declared his support for the paranoia diagnosis. Brickner, according to

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[40] Ibid., 17.
[41] Lawrence Kubie, Edward A. Strecker, Arthur H. Ruggles, Smith Ely Jelliffe, David Levy, and Lawson G. Lowrey, "Letter to the Editor," *Saturday Review of Literature*, 31 July 1943.
[42] George N. Shuster, "Nazism, A German Disease," *New York Times*, 4 April 1943, BR9.

Lernard, demonstrated the incorrectness of those "good tempered persons who used to say … that there are good Germans and bad Germans: we dislike only the bad Germans," as "paranoia is contagious" and rife within German society.[43] Furthermore, Lernard argued for the validity of a psychological approach to the "German problem," noting that, while "it would be error to accept any one thesis as a complete diagnostic of German pathology," American officials' knowledge would "not be complete without the opinion of the doctors of the human psyche."[44]

While much of the discussion of Brickner's diagnosis of Germany occurred in 1943 and 1944, his contention that Germany suffered from paranoia and needed to be "treated" for this serious mental illness never truly went out of circulation among American analysts and commentators. In fact, in the summer of 1945, Lawson G. Lowrey, a fellow psychiatrist, analyzing the "German problem" in the *New York Times*, reiterated Brickner's argument, asserting that paranoia was the "fundamental diagnostic formulation for Germany." For Lowrey, there was "no doubt that both the German leaders and their people were and definitely are pathological" and that the German nation "is basically paranoid in structure."[45] Furthermore, Lowrey also echoed Brickner's contention that the Nazis were merely symptoms, not causes, of Germany's pathology. He noted that "the same thing … occurred under Kaiser Wilhelm, under Frederick the Great, and, it may be added, under Attila the Hun," ignoring the fact that Attila was, in actuality, not German, despite the popular pejorative use of "Hun" as a nickname for Germans.[46]

Lowrey was not alone in continuing to use psychological language when discussing the

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[43] Albert Lernard, "Are Germans, As A People, Insane?," *Washington Post*, 9 May 1943, L5.
[44] Ibid., L5.
[45] Lawson G. Lowrey, "To Make the Germans Men of Peace," *New York Times*, 17 June 1945, SM7. Lowrey was also the editor of the *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, in which Brickner originally published his diagnosis of paranoia.
[46] Ibid., SM7.

"German problem" after the end of the war. For instance, an editorial in the *New York Herald Tribune*, discussing the recent formation of a committee dedicated to reforming German education, argued in support of the committee's goal of leading "German education and thereby the German people back to health and sanity," thereby "arresting the infection from a diseased Germany."[47] Moreover, American commentators, still determined to uncover the "secrets" of the German mind, continued to psychoanalyze Germany in the hopes of definitively identifying its psychological pathology. As noted at the beginning of this chapter, Brigadier General Edwin L. Sibert argued that the German mind was the "greatest problem" Americans faced in Germany and diagnosed Germany with a split personality and schizophrenia.[48] While Sibert followed the numerous wartime psychologists who had argued during the war that Germany suffered from schizophrenia, journalist William Harlan Hale struck out in a new direction. Writing in *Harper's Magazine*, Hale diagnosed Germany with a father-dependency complex, asserting that Germany's tendency toward authoritarianism resulted from a compulsion "to continue throughout adult life that dependence on an all-powerful father which made childhood so free of responsibilities."[49] As these examples demonstrate, the wartime psychologists' notion that the Germans were a mentally ill people thus continued to circulate in the early postwar period – and to shape American views of the German people, just as U.S. officials and troops began to interact with actual, rather than theoretical, Germans.

The Analysts Plan the Occupation of Germany

Having thoroughly studied and diagnosed the pathologies of the "German mind," albeit

[47] "Disinfecting German Minds," *New York Herald Tribune*, 18 July 1945, 30. See also "Education Seen Cure for Sick German Mind," *New York Herald Tribune*, 12 November 1945, 4.
[48] Sibert, "The German Mind: Our Greatest Problem," 7.
[49] William Harlan Hale, "Germany's Deformed Conscience," *Harper's Magazine* 192, no. 1148, January 1946, 3.

largely from afar, how did the wartime psychologists intend their conclusions to be employed by American government officials? Given that these analysts generally developed and refined their diagnoses during the Second World War, they primarily intended their findings to aid U.S. officials in their quest to uncover what lay within the German mind and to exploit that knowledge to defeat Nazi Germany. However, the wartime psychologists did not envision that the relevance of their theories would expire with victory in Europe. Rather, they believed that their conclusions would help American officials determine what reeducation and reorientation the Germans would need during the occupation to become mentally "healthy" and design scientific occupation policies that would precisely and effectively target the "diseased" areas of the German mind. In fact, determined to prove the validity and demonstrate the real-world applications of their psychological profiles of the Germans, a number of the wartime psychologists began to "plan" the occupation themselves. That is, they offered suggestions as to how American troops and occupation officials should treat the Germans after defeat and drew up blueprints for reeducation programs.

Although the wartime psychologists were convinced that their findings would help American officials design a "better," more scientific occupation of Germany, they realized that they still needed to convince both those officials and the American public of the value and utility of applying psychology to international affairs. In their publications, therefore, analysts such as Brickner took care to emphasize the greater insights to be gained from a psychological approach to the "German problem" than any others. Noting that the "problem of what to do about the Germans after they are defeated … looms higher and more confusing with every step toward victory," Brickner argued that psychiatrists' "long clinical experience with mental ills and mental

trends" would be an "invaluable key" to solving this problem.[50] Indeed, the psychiatrist's "peculiarly probing" approach to "human affairs" made other approaches to the question of how to treat Germany after defeat "appear either misleadingly superficial or based on fundamental misconceptions."[51] Writing two years later, in the summer of 1945, Lawson G. Lowrey echoed Brickner's comments, asserting that determining the precise solution to the "German problem" would require a thorough understanding of "the present psychology of German adults and children," which, in his view, American officials did not currently possess.[52] American personnel in occupied Germany, therefore, should allow themselves to be guided by psychiatrists and psychologists, who knew better "how and where they [the answers to the 'German problem'] should be sought."[53] Both Brickner and Lowrey thus argued in favor of an occupation of Germany led by the wartime psychologists, which would offer them the opportunity to deploy their theories of German psychological pathology in service of American reeducation and reorientation efforts.

The wartime psychologists themselves were, unsurprisingly, the most vocal advocates for psychologically-based occupation policies. However, they were not alone in making these claims, as their arguments about the benefits of applying these theories to the occupation won over other commentators. For instance, commenting on Brickner's application of psychology to international affairs, an editorial published in the *New York Herald Tribune* claimed that Americans needed a "more fruitful approach" than "mere power politics" to deal with "the problem of [international] affairs."[54] It was not enough to just to "punish" Germany; rather, the

[50] Brickner, *Is Germany Incurable?*, 27-28.
[51] Ibid., 27-28.
[52] Lowrey, "To Make the Germans Men of Peace," SM7.
[53] Ibid., SM7.
[54] "'Curing' Germany," *New York Herald Tribune*, 29 April 1943, 22.

United States needed to achieve "specific desired social results" from its dealings with other peoples, such as the Germans during the anticipated occupation period. Furthermore, the article noted that there was a "growing tendency to hunt for these more efficient means in psychology, sociology, and the other scientific approaches to human behavior," a tendency it called "healthy and … hopeful."[55] This editorial encapsulated what the wartime psychologists hoped to do: as self-styled experts in human behavior, they would help American officials produce those "specific desired social results" during the occupation of Germany. But how, exactly, would that occur? What types of policies would the American military government need to implement, and how should American troops act when in occupied Germany? Once again, the analysts had – or believed they had – the answers, as they began to "plan" the occupation in their publications, some offering more concrete proposals than others.

Already in 1943, émigré analyst Emil Ludwig offered "some practical advice on how to treat [the Germans] after their military defeat," which, he promised his American readers, "will come soon."[56] Because Germany was "a nation in love with commands and obedience," Ludwig asserted that it could only be governed "with authority." To obtain and preserve that all-important authority, American occupation troops would need to avoid "cordiality and reconciliation" at all costs and remember that the "victor is the master, not the friend. The master does not smile – he orders."[57] Furthermore, American troops and officials "should become known as strict but honest men," preserving the rule of law, but "still living aloof, as is seeming for a class of masters," even when it came to reeducating Germans. Rather absurdly, Ludwig argued that "no one will be able to educate [the Germans]" about democracy, "if he treats them

[55] Ibid., 22.
[56] Emil Ludwig, *How to Treat the Germans*, trans. Eric Mann (New York: Willard Publishing Company, 1943), Introduction (n.p).
[57] Ibid., 78, 80.

as equals," emphasizing once again his belief that the Germans would only respond to force and ignoring the irony of teaching the Germans democratic values from a position of inequality.[58]

Writing two years later, Lowrey echoed Ludwig's contention that the Germans would only respond to force, remarking that "it unfortunately appears that the Allies will need to keep a strong show of force" in Germany until sufficient reeducation and reorientation had occurred to allow the Germans "to live at peace with themselves.[59] Moreover, that reeducation would have to be delivered from above, i.e. by the occupying forces, as the Germans could not be trusted to reeducate themselves. Lowrey noted that there had been suggestions that "it would be possible to re-educate considerable masses of the German people through the teachings of their own educators," thus making reeducation a primarily German endeavor.[60] However, these proposals, he argued, failed to take into account a basic fact of the current German mindset: that "everyone in Germany is indoctrinated with the theory of German superiority," as well as "the idea that the nation as a whole has been persecuted in the present war as it has been in past wars."[61] Given this mindset, it was highly unlikely, Lowrey concluded, that German-led reeducation efforts would succeed. American officials thus would have to lead the reeducation program, if there was to be any hope of effecting meaningful psychological change in Germany and impressing the reality of defeat upon the German people.

Ludwig's and Lowrey's plans for the occupation aligned with those of American officials who favored a "hard" occupation of Germany, one in which American authority would be firmly established, the bankruptcy of Nazi ideas and the Nazi system would be impressed upon the

[58] Ibid., 82-83.
[59] Lowrey, "To Make the Germans Men of Peace," SM7.
[60] Ibid., SM7.
[61] Ibid., SM7.

Germans, and Germany would be thoroughly punished for its crimes during the war.[62] Indeed, there are striking similarities between these two analysts' comments and early statements of American occupation policy. For instance, similar to Ludwig's argument that American troops should remain aloof in Germany in order to maintain their authority, the *Pocket Guide to Germany*, an informational handbook for U.S. troops in Germany, informed GIs that "there must be no fraternization. This is absolute!"[63] American soldiers were forbidden from entering German homes or associating with Germans "on terms of friendly intimacy, either in public or in private," given that "these people [Germans] are not our allies or our friends," but rather "are bound by military terms."[64] Likewise, JCS 1067, the first major directive regarding the occupation of Germany, instructed occupation officials and American troops to "strongly discourage fraternization with the German officials and population," reminding American forces that they should be "just but firm and aloof.[65] Moreover, the directive also echoed Lowrey's argument that American officials would have to carefully monitor the reeducation process to ensure that Germans realized the bankruptcy of Nazi ideas, especially the belief in German superiority. American occupation personnel, the document noted, would have to impress upon the Germans "that Germany's ruthless warfare and the fanatical Nazi resistance have … made chaos and suffering inevitable and that the Germans cannot escape responsibility for what they

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[62] The leading advocate of a "hard" occupation in the United States was Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau Jr., whose plan for defeated Germany proposed that it be "deindustrialized as well as demilitarized; that, essentially, it be turned into an agrarian country." Indeed, Morgenthau believed that the postwar "agrarianization of Germany" was necessary in order to prevent Germany from starting another war. Richard Bessel, *Germany 1945: From War to Peace* (New York: Harper, 2009), 282. See also Henry Morgenthau, Jr., *Germany Is Our Problem* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1945), in which Morgenthau laid out his detailed plan for Germany.
[63] Army Service Forces, Information and Education Division, *Pocket Guide to Germany* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1944), 2.
[64] Ibid., 2, 4.
[65] Directive of the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Commander-in-Chief of the United States Forces of Occupation Regarding the Military Government of Germany (JCS 1067), in *Documents on Germany Under Occupation, 1945-1954*, ed. Beate Ruhm von Oppen (London: Oxford University Press, 1955), 16.

have brought upon themselves."[66]

In addition to Ludwig's and Lowrey's suggestions as to how Americans should treat the defeated Germans, the wartime psychologists also advanced proposals for long-term "treatment" programs to be administered during the occupation period, designed to return the Germans to mental "health." Stripped of their psychological language, these "treatment" programs prefigure the eventual American program of reeducation in occupied Germany, which emphasized reorienting the Germans to democracy, teaching them new or reestablishing dormant values to replace Nazi ones, and reworking the German educational system to produce future generations of democrats.[67] For instance, in his 1942 article in the *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, Brickner proposed a "treatment" program for Germany based on a "prolonged, carefully planned, broad educational scheme for both adults and children," which would "develop a whole new way of thinking in Germany."[68] Brickner explicitly conceived of this program as a long-term endeavor, arguing that "two generations of Germans for whom paranoid interpretations and paranoid institutions had little attraction" would need to be produced before "the menace of

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[66] Ibid., 15.

[67] Indeed, the United States ultimately rejected "hard" plans for the occupation of Germany, such as the Morgenthau Plan, in favor of a rather idealistic view of postwar Germany as a "country re-educated, its political and economic structures reformed and decentralized, so that it would become more like the United States." Bessel, *Germany 1945*, 285. The United States set out its reeducation policy in a number of handbooks for occupation officials, including Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force, Office of the Chief of Staff, *Handbook for Military Government in Germany Prior to Defeat or Surrender*, 1944; Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force, *Technical Manual of Education and Religious Affairs*, 1945; and Office of the U.S. High Commissioner for Germany, Office of Public Affairs, Education and Cultural Relations Division, *A Guide to Education and Cultural Relations*, 1950. For scholarly studies of American reeducation policy, see James F. Tent, *Mission on the Rhine: Re-Education and Denazification in American Occupied Germany* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982); 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*, ed. Michael Ermarth (Providence: Berg, 1993), 35–46; Heather L. Dichter, "Sporting Democracy: The Western Allies' Reconstruction of Germany Through Sport, 1944-1952" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Toronto, 2008); Brian M. Puaca, *Learning Democracy: Education Reform in West Germany, 1945-1965* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009); and Alexandra F. Levy, "Promoting Democracy and Denazification: American Policymaking and German Public Opinion," *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 26, no. 4 (2015): 614–35.

[68] Brickner, "The German Cultural Paranoid Trend," 628.

culturally organized paranoia in Germany" could be declared "eradicated."[69]

Similarly, in his subsequent book, Brickner maintained that the military government should "foster the *clear* [i.e. the non-paranoid] Germans and then gradually draw into their group all possible marginal cases."[70] This "treatment" program should ensure that "*clear* behavior" would "become emotionally attractive to more and more Germans … receiving rewards in success and respect parallel to those formerly accorded paranoid behavior."[71] If one exchanges "clear" for "democratic," Brickner's proposed program is, essentially, the same as that later developed by OMGUS (Office of Military Government, United States), which sought, first, to foster democratically-inclined Germans, then promote democracy in such a way that it became sufficiently attractive to draw in an ever-greater proportion of the German population.[72] Moreover, Brickner also argued that, during the "treatment" process, American officials "must make sure not only that *clear* individuals arrive at and remain in power," but also that "the population in general associates tangible rewards with the new regime."[73] Indeed, the Allies' major mistake after the First World War, according to Brickner, was to allow the "clear" group governing the Weimar Republic to be associated with "coincidental deprivation – hunger, unemployment, inflation," preventing any "positive trend away from paranoid reactions" to develop.[74] Again, if one strips away the psychological language, Brickner's contention prefigures American occupation officials' later realizations that they had to "sell" democracy to

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[69] Ibid., 628.
[70] Brickner, *Is Germany Incurable?*, 306. Emphasis in the original.
[71] Ibid., 306. Emphasis in the original.
[72] JCS 1067 set out the blueprint of this reeducation policy, stating that "an affirmative program of reorientation will be established, designed completely to eliminate Nazi and militaristic doctrines and to encourage the development of democratic ideas." JCS 1067, *Documents on Germany Under Occupation, 1945-1954*, 20. See also: *A Guide to Education and Cultural Relations* (1950); Tent, *Mission on the Rhine: Re-Education and Denazification in American Occupied Germany*; and Puaca, *Learning Democracy: Education Reform in West Germany, 1945-1965*.
[73] Brickner, *Is Germany Incurable?*, 306-307.
[74] Ibid., 306-307.

the Germans – i.e. to convince them of its practical, tangible benefits – in order for it to take hold in Germany.[75]

Brickner's fellow psychiatrist Lawson G. Lowrey also suggested a "treatment" program for Germany that prefigured OMGUS's own reeducation program. While Lowrey, as mentioned earlier, argued that such a program would have to be imposed by the American occupiers, possibly through force, his proposal stressed reorientation of the German people over punishment. Writing at the beginning of the occupation in the summer of 1945, he argued that "what will be needed … is a long-time program designed to effect a marked change in the character structure of the people themselves."[76] For a program of this nature to be successful, Lowrey argued that it would have to be multi-faceted – "education as we conceive it" would not be "in and of itself enough" to achieve this vital change in the German national character. Rather, reorientation would also need to encompass the complete alteration and democratization of the German familial structure, where, according to Lowrey, the German cultural paranoid trend originated.[77] Indeed, he asserted that "the basic formula for mental health, and thus socially acceptable behavior, lies in certain external reality factors," the most fundamental of which were food, shelter, and basic security, which Lowrey argued had consistently been present in Germany. As a result, "the secrets of mental health and a healthy society" lay in "interpersonal relationships," such as familial relationships.[78] To be successful, any program designed to "treat" the Germans would thus, according to Lowrey, need to focus on reorienting

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[75] American occupation officials were especially concerned with "selling" democracy to German youth, who, as the future leaders of Germany, would determine whether Germany remained democratic or fell back into old patterns of authoritarianism. See Petra Goedde, *GIs and Germans: Culture, Gender, and Foreign Relations, 1945-1949* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2003), especially chapters 4-5. The need to convince Germans of the practical, tangible benefits of democracy would also, later, become a justification for providing Marshall Plan aid to Germany.

[76] Lowrey, "To Make the Germans Men of Peace," SM7.

[77] Ibid., SM7.

[78] Ibid., SM7.

German social structures as well as German ways of thinking.

For the wartime psychologists, therefore, restoring the Germans to mental "health" had to be one of the highest priorities of the American military government during the future occupation of Germany, if the "German problem" was to be definitively solved. In fact, only when Germany was no longer a mentally ill nation could the world be safe from German aggression and expansionism, the outward manifestations of its psychological pathology. The analysts' tendency to frame the question of how to treat Germany after the war in a psychological binary – mental health versus mental illness, normality versus deviance – was the product of their wartime psychoanalysis of the German people and the German nation.[79] Indeed, throughout the Second World War, determined to understand what had "gone awry" in the German mind to induce Germans to support the Nazis, this group of American journalists, officials, and psychologists, among others, had endeavored to psychoanalyze Germany, in order to identify its particular psychological pathology. With the constraints of psychoanalyzing an entire nation from afar, the wartime psychologists attempted to align what they thought they knew about the German mind, the German character, and German national behavior with recognized diagnoses of mental illness, such as paranoia or schizophrenia. Moreover, the analysts invested their diagnoses of German national mental illness with the power to explain German support for the Nazis, their plans for Europe, and their war effort.

Over the course of the Second World War, as the wartime psychologists utilized the language of mental illness as an explanatory tool, they increasingly concluded, ahead of any real interaction with Germans, that the German people were mentally ill and in need of treatment for

[79] As I will demonstrate in Chapter 3, this binary greatly influenced a later group of analysts, seeking the historical origins of contemporary German psychological deviance, as they emphasized Germany's continual deviance from the alleged "norms" of national development.

their dangerous psychoses. Furthermore, this conclusion was largely based on evidence the analysts collected from afar, evidence that was often heavily colored by prejudices, propaganda, or other inaccuracies. As we have seen, this view of Germany circulated throughout the American press, shaping the views of its target audience: future occupation officials and other commentators who would soon be entering occupied Germany. Before the occupation of Germany had even begun, the wartime psychologists' diagnoses of German psychological pathology had thus come together to form a rubric for American interaction with Germans, causing occupation officials to carry into Germany a set of foregone conclusions about how Germans would behave and what their current mindset would be. The consequences of these preconceived notions will be explored in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 2
Analyzing the "Spawn of the Nazi Code": Psychology, German Youth, and Reeducation

In November 1945, the Berlin-born *New York Times* correspondent Tania Long profiled the youth of Germany, whom she rather tellingly described as the "spawn of the Nazi code."[1] Set adrift by the total collapse of the Nazi system under which they had grown up, young Germans, according to Long, were "disillusioned, tired, confused, and visibly growing more and more demoralized…floundering in a morass of hatred and cynicism." Lacking structure and discipline in their lives, youth were "allowed to drift, to spend their time on the streets, to get into bad habits…freedom from responsibilities [has] set them loose on dangerous paths."[2] If the Americans were to prevent young Germans from following these dangerous paths to their conclusion, Long argued that "immediate and aggressive action" must be taken. While "materialistic forms of reconstruction," heretofore the focus of American policy, ensured that " a boy in the American zone…is better fed and clothed than a boy in the Russian zone," the former was much more "mentally and emotionally…disorganized" than the latter.[3] The message was clear: Germany's youth were caught in a psychological crisis and, without outside intervention, all kinds of unwanted attitudes and behaviors would arise among the younger generations, posing a serious obstacle to American plans for the democratization and denazification of Germany.

For American occupation officials and other observers, Long's arguments echoed the conclusions they had begun to reach at the end of 1945, as well as assumptions made during the war about the mental state of the Germans. The war, especially in its final months, had shattered the lives of young Germans, leaving them facing a world of material need, broken social

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[1] Tania Long, "Spawn of the Nazi Code: German Youth Has Lost Its Roots and Visibly Grows More Demoralized," *New York Times,* 25 November 1945, 8.
[2] Ibid., 8.
[3] Ibid., 8.

structures, and military government rule.[4] Having watched the Nazi regime collapse around them, many German youth were left with little to no faith in politics, ideology, or, in some cases, anything at all.[5] Moreover, American officials, influenced by the wartime psychologists' clinical diagnoses of German psychological pathology, believed that simply growing up in Germany – a nation perceived to be mentally ill – had been enough to "warp" the minds of these young people. Contemplating the future of the occupation – and, by extension, the future of Germany – American observers feared the consequences should young Germans remain at loose ends, disillusioned, and carrying the "Nazi virus" in their minds.[6] The disease of National Socialism needed to be purged from the minds of these young people, if they were to become the vanguard of a democratic Germany, rather than the leaders of a reconstituted Nazi movement. In order to make the democratic future a reality, the American military government believed that it would have to provide young Germans with an entirely new psychological foundation in order for them to be able to build new, democratic lives.

This chapter will explore the question of why American occupation officials and other observers portrayed the problems affecting German youth as inherently psychological in nature. Previous studies of American reeducation efforts have not devoted close attention to the psychological frame that American officials and other observers applied to these programs.[7]

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[4] For the condition of Germany in 1945, see Richard Bessel, *Germany 1945: From War to Peace* (New York: Harper, 2009), especially chapters 9, 11, and pages 326-329, and Ian Kershaw, *The End: The Defiance and Destruction of Hitler's Germany, 1944-45* (New York: Penguin Press, 2011).

[5] "Youth" in the context of this chapter has a broad meaning: American Military Government officials opened their youth programs to anyone between 10 and 25 years of age. Military Government of Germany (hereafter MGG), *Monthly Report of the Military Governor, U.S. Zone*, No. 22, April 1947, Education and Religion Branch (Cumulative Review), 34. Tara Zahra notes that defining who was a "child" in postwar Europe was highly difficult, given that the war had disrupted and destroyed "perceived boundaries between childhood and adulthood." Zahra, "'The Psychological Marshall Plan': Displacement, Gender, and Human Rights after World War II," *Central European History* 44 (2011), 46.

[6] The term "Nazi virus" was a contemporary one, used by journalists and other commentators. For an example, see Raymond Daniell, "Nazi Virus Thrives in American Zone," *New York Times*, 22 April 1946, 1.

[7] For scholarly studies of American reeducation and democratization efforts, see Introduction, notes 18 and 19.

Seeking to offer a new perspective on reeducation, this chapter argues that the psychological frame given to the reeducation of German youth was the product of the American wartime psychoanalysis of Germany and the resulting diagnoses of German psychological pathology. Before the occupation began, these diagnoses came together to form a certain paradigm for American interaction with young Germans, causing U.S. officials to carry into occupied Germany a pre-formed image of how German youth would behave and, more importantly, how they had been taught to think by the Nazi regime. In addition to the clinical diagnoses, the American occupation paradigm, as I call it, was also shaped in significant ways by contemporary ideas about the relationship between environment and human development, which held great sway in American intellectual circles throughout the 1930s and 1940s.

This chapter argues that American assumptions about young Germans' mindset and psychological state, as well as the impact of the environment, colored their relations with young people in Germany and promoted their use of a psychological frame to discuss reeducation. Furthermore, American reliance upon an image created before sustained interaction with young Germans at times worked to blind occupation officials and observers to many of the deeper complexities of German youth's psychological state and worldview. This left the occupiers with certain expectations of the rapidity with which reeducation and psychological change would occur among youth in Germany. As a result, when American officials and observers began to evaluate the success of the reeducation of young Germans in 1948 and 1949, their perceptions were influenced by their preconceived ideas of what could be achieved during the occupation. Moreover, this fact also shaped American interpretations of Germany's likelihood to remain democratic in the coming years and decades.

Moving generally chronologically, this chapter explores the various aspects of the

American occupation paradigm in turn. The first section examines the ways in which the wartime psychologists' general diagnoses of German mental illness, as well as specific theories about the impact of Nazi rule and indoctrination on young Germans' minds, influenced American officials' tendency to frame the reeducation of German youth in psychological terms. This section also investigates how the American occupation paradigm shaped U.S. officials' and observers' comments on and interpretations of young people's behavior and psychological state. The second section explores the influence of popular contemporary ideas about environmental determinism on American officials' image of young Germans' psychological and behavioral state, considering in particular Americans' fears about the effect of "bad" environment on the prognosis for the reeducation of young Germans. Finally, the last section investigates American evaluations of the extent to which youth reeducation had been successful, keeping in mind that the American occupation paradigm had engendered certain expectations of the rapidity with which psychological change would occur.

Disillusioned and Unreconstructed: The "Warped" Youth of Germany

As I demonstrated in Chapter 1, in their attempts to "know their enemy" in preparation for the anticipated Allied victory in the Second World War and subsequent occupation of Germany, U.S. officials, journalists, and psychologists, among others, psychoanalyzed Germany from afar, making assumptions about the current German mindset, the nature of the German national character, and the reasons why Germans supported the Nazi regime. However, a certain subsection of wartime psychologists did not merely attempt to diagnose the faults in German national psychology as a whole. Rather, they sought to theorize what socialization in Nazi Germany, and the attendant indoctrination with National Socialist values, had done to the minds

of young Germans.[8] Indeed, American officials attached great importance to discovering how embedded Nazi beliefs were in the minds of German youth, as young people, thought to be "more receptive" and "malleable" psychologically, and to have received the greatest dose of Nazi indoctrination, were slated to be the first candidates for reeducation.[9] Evaluating and understanding the full scope of young Germans' current psychological state, therefore, would help OMGUS (Office of Military Government, United States) develop effective reeducation policies that not only would "heal" the minds of German youth, but could also "serve as a model for the democratization of the rest of the German population."[10]

These analyses of German youth were not intended to ferret out the causes of psychological trauma that they experienced or even to argue that these young people suffered wartime trauma in the first place. Unlike humanitarian organizations working with non-German children, American officials and journalists were largely unconcerned with young Germans' claims to victimization during the war.[11] Rather, they sought to uncover the extent to which Nazi indoctrination had "warped" the psychology of young Germans, emphasizing that these were children and adolescents who had been socialized by a criminal regime in ways that were

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[8] As part of this attempt to understand what Nazi indoctrination had done to the minds of German youth and, thus, to theorize what young Germans' current mindset might be, American officials had closely observed and studied German prisoners of war captured in North Africa and during subsequent campaigns. These German prisoners were the first "test cases," so to speak, for the study of Nazi ideology, as well as early iterations of reeducation programs. As many of these POWs were young men, upon returning to Germany after the war, they would have been included in the effort to reeducate German youth discussed in this chapter. However, I have chosen to focus on young Germans who had not served in the military and, thus, had remained in Nazi Germany throughout the war, either because of age, gender, or other considerations. Drawing on ideas about environmental determinism, American officials were extremely concerned about these youth, as they had never been removed from the "bad" environment of the Third Reich, i.e. by being captured and transported to the United States, and appeared to present the greatest threat to American plans for Germany's democratization. For more information on American officials' work with German POWs, see Arnold Krammer, *Nazi Prisoners of War in America* (New York: Stein and Day, 1979) and Antonio Thompson, *Men in German Uniform: POWs in America during World War II* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2010).

[9] Petra Goedde, *GIs and Germans: Culture, Gender, and Foreign Relations, 1945-1949* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003), 127, 164.

[10] Ibid., 128

[11] Tara Zahra, *The Lost Children: Reconstructing Europe's Families After World War II* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), 88-89.

contrary to the norms of "good" or "normal" societies.[12] Indeed, U.S. officials made this viewpoint clear in the *Pocket Guide to Germany*, a primer for American troops published in 1944. Adapting the classic aphorism of "don't judge a book by its cover," the *Pocket Guide* informed Americans that, on the outside, "the German youth is…much like the average fellow you grew up with back home." The difference – what made this otherwise "average fellow" a Nazi – was "inside him – in his character," formed (or deformed, in the eyes of the *Guide*) by Nazi indoctrination.[13] Similarly, while discussing the problem of education in occupied Germany, a 1945 War Department pamphlet wondered how best to deal with "an already mentally twisted younger generation," emphasizing once again the idea that growing up in Nazi Germany had "warped" the "normal" development of young Germans' minds.[14]

Because German youth had been so exposed to the psychologically distorting effects of Nazi indoctrination, the *Pocket Guide* described young Germans as the victims "of the greatest educational crime in the history of the world."[15] This rhetorical formulation echoed Gregor Ziemer's 1941 analysis of the National Socialist educational system, ominously entitled *Education for Death*, in which he characterized schools in Nazi Germany as little more than ideological indoctrination factories, producing young, fanatical Nazi supporters.[16] Nazi

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[12] Michaela Hoenicke Moore, *Know Your Enemy: The American Debate on Nazism, 1933-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 198-203, 233-240.
[13] Army Service Forces, Information and Education Division, *Pocket Guide to Germany* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1944), 9.
[14] Department of War, *Can the Germans Be Re-Educated?* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1945), 26.
[15] *Pocket Guide to Germany*, 9.
[16] Gregor Ziemer, *Education for Death: The Making of the Nazi* (London: Oxford University Press, 1941), 23, 103, 193. Ziemer was not alone in making the claim that the Nazi educational system was designed to produce one thing alone: the next generation of fanatical Nazi supporters. Indeed, *Can the Germans Be Re-Educated?*, issued by the War Department in 1945, echoed Ziemer's language, arguing that "the entire German educational system, from the kindergartens through the universities – and outside the classroom too – was organized to mold every German into a confirmed Nazi." Department of War, *Can the Germans Be Re-Educated?*, 16-17. Similarly, in 1942, Fritz Lilge argued that the Nazis reorganized the German educational system with one goal in mind: preparing "mentally and physically for war." During this process, the Nazis "gained control of the whole life of the child," shaping them into

indoctrination, Ziemer argued, was so powerful that it could warp a child's natural instincts, citing the case of one boy, ill with pneumonia, who, rather than desiring a return to health, pleaded with the doctor, "Let me die for Hitler. I *must* die for Hitler," as that, he had been taught, was the duty of all German youth.[17] To demonstrate that this was not simply an anomalous case, Ziemer noted that, in Nazi Germany, "the ideal of self-sacrifice, of dying for Hitler" was a national phenomenon, taking on "proportions that to an outsider would seem sadistic perversion." Indeed, Nazi indoctrination had so distorted the psychology of young Germans that it had "produced a generation of human beings…so different from normal American youth that mere academic comparison seems inane."[18]

This statement, in particular, highlights the fact that Ziemer used young Americans as the normative standard of "healthy" psychological development. Moreover, Ziemer was not alone, as the notion that American youth, socialized under a democratic system, were the embodiment of healthy, well-adjusted youth would become a key aspect of the American occupation paradigm. It is worth mentioning that, given the political and cultural milieu of the 1940s United States, the wartime analysts would have envisioned these "ideal" youth – the model for the reeducation and reorientation of young Germans – as white. African-Americans and other minorities were not included in American commentators' vision of "good," democratic young people.[19] Not seeing – or deliberately suppressing – the irony in this, American officials brought

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the next generation of loyal, obedient Nazi followers. Fritz Lilge, "The Fruits of Nazi Education," *Harvard Educational Review* (May 1942), 223-226.

[17] Ibid., 80-81.

[18] Ibid., 107-108, 193-194.

[19] The 1945 film *Here is Germany* exemplifies the racial politics inherent in American analysts' vision of "ideal" youth. While discussing the alleged differences between Germans and Americans, the film noted that, in supposed contrast to the German educational system, American children are taught in school that all people are created equal, that there are no "privileged few." However, as the voiceover narration explained this difference in traditions, the images displayed were of all-white American classrooms: the "ideal" youth of the United States learning about equality in an educational system defined by inequality and segregation. Frank Capra, *Here Is Germany* (Office of War Information, 1945), minute 8:36-8:48.

the conceptual binary between "healthy" Americans and "perverted" Germans with them to occupied Germany, where it colored their perceptions of the young Germans they encountered.

Addressing the same issues of education and socialization from a slightly different direction, Leopold Schwarzschild, a German émigré writer, considered the question of German youth from the perspective of theories of human development. Schwarzschild's purpose was to determine "at what age of their greatest plasticity a whole generation was for a longer or shorter time clay in potter Hitler's hands," given that the educational policy of "the monopolistic regime formed and deformed the minds of the young generation."[20] If OMGUS officials read Schwarzschild's piece, they were undoubtedly disheartened by his conclusion that "the overwhelming majority of young people usually are profoundly affected by the influences to which they are exposed during their formative period." On top of that, "the overwhelming majority of adults usually preserve the ideas implanted in them during these years."[21] In just a few sentences, Schwarzschild encapsulated the fear that the psychological damage inflicted by socialization in Nazi Germany might be too great an obstacle to be overcome without psychologically-based reeducation policies.

Armed with these hypotheses about the effect of National Socialism on the minds of young Germans, once the occupation of Germany began OMGUS officials and other American observers set out to evaluate the psychological condition of German youth, in preparation for reeducation. Given the work of Ziemer, Schwarzschild, and other wartime psychologists, Americans went into the field inclined to view the Germans as a mentally ill people and, therefore, were attuned to indications of the supposedly "warped" and "perverted" minds of young people. Many of these observers collected their evidence using social scientific methods,

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[20] Leopold Schwarzschild, "Threat to Peace: Nazi Youth," *New York Times*, 28 January 1945, SM6.
[21] Ibid., SM6.

whether these took the form of public opinion surveys[22] or anthropological field studies.[23] Other observations came from newspaper and magazine correspondents' reports from the field in Germany, profiling the mood of the Germans, based on interviews, for their readers back in the United States.[24]

Despite their commitment to scientific methodologies and the attendant claims to objectivity, these observations were heavily colored by American theories of German psychological pathology, as well as the belief that socialization in Nazi Germany had produced youth who were so far from the "normal," American mold as to be almost unrecognizable. Indeed, through interviews, polls, and other interactions, American officials found their hypotheses and, thus, the efficacy of their occupation paradigm, largely being confirmed. Observing German youth transformed American observers' assumptions about the psychological problems of these young people into (perceived) fact, leading OMGUS personnel to frame their discussions of the need for youth reeducation in distinctly psychological terms. They were particularly troubled by two common psychological characteristics of young Germans in the U.S. zone of occupation. On the one hand, the collapse of Nazi Germany left many young Germans disillusioned to the point of nihilism, causing them to be apathetic and unreceptive to American attempts at reeducation. On the other hand, other young people clung to National Socialist beliefs, ideals, and ways of interpreting the world, seeming to actively defy the attempts of the

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[22] Anna J. Merritt and Richard L. Merritt, eds, *Public Opinion in Occupied Germany: The OMGUS Surveys, 1945-1949* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1970). Each survey reports the size and characteristics of the population sample surveyed.

[23] David Rodnick, *Postwar Germans: An Anthropologist's Account* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1948). Rodnick described his method as "intensive anthropological field work," consisting of observations of and interviews with Germans in Hesse. (ix)

[24] See, among others, Long, "Spawn of the Nazi Code;" Shepard Stone, "Report on the Mood of Germany," *New York Times*, 26 January 1947, SM8; Edward P. Morgan, "Echoes of the Hitler Jugend in Germany," *New York Times*, 27 November 1949, SM13; Ernest O. Hauser, "The Germans Just Don't Believe Us," *Saturday Evening Post*, 3 August 1946, 18-19, 82-84; and Ernest O. Hauser, "A German Family Takes Down Its Hair," *Saturday Evening Post*, 27 September 1947, 15-17, 114, 117, 119.

occupiers to purge their minds of the Nazi virus.

Having recently lived through "war, death, and forced relocation" and faced the collapse of the only world they had known, many young Germans in the first months and years of the occupation were wary of believing in anything and trusting anybody.[25] Indeed, by early 1946, American authorities and Germans alike had begun to worry seriously about the rise of "ideological nihilism" among youth.[26] However, while U.S. officials correctly recognized that these young Germans were suffering from extreme disillusionment, they had at times a rather unambiguous explanation for it. Because Nazi indoctrination – according to the Ziemer/Schwarzschild/*Pocket Guide* interpretation – had been all-encompassing, dictating how young Germans were to think and act and, in so doing, retarding their individuality, Americans assumed that these youth were suffering from a mental void, unable to cope with the lack of a government telling them what to believe.[27] For American observers, the behavior and opinions of young people like Klaus Wachsmüth seemed to validate this image of young Germans as mentally wandering and flirting with nihilism, possessing no firm belief system and no concept of how to form opinions for themselves. Profiled in David Rodnick's anthropological study of youth in Hesse, nineteen-year-old Klaus stated that, because he started school the same year that the Nazis came to power, his "most receptive years were under the influence of National Socialism."[28] With that system not only destroyed, but also discredited by the Allies, Klaus found himself in a void in which it was "extremely difficult…to think clearly about the future" of

[25] Goedde, *GIs and Germans*, 133.
[26] Ibid., 133.
[27] Indeed, the American belief that socialization in Nazi Germany had retarded the development of individuality was so strong that the Unitarian Service Committee, a humanitarian organization, operated a Mental Health Program in postwar Germany explicitly designed to promote and cultivate individualism among children. Zahra, *The Lost Children*, 93-94.
[28] Rodnick, *Postwar Germans*, 82.

Germany and, one can assume, his own personal future as well.[29]

Erich Körber, a young man interviewed in 1946 by Ernest O. Hauser, a correspondent for the *Saturday Evening Post*, had likewise lost his faith at the end of the war – both in himself and in humanity. Reflecting on Germany's defeat, Erich reflected that his "world has collapsed like a tall chimney…now there's nothing but a cloud of dust."[30] Although Erich remarked that he would "love to believe that this democracy everybody is talking about could be real someday," he was disillusioned by the "viciousness, jealousy, spite" that he observed in occupied Germany at present, concluding that "the mean and the wicked rule supreme. Man is essentially evil; I'm convinced of it."[31] Commenting on his conversation with Erich, Hauser described the young man as a "nihilist," needing not "a spanking," i.e. punishment from the military government for his participation in Nazi organizations, but rather "a psychoanalysis" to begin the process of "healing" his mind.[32] Hauser was seconded in this view by Karl Jaspers, a professor at Heidelberg University – and prominent psychiatrist and philosopher – whom he interviewed for the same article. Students at Heidelberg, according to Jaspers, had "emptiness in their faces and apathy in their hearts." However, he was not overly critical of this disillusionment, remarking that, as long as the future of Germany remained "completely unsettled," "what is there to study for?"[33]

Reflecting on the situation of young Germans in April 1947, *Der Mannheimer Morgen*,

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[29] Ibid., 82. Klaus was not the only person to mention a mental and/or ideological void, either implicitly or explicitly. This rhetorical formulation was relatively common in American correspondents' reports on the mood of Germany and on youth policy. See, for example: Neal Stanford, "AMG in Attack on Delinquency," *Christian Science Monitor*, 4 February 1947, 13 and Morgan, "Echoes of the Hitler Jugend in Germany." This formulation also appears in some OMGUS reports. See, for instance: MGG, *Monthly Report of the Military Governor, U.S. Zone*, No. 10, May 1946, Education and Religion Branch, 19.
[30] Ernest O. Hauser, "The Germans Just Don't Believe Us," *Saturday Evening Post*, 3 August 1946, 18.
[31] Ibid., 19.
[32] Ibid., 19.
[33] Ibid., 82.

in an editorial reprinted in OMGUS's *Weekly Information Bulletin*, echoed Hauser's and Jaspers' diagnosis of extreme disillusionment, noting that "in its majority youth is skeptical and not optimistic."[34] Like Jaspers, the *Morgen* insisted that this was reasonable, given that "what youth has learned and believed until recently…lies destroyed" and "is recognized in its hollowness and rejected by youth itself." For this reason, the *Morgen* continued, the disillusionment of young people was generally with "all that calls itself 'party' and has mass character," as, having witnessed the bankruptcy of the Nazi system firsthand, they rejected everything related to politics, political parties, or the state.[35] That same month, A. Dempwolf, a German writing in the *New York Herald Tribune*, echoed the *Morgen*'s comments, stating baldly that "German youths of today do not nurse any hopes." Even more worryingly, for Dempwolf and doubtless for his American readers, he argued that young Germans had thus far been disappointed by democracy. Rather than adopting a new belief system to replace Nazism, some youth had begun to believe that "[the situation in Germany] would become better again with another Nazi time."[36]

Dempwolf's comment also highlights the second worrying characteristic of young Germans' psychological state noted by American observers: a good number of youth appeared to be unreconstructed, unwilling to give up Nazi beliefs and therefore resisting attempts to reeducate them and purge their minds of National Socialism.[37] Because of the American theory that all young Germans had been victims of an "educational crime," having been heavily indoctrinated with Nazi ideology from a very early age, American officials tended to interpret

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[34] "Problem of Youth," German Reactions, *Weekly Information Bulletin*, No. 90, April 1947, 13.
[35] Ibid., 13.
[36] A. Dempwolf, "A German's View of Fatherland: A Hopeless Concentration Camp," *New York Herald Tribune*, 13 April 1947, A4.
[37] Kathleen J. Nawyn has observed that American officials in occupied Württemberg-Baden found the attitudes of young German veterans disturbing, as this group was often highly reluctant to adapt to the "new circumstances" of occupation and to let go of "previous values." However, it is necessary to expand upon this statement, as the evidence indicates that American observers found the attitudes of German youth who had never served in the military equally worrisome. Nawyn, "Banning the Soldier Hero," 126.

the persistence of the Nazi mindset among youth as a form of recalcitrance or resistance to military government authority.[38] That is, Americans' foregone conclusion that indoctrination had been necessary to win young Germans to the Nazi regime left little room in their occupation paradigm for the possibility that many ordinary Germans, including the younger generation, had genuinely and willingly given their support to the Nazis. Indeed, historian Peter Fritzsche convincingly argues that, although some Germans certainly "converted to National Socialism out of fear and for the sake of appearances," many other Germans "converted because they were genuinely attracted to the social and political vision of National Socialism," especially "the promise of the people's community."[39] Most importantly for this discussion, Fritzsche noted that the idea of the people's community "would not have been convincing had the Nazi regime not been able to dramatically improve the material conditions of life" in Germany. Youth in their teens in 1945 would have been able to experience the Third Reich in the 1930s as many adults did, as a "cherished period of political and economic stability" after the storms of the 1920s and early 1930s.[40]

The attitudes and beliefs of Karl Huber, a seventeen-year-old boy interviewed by Rodnick, provide a window into the deeper complexities of young Germans' continued attraction to National Socialism after 1945. Indeed, while extremely pro-Nazi in nature, the substance of Karl's comments indicate that he did not merely voice these sentiments as a form of resistance to the American military government and its reeducation program. Rather, he appears to have been one of the many Germans who was genuinely attracted to what the Nazis had to offer. However,

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[38] *Pocket Guide to Germany*, 9.
[39] Peter Fritzsche, *Life and Death in the Third Reich* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008), 37.
[40] Ibid., 56. See also Ulrich Herbert, "Good Times, Bad Times: Memories of the Third Reich," in *Life in the Third Reich*, ed. Richard Bessel (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 97-110. Herbert notes that, in a 1951 public opinion poll, nearly half of West Germans cited the period between 1933 and 1939 "as the one in which things had gone best for Germany." Herbert, 97.

he was not interpreted as such by Rodnick, who noted his comments only as representative of "that large group of 'unreconstructed' Nazi youth who want a new form of National Socialism," not bothering to inquire more deeply into why this group of youth so wanted a return to Nazism.[41] This is the same group of youth whom Tania Long had in mind when she wrote that young people are "still under the shadowy influence of the late Dr. Goebbels," implying that heavy Nazi indoctrination and constant propaganda were responsible for the persistence of the Nazi mindset, once again not admitting the possibility that genuine attraction to National Socialism could be an important factor at play.[42]

Expressing a sentimental attachment to Nazi Germany, Karl stated that "it is almost unimaginable for me that the German people, and especially the German youth, could have learned so quickly to forget the Third Reich," which was the first true time that "we Germans…learned what unity was," a reference to the people's community.[43] Continuing his mourning for the Nazi regime, Karl lamented, "How noble and how beautiful the Third Reich looks to us now…in what other period of German history was the living standard so high, the unity of the German people so great, and economic might so powerful as in the wonderful days of the Third Reich."[44] In this statement, Karl enumerates the same factors attracting Germans to National Socialism that Fritzsche and Herbert would note over sixty years later: the promise – and reality – of stability and a better life after the instability of the Weimar Republic and economic crisis of the Great Depression.

Considering the possibility that the Allies might be telling the truth about some Nazi crimes, Karl admitted that "it is possible that Hitler may have permitted certain bad things to

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[41] Rodnick, *Postwar Germans*, 84.
[42] Long, "Spawn of the Nazi Code," 8.
[43] Rodnick, *Postwar Germans*, 84.
[44] Ibid., 84.

come about." However, he immediately switched tone, asking, "But did he not do a great deal of good for Germany? In the main, shall a great idea, such as National Socialism, be destroyed because of the failings of a few little men?"[45] Karl was by no means alone in this attitude. Providing firsthand evidence that the American occupation paradigm had likely erred in its assumption that indoctrination had been necessary to generate loyalty to the Nazi state, nearly half of Germans felt that "National Socialism was a good idea badly carried out," according to a survey done by OMGUS in September 1946.[46]

This attitude was deeply troubling to Americans in occupied Germany because it challenged one of the core tenets of their occupation paradigm, i.e. the notion that loyalty to the Nazi state had not been freely given, but had to be coerced through indoctrination. OMGUS officials viewed young Germans' continued profession of support for Nazi ideas as an unreconstructed and oppositional attitude – essentially, the product of Nazi brainwashing. Indeed, they struggled to accept that Germans might think in ways other than those laid out by the wartime psychologists in their clinically-based studies of German mental illness. American officials and observers simply could not conceive that Germans might have attributed positive accomplishments in the 1930s to the Nazis, such as improving the economic situation of the country and providing a sense of belonging and community (for those deemed racially worthy). However, rather ironically, Karl and other Germans credited the Nazis with doing the very things that American officials regarded as constituting the construction of a "good" environment, some of which, in slightly different forms, had been part of the New Deal.[47]

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[45] Ibid., 84-85.
[46] *Public Opinion in Occupied Germany*, 105.
[47] In addition to contemporary comparisons between New Deal America and Nazi Germany such as these, several scholars have also explored the existence of similarities among social welfare programs (such as, for instance, public works programs) in the United States and Nazi Germany in the 1930s. See, for example, Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *Three New Deals: Reflections on Roosevelt's America, Mussolini's Italy, and Hitler's Germany, 1933-1939* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2006) and Kiran Klaus Patel, *Soldiers of Labor: Labor Service in Nazi Germany and*

American officials could not – or would not – see this parallel, instead attributing the persistence of Nazi beliefs among young Germans to recalcitrance or incomplete reeducation. Indeed, in March 1947, officials of the American military government in Bavaria noted in a Weekly Intelligence Report that "youth still thinks the way the nazis [sic] taught them" and, moreover, German youth "does not want any duties but demands great privileges from Democracy."[48] Keeping the focus on the need to reorient the minds of young Germans, a few months later another Weekly Intelligence Report worried that "if we fail to rehabilitate their [young Germans'] minds," the occupation would be a failure, "for those will be the Hitlers, Goerings, Himmlers, and Streichers of tomorrow."[49] The message was clear, although incomplete: if American reeducation efforts did not succeed in providing young Germans with a new psychological foundation, all that the American occupation of Germany would produce would be the next generation of National Socialist leaders and, thus, the seeds of another war. However, U.S. officials had yet to fully recognize why German youth were in such danger of becoming the vanguard of a new Nazi movement.

Like Karl, Hildegard Jost, a nineteen-year-old former member of the *Bund Deutscher Mädel* (League of German Girls, or BDM), also displayed a continued attachment to the Nazi regime, as evidenced by her attempt to reapportion the blame for the "destruction of our

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New Deal America, 1933-1945, Publications of the German Historical Institute (Washington, D.C.: German Historical Institute, 2005).

[48] Office of Military Government, Bavaria (hereafter OMGB), Weekly Intelligence Report, 12 March 1947, 25: National Archives and Records Administration (hereafter NARA), RG 260/390/47/19/1, Box 170.

[49] OMGB, Weekly Intelligence Report, 13 August 1947, 12: NARA, RG 260/390/47/19/1, Box 173. This echoed a statement of Gen. Joseph T. McNarney, the U.S. Military Governor, in 1946. McNarney's language was not as strong as the Intelligence Report, but he nonetheless argued that, if German youth could be democratized, they would "lead the German nation along the paths we wish them to follow" so that the U.S. would not have to "again come to Europe to wage war." Quoted in Lt. Col. Robert C. Hall, "The Army's Role in GYA," *Weekly Information Bulletin*, No. 117, November 1947, 4. Beyond McNarney, other American military government officials were aware that the treatment of German youth would "determine whether they will become the nucleus of a future nationalistic group, 10, 15, or 20 years hence, or whether they will develop into the strong basis of a democratic and peaceful Germany." MGG, *Monthly Report*, No. 10, May 1946, Education and Religion Branch, 16.

Fatherland" from the Nazis to those who had opposed them in the late 1920s and early 1930s.[50] Interviewed by Rodnick, Hildegard argued that people claiming to be anti-Nazis spent a great deal of time "blaming the Nazis for everything that has occurred to our poor Germany" without realizing that they themselves "are even more responsible…than the Nazis."[51] Hildegard's logic was that, if anti-Nazis "had only thought and behaved then the way that they now say they did," the Nazis would "certainly" never have been able to gain power in Germany.[52] For the OMGUS officials who read Rodnick's report, Hildegard's comments would have been quite worrisome. They revealed one of the characteristics of the allegedly distorted psychology of young Germans, namely that they would seek to discredit anti-Nazis in occupied Germany in the hope of removing them from their position of power, which could then be filled by a resurgent National Socialist movement. Her attitude also appeared to confirm the accuracy of American hypotheses about the "warped" psychology of German youth, as American officials likely concluded that, surely, only someone fully indoctrinated by the Nazis could twist circumstances around so much as to blame opponents of the Nazis for the war and Nazi crimes.

Another apparent confirmation of the efficacy of American theories about German youth came in September 1945, when the *Weekly Information Bulletin* reprinted a letter to the *Frankfurter Rundschau* written by a young former Nazi, explaining to its readers that it had the "virtue of revealing a considerable segment of the young, Nazi-bred mind."[53] Attempting to excuse his – and other Germans' – support for the Nazi regime as a mental aberration, the writer argued that the Nazis preached "ideals to us which could enflame an honorable, upright person" lacking the "critical faculty" to perceive "the falseness of these ideals," i.e. a young person.

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[50] Rodnick, *Postwar Germans*, 79.
[51] Ibid., 79.
[52] Ibid., 79-80.
[53] "The 'Plight' of the Innocent Young Nazi," *Weekly Information Bulletin*, No. 9, September 1945, 18.

Continuing, the writer highlighted the "peculiar position" of German youth, who were labeled almost as "criminal[s]" for "having dared to succumb to the pressure of Nazi rule."[54]

By portraying individual Germans as having given in to the overwhelming pressure of Nazi rule and arguing that the Nazis gained loyalty through a kind of emotional indoctrination, the author appeared to confirm American assumptions that loyalty to the Nazi regime had to be forced in some way: that it had not been genuine. Moreover, the writer's argument likely appeared logical to many German readers of the *Frankfurter Rundschau*, who, for their own reasons, would have seconded the notion that many Germans had not freely chosen to believe Nazi ideas, but had yielded under pressure. At the same time, this line of argumentation worried OMGUS officials, who feared that once one or two young Germans began excusing their behavior, the rest would follow, making it impossible to determine who needed the greatest amount of reeducation. Indeed, the *Bulletin* noted that the letter's author was neither "self-critical" nor "logical," emphasizing the absence, in their view, of true reckoning with the Nazi past and thus the possibility that the "Nazi virus" lingered in the writer's psyche.[55]

The Impact of the Environment

As we have seen, American officials and observers in occupied Germany allowed their interpretations of young Germans' disillusionment and continued adherence to Nazi ideology to be colored by a set of assumptions about the effects of Nazism on the German population formed in advance of any sustained interactions with German youth. However, wartime analyses did not alone provide the foundation for the American image of young Germans' psychological and behavioral state. Rather, it was also shaped in significant ways by the progressive culture of the

[54] Ibid., 18-19.
[55] Ibid., 18.

early twentieth-century United States, particularly the contemporary belief that a causal relationship existed between environment and human development. In the 1920s and 1930s, American social housing reformers, in particular, believed strongly in environmental determinism, arguing that socialization in big-city slums (the quintessential "bad" environment) had extremely detrimental effects upon the development, health, and behavior of the children of slum dwellers.[56] By the late 1930s, with slum clearance programs spreading across the United States, the progressive reformers' ideas about the impact of environment upon human development had entered the vocabulary of American officials and journalists – the same groups of people who would soon turn their attention to the less-than-ideal living conditions (a potentially "bad" environment) in defeated Germany.[57]

Given the widespread circulation of these notions of environmental determinism in the prewar decades, it is hardly surprising that American officials and journalists in occupied Germany quickly began to worry about the effects of "bad" environment, particularly the present conditions of physical destruction and material need, on the psychological state and behavior of young Germans. Believing that the unstable environment of the Weimar Republic had greatly

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[56] Edward G. Goetz defines environmental determinism as the belief that "the physical conditions within which people live have great influence over their behavior and life chances." Goetz notes that American social housing reformers spent a great deal of time in the early twentieth century worrying that the "bad" environment of big-city slums would adversely affect the development of children forced to grow up in such a squalid and disease-ridden environment, cared for by adults whose own health, morals, and behavior had themselves been shaped by the "bad" environment. Slum clearance and public housing programs were thought to be the "ideal" solution, excising the "bad" environment and replacing it with a rationally-designed, clean, and regulated environment. See Goetz, *New Deal Ruins: Race, Economic Justice, and Public Housing Policy* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2013), 25.

[57] Ibid., 27. By the early 1940s, public housing in the U.S. had been transformed from a small-scale project, funded by the New Deal Public Works Administration, to a long-term, federally-funded effort operating throughout the country. As slum clearance and public housing projects diffused throughout the country (and throughout the federal bureaucracy), so too did the justifications for these projects, including the idea of environmental determinism. Many – if not nearly all – of the American occupation officials and journalists in postwar Germany would thus have been aware of the language of environment and development before they entered Germany, enabling it to influence their perceptions of young Germans' psychological state and behavior. *New York Times* reporter Tania Long, for example, made a direct comparison between reeducation programs in Germany and prewar housing reform programs in a November 1945 article. See Long, "Spawn of the Nazi Code," 32.

contributed to the rise of National Socialism, Americans in defeated Germany worried that the current young generation would be shaped by a similar psychological environment: one that bred totalitarianism, not democracy; one that promoted mental instability, not mental health.[58] Moreover, as Ernest O. Hauser observed in the summer of 1945, the occupation environment was not the only one to worry about; after all, German youth were "the authentic product of the Third Reich, fed on a diet of horror, glory, and hate."[59] Having been socialized in Nazi Germany, an environment characterized by, as Hauser later put it, "the phony gaiety, the fanfare, the bloodcurdling paganism, the prepuberty sex, the tomorrow-the-world spirit of the Hitler Youth," young Germans had already been set on a path of development which led them away from becoming good, productive members of society.[60] What more damage could be done if the occupation environment could not be transformed into a "good" one and reeducation could not provide young Germans with a new psychological foundation?

Hauser's answer to this question was not auspicious. Commenting in the summer of 1946 on the physical destruction still affecting German towns and cities, as well as economic hardships, Hauser remarked that the backdrop of life for young Germans "bears a tragic resemblance to the environment in which Nazis became Nazis."[61] Continuing, Hauser noted that "the same unwholesome factors operate today – the same defeat, the same despair, the same dearth of bread and of ideas, the same afterglow of recent glory." If American officials could "put them [all young Germans] on a ship and dump each one in the lap of an American family," where they could go to American schools, "play baseball, take out the old jalopy on Saturday

[58] For instance, Helen Fogg, a Unitarian Service Committee worker in Germany, argued that the current environment in occupied Germany was reminiscent of that which had led to the "rise of a totalitarian leader" in the 1920s. Quoted in Zahra, *The Lost Children*, 94.
[59] Ernest O. Hauser, "The Dead-End Kids of Cologne," *Saturday Evening Post*, 16 June 1945, 18.
[60] Ernest O. Hauser, "The Germans Just Don't Believe Us," *Saturday Evening Post*, 3 August 1946, 83.
[61] Ibid., 84.

night, [and] have a milkshake at the corner drugstore," Hauser was certain that "their minds … would straighten out all by themselves." However, recognizing this as an impossibility, Hauser worried that "with the sickening smell of two lost wars in the air" in Germany, "it would take a miracle to bring about a change of mind" among young Germans if their current environment did not change for the better.[62]

Similarly, profiling an "average" German family in the fall of 1947, Hauser observed that the children, Ruth and Herbert, were "healthy and, given the opportunity, may stay healthy" within Germany.[63] However, the best way to ensure their continued physical and psychological health would be to "spread out a magic carpet and take them to an American home." Given the opportunity to grow and develop in a "good" American environment, Hauser told his readers that, within a year, Ruth and Herbert "mightn't be much different from your own kids as they sip their milk shakes at the soda fountain."[64] Like Ziemer, Hauser used young, presumably white, Americans as the normative standard of "healthy" psychological development, again demonstrating that central to the American occupation paradigm was the idea that American youth, socialized under a democratic system, should be taken as the model of healthy, well-adjusted youth, whether or not they were in reality "ideal" young people.

Hauser's concerns for the effect of the environment upon the psychological state of German youth and the prognosis for their "treatment" during the occupation were echoed by a 1947 report in the *New York Times* which argued that only "a coordinated psychological and economic program" could resolve the "psychological problem in Germany."[65] Unless Germans could know that the present and future would bring food, housing, and improved job

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[62] Ibid., 84.
[63] Ernest O. Hauser, "A German Family Takes Down Its Hair," *Saturday Evening Post*, 27 September 1947, 119.
[64] Ibid., 119.
[65] Shepard Stone, "Report on the Mood of Germany," *New York Times*, 26 January 1947, p. SM8.

opportunities, "no program for psychological change has a chance of success," the article rather pessimistically noted.[66] Pessimism notwithstanding, there were precedents for the successful alteration of the environment and subsequent improvement in young people's mental state, as Tania Long had already observed in November 1945. Referring directly to prewar progressive reform programs, Long argued that the problem of reeducation in Germany was "like the problem of slum children in a big city where bad environment and wrong upbringing has led them to juvenile delinquency."[67] Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, that problem had been "tackled" by governments through social housing programs designed to create good, healthy environments in which children could grow up to be respectable members of society. Now, Long concluded, the "problem of German youth must be tackled," so as to prevent them – and, by extension, the German nation – from becoming "delinquent" again.[68]

Indeed, delinquency was a major concern of Americans in occupied Germany, who, given their ideas about the effects of "bad" environment, went into the occupation with the assumption that they would face youth behavioral issues in Germany. Moreover, Americans feared that unchecked juvenile delinquency would have a decidedly negative impact on their plans to reeducate German youth and effect meaningful psychological change. Over the course of the first years of the occupation, American hypotheses about the behavior of young Germans appeared to be validated, as the military government was confronted with high rates of juvenile delinquency. American reports, though, were often rather vague on what constituted juvenile delinquency. For instance, in February 1946, a Weekly Intelligence Report from Bavaria noted only that the "rising tide of juvenile delinquencies is being checked" through various control

[66] Ibid., SM8.
[67] Long, "Spawn of the Nazi Code," 32.
[68] Ibid., 32.

measures, without explaining what, specifically, constituted delinquency.[69] A report from August 1946 provides some hint of what constituted worrisome behavior on the part of young people, observing that officials had noted that "a favorite topic of conversation among German youths is 'What I'm going to do to the Americans.'" The same report also cited local officials in Miltenberg (Bavaria), who were concerned by the phenomenon of "teen-age youths congregating on street-corners and assuming insolent and insulting attitudes."[70] The fact that these behaviors appear closer to subversion than to what we might consider "typical" acts of delinquency was not lost on the *Baltimore Sun*, which, in early 1947, described young members of subversive movements in Germany as "what we would call juvenile delinquents" in the United States. However, in the "bad" environment of occupied Germany, where disillusioned and dissatisfied German youth spent their time "aimlessly knocking around, stealing food, waiting to vent the festering grudge they nurse against the world," the line between delinquency and subversion – between "an anti-allied jingle and an anti-allied bomb" – was quite thin.[71]

Whatever the behaviors classified as juvenile delinquency, U.S. occupation officials and journalists were quite sure that they were a direct product of the "bad" environment in their zone of occupation: the combination of physical destruction, material need, and broken social structures would by no means shape young Germans into healthy, productive citizens. Rather, it would lead them down a path toward immorality, disreputable behavior, and criminality, not the qualities usually associated with mental "health." A "special survey" of youth conducted by American officials in Garmisch (Bavaria) in July 1946 appeared to confirm this connection between environment and behavior. Summarizing their findings, the officials observed that there

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[69] OMGB, Weekly Intelligence Report, 21 February 1946, 12: NARA, RG 260/390/47/19/1, Box 168.
[70] OMGB, Weekly Intelligence Report, 14 August 1946, 7-8: NARA, RG 260/390/47/19/1, Box 169.
[71] Richard Hanser, "Germany Today: A This is America – This Week Short," *Baltimore Sun*, 26 January 1947, WM14.

was "an inherent willingness to engage in subversive activities mainly because of insufficient food, which drives them [young people] to despair."[72] These findings prefigure the 1947 *New York Times* report on the mood of Germany, which predicted that an improvement in the psychological condition of Germans would only come to pass when economic and living conditions in occupied Germany improved.[73]

In addition to the "bad" physical and economic environment affecting the American zone of occupation, U.S. officials and observers were concerned about the effect that unsettled home environments would have on the behavior and psychological condition of German youth, which, in turn, would be a major determining factor of the success of reeducation. The war had broken apart many families, creating numerous "half" families, in which fathers either had been killed in the war or remained prisoners of war. Furthermore, even as men returned from the war, they often carried with them physical and/or psychological wounds that would take time to heal. In either case, women were left as the heads of household, necessitating that they work long hours and take the responsibility of finding food for their families.[74] The chaos of defeat also enabled some men to abandon their families, using the destruction of records as an opportunity to contract second, bigamous marriages and start new lives.[75] Given the unstable nature of families in occupied Germany, American officials worried that the combination of absent fathers and working mothers had transformed the familial environment into a "bad" one, in which children were largely left to their own devices and not provided with the discipline that they required. Moreover, they were aware that this crisis of authority was not limited to Germany, but rather

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[72] OMGB, Weekly Intelligence Report, 17 July 1946, 5: NARA, RG 260/390/47/19/1, Box 169.
[73] Stone, "Report on the Mood of Germany," SM8.
[74] Elizabeth D. Heineman, *What Difference Does a Husband Make?: Women and Marital Status in Nazi and Postwar Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 108-109. See also Elizabeth Heineman, "Complete Families, Half Families, No Families at All: Female-Headed Households and the Reconstruction of the Family in the Early Federal Republic," *Central European History* 29, no. 1 (1996): 19-60.
[75] Bessel, *Germany 1945*, 273-274.

was sweeping across Europe. Indeed, European youth workers and educators in the early postwar years remarked on growing problems with youth who, having "survived wartime displacement, occupation, and persecution had lost all respect for their parents, teachers, and religious and political leaders."[76]

However, OMGUS officials did not merely attribute the causes of the crisis of familial authority to the instability of families in occupied Germany. Drawing on their pre-occupation analyses of National Socialism and the German mindset, Americans believed that the Nazis were partially responsible for destroying the structure of the family in Germany.[77] A handbook for U.S. military personnel involved with the German Youth Activities (GYA) program, which sponsored the formation of youth groups and youth centers, noted that "traditionally, the home is the heart of German social and cultural life…German youth before Hitler had little need for a youth center or a youth club." This "cultural pattern" had been overturned by the Nazis, who "depreciated" the home and then organized the Hitler Youth and League of German Girls to "fill the great Nazi-made gap in the lives of youth."[78] The conditions of the postwar period, the handbook argued, made it nearly impossible for the home to "assume its rightful place" in the lives of youth, who spent their time "actually and figuratively 'on the streets.'"[79] The goal of the GYA program, therefore, was to provide spaces in which youth could be exposed to a "good" environment, with activities to constructively fill their time and with sufficient discipline to

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[76] Zahra, *The Lost Children*, 114.
[77] Tara Zahra notes that theories of totalitarianism, emerging during and after the Second World War, "located the evil of both Nazism and Communism in the destruction of the private sphere." Because of this, both American and British youth aid workers in postwar Europe believed that the reconstruction of families – and of democracy – depended upon the restoration of individualism, to which, it was assumed, Nazism in particular had been hostile. This is reminiscent of Ziemer's 1941 argument that the Nazi education system bred fanatical young Nazi supporters incapable of thinking for themselves. See Zahra, *The Lost Children*, 93 and Ziemer, *Education for Death*.
[78] U.S. Army, EUCOM, OPOT Division, Training and Education Branch, *German Youth Activities Army Assistance Program Guide* (1948), 8-9.
[79] Ibid., 9.

reverse their progress down the path to delinquency, criminality, and immorality.[80]

The initially high rates of juvenile delinquency appeared to confirm American assumptions that the "bad" environments of Nazi and occupied Germany had produced young people predisposed to disreputable, criminal behavior. Similarly, the fact that delinquency began to level off or even decline after the implementation of the GYA program in 1947 seemed to justify the American belief that improving the environment would translate into an improvement in the behavior of German youth. In June 1948, American officials in the area around Nürnberg reported that "there is no doubt that GYA has a curbing effect on crime among youth." Young Germans who occupied their time with "GYA clubs, libraries, etc." were "kept away from the street and from bad company which might induce them to commit criminal offenses." The local judge had reported to American authorities that only one of the 520 young people convicted of crimes throughout 1947 and 1948 was a member of a U.S.-sponsored youth group.[81]

It was for precisely this reason that many German adults supported the GYA program. For a good number of German parents, the value of GYA was not its goal of introducing their children to a democratic way of life or "healing" their supposed psychological ills, but its potential to help them solve the crisis of familial authority by enabling them to "regain control over their children and bring order and stability into their lives."[82] This was particularly true for the many single mothers in Germany, especially those of young boys, who welcomed the program as "a way to compensate for the lack of paternal discipline and guidance in the home."[83]

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[80] Ibid., 29, 45, 88. For more information about the German Youth Activities program, see Historical Division Headquarters, United States Army, Europe, *The U.S. Armed Forces German Youth Activities Program, 1945-1955* (1956); OMGUS, Education and Cultural Relations Division, Group Activities Branch, *German Youth Between Yesterday and Tomorrow* (1948); and U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Public Affairs, *Young Germany: Apprentice to Democracy* (1951).
[81] OMGB, Field Operations Division, Area Nürnberg, 30 June 1948, 8: NARA, RG 260/390/47/12/1, Box 1414.
[82] Goedde, *GIs and Germans*, 160.
[83] Ibid., 160.

Indeed, historian Petra Goedde argues that GYA, as a form of "direct American involvement in the re-education of Germany's youth," bolstered "the paternal role that American soldiers had already adopted toward German women." American occupation personnel who participated in GYA "increasingly assumed the role of Ersatz-fathers," especially to German boys, "just as they were assuming the role of Ersatz-husbands to the women they dated."[84] Rather than being cited as an example of too much fraternization, American soldiers' adoption of paternal roles vis-à-vis German youth pleased the military government, as the reintroduction of discipline and structure into the lives of young Germans was considered a major step forward in the improvement of the home environment and therefore heralded the development of youth into psychologically stable, respectable, productive members of a democratic German society.[85]

Evaluating Reeducation and Democratization

The positive effects of the GYA program appeared to American officials and observers to confirm their hypotheses that altering the environment of occupied Germany from "bad" to "good" could adjust the trajectory of development upon which young Germans found themselves. But how much of a transformation in the behavior and psychological state of German youth had American reeducation efforts truly wrought? Would the reeducation and reorientation of young Germans "stick"? Had American officials succeeded in providing young

[84] Ibid., 128.

[85] Discussing Germans more generally but expressing similar sentiments, several American officials and commentators in 1945 and 1946 argued that ordinary American soldiers would be the best ambassadors for democracy in occupied Germany, as their supposedly-fair behavior toward and restraint in dealing with the former enemy would demonstrate the superiority of democratic values and practices. For instance, a *Saturday Evening Post* editorial, criticizing the then-current ban on fraternization between Americans and Germans, argued that the ban compelled "American boys, who thought they were doing a good turn for democracy [by defeating the Nazis], to represent themselves as a new batch of Herrenvolk," thus preventing "the best salesman democracy has, G.I. Joe of Community Crossroads, U.S.A., from demonstrating his stuff among those who must be convinced of democracy's virtues." "Why Make G.I. Joe Play Herrenvolk?," *Saturday Evening Post*, 4 August 1945, 112.

people with a new psychological foundation from which to build new lives in a democratic Germany? In late 1948 and 1949, as it became increasingly clear that the occupation of Germany would come to a close in the near future, U.S. officials and journalists became quite interested in attempting to evaluate the extent to which youth reeducation had succeeded and, therefore, the chances of the soon-to-be established Federal Republic of Germany remaining democratic and mentally "healthy" in the decades to come.

American officials had arrived in occupied Germany believing that the malleability of youth and the purportedly-coerced nature of loyalty to the Nazi regime would make it relatively easy to reorient young Germans to democracy. To a certain degree, these officials saw their expectations fulfilled, as some young people appeared to have learned to "speak democracy," as it were. For instance, one group declared that "German youth, out of a sense of the highest human and political responsibility toward the youth of all nations, affirms its commitment to democracy, social justice, and the community of nations."[86] This language was mirrored in the articles pertaining to young people in the 1947 constitution of the city of Bremen, which stated that one of the goals of childrearing should be to raise children to have "a desire for social justice and political responsibility that leads to objectivity and tolerance toward the opinions of others."[87] Another encouraging sign was that, by 1949, some young Germans had begun to organize and participate in youth forums and youth parliaments, in order to discuss contemporary political and social issues in a democratic manner. Indeed, the *Frankenpost* (Hof) remarked in January 1949 that, during an Upper Franconian youth forum, "not one stupid word was said, asked, or answered…one saw and heard a wide-awake youth full of eager interest in all civic

[86] "The German Youth Ring: Programmatic Leaflet (November 19, 1946)," German History in Documents and Images, accessed 21 March 2019, http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=4486.
[87] "The Constitution of the Free Hanseatic City of Bremen (October 21, 1947)," German History in Documents and Images, accessed 21 March 2019, http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=4488.

issues." While the *Frankenpost* concluded that "this is very encouraging," it was forced to admit that the youth forum had been composed of a "selected group of young people."[88]

As the *Frankenpost*'s clarification suggests, there were also signs that the reeducation of young Germans had not proceeded quite as smoothly or as rapidly as American officials had assumed would be the case. Indeed, in the last year or so of the occupation, some U.S. observers were rather pessimistic about the chances for German youth to take the path of democracy, noting that their psychological foundation appeared to be the same as ever, i.e. Nazi in character. In March 1949, a report in the *New York Times* remarked that several German youth leaders had agreed that "German youth today would follow a new 'strong man' if convinced that his path led to economic betterment and revived social standing among nations." Many young people in Germany, the report continued, could be described as "actually casting about for some new, powerful leader."[89] For American occupation officials, this was hardly an auspicious sign, as the chances that a new German state would fall back into old patterns of authoritarianism seemed considerable.

Profiling the youth of Germany in November 1949, several months after the establishment of the Federal Republic, Edward P. Morgan expressed his concerns in an article unpromisingly entitled "Echoes of the Hitler Jugend in Germany." Listening to young Germans in a discussion group, Morgan reported the comments of one young woman who remarked that, despite American attempts to democratize German youth, "until now democracy has meant little more to us than denazification."[90] Another young man argued that former Hitler Youth members

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[88] "Hof Youth Forum," Editorial Opinion in German Press, *Weekly Information Bulletin*, No. 152, January 1949, 24.
[89] Jack Raymond, "Youth in Germany Seek 'Strong Man,'" *New York Times*, 23 March 1949, 21. Expressing similar misgivings, David Rodnick, summarizing a conversation with German youth in Hesse, argued that young Germans "appear to be waiting for a new leader, who can rouse the population to superhuman feats of reconstruction," adding that "time, they feel, is on their side," as dissatisfaction with the pace of reconstruction in Germany increased. Rodnick, *Postwar Germans*, 71.
[90] Edward P. Morgan, "Echoes of the Hitler Jugend in Germany," *New York Times*, 27 November 1949, SM13.

should "not be left to stand indefinitely apart" in German social and political life. Rather, they should be "divested of their shame and fears and led to cooperate with all elements of youth in rebuilding Germany." Morgan remarked that this comment was received with "vigorous applause" by those in attendance.[91] Echoing Morgan's worries that significant traces of the Nazi mindset remained among German youth, David Rodnick noted in his study of young people in Hesse that youth had twisted the meaning of democracy into the implication that Germans have the right "to do as they please" and "to attack Allied Military Government." As a result, democracy, instead of heralding a new direction for Germany, had "become the means whereby German nationalism can be defended by impugning the motives of all those who do not share the extreme nationalistic concepts of the young."[92]

The direction that Germany would take after 1949, then, was hardly assured. Despite American officials' desire to know with certainty whether their reeducation efforts had succeeded and, by extension, whether the new Federal Republic would remain democratic in the coming decades, the mixture of optimism and pessimism in their assessments of young Germans indicated that psychological change was still ongoing. The reorientation of all German youth from Nazism to democracy would thus take longer than four years to complete, not surprising when one considers that OMGUS framed reeducation as an inherently psychological process, which would need to provide young Germans with an entirely new mental framework. Indeed, the American occupation paradigm, with its focus on indoctrination and coerced loyalty, was responsible for OMGUS officials' overestimation of the rapidity with which reeducation would occur. Because the idea of genuine attraction to National Socialism had not truly entered into the wartime psychoanalysis of Germany, Americans arrived in occupied Germany unable to

[91] Ibid., SM13.
[92] Rodnick, *Postwar Germans*, 87.

conceive of the possibility that Germans might have credited the Nazis with doing good things, especially in the 1930s, and, thus, had sincerely supported the Nazi regime. Rather, OMGUS personnel believed all that was required to achieve psychological change among Germany's youth was to purge the Nazi virus from their minds.

Despite working from this rather simplistic set of assumptions, American officials in occupied Germany were still able to observe positive changes occurring among German youth – undeniably slower than anticipated, but apparent nonetheless. In spite of the fact that their occupation paradigm blinded American officials to the deeper complexities of young Germans' mindset, it nevertheless led them to realize the necessity of improving the conditions of life in Germany. Heavily influenced by contemporary ideas about environment and development, OMGUS personnel sought to counteract the effects of the "bad" environments of Nazi and early postwar Germany on the behavior and psychological state of German youth. Indeed, through their attempts to create a "good" environment in their zone of occupation, U.S. officials initiated a vital process: that of restoring some semblance of order and normalcy to the lives of young Germans, encouraging them to view the future of Germany with some measure of hope, rather than despair. In doing so, the American military government demonstrated to German youth that a democratic government could provide improvements in the conditions of life in Germany: that they did not merely come from authoritarianism. Still caught in the mindset engendered by their occupation paradigm, American officials and observers may not have fully realized it at the time, but a beginning had been made. The end result – the endurance of the Federal Republic for nearly seventy years – was still contingent, but it was becoming increasingly realistic to hope, as a State Department report did in 1951, that German youth would soon have a "firm conviction that a democratic way of life offers richer satisfactions to the human mind and heart than any

other way of life."[93]

[93] U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Public Affairs, *Young Germany: Apprentice to Democracy* (1951), 78.

CHAPTER 3
Normality and Deviance: The Analysts Read German History

In 1943, commissioned to contribute to a series of public policy pamphlets being published by the University of Chicago, the distinguished historian Bernadotte Schmitt offered an examination of the origins of the "German problem." Surveying the course of German history since the Middle Ages, Schmitt argued that "Germans *are* different from Frenchmen, Englishmen, or Americans." According to Schmitt, this difference was not a product of the Germans' "particular racial makeup, whatever that may be," but rather stemmed from "their history and environment."[1] That is, German history and traditions had produced a nation committed to authoritarianism, militarism, and expansionism and a people who were "not like Frenchmen or Britishers or Americans," as they possessed "certain national traits which make them impervious to reason, generosity, or fair play."[2] The year before, journalist Dorothy Thompson, seeking to understand the "German mind," argued that much could be learned about the contemporary German mindset from a study of the German past, as history was the "universal social inheritance" of a people.[3] For her, German history revealed "not unity, but disunity; not conformity, but contradictions." Indeed, Germany was "that nation of Europe with least uniformity and conformity in its history."[4] The conclusion, for both Schmitt and Thompson, was damning: German history was not like that of the United States, Britain, or France. Rather, something about it was profoundly different, indeed different enough to account for the rise of the Nazis, the Second World War, and Nazi crimes throughout Europe.

However simplistic and teleological such a conclusion might appear to twenty-first

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[1] Bernadotte E. Schmitt, *What Shall We Do With Germany?* Public Policy Pamphlet No. 38 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1943), 3.
[2] Ibid., 20.
[3] Dorothy Thompson, *Listen, Hans* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1942), 6.
[4] Ibid., 7.

century readers, Schmitt and Thompson were far from the only American historians, journalists, or other intellectuals to posit that there was a fundamental quality of deviance in German history. This chapter will explore the articulation of theories of German historical deviance, as a group of American analysts turned to history in an effort to deepen their understanding of the German mind and German national character. Influenced by the wartime psychologists' diagnoses of German national mental illness, these analysts attempted to locate the origins of that illness. That is, they sought to ascertain when, exactly, something had "gone wrong" in Germany, triggering its development into a psychologically "abnormal" nation. As these American commentators combed through German history, assuming they would find evidence of incipient psychoses and national psychological malformation, their preconceptions led them to emphasize Germany's lack of conformity to the alleged norms of national development. Accordingly, they argued that, for several centuries at least, Germany had consistently followed a different historical path from other Western nations, leading it to value militarism and authoritarianism, thus preparing the ground for the rise of National Socialism.

Not only did this concept of Germany's "different path" appear to the wartime analysts to effectively explain contemporary German national psychological deviance. It also proved to have a great deal of intellectual staying power. Throughout the late 1940s and 1950s, clinical theories of German psychological pathology began to lose influence with Americans, as wartime perceptions of the German people began to shift, especially from around 1948 onwards, and the new Federal Republic became an American ally in the developing Cold War.[5] However, theories of German historical deviance did not lose their intellectual currency, in particular the idea that,

[5] For the shifting American-German relationship in the late 1940s, see Petra Goedde, *GIs and Germans: Culture, Gender, and Foreign Relations, 1945-1949* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003), especially chapter 3.

until the defeat of the Nazis in 1945, Germany had followed a different path into modernity than other Western nations. Rather, they continued to circulate after the Second World War, influencing postwar historians of Germany and providing the intellectual foundation for their own historical analyses, as they started to wrestle with the task of explaining the rise of National Socialism.[6] Indeed, highlighting the long-term influence of ideas derived from the wartime psychoanalysis of Germany, there is a remarkable intellectual continuity between the wartime analysts' assertions that Germany had consistently deviated from the normative path of national development and the historiographical interpretation developed by the postwar historians, aptly called the *Sonderweg* ("special path").

As articulated by historians of Germany in the postwar period, the *Sonderweg* argument held that Germany deviated from the Western path to political modernity, which these scholars assumed to have been the normative path, i.e. the standard of national development. Proponents of the *Sonderweg* argued that Germany's different path to modernity had the power to explain the catastrophe of the Third Reich and the Second World War, as it led the nation to National Socialism, rather than liberal democracy. In the 1960s and 1970s, social historians, such as Hans-Ulrich Wehler, developed a structuralist variation of the *Sonderweg*, asserting that Germany experienced only partial modernization, producing a heavily industrialized economy resting on "pre-modern" social and political foundations. The survival of these pre-modern foundations enabled the endurance of authoritarianism and militarism in Germany – and prevented the development of democracy – thus laying the groundwork for the rise of National

[6] For a study of the transnational origins of the historical study of the recent German past after the Second World War, see Astrid M. Eckert, "The Transnational Beginnings of West German *Zeitgeschichte* in the 1950s," *Central European History* 40, no.1 (2007): 63-87.

Socialism.[7]

This chapter begins by examining the principal conclusion of the wartime analysts' historical studies, namely, the notion that there is a certain normative path to national development, one from which Germany consistently diverged, resulting in its deviant, malformed development as a nation. In the first section, I will also investigate the ways in which these theories of German historical deviance were intellectual predecessors to the *Sonderweg* argument. Moving in a slightly different direction, the second section of this chapter explores a related idea advanced by several of the wartime analysts: the argument that the Germans' unique – that is, uniquely bad – national character had played an important part in Germany straying from the "normal" path of national development.

The "Peculiarities" of Germany's Path to Modernity

With the wartime psychologists having thoroughly studied and diagnosed Germany's psychological pathologies, albeit largely from afar, what more could American analysts hope to learn about the German mind? For a group of these analysts, the answer was: a good deal. Seeking to take the wartime psychologists' work one step further, they sought to determine the precise origins of Germany's national mental illness. By turning their attention to German history, these analysts aimed to deepen their understanding of the German mind, preparing both themselves and their readers for the anticipated Allied occupation of Germany, when every piece of knowledge would count in the campaign to reeducate and denazify the German people. However, influenced by the wartime psychologists' conceptual binary – mental health versus mental illness, normality versus deviance – these commentators stressed the perceived

[7] Jürgen Kocka, "German History before Hitler: The Debate about the German *Sonderweg*," *Journal of Contemporary History* 23, no. 1 (1988): 4-6. For more information on the *Sonderweg* argument, see Introduction, note 23.

"peculiarities" of German national development, emphasizing the distance between Germany and its Western counterparts.

Although the American analysts who formulated theories of Germany's historical deviance differed on the details at times – had Germany diverged from the West in the eighteenth century, or as early as the Middle Ages? – they all agreed that a divergence had certainly occurred, caused by Germany "lagging behind" other Western nations in terms of development. Drawing a sharp line between Germany and the other Western European nations, journalist Dorothy Thompson argued that German history was "the history of a people who became a national state centuries after Britain and France had found their characteristic national forms."[8] Even after German unification, events did not conform to the Western model, as Thompson contended that Germany was only "partially unified," since "the German nation-state did not include the whole of the Germanic peoples."[9] In case that evidence was not sufficient to prove Germany's divergence from the "normal" historical path, Thompson further noted that "that part of the German people unified in the Reich have lived one common national and cultural life for less than half the length of the history of the American Constitution."[10] As the United States was itself a relatively young nation, Thompson thus drove home her assertion that Germany was a nation that seriously lagged behind its counterparts in terms of its path towards modernity. Similarly underscoring Germany's supposed divergence from the West, the film *Here is Germany*, produced by Frank Capra in conjunction with the War Department in 1945 and intended to teach Americans about German history, noted that, 150 years ago, Germany was disunited, no more than a "loose conglomeration" of three hundred individual states supposedly

[8] Thompson, *Listen Hans*, 7.
[9] Ibid., 7.
[10] Ibid., 7.

lacking a "common history, religion, or literature" and ruled by autocratic princes. At the same time, the other major Western nations had already both achieved national unity and started down the road to democracy, even the young United States.[11] Germany, therefore, was seriously behind the "normal" nations of the West, all of which were traveling the same – the "normal" – path of development.

As noted earlier, the wartime analysts' claims that Germany had taken a markedly different path to national development from its Western counterparts had a long intellectual afterlife, continuing to circulate well after the Second World War ended. Indeed, nearly twenty years after both Thompson and *Here is Germany* argued that Germany's national development was seriously behind that of Britain, France, and the United States, the journalist William Shirer made a strikingly similar claim in his lengthy popular history of Nazi Germany. Discussing the course of German history before Hitler, Shirer argued that Britain and France had emerged as "unified nations" by the end of the Middle Ages. Germany, however, "remained a crazy patchwork of some three hundred individual states," a description almost identical to that used by Capra in *Here is Germany*.[12] Admitting little – if any – historical contingency, Shirer concluded that "this lack of national development … largely determined the course of German history" from the end of the medieval period "to midway in the nineteenth century," making it "so different from that of the other great nations of Western Europe."[13]

Seeking to build on the argument that Germany's national development had lagged

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[11] Frank Capra, *Here Is Germany* (Office of War Information, 1945), minute 10:20-11:15. *Here is Germany* was the last of several films about Germany directed by Capra, including *Your Job in Germany* (1945) and *Prelude to War* (1942). In these films, Capra effectively combined voiceover narration and footage pulled from newsreels or contemporary films to advance visual and verbal arguments about the peculiarities of German history and the nature of the German character. For more information about these films, see Michaela Hoenicke Moore, *Know Your Enemy: The American Debate on Nazism, 1933-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 157–61, 259–65.

[12] William L. Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1960), 91.

[13] Ibid., 91.

behind that of the nations of Western Europe and North America, other analysts attempted to identify the specific historical force (or forces) that had delayed Germany's development and, consequently, caused it to deviate from the "normal" historical path. One popular conclusion was that German deviance had originated from Prussia. In other words, Prussia, the most "abnormal" – and the most dominant – of the German states, by pursuing its deviant aims, had prevented Germany from developing "normally." Intent on informing Americans about the danger of the Prussian tradition, *Here is Germany* portrayed Prussia as an authoritarian, aggressive, anachronistic state, whose rulers' continual quest for power blocked any hope of "normal" development in Germany from the eighteenth century onward. For instance, when other European and North American governments were supposedly becoming more liberal, Frederick the Great, so the film argued, pulled Prussia in the other direction, seeking to "perpetuate Prussia's feudal, militaristic society" and "make possible ruthless aggression against the world."[14] Subsequent generations of Prussian kings, bureaucrats, and generals built on Frederick's foundation, shaping Prussia into (supposedly) the absolute opposite of the United States, Britain, or France: a militaristic state that "preached the gospel of Prussian aggression" and dreamed of conquest. Furthermore, the film asserted that, after German unification, Prussia bequeathed its peculiar "heritage" to the new German Empire, a "tradition not of peace and friendship, but of war and conquest," one that the new nation eagerly adopted.[15] Prussia, therefore, was "identified as the cause of all future trouble in German history," pulling the nation down the path of authoritarianism and militarism and leading it ever more inexorably away from a "normal" path of development – straight towards National Socialism.[16]

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[14] Capra, *Here Is Germany*, minute 11:18-12:00.
[15] Ibid, minute 13:14-14:00 and 18:57-19:10.
[16] Moore, *Know Your Enemy*, 262.

Indeed, because the wartime analysts' focus on German historical deviance prevented them from seeing points of contingency in German history, they viewed the rise of Hitler and the Nazi party as the logical outcome of Germany's "abnormal" development. Largely uninterested in the content of Nazi ideology, these commentators saw the Third Reich as just another authoritarian, aggressive, militaristic German government, the most recent heir to the Prussian tradition.[17] For instance, Thompson described Hitler as "the expression of the whole unconscious mind and history of the German nation."[18] In other words, Hitler both embodied and was the most recent product of German history. Similarly, émigré analyst Emil Ludwig argued that Hitler drew nearly all of his ideas from Prussia, which had created the "philosophy" of the glorification of war and conquest, turned it into a "religion," and "preached" it in its schools and universities. Furthermore, the Prussians "were the first to proclaim the 'Germanic God,'" and they "propagandized 'Teutonic World Domination' half a century before Hitler." Given that intellectual heritage, all Hitler did was "follow the old Prussian recipe."[19] Bernadotte Schmitt agreed with Ludwig, arguing that "what [Hitler] preached and advocated was little more than pre-1914 Prussianism and Pan-Germanism."[20] Hitler, therefore, in the view of the wartime analysts, was nothing more than yet another German ruler cast in the Prussian mold.

The idea that Prussia was the source of the German deviance that had produced Hitler,

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[17] Because of this general lack of interest in the actual content of Nazi ideology, when wartime analysts happened to mention or discuss ideology, the results were often comically off the mark. For instance, Emil Ludwig was convinced that the most important, constant elements of Hitler's political program were "his belief in violence, his vengefulness, and his sense of insecurity." Anti-Semitism, Ludwig argued, was "ephemeral" for Hitler and "could be reversed," demonstrating his near-complete ignorance of the role of race in Nazi ideology. Other analysts preferred to argue that the Nazis had no ideology at all. Indeed, the pamphlet *Can the Germans Be Re-Educated?* maintained that the Nazis "had no profound philosophy," as they were "opportunists," whose ideology was nothing more than a "patchwork of scrambled ideas." Emil Ludwig, *The Germans: Double History of a Nation*, trans. Heinz Norden and Ruth Norden (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1941), 475; Department of War, *Can the Germans Be Re-Educated?* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1945), 17.

[18] Thompson, *Listen, Hans*, 16-17.

[19] Emil Ludwig, *How to Treat the Germans*, trans. Eric Mann (New York: Willard Publishing Company, 1943), 35.

[20] Schmitt, *What Shall We Do With Germany?*, 11.

articulated often throughout the war, proved to have considerable intellectual staying power in the postwar period, first among Allied officials and, later, among historians of Germany. Hoping that eliminating Prussia would wipe out a major source of the "German problem," Allied occupation officials abolished the state of Prussia in 1947, judging it "the very source of the German malaise that had afflicted Europe" and the "reason why Germany had turned from the path of peace and political modernity."[21] In the following years and decades, a number of historians of Germany followed the example of this Allied discourse, crafting arguments that Prussia had "played a key role" in Germany's "political malformation" and consequent failure to follow the "normal" path to modernity.[22] As historian Christopher Clark notes, this reading of Prussian history, a key part of the larger *Sonderweg* theory, held Prussia responsible for "imprinting its own peculiar political culture on the nascent German nation-state," concluding that the Prussian tradition "prepared the ground for the collapse of democracy and the advent of dictatorship" in Germany.[23] Just as the wartime analysts had concluded that Hitler had followed the "Prussian recipe," postwar historians of Germany, drawing on this intellectual precedent, reduced Prussian history "into a national teleology of German guilt."[24]

While most wartime analysts identified Prussia as the force that had delayed Germany's development and, consequently, caused it to deviate from the "normal" historical path, some American commentators did advance different arguments to explain Germany's lack of conformity to their imagined model. *Can the Germans Be Re-Educated?*, a pamphlet published by the War Department and written in conjunction with the Historical Service Board of the

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[21] Christopher Clark, *Iron Kingdom: The Rise and Downfall of Prussia, 1600-1947* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006), xii.
[22] Ibid., xii.
[23] Ibid., xiii.
[24] Ibid., xv-xvi.

American Historical Association, argued that Germany's location in Central Europe had affected its national development. For the past 1,500 years, Central Europe, according to the pamphlet, had been locked in "a relentless, selfish, and brutal struggle for power," preventing any "lasting sense of social or political security" from developing "comparable to that which grew up in England or America."[25] Because this social and political security never developed in Germany, the "type of democracy developed by the English-speaking peoples never had a chance to take root" there, as it required "centuries of relative political security to attain full growth."[26] Its geographic position having inhibited the development of a democratic tradition, Germany thus deviated from the normative model of political modernity.

Although few other analysts followed *Can the Germans Be Re-Educated?* in highlighting the effect of geography upon Germany's historical trajectory, all of them were highly attentive to Germany's supposed lack of a democratic tradition. Indeed, they considered it a major indication of German historical deviance, as the "normal" nations of the world had all evolved a democratic tradition and established democratic or parliamentary governments. Looking at the case of the 1848 revolutions in his 1941 history of Germany, Emil Ludwig combined a discussion of Germany's lack of a democratic tradition with the popular idea that Germany lagged behind other Western nations. In 1848, Ludwig argued, the Germans attempted a revolution, but "their demands did not correspond to the French example," i.e. the normative model, as "action was a century late in coming."[27] While the French "drove out the entire bourgeois regime together with their Citizen King," the Germans, far behind in terms of national development, "aspired" to "precisely this bourgeois regime." Ludwig concluded that, in 1848,

[25] Department of War, *Can the Germans Be Re-Educated?*, 12.
[26] Ibid., 12.
[27] Ludwig, *The Germans: Double History of a Nation*, 310.

the Germans "pretended that it was 1789," though even that pretense could not help them, as the revolution failed.[28]

Returning to the question of German democracy, or the lack thereof, in his 1943 pamphlet *How to Treat the Germans*, Ludwig argued that the Germans had never succeeded in establishing a democratic government, because "in a thousand years the Germans [have] never had a genuine revolution."[29] Throughout German history, the three attempted revolutions – in 1525, 1848, and 1918 – only "lasted a few days or weeks and brought about terrible reprisals upon the people." More importantly, none of these revolutions brought about a fundamental change in the system of government, as, according to Ludwig, the "German people prefers order to liberty, and taking commands to taking responsibility," making them constitutionally unsuited for democracy.[30] That same year, in his study of German history, Bernadotte Schmitt contended that, in 1848, the Germans had had a genuine chance to establish a constitutional regime, unify the nation, and begin developing a democratic tradition. However, the failure of the revolution "badly discredited" democracy, which, anyway, "had no tradition in German history" and "had not penetrated much beyond the intellectuals and the bourgeoisie."[31] After the failure of 1848, moreover, the Germans fell further behind their Western European neighbors, who "acquired unity, power, and vast areas for colonization," while Germany "remained what she had been for long ages, a geographical expression."[32]

From the mid-nineteenth century to the end of the First World War in 1918, Germany, according to the American analysts, continued to lag behind its Western counterparts in terms of

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[28] Ibid., 310.
[29] Ludwig, *How to Treat the Germans*, 17.
[30] Ibid., 17.
[31] Schmitt, *What Shall We Do With Germany?*, 6.
[32] Ibid., 6.

its progress toward democracy. In their view, any democratically inclined groups or political movements were immediately suppressed by the authoritarian governments of the German states – later, by the authoritarian government of the German Empire, dominated by autocratic Prussia.[33] With the collapse of the monarchy in November 1918, though, Germany had a chance to move towards the "normal" historical path, as the ostensibly democratic Weimar Republic succeeded the Empire. However, the analysts largely agreed that this was yet another failed opportunity for Germany to correct its "abnormal" development, as the lack of a democratic tradition doomed the Weimar Republic from the start. For instance, emphasizing the ways in which the revolution of 1918 did not conform to the normative model, Dorothy Thompson argued that the Weimar Republic was "a strange phenomenon … in a perverted sense, a creation of the German Army – strictly an interim creation."[34] Established by the army "as a fence for its own defeat," the Weimar Republic was certainly not the product of a popular, democratic movement, nor was it intended to be anything more than a placeholder government.[35] Similarly, Bernadotte Schmitt described the revolution of 1918 as "only a skin-deep affair," arguing that a

[33] While the wartime analysts certainly saw no evidence of democratization occurring in the *Kaiserreich*, in the last twenty years historians of the German Empire have greatly nuanced this view of the supposedly anti-democratic *Kaiserreich*. Their work has illuminated the fact that certain democratic attitudes and processes did develop and grow in Germany in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For instance, Margaret Lavinia Anderson argued that, while the German Empire was not a democratic state, a certain political culture of democracy did develop, particularly in relation to elections and the practice of universal manhood suffrage. Margaret Lavinia Anderson, *Practicing Democracy: Elections and Political Culture in Imperial Germany* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000). Further studies of democratization in the *Kaiserreich* include James N. Retallack, *Red Saxony: Election Battles and the Spectre of Democracy in Germany, 1860-1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017); Marcus Kreuzer, "Parliamentarization and the Question of German Exceptionalism: 1867-1918," *Central European History* 36, no. 3 (2003): 327–57; Jeffrey R. Smith, "The Monarchy versus the Nation: The 'Festive Year' 1913 in Wilhelmine Germany," *German Studies Review* 23, no. 2 (2000): 257–74; and Roland Spickermann, "The Elections Cartel in Regierungsbezirk Bromberg (Bydgoszcz), 1898-1903: Ethnic Rivalry, Agrarianism, and 'Practicing Democracy,'" *Central European History* 37, no. 1 (2004): 91–114. For a review of recent work on the history of reform movements in imperial Germany, see Edward Ross Dickinson, "Not So Scary After All? Reform in Imperial and Weimar Germany," *Central European History* 43, no. 1 (2010): 149–72. For a study of the German Social Democratic Party in the years before the First World War, when it grew to become the largest party in the Reichstag, see Jens-Uwe Guettel, "The Myth of the Pro-Colonialist SPD: German Social Democracy and Imperialism before World War I," *Central European History* 45, no. 3 (2012): 452–84.

[34] Thompson, *Listen, Hans*, 12.

[35] Ibid., 12.

republican government was established "not from conviction, but in the hope of getting easier terms of peace" from the Allies.[36]

While Thompson and Schmitt viewed the Weimar Republic as a placeholder government, only intended to last until the army could regain its strength and retake power, some commentators went one step further, claiming that the forces of "old" Germany never really relinquished power at all. In his analysis of the "German problem," Henry Morgenthau, Jr., the Secretary of the Treasury, not only argued that the "German high command … engineered the 'revolution'" of 1918. He also claimed that the military "never loosed its grip on the strings that controlled this and the succeeding puppet governments of republican Germany."[37] The film *Here is Germany* concurred, informing viewers that the Weimar Republic had "all the appearances of democracy," but, "under the surface, the old German system went on." Imperial bureaucrats became republican bureaucrats; imperial industrialists ran Weimar industry; and the same teachers continued to teach the same "gospel of German nationalism and racial superiority."[38] Because Germany's "abnormal" development ensured that it had no democratic tradition, and no desire to develop one, the wartime analysts concluded that the Weimar Republic was nothing more than the old Germany with a new, extremely thin veneer.

Despite this general consensus that the Weimar Republic had been a sham, there was at least one dissenting voice. Werner Richter, a German émigré, former official in the Prussian Ministry of Education during the Weimar period, and democratic reformer, sought to defend the government that he had served. Richter argued that non-German commentators' perceptions of the Weimar government were based on the Nazis' "cynical falsification" of the "achievements of

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[36] Schmitt, *What Shall We Do With Germany?*, 9.
[37] Henry Morgenthau, Jr., *Germany Is Our Problem* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1945), 3.
[38] Capra, *Here Is Germany*, minute 27:45-28:34.

the first German Republic."[39] Pushing back against these perceived distortions, Richter insisted that the Weimar Republic "was not an illusion" and that its leaders had not been "merely tools in the hands of the Junkers." Rather, Weimar officials, animated by a "democratic spirit," made a "passionate attempt to arrest the cultural and political crisis which Germany experienced in an acute form in consequence of her defeat."[40] This "attempt at re-education" and the redirection of Germany onto a new path, Richter maintained, ultimately failed not because the Weimar government had been the pawn of the Junkers or a puppet in the hands of the military, but because the German army, "devoid of conscience," betrayed the country into the hands of Hitler.[41] However, Richter's critique notwithstanding, the consensus view of the Weimar Republic endured beyond the Second World War. Highlighting this intellectual continuity, historian Hans Kohn, writing in 1960, argued that the success of any democratic government depends upon "traditions of liberty under law," which lacked "vitality" in Germany. As a result, what little democratic spirit existed in the Weimar Republic could not withstand the challenge of "nationalist pride and passion," which "undermined democracy after 1918 as it had done in 1848."[42]

The vast majority of American wartime analysts were in agreement: Germany lacked a democratic tradition, which had greatly contributed to its failure to develop along "normal" lines, in the style of Britain, France, or the United States. Germany, for much of its history, also lacked national unity, another indication of its historical deviance, given that its Western counterparts had all supposedly achieved unity fairly early in their histories. While Germany

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[39] Werner Richter, *Re-Educating Germany*, trans. Paul Lehmann (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1945), xiii-xiv.
[40] Ibid., xiii-xiv.
[41] Ibid., xiii-xiv.
[42] Hans Kohn, *The Mind of Germany: The Education of a Nation* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1960), 306.

eventually reached that milestone with its unification in 1871, the analysts, influenced by their preconceptions about Germany, found plentiful evidence that German unification had not unfolded "correctly," that is, along the lines of the normative model. The pamphlet *Can the Germans Be Re-Educated?* highlighted Germany's "lateness" in unifying compared to its European neighbors. Noting that, when Charlemagne's empire collapsed in the ninth century, "Europe showed dimly the lines of modern national divisions," the pamphlet argued that, from that point, Germany "traveled the longest road" to unity of the European nations.[43] Moreover, when Germany did finally unify nearly one thousand years later, it came at the "price of making the state and the army dominant over the individual citizen," a sign of deviance, given that Britain, France, and the United States had supposedly managed to achieve unity while preserving individual rights and keeping the military subject to civilian control.[44] In what we shall see was a common refrain among American analysts, the pamphlet asserted that united Germany "had been created by blood and iron, not ballots," implying that national unity should be achieved through popular consent and ignoring the fact that neither Britain, France, nor the United States could claim to have been united entirely through popular consent.[45]

Dorothy Thompson added her voice to this refrain, arguing that the establishment of the German Empire went against the spirit of the times, as it was the "creation of an aristocratic Prussian military caste," rather than "a popular revolutionary movement, in harmony with other European movements of the times."[46] As the creation of the Prussian army over the course of three wars, the German Empire, according to Thompson, "was both an instrument of war … and a social instrument for preserving the interests of the Prussian estate-owning and military

[43] Department of War, *Can the Germans Be Re-Educated?*, 3.
[44] Ibid., 8-9.
[45] Ibid., 8-9.
[46] Thompson, *Listen, Hans*, 10.

caste."[47] Nothing about this new German state, therefore, was popular: the German people had had little say in its creation, and its rulers were dedicated to preserving their own interests, not those of the people. Bernadotte Schmitt agreed with Thompson's assessment of the German Empire, claiming that Bismarck accomplished the unification of Germany through a combination of political unscrupulousness – he "defied the constitution of Prussia and provoked wars with Denmark, Austria, and France – and "blood and iron."[48] Focusing on the contrast between Germany's unification through "blood and iron" and the normative model of unity achieved through democratic methods, *Here is Germany* noted that the symbol of the German Empire was "Victoria (victory), not the Liberty Bell; not the Magna Carta; not liberté, egalité, fraternité, or any other symbol of freedom, but Victoria, the symbol of conquest."[49] Not only had Germany been late to unify, compared to its Western counterparts. It had also failed to follow their path to national unity, producing a state built on "abnormal" foundations and thus fully capable of deviant behavior.

As with the wartime analysts' comments on Germany's lack of a democratic tradition and the pace of its national development, the notion that German unification had not unfolded "correctly" – that is, along the lines of an assumed normative model – had a long afterlife. Indeed, in his 1960 history of the German mind, Hans Kohn echoed the analysts' assertions that German unification had been achieved through war and conquest, rather than peaceful, democratic methods, the latter being the "right" way to unify. For Kohn, Bismarck's "triumph" in 1871 "vindicated the ideal of the Prussian state," with its deviant foundation of militarism and authoritarianism, over the "western ideals of the rights of men and the peace of peoples."[50]

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[47] Ibid., 10-11.
[48] Schmitt, *What Shall We Do With Germany?*, 7.
[49] Capra, *Here Is Germany*, minute 17:52-18:10.
[50] Kohn, *The Mind of Germany: The Education of a Nation*, 167.

Furthermore, Kohn argued that Bismarck directly contributed to Germany's divergence from the "normal" path of national development, as without his suppression of German liberalism, "Prussia and Germany would in all probability have developed along more western lines."[51] Instead, with Bismarck at the helm, Germany once again deviated from the "normal" historical path.

As we have seen, throughout the wartime analysts' examination of German history, they continually made the assumption that the major Western nations – Britain, France, and the United States – had all developed in the same way, reaching the same historical milestones at the same points in their histories. Given that these three nations now led the forces of democracy in the war against Nazi Germany,[52] the analysts idealized their historical trajectories as the "normal" path of national development, from which Germany, the wartime enemy and aggressor in Europe, had continually deviated. This concept of a normative model of national development was not only the foundation of the wartime analysts' historical studies, shaping their conclusions about the origins of German deviance. Demonstrating the long-term influence of ideas derived from the wartime psychoanalysis of Germany, it also constituted the key point of intellectual continuity between the analysts' work and the *Sonderweg* historiographical interpretation developed by postwar historians of Germany. For, as in the case of the wartime studies, the *Sonderweg* interpretation rested on the assumption of an Anglo-American/Western European normative model of historical development.

Indeed, historian Jürgen Kocka noted that proponents of the *Sonderweg* "identified, by

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[51] Ibid., 150.

[52] While this image of the "forces of democracy" fighting the "forces of totalitarianism" is, admittedly, complicated by the presence of the Soviet Union among the Allied powers, this is how the wartime analysts typically described the Second World War. Indeed, they largely avoided discussing the alliance with the Soviet Union in their studies and never listed it among the "normal" nations of the world.

explicit or implicit comparison with England, France, North America or 'the West,' peculiarities of German history, structures and processes, conditions and experiences" that "hindered the development of liberal democracy and … facilitated the rise of fascism."[53] Postwar historians' use of the normative model, and the conclusions they drew from it, were thus hardly dissimilar to those of the wartime analysts. Furthermore, in a critical assessment of the *Sonderweg* argument, Konrad Jarausch and Michael Geyer argued that historians' assumptions of German deviation from a normative model of development engendered a certain "retrospective teleology," namely, that "modern German history culminated in the Nazi seizure of power, the crimes of the SS and the disaster of 1945." According to this teleology, all the "really important trajectories" of German history "led to an inevitable catastrophe."[54] Twenty years before the advent of the *Sonderweg*, the wartime analysts had centered their studies around the same "retrospective teleology," portraying the rise of Hitler and the Nazi party as the logical outcome of Germany's failure to conform to the "normal" path of historical development.

The lasting intellectual significance of the normative model of national development to theories of German historical deviance is also illustrated by the fact that it was one of the first aspects of the *Sonderweg* interpretation to be critiqued in the 1980s. Noting that the *Sonderweg* rested on the assumption of "German historical aberration," critical historians David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley argued that "in order to have an aberration it is clearly necessary to have a norm." Like the wartime analysts before them, proponents of the *Sonderweg* took "'western' and most particularly Anglo-American and French developments" as a "yardstick against which

[53] Jürgen Kocka, "German History before Hitler: The Debate about the German *Sonderweg*," *Journal of Contemporary History* 23, no. 1 (1988): 4.
[54] Konrad H. Jarausch and Michael Geyer, *Shattered Past: Reconstructing German Histories* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 94.

German history was … found wanting."[55] However, Blackbourn and Eley contended that this normative model rested "on a misleading and idealized picture of historical development in those countries that are taken as models."[56] Indeed, many – if not most – of the wartime analysts' assumptions about Britain, France, and the United States fit Blackbourn and Eley's description of being heavily "idealized" and "quasi-mythical," such as the contention that Britain, France, and the United States had achieved national unity through popular consent rather than war and revolution.[57] As the analysts explored German history, they, as the *Sonderweg* theorists would later do, thus continually assumed the existence of a historical binary – normality versus deviance, the West versus Germany – leaving little room for historical contingency, gray areas, or the possibility that the complexities of national development cannot, in fact, be reduced to a model.

National Character and National Development

As American wartime analysts searched through German history for evidence of deviance, several of them began to hypothesize that the nature of the German national character had contributed to Germany straying from the path of "normal" national development. These writers' foregone conclusions about the pathological nature of the German mind combined with their selective reading of German history to produce a particular view of the German people, one that emphasized their uniquely bad national character. According to the analysts, the Germans created and maintained a rigid social hierarchy; had a passion for obedience that caused them to prefer authoritarian rulers; and nurtured a cruel, sadistic side to their character – all in direct

[55] David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley, *The Peculiarities of German History: Bourgeois Society and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 10.
[56] Ibid., 10.
[57] Ibid., 10.

contrast, supposedly, to the "normal" Anglo-American character. Because the German character contained such deviant qualities, it was thought to have had a hand in pushing Germany off of the "normal" path of national development, ultimately accounting for the rise of Hitler and the Nazi party, the outbreak of the Second World War, and Nazi war crimes.

Given American analysts' theory that the nature of the German national character had played a part in Germany's "abnormal" national development, they sought to identify the specific characteristics that allegedly distinguished the Germans from other peoples and had inhibited "normal" development. Produced by Frank Capra soon after the United States entered the Second World War to convince Americans of the necessity of defeating the Axis powers, the film *Prelude to War* drew a heavily teleological line between the existence of a deviant German character and the Nazis' rise to power. Indeed, the film insisted that Hitler's political success in the late 1920s and early 1930s was due to the fact that he had "certain distinctive German characteristics to play on" as he set out to "murder the new-born German republic." Chief among these characteristics was a long-standing German quality, namely, the "inborn national love of regimentation and a harsh discipline." That, the film remarked, Hitler "could give [the Germans]."[58] Furthermore, since the end of the First World War, another distinguishing German trait was the desire for revenge, given that the "German army, and through them, the people, had never acknowledged defeat." Again, Hitler "promised" to deliver that to the Germans, satisfying two of their deeply-held national desires.[59] By employing "distinctive German characteristics" as an explanatory tool to account for Hitler's rise to power, *Prelude to War* thus advanced the notion that the unique qualities of the German character had drawn ordinary Germans to Hitler.

Taking *Prelude to War*'s argument several steps further, Emil Ludwig turned to the

[58] Frank Capra, *Prelude to War* (Office of War Information, 1942), minute 8:30-9:15.
[59] Ibid, minute 8:30-9:15.

question of the German character in his 1943 pamphlet *How to Treat the Germans*. Expanding on the film's argument that Germans' particular national traits had predisposed them to support the Nazis, Ludwig argued that these national traits had been constant for centuries. In fact, according to him, the German national character had not fundamentally altered since the "first centuries of their [early German peoples'] appearance in civilized Europe," nearly two thousand years ago. Those early Germans "made their way by overpowering their richer neighbors," constructed a social "hierarchy with masters and servants," and taught their youth the virtues of obedience and militarism.[60] Germans in the 1940s, Ludwig argued, were no different, with "their passion for obedience … their joy at standing at attention in front of a superior, a passion which no modern nation has ever known to such a degree."[61]

Not only did the inordinately high value Germans placed upon obedience to authority and the maintenance of hierarchy mark them as fundamentally different from other Western European peoples. It also, Ludwig maintained, inhibited the development of a democratic tradition in Germany, as the "fundamentally democratic" qualities of "trust and liberty" could not flourish in "a country where every man feels that there is someone above him." Because the Germans considered it "virtue to obey and greatness to command," liberty was not in great demand, ensuring that Germany remained authoritarian, rather than evolving a democratic form of government.[62] Making a comparison to American history for the benefit of his readers, Ludwig argued that, after the revolution of 1918 and the fall of the monarchy, the Germans "felt somehow like the slaves of the South when they were given their freedom after the Civil War," as both groups, supposedly used to obeying "masters," did not know what to do with freedom.[63]

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[60] Ludwig, *How to Treat the Germans*, 8.
[61] Ibid., 10.
[62] Ibid., 16.
[63] Ibid., 16.

The unchanging nature of the German character was thus, according to Ludwig, responsible in large part for Germany's failure to travel the "correct" historical path, as it blocked the development of a democratic tradition and all that would have followed from it.

Beyond the ostensible German "passion" for obedience to authority and maintaining a strict social hierarchy, other American commentators focused their attention on the allegedly sadistic side of the German national character, especially as revelations of Nazi war crimes and atrocities came to American analysts' attention.[64] Underscoring discussion of this supposed unique German brutality was the belief that Germans' tendency toward savage violence had greatly inhibited the "normal" development of the German nation. Considering the problem of Germany's development in his 1943 pamphlet, Bernadotte Schmitt claimed that German deviance could be traced back to the Middle Ages, at least: the same period in which he located the origins of the sadistic side to the German national character. In fact, Schmitt pinpointed the emergence of the German tendency towards brutal violence in the crushing of the Peasants' Revolt in 1525. He argued that when Martin Luther, turning against the rebelling peasants, urged German landlords to "stop at naught" in suppressing the revolt, his "advice" was "more like the threats of the Gestapo than the language of a Christian gentleman."[65]

For Schmitt, Luther's endorsement of the violence committed by the nobles was

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[64] I use the generalized term of "Nazi war crimes," as opposed to differentiating between the Holocaust, the killing of Roma and Sinti, and the murder of non-Jewish civilians in Europe, in order to keep continuity with my sources. Indeed, nearly all of the wartime analysts made no attempt to differentiate between Hitler's victims, to the point that they often played down the specifically Jewish identity of many of those victims in favor of a universalized image of murdered "Europeans." For example, the film *Here is Germany* managed to construct a montage of atrocity footage showcasing Nazi crimes without ever mentioning the words "Jewish victims," even though many of the scenes Capra included in the atrocity montage are today synonymous with the Holocaust and Hitler's Jewish victims, such as gas chambers, piles of looted clothing and possessions, and emaciated corpses. Capra, *Here Is Germany*, minute 4:00-7:10. As historian Leonard Dinnerstein demonstrates, the 1930s and 1940s were the high point of anti-Semitism in contemporary American politics, society, and culture. Writing in this context, the great majority of wartime analysts, therefore, would have had little interest in differentiating between Hitler's victims and highlighting the existence of the "Final Solution." See Leonard Dinnerstein, *Antisemitism in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), especially chapters 5-7.

[65] Schmitt, *What Shall We Do With Germany?*, 3-4.

"evidence that the sadistic side of the German character, which the Gestapo has done so much to reveal to us, is not something new or unusual but has deep roots in German history."[66] Moreover, he concluded that the "fear of the state and submissiveness to it which is so characteristic of the modern German tradition," and which had prevented democracy from taking hold in Germany, could be explained "in no small degree by the tradition handed down since the crushing of the peasants' revolt."[67] The Germans' tendency toward brutality thus had pushed Germany onto a different historical path as early as the sixteenth century. Furthermore, because of their long history of brutality, contemporary Germans were allegedly "not in the least disconcerted by the methods used by their rulers [i.e. the Nazis] and their armies." Rather, the "sadistic traits in the German character" fully expressed themselves in "the terrorism and cruelties perpetrated from one end of Europe to the other" by the Nazis.[68]

Considering the strongly anti-German atmosphere in the wartime United States, Schmitt's arguments about the brutal quality of the German character likely resonated with most people who read his pamphlet. However, Werner Richter sharply criticized Schmitt's depiction of Germany as "the personification of evil" and a nation whose every action was "the expression of a thoroughly planned and calculated Machiavellianism."[69] As Richter noted, arguments such as Schmitt's would certainly "impress all those who are overcome with emotional revulsion at the unspeakable brutalities of the Nazis and the German military leaders." However, scholars and other commentators, in Richter's view, should still attempt to preserve some sense of "objective reflection," especially when making arguments about the place of Nazi atrocities within the longer course of German history, rather than considering only "the mood of the

[66] Ibid., 4.
[67] Ibid., 4.
[68] Ibid., 12.
[69] Richter, *Re-Educating Germany*, 133-134.

moment."[70] Striving for some sort of objectivity was doubly important, according to Richter, because Schmitt and proponents of his argument had "unconsciously succumbed to the Nazi ideology." That is, National Socialism could "think only in generalizations, in collective categories," much as these American analysts advanced extreme generalizations about Germany and the German people.[71]

Despite Richter's sharp critique of Schmitt's arguments, his conception of the German character as possessing a uniquely sadistic side continued to circulate in the United States and to influence other analysts and commentators. Indeed, these ideas were at the forefront of several American analyses of Germany published or released in 1945, as growing knowledge of the full extent of Nazi crimes prompted further reflections on what had triggered the Germans to develop so "abnormally" that they were able to commit such atrocities. The film *Here is Germany* confidently advanced its answer to this question.[72] Americans, the film argued, should not believe that there were only a handful of differences between the German and American national characters, differences that stemmed from Nazi indoctrination and could be relatively easily "corrected" through denazification and reeducation. Rather, the entire German national character deviated from the Anglo-American "norm," though that might not be apparent at first glance to non-Germans, as the Germans masked their more "abnormal" traits, such as brutality, behind a façade of normality.

Capra advanced this argument through the shrewd – and highly effective – use of visual montages, beginning with a lengthy collection of footage showing the apparently "good," wholesome, "industrious" Germans going about their daily business. Germany was described as

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[70] Ibid., 133-134.
[71] Ibid., 139.
[72] For more information on *Here is Germany*, including its origins and its connection to the Vansittart school of thinking vis-à-vis Germany, see Moore, *Know Your Enemy*, 259-265.

a prosperous, modern, educated, and cultured nation – not that different, the narrator remarked, from the United States.[73] However, this was nothing more than an act. The true quality of the German character, the film maintained, was brutality, revealed by the crimes Germans had committed throughout Europe during the Second World War. Indeed, Capra revealed those crimes for American viewers in another montage, this time composed of footage from liberated concentration camps, showing piles of corpses, emaciated survivors, gas chambers and crematoria, and clothing looted from victims, as well as scenes of German massacres in Lublin, Rome, Belgium, and Malmedy, the victims of the latter being American prisoners of war.[74] The juxtaposition of the two montages underscored – and provided evidence in support of – the film's contention that the German character was uniquely sadistic, explaining why ordinary Germans and committed Nazis alike had committed atrocities during the war. Furthermore, the film argued, this quality of the German character caused Germany to stray from the "normal" historical path. Because "the love of aggression and conquest" was ingrained "deep in the soul of the German," in contrast to the love of freedom in the American soul, Germany had not been able to take the "correct" path to national development. Instead, Germany had traveled the path of authoritarianism and National Socialism, a journey that only the deaths of "thirty million men" in the war had been able to halt.[75]

Although films such as *Here is Germany* might have been the expected medium for the dissemination of ideas about the Germans' innate brutality – after all, they were intended to stir the emotions – such notions circulated widely in the United States, even reaching high-level government officials. Indeed, in his 1945 book *Germany Is Our Problem*, Henry Morgenthau,

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[73] Capra, *Here is Germany*, minute 1:05-3:50.
[74] Ibid, minute 4:00-7:10.
[75] Ibid, minute 46:12-46:50.

Jr., the Secretary of the Treasury, espoused opinions about the Germans strikingly similar to those found in *Here is Germany* or Schmitt's pamphlet. Emphasizing how the German character had developed "differently" from that of other European peoples, Morgenthau argued that the "medieval belief" that war is the best profession for both nobles and common people "survived in Germany long after it had been outmoded in all the rest of Europe." As well as that belief, still extant in the 1940s, Germans felt they were destined "to dominate the world with lash and club for the sole comfort and enrichment of Germans."[76] While Morgenthau noted that the Nazis "pushed these theories further in practice than any of their predecessors," he claimed that they could not have done so "without the generations of preparation" that twisted the German character. Employing a gardening metaphor, Morgenthau remarked that the German people had to be "cultivated intensively" for almost two hundred years before they could produce "those finest Nazi flowers – the gas chambers of Maidaneck [sic.] and the massacre of Lidice."[77] With the end result of this "cultivation" in mind, Morgenthau warned that "it would be a highly reckless gamble" to assume that the defeat of the Third Reich had "fertilized" German soil anew and "changed its character," reminding his American readers that the "German will to war" is as old as "our traditional will to freedom."[78] Only harsh and concerted action on the part of American officials during the occupation of Germany could change the German historical path and the nature of the German character.

While the wartime analysts' theories about the peculiarities of German national development are most easily recognized as intellectual predecessors to the *Sonderweg*, the assertion that the German character contained a uniquely brutal side also prefigures the

[76] Morgenthau, *Germany Is Our Problem*, 104.
[77] Ibid., 105.
[78] Ibid., 105.

Sonderweg argument – at least, one particular, highly contentious application of it. About fifty years after wartime analysts such as Schmitt and Morgenthau asserted that the sadistic nature of the German character enabled Germans to willingly participate in the commission of war crimes all over Europe during the Second World War, Daniel J. Goldhagen articulated a strikingly similar argument in his controversial book *Hitler's Willing Executioners*. Applying the notion of Germany's "special path" to the study of the Holocaust, Goldhagen argued that German politics, society, and culture until 1945 were characterized by a unique kind of eliminationist anti-Semitism that led Germans "to conclude that Jews *ought to die*," paving the way for their support of and participation in the Nazi campaign to exterminate the Jews.[79] Like Schmitt and Morgenthau, who had claimed that the capacity for brutality had long been present in the German character, if not fully expressed, Goldhagen asserted that eliminationist anti-Semitism had been present and pervasive in Germany "well before the Nazis came to power."[80]

In Goldhagen's view, after 1933, the Nazis thus "found themselves the masters of a society already imbued with notions about Jews that were ready to be mobilized for the most extreme version of 'elimination' imaginable." The National Socialist government, therefore, did not employ the "coercive means of a totalitarian state," apply "social psychological pressure," or indoctrinate the Germans into a willingness to kill Jews, as that desire was already present.[81] Goldhagen's divisive conclusions were thus remarkably reminiscent of several wartime analysts' arguments that the deviant qualities of the German character accounted for the rise of Hitler and the Nazi party, the Second World War, and the brutality of Nazi war crimes and atrocities. In the end, whether due to its "abnormal" character or its failure to develop institutions and traditions

[79] Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996), 9. Emphasis in the original.
[80] Ibid., 23.
[81] Ibid., 23, 9.

identical to those of other Western nations, Germany, according to the wartime analysts, had consistently followed a different path to modernity. Having begun their examination of German history hoping to uncover the origins of Germany's national mental illness, these analysts ultimately articulated theories of German historical deviance – theories that would influence the work of postwar historians of Germany, demonstrating the long-term influence of ideas and models derived from the wartime psychoanalysis of Germany.

CONCLUSION

Reviewing Richard M. Brickner's book *Is Germany Incurable?* in the *Saturday Review of Literature* in 1943, H. M. Kallen argued that, in order to be definitive, any solution to the "German problem" would have to achieve "the healing of the Western World from the sickness of Germanism."[1] To achieve this cure, the West "must put sanity in power in the German land and encourage its spread and growth" throughout German society.[2] Why did a number of American journalists, officials, and intellectuals, including Kallen, turn to the language of mental illness during the Second World War in order to describe Germany and the German people? This thesis has examined this question, investigating how this particular group of American analysts assumed the role of wartime psychologists, convinced that uncovering what lay within the German mind would help the Allies win the war and, more importantly, "fix" what was "wrong" with the Germans during the anticipated occupation. As the wartime psychologists psychoanalyzed Germany, drawing upon popular conceptions of psychology and mental illness, they increasingly characterized the Germans as a deviant, pathological people in need of "treatment" for a host of dangerous psychoses. Given that the wartime psychologists did not formulate their theories of German psychological pathology in a vacuum, this thesis has also sought to explore the consequences, in both the short and long term, of these analysts' conception of the Germans as a mentally ill people, especially the ways in which it influenced the content and direction of American reeducation policy and shaped narratives of German history and national development.

Indeed, in this thesis, I have explored what the American wartime psychoanalysis of

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[1] "What Shall We Do With Germany: A Panel Discussion of 'Is Germany Incurable?,'" *Saturday Review of Literature*, 29 May 1943, 5.
[2] Ibid., 5.

Germany produced: diagnoses of national mental illness and proposals for treatment; preconceptions and paradigms; a (surprisingly) relatively successful youth policy; and theories of German historical deviance which would have a long afterlife. Outlining the wartime psychologists' various theories of German mental illness, Chapter 1 argued that, constrained by the realities of wartime – i.e. forced to psychoanalyze Germany from afar – these analysts aligned their often-questionable evidence of Germany's pathologies, colored by stereotypes and propaganda, with common contemporary diagnoses of individual mental illness. Furthermore, the wartime psychologists particularly preferred "severe" diagnoses, such as paranoia or schizophrenia, which appeared to have the power to explain Germany's deviant behavior, "abnormal" national character, and the brutal extent of Nazi war crimes. In addition to diagnosing Germany's mental illness, many of the analysts turned their attention to "curing" those pathologies, arguing that restoring the Germans to mental "health" had to be one of the highest priorities of the American military government during the occupation of Germany. In fact, like Kallen, they asserted that only a restoration to mental health would make the world safe from German aggression and expansionism, the outward manifestations of its mental illness.

Throughout the war, the wartime psychologists' view of Germany as a mentally ill nation circulated throughout the American press, influencing the reading public, including future occupation officials and other commentators who would soon enter occupied Germany. Before the occupation of Germany even began, the analysts' diagnoses of German mental illness came together to create an image of how Germans would behave and how they had been taught to think. Chapter 2 explored what transpired when American occupation officials, drawing upon this image, as well as popular contemporary ideas about environmental determinism, turned their attention to the reeducation of German youth. Throughout the occupation period, American

preconceptions about young Germans – what I called the American occupation paradigm – shaped U.S. officials' and observers' interpretations of young people's behavior and mental state, producing certain expectations of the rapidity with which meaningful psychological change would occur among youth.

Indeed, I argued that the American occupation paradigm itself, with its rather simplistic set of assumptions about young Germans' psychological state, was responsible for American analysts' underestimation of the amount of time needed to reeducate and reorient German youth. Blinded to the deeper complexities of young people's thinking, OMGUS personnel believed that all that was necessary to achieve psychological change among Germany's youth was to "purge" their minds of the Nazi virus, i.e. the National Socialist values with which they had been indoctrinated. Surprisingly, in spite of this, American youth policy, in the end, was relatively successful. However, I asserted that this was due more to the influence of ideas about environment and development than the wartime psychologists' diagnoses of Germany. Indeed, as American officials sought to create a "good" environment, one that would promote mental "health," they initiated a vital process: that of restoring some semblance of order and normalcy to the lives of young Germans, encouraging them to view the future with some measure of hope, rather than despair or disillusionment. While many American officials and observers, still influenced by their preconceptions about German youth, did not realize it at the time, this constituted a beginning, from which the reorientation of young people could proceed.

The effects of the American wartime psychoanalysis of Germany can be observed not only in relation to occupation policy, where the analysts' theories influenced the formulation and evolution of youth reeducation programs, but also in the intellectual arena. Focusing on this sphere, Chapter 3 argued that, influenced by the wartime psychologists' diagnoses of German

national mental illness, a group of American analysts sought to locate the historical origins of that illness. Hoping to determine when, precisely, something "went awry" in Germany, they analyzed German history, looking for early signs of national psychological malformation and incipient pathologies. Guided by the wartime psychologists' assertion that the Germans were a deviant, pathological people, these analysts asserted that, for several centuries at the very least, Germany had taken a different historical path than its Western counterparts, choosing militarism and authoritarianism over liberal democracy and respect for individual rights.

Throughout their examination of German history, the analysts continually assumed that the major (democratic) Western nations, i.e. Britain, France, and the United States, had all developed in the same manner. Furthermore, they idealized these nations' historical trajectories as the "normal" model of national development, to which Germany had failed to conform. After the Second World War, the analysts' theories of German historical deviance continued to circulate, influencing the work of postwar historians of Germany as they began to formulate arguments about the place of National Socialism within German history. Demonstrating the wide-reaching effects of the wartime psychoanalysis of Germany, the wartime analysts' concept of a normative model of national development, I argued, constituted the key point of intellectual continuity between their work and the *Sonderweg* historiographical interpretation developed by the postwar historians. Indeed, as was the case for the wartime studies, the *Sonderweg* argument, which asserted that Germany deviated from the Western path to modernity, rested on the assumption of a normative, Anglo-American/Western European model of political modernity.

Over the course of three chapters, this thesis has demonstrated the varied consequences of the wartime psychologists' use of the language of mental illness to explain the rise of the Nazis, German responsibility for the Second World War, and the brutality of Nazi war crimes and

atrocities. Furthermore, I have also engaged with several larger questions related to American attempts to "know" their enemy and the American occupation of Germany. By exploring the wartime psychologists' belief that their findings could be used to successfully "fix" what was "wrong" with Germany, this thesis expands our understanding of American reeducation programs in occupied Germany, which historians, for the most part, have not viewed as broad-based efforts to reorient the German mind. I argued that the wartime psychologists – and American officials influenced by their studies – framed reeducation as an inherently psychological process, which had to provide Germans with an entirely new mental foundation from which to build new, democratic lives. As such, they were convinced that, when it came to reeducation, "education, in the sense of formal schooling," had "definite limitations," as one pamphlet put it, given that "we are educated not only by teachers, but by what we do, by the purposes we can develop and help to carry through."[3] If American officials wanted to ensure that the Germans would embrace democracy, rather than remain "infected" with the Nazi virus, the wartime psychologists thus argued that reeducation programs had to teach Germans how to lead democratic lives – an endeavor that involved much more than formal education alone.

Beyond highlighting the wartime psychologists' conception of reeducation as an inherently psychological process, this thesis has also drawn attention to the psychological approach to the "German problem" adopted by a group of American analysts, an aspect of the wartime campaign to "know" the enemy that has largely been overlooked. In doing so, this thesis serves as a reminder that politically- and economically-grounded plans for the deindustrialization, demilitarization, and even dismemberment of Germany were not the only "harsh" or "radical" American visions of postwar Germany. Rather, the wartime psychologists'

[3] Department of War, *Can the Germans Be Re-Educated?* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1945), 23–24, 31.

plans for the treatment of Germany's psychological pathologies were often equally extreme. As we have seen, some wartime psychologists advocated "curing" Germany through some sort of shock treatment, the details of which were not specified. Others, meanwhile, argued that, given the "warped" nature of the German mind, reeducation would have to be delivered by force, the only thing the Germans would respond to. Still other analysts contended that the Germans were so pathological that it would take decades to "normalize" their behavior and return them to mental "health."

As these examples demonstrate, the wartime psychologists' plans for Germany may have differed in the details, but their overarching conclusion was the same: the Germans were a mentally ill people, so different from the Americans as to be hardly recognizable. Furthermore, as in the case of proposals focused on economics and politics, the treatment programs that the analysts envisioned defined an asymmetric power relationship between the United States and Germany, one that tilted in favor of the U.S., given that Americans would be the "doctors" and Germans the "patients" during the occupation. Taking all of these points into account, in the end, this thesis reminds us that, not so very long ago, a group of Americans, in a position to circulate their ideas in the press, believed strongly that the mind of a nation could be psychoanalyzed and diagnosed as mentally ill: that, in the case of Germany, to use Kallen's words, the "sickness of Germanism" could be identified.[4] Moreover, these wartime psychologists were convinced that the results of such a psychoanalysis could be used to win a war and engineer a successful occupation, one that would "cure" national mental illness and "put sanity in power" in Germany.[5]

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[4] "What Shall We Do With Germany," *Saturday Review of Literature*, 5.
[5] Ibid., 5.

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