

ABSTRACT

NICOLE H. MEINSSEN

The Conflicting Motivations of the British and their Effects on the German People: An Analysis of the British Occupation of Germany 1945-1947

(Under the Direction of JOHN H. MORROW, JR.)

British objectives for their occupation were many, and the means of achieving them often conflicted with one another; this conflict caused chaos in the British Zone and detracted from British efforts to rebuild a stable and self-supporting Germany in all areas. This thesis examines the early years of the British occupation from a German perspective, and analyzes British efforts in denazification, democratization, and repairing the economy while also discussing the geopolitical motivations and pressures that affected British decisions regarding many of their objectives. It concludes that in attempting to achieve all of their objectives, the British made contradictory policies, and although they endeavored to rectify these contradictions by later compromising between their different objectives, these compromises only served to further hinder their occupational efforts. The contribution of British prejudices, poor planning, and bureaucratic stagnancy to the hindrance of their occupational goals is also examined. Finally, the impact the British occupation had on the German people within the British Zone is investigated, with emphasis on the ways in which the conflicting motivations and objectives of the British contributed to the continuation of German suffering during the early years of the occupation.

INDEX WORDS: Germany, Britain, World War II, Occupation, British Zone, 1945, 1946, 1947, Denazification, Democratization, Re-education, Economy, Cold War, Allied Control Council, ACC, Control Commission Germany, CCG, Military Government, Famine, Coal, Industry, Ruhr, Black Market, *Fragebogen*, Censorship, Press, Housing, Prisoners of War, Prejudice

THE CONFLICTING MOTIVATIONS OF THE BRITISH AND THEIR EFFECTS ON THE
GERMAN PEOPLE: AN ANALYSIS OF THE BRITISH OCCUPATION OF GERMANY
1945-1947

by

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my father, Klaus F. Meinssen, whose love and support have been invaluable to me over the years, and whose interest in and dedication to our family's heritage inspired this thesis. Without everything my father has given me and everything he has done for me for all the years of my life, I would be nowhere compared to where am I today. As much as this thesis was written in pursuit of my own academic interests, it was also written for him, in an effort to help him find our roots and preserve the memory of where our family came from for years to come.

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Finally, I would like to give special regard to my grandfather, Klaus E. Meinssen, who is no longer with us today. His memoirs appear in this text, and his life, love, and continual effort and attention to detail were an inspiration to me throughout my childhood and still are to this day.

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

The topic, subject matter, and perspective of this thesis was inspired by my discovery and translation of an unpublished personal testimony written by my grandfather, Klaus E. Meinsen, in the late Spring and Summer of 1945. A copy of this testimony, and my translation of it, appear in the Appendices of this document. Meinsen was an enlisted man in the German army, recruited at seventeen, and had been stationed in Denmark when he was captured by British soldiers, who marched his regiment back to Germany and used them as forced labor before gradually dismissing them a few at a time. The discovery of this memoir moved me to explore the history of the British occupation of Germany, and also motivated the decision to limit the analysis geographically to the British Zone itself, leaving out the British section of Berlin as well as the other Allied Zones; in addition, because my grandfather was a German soldier, the record of his experience inspired me to look at the British occupation from a German perspective instead of an Allied perspective. This perspective challenges the traditional British view of the occupation of their zone; historians of the time, such as Raymond Ebsworth, tended to see British actions as right, and such histories are colored by the British perspective they are written from. The actions of the British are reviewed based on their effects on the German people and their attempt to rebuild their nation.

The history of the occupation of Germany is long and complex, and the history of the occupation of the British Zone in particular is no exception. The British had a number of different goals and motivations for their occupation, some of which were entirely their own and others of which were shared, in greater or lesser degrees, by all of the Allies. In discussing the

nature of British motivations, the application of those motivations in the occupation, and the resulting effects British decisions had on the German people, it is helpful to understand the historical background, nationally and internationally, of events during the final years of the war and the early years of the occupation.

First of all, the events that occurred during World War II cannot be ignored. Under the Nazi regime, the German army committed terrible atrocities and war crimes both against their own people and against the people in the areas, such as Poland and France, that they occupied. The events of the holocaust left a terrible scar on all of Europe, and when the public in the Allied nations discovered the truth after the end of the war, they were outraged. German actions during the war, coupled with the holocaust, inflamed anti-German sentiments in Britain. Images of the holocaust also desensitized the British occupiers to the fate of the German people because they made the British, indeed all of the Allies, feel that Germany as a nation was responsible, and inspired them to treat the Germans as if they were all guilty. The influence of German actions during World War II should be kept in mind when considering British attitudes toward the German people and the decisions they made during their occupation; however, the atrocities committed by the Germans during the war are not the focus of this analysis. Instead, they should simply be remembered during discussion of the occupation of the British Zone.

Even before World War II was definitively over and continuing after the war's end, the Allies, a group consisting of Britain, France, the United States, and the Soviet Union, had held a number of conferences to decide the fate of Germany once the war was ended. At the Allied conferences at Yalta and Potsdam, which took place in February and July 1945 respectively, the Allies discussed the division of Germany into zones of Allied occupation and also made or planned for a number of other agreements on occupational policy that would later affect the

British occupation.¹ Germany was divided up into different zones, each zone to be occupied and governed by a different Allied nation. Berlin, the German capital, was also divided into different zones of occupation. The Soviet Union took eastern Germany, which they had invaded during the war and demanded to keep, and France and the US took zones in the south and center of western Germany.² The British Zone consisted of “the largely empty farmlands of Schleswig-Holstein, the industrial and farming areas of Lower Saxony, and the industrial but also highly cultural region of the Rhine and the Ruhr.”³

As time went by, the British, who had financial problems of their own and were having trouble paying the high costs of importing food into their zone, began relying more and more on the US for food imports and financial aid. Eventually, in order to ease the burden on both and to encourage trade, Britain and the US forged their zones together economically to create the bizon. Britain depended on the US for financial support and food imports, and the economic bizon was created partially in order to relieve some of the burden of importing food for both governments.⁴ The British branch of the CCG⁵ stated that the bizon was created to “[improve] imports,” “to increase production of Germany’s indigenous resources, especially coal,” and to achieve a “self-sustained economy for both Zones before the end of 1949.”⁶ Economic concerns were not all that motivated the creation of the bizon, however. The Soviet Union was becoming a greater and greater threat, and the fears of the spread of communism that heralded the beginnings of the Cold War were looming. These Cold War ways of thinking were another

¹ Giles MacDonogh, *After the Reich: The Brutal History of the Allied Occupation* (New York: Basic Books, 2007), xvii, 11-12.

² MacDonogh, *After the Reich*, x-xi, 9.

³ MacDonogh, *After the Reich*, 255.

⁴ Ian Turner, “British Policy Towards German Industry,” in *Reconstruction in Post-War Germany*, ed. Ian Turner (New York: Berg, 1989), 81.

⁵ Control Commission Germany.

⁶ *Statement by Sir Cecil Weir, President of the Committee of the Control Commission for Germany (British Element), on the Bizonal Economic Fusion*, 4 December 1946, ed. Beate Ruhm von Oppen. In *Documents on Germany Under Occupation* (London: Oxford University Press, 1955), 199.

motivation to create the bizonie: it would keep the Soviet Union out of West Germany and to limit their expansion, as both the US and the UK were beginning to fear the growth of communism and Soviet power.⁷

After the creation of the bizonie, however, the British began to lose influence in what was originally their zone. Their power did not wane completely, but the Americans were definitely senior in their partnership, and the British were able to retain less and less control as time went on.⁸ Because the bizonie was created on January 1, 1947, and British influence did not dissipate immediately, British impacts on their zone can still be discussed as late as the beginning of 1948, and perhaps even later than that. However, in the interest of discussing the time period during which the decisions made by the British had the highest level of impact on their zone of occupation and its people, the temporal scope of this paper is limited to the years 1945 – 1947.

While the international historical background of this time period played an important role in the character of the British occupation, the condition Germany was in after the end of the war played a key role as well. Allied bombing had devastated large areas of the country, and millions of civilians had been killed or injured in the attacks. “By 7 May 1945 at least 18 million German civilians had perished and 3.6 million homes had been destroyed (20 per cent of the total), leaving 7.5 million homeless.”⁹ Many, many civilians were killed in the Allied attacks on Germany, on top of the millions of soldiers who had been killed in the war. The population and demographics of the country were severely altered by the war and its destruction, and many of the people who had managed to survive Allied bombing raids were left homeless. The “situation in all major German cities” was that “the city centre [was] devastated[,] ... there was little water,

⁷ Anne Deighton, “Cold-War Diplomacy,” in *Reconstruction in Post-War Germany*, ed. Ian Turner (New York: Berg, 1989), 21.

⁸ Turner, “British Policy,” 81-82.

⁹ MacDonogh, *After the Reich*, 1.

less gas and no electricity, sewage and roads were blocked.”¹⁰ The state Germany was in when the Allies arrived to begin their occupation is best described as utter chaos. Even basic utilities like electricity and sewage were not functioning, and life in cities all over Germany had been returned to a very primitive state. The German food system, which had been under severe strain even before Germany’s collapse due to wartime food rationing and Allied air raids’ disruption of the transportation system, was barely functioning¹¹ This fact compounded with the level of destruction present in Germany meant that the Allies had a lot of work to do just to return their zones to a state of habitability, in addition to getting economic and governmental structures running again.

The German people had suffered a great deal during the war. One German described what it felt like to be a German citizen during and after the war in a letter:

Do you believe they will understand what it feels like to be showered with their bombs and shells and at the same time to be sullied by this diabolic state; what it means to be crushed between these two millstones? They simply cannot have suffered as much as us, and since Christ’s death there has been a hierarchy of suffering in which we will remain the victors, without the world ever learning or understanding what it was we felt.¹²

Germany was in a state of total ruin when the Allies arrived to occupy their zones. Economically, governmentally, physically, and mentally, the country would have to be cleaned up and rebuilt from the ground up. The British faced a nearly insurmountable task, but simply rebuilding their zone was not the extent of their goals for their occupation.

There were three main areas in which the British had major goals for their occupation of Germany, and these areas were denazification, democratization, and economic recovery. In denazification, the main goal of the British, indeed of all of the Allies to some degree, was to

¹⁰ Barbara Marshall, *The Origins of Post-War German Politics* (New York: Croom Helm, 1988), 25.

¹¹ John E. Farquharson, *The Western Allies and the Politics of Food: Agrarian Management in Postwar Germany* (Dover: Berg Publishers, 1985), 17.

¹² Qtd. in MacDonogh, *After the Reich*, 3.

remove Nazis from positions of responsibility or authority and punish them as befitted their standing in the Nazi party. Democratization entailed reconstructing the various German government structures to be democratic and 'reeducating' the Germans in democratic principles. Finally, a major British goal was economic recovery and eventual self-sustainability in their zone; the Ruhr was a central industrial area for the whole of Germany, and its industrial production and coal mining were vital both to the reconstruction of Germany as a whole and to satisfying Allied demands for reparations.

However, the British also wanted to minimize the damage caused by denazification efforts to the other goals of occupation, since nearly every person with any kind of real influence almost had no choice but to be a member of the Nazi party; removal of every single one of these people would ruin their attempts to recreate the government and resuscitate the economy within the British Zone. Similarly, focusing too much on economic recovery at the expense of denazification and other security measures could have resulted in a resurgence of Nazism, so the British wanted to try to strike a balance between their conflicting goals in denazification and economic recovery. They were also overly ambitious in their attempts to reformat pre-existing German government structures, since doing so taxed their own resources, and their methods and attitudes generated some anti-British resentment among the German populace. Overshadowing all three of these areas were the other three Allied powers, who each had their own interests and demands and each put pressure on the British at different times, in different ways, and in order to achieve diverse and sometimes conflicting results.

The British had several goals for their occupation of Germany, and many of these goals conflicted with each other. They tried to compromise between each of the areas of their occupation, hoping to minimize the damage each did to the others while simultaneously

achieving their goals in all three areas. However, the three main aims of the British occupation were heavily interconnected, and the attempts at compromise just made things chaotic in all three areas without really ending the conflicts between them. The British occupation was plagued with mistakes and problems, not all of which were directly their fault, but the British attempts at resolving these issues and reconciling their conflicting goals either did not work or made things worse. As a result of the fact that the British failed to focus on their goals one at a time and instead tried to accomplish several conflicting goals at once, the German people suffered in many different ways and the British were not successful in accomplishing all of their goals.

CHAPTER 2 INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

The character of international politics at the end of the Second World War and the various pressures put on the British by the other allies overshadow the decisions made by the British Military Government occupying their zone of Germany and the British government as a whole. Therefore, international politics will be treated first, so that outside pressures will be kept in mind throughout the discussion of other aspects of the occupation. The goals and intentions of the British often differed from those of the other Allied powers, and because Britain relied heavily on the US for economic support in Europe it often had no choice but to go along with American demands. In addition, the British government feared the spread of communism and the influence of the USSR, and much of its decision-making and policy reflected attempts to stop communism and limit the power of the Soviet Union in Europe. These differences in goals between the Allies, as well as strategic geopolitical aims that often took precedence, played a significant role in the chaos and the contradictory decisions made in the British zone, as later sections of this thesis will demonstrate.

The Goals and Motives of the Allied Powers in Occupation

The Allied powers, a group consisting of Britain, France, the United States, and the Soviet Union, made varying demands of conquered Germany and held varying ideas on managing the occupation and reconstruction. In order to properly discuss Allied influences on British foreign policy and how British goals differed from those of the other Allies, it is necessary to examine the goals and motivations the other Allied powers, especially the US, had for the occupation of Germany.

First of all, the US, France, and the Soviet Union each had different ideas about how much of Germany's industrial capacity should remain intact and at what level each industrial area should operate, causing inter-allied conflicts over whether to place priority on Germany's economic recovery, reparations, or security and prevention of German military development. The British, whose zone contained the wealthy industrial area of the Ruhr, were under pressure from all of the Allies as well as the Germans themselves, and these pressures were often contradictory.

The first major conference the Allies had on how to approach the occupation of Germany was Potsdam in July and August 1945, which "was a flawed and ambiguous agreement" that "set the parameters" of the conflict over "whether reparations should take precedence over economic unity" because it did not state clearly enough which of the two was more important.¹ From the beginning, the Allies could not agree on how much of Germany's economic resources should be devoted to reparations and how much to German reconstruction and unification. France and the USSR, in particular, demanded high levels of reparations, while simultaneously insisting on severe limitations on German industry for security reasons. For example, the French wanted to limit German steel production to 7 million tons per year, and the Soviets a mere 4.6 million tons, because steel production is an important military industry.² While demanding that German industry be limited to prevent future military aggression, however, the Allies, particularly the French, also insisted on receiving very high levels of reparations; these two demands put the British, who were in control of Germany's main industrial center, in an interesting situation, since industry could not meet the demands for reparations and still support the German populace if it was as limited as the Allies wanted it to be.

¹ Deighton, "Cold-War Diplomacy," 16.

² Alan Kramer, "British Dismantling Politics," in *Reconstruction in Post-War Germany*, ed. Ian Turner (New York: Berg, 1989), 131.

In addition, the German local government and the British Control Commission were pressuring the British in the opposite direction:

The British government was constantly being urged by German politicians and senior Control Commission officials to halt, or at the very least drastically reduce, coal exports, whilst on the other hand being subjected to a continuous barrage of diplomatic pressure from the French, with US State Department support, aimed at achieving an increase in the amount of coke and coal available for export.³

The diplomatic battle over coal between German and French interests played a major role in the larger diplomatic battle between the allied powers over Germany as a whole. Coal was central to reparation and reconstruction efforts in France, ravaged as it was by occupation and war, and so the French demanded large amounts of coal from Germany in order to rebuild. However, this demand for large amounts of coal conflicted both with German interests in Ruhr coal and with French and US ideas on industrial restriction, for security purposes, in Germany. “Because of [the] enormous economic but also security importance of the Ruhr ... the British were never entirely free in making policies of their own choosing there. ... It was from here that reparations should be taken. Moreover, German industrial production was severely limited to prevent her from becoming a security risk again.”⁴ Conflicting and contradictory interests and demands created a highly chaotic diplomatic atmosphere regarding the British zone, especially the Ruhr area, and the effects of this chaos can be seen in the way the British handled the German economy in their zone.

The views of the different allies on German democratization and the handing over of political control to the German people conflicted as well, albeit not as drastically as their views on German economics and industry. According to “the French view, ... Germany was not only to be ‘democratised’ but also totally demilitarized, dismembered into semi-autonomous states,

³ Turner, “British Policy,” 78.

⁴ Marshall, *Origins of Post-War German Politics*, 12.

and kept under strict occupational control for a generation or more.”⁵ Considering the fact that their country was torn apart in the war, it is unsurprising that the French wanted to eliminate the possibility of Germany rising up and invading them again, but their goal of controlling Germany politically for an extended period was not shared by the Americans.

“The Americans ... were already changing their tune by the end of 1945 and pressing for the transfer of political responsibility to elected German bodies as soon as possible.”⁶ The US wanted to give political control to the German people as soon as possible, but this view conflicted with Soviet views in addition to French ones. “The Russians were prepared to hand over some powers almost immediately – but only to Germans who had been suitably schooled by themselves during the war.”⁷ The future divide between East and West Germany was being foreshadowed by Soviet views on political control in Germany. They did not want to hand over control unless they could be assured that their zone would continue to follow Soviet ideals and interests, a view that was ideologically opposed to the American one.

In denazification policies, however, the Allies were in agreement. None of the Allies wanted to risk the resurfacing of Nazism or another war started by German aggression, and so all of them pushed for stringent policies that would remove former Nazis from positions of authority or influence. “Denazification was the negative aspect of the measures taken by the allies to reform German society ... its aim was to ensure that Germany would never again pose a security threat to Britain and her allies.”⁸ The Allies intended to make denazification policies very severe, as security and prevention of further wars were very important to all of them. The Americans were especially focused on the elimination of Nazism, and they proposed “radical and

⁵ Raymond Ebsworth, *Restoring Democracy in Germany* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., 1960), xiii.

⁶ Ebsworth, *Restoring Democracy*, xiii.

⁷ Ebsworth, *Restoring Democracy*, xiii.

⁸ Ian Turner, “Denazification in the British Zone,” in *Reconstruction in Post-War Germany*, ed. Ian Turner (New York: Berg, 1989), 239.

comprehensive [denazification] measures.”⁹ Each of the Allies put a great deal of pressure on the British to pursue these radical denazification measures. Denazification, however, was an imprecise and nebulous pursuit, requiring the devotion of a lot of time and resources and not always resulting in the elimination of actual Nazis. The difficulties associated with denazification, combined with the high levels of diplomatic pressure to denazify, would afflict the British in their attempts to turn their zone into an economically and politically self-sufficient zone.

Comparison and Contrast of Allied and British Occupational Goals

While the goals of the British in their occupation of Germany did not always conflict with those of the other Allies, they were not always similar either, and the differences between the two groups’ goals often led to diplomatic conflict and chaos within the British zone.

The main area in which British goals and ideas differed most clearly from those of the other allies was the German economy. Unlike the other allies, who were primarily focused on security and reparations, the British were focused on economic recovery in Germany for three main reasons, the first two of which being that recovery in Germany would be central to recovery in Europe as a whole and that a stable and self-supporting German economy would underpin political stability and security in Germany. British politician Anthony Eden stressed that “any policy of industrial disarmament should not be pursued to the extent of bankrupting Germany” and also “stressed the political consequences of a system of economic security so oppressive as to cause long-lasting unemployment and destitution in Germany,” recognizing “the key role of Germany in the European economy and its importance to Britain as a trading partner as well as the linkage between economic and political stability.”¹⁰ The British realized that

⁹ Turner, “Denazification,” 239.

¹⁰ Turner, “British Policy,” 70.

Germany was vital to the European economy on the whole, and that recovery in Germany would fuel recovery in the rest of Europe. However, economic recovery was not their only concern: they also worried about their efforts generating political unrest and angering the German people such that another war might occur.

The third main reason the British wanted to achieve a stable and self-supporting economy in Germany was to reduce their own spending on maintaining their zone. The British zone had been torn apart during the war, and simply importing enough food into the zone to feed its population represented immense costs for the British. “Only a balanced economy in the whole of Germany would minimize British costs there.”¹¹ Cost was an important factor for the British, who had already spent a fortune on a long war and would not be able to afford to support their zone economically for very long. However, in terms of preserving industrial plant, “the Soviets, the French and even the Americans wanted to reduce German economic activity to a considerably lower level than that proposed by the British.”¹²

British ideas about German economic recovery were not altruistic. They still wanted to maintain their own economic dominance, and while it was important for the German economy to recover so that it would stimulate their own, the British were well aware that “too-prosperous a Germany could become a rival for Britain as well as a potential military threat once again.”¹³ The British had contradictory interests regarding Germany: they wanted to stimulate economic recovery there, in order to stop spending money on Germany, but they also wanted to restrict the German economy and industry so that the Germans would not become economic or military rivals once again.

¹¹ Marshall, *Origins*, 10.

¹² Kramer, “British Dismantling Politics,” 131.

¹³ Deighton, “Cold-War Diplomacy,” 17.

Conflict over how to approach, and how much to limit, the German economy was thus generated both by the other allied powers and by the British themselves. British economic policy in their zone was restricted by diplomatic pressure and demands from the French, the US, the Soviet Union, and the Germans themselves. These demands often conflicted with each other and with British interests, creating confusion and limiting British action in the Ruhr and in the British zone as a whole. “Allied co-operation did not function” in Germany, with the consequences being reaped by the German people themselves.¹⁴

The effects of the allies’ inability to cooperate were soon felt by the British, who could not meet the costs of supporting their zone. Unable to get the allies to agree on higher levels of industry and standard of living limits for Germany, the British could not significantly reduce the costs of running their zone. The British “[had] to rely on American involvement in Europe as a result of their economic weakness.”¹⁵ Since the British had to rely more and more on economic aid and food imports from the US, the US gained a degree of control over British policy in Germany. “The Americans were paying the piper, so they naturally wanted to call the tune.”¹⁶ It became a policy aim “to involve as far as possible the United States in Europe who could take on some of the burden [of] ... the cost for the running of Germany.”¹⁷ The British began to follow along with US goals and ideas for Germany, in the hope of achieving these goals so that the US would continue to remain in Germany and foot the bill for supporting her. In this way, as time marched on, British goals began to change and merge with US goals, foreshadowing the unification of the British and US zones into the bizon in late 1946 and early 1947.

¹⁴ Marshall, *Origins*, 10.

¹⁵ Marshall, *Origins*, 13.

¹⁶ Turner, “British Policy,” 81.

¹⁷ Marshall, *Origins*, 9.

Eventually, the British had no choice but to realign their goals to match more closely those of the United States, but the seeds of conflicting and contradictory policies had already been sown, and this British concession to US goals only added to the confusion. The differences between the policies of the British and the other allies had, in many cases, negative impacts on the British occupation of their zone, the specifics of which will be discussed in detail in later chapters. International interactions and politics had a large impact on the occupation of Germany after WWII. In addition, the Soviets and communism were becoming more and more of a threat, and “the overriding aim of the British government emerged: to secure a continuing US commitment to the recovery of Germany and to a balance of power in Europe that would not favour communist influence.”¹⁸

Relations with the USSR, the Cold War, and their Effects on British Foreign Policy

Ever-present in the minds of the western Allies – France, Great Britain, and the United States – as time passed, was the growing threat of the Soviet Union and the spread of communism. Preventing communism from spreading into western Germany and thwarting Soviet attempts to gain more power in the western world were important goals for all of the western powers. The beginnings of the Cold War and anti-communist ways of thinking began to influence policy decisions made in all aspects of the British occupation in Germany. The British had much “anxiety about the Soviet Union ... their worst nightmare was a future alliance between Germany and the Soviet Union.”¹⁹ Keeping Germany allied with the west instead of with the Soviet Union was becoming a major motivator in British policy-making with regards to Germany. “British security had to be guaranteed,” both “against Germany” and the resurgence

¹⁸ Deighton, “Cold-War Diplomacy,” 20.

¹⁹ Deighton, “Cold-War Diplomacy,” 18.

of war and also “against the Soviet Union.”²⁰ Security was an important and ever-present part of the goals all of the allies had for the occupation of Germany, and as conflicts with the Soviet Union became more frequent, basic security measures expanded to include security against the spread of communist influence in addition to security against a resurgence of Nazism and war.

Fears of the Soviet Union underlay many decisions made and actions taken that seemed to have other, usually economic, motivations. The creation of the US and British bizonie, and the resultant division of Germany, was one of these actions. The bizonie’s official inception date was January 1st, 1947,²¹ and by the end of that year documents published by both the British in the west and the Socialist Unity Party²² in eastern Germany reveal the building tension between the two groups. In the later months of 1947, a Foreign Ministers Conference, which discussed the unity of Germany, was taking place in London, and the Socialist Unity Party had been denied access by “the leaders of the Social Democratic Party of Germany and of the bourgeois parties in the Western Zones of Occupation.”²³ The executives of the Socialist Unity Party called a “German People’s Congress for Unity and a Just Peace” to be held on 6 and 7 December 1947, at which “all parties, organizations, and large enterprises” would “[elect] a delegation to the London Conference of Foreign Ministers” that could express “the will of the German people.”²⁴ Of course, “the will of the German people” meant the will of the Communist Party, and by announcing this German People’s Congress in the manner that they did the Socialist Unity Party was threatening to enter communist supporters into the Foreign Ministers Conference.

²⁰ Marshall, *Origins*, 9.

²¹ *Agreement Between the Governments of the United Kingdom and the United States on the Economic Fusion of their Respective Zones*, 2 December 1945, Ruhm 195.

²² The Socialist Unity Party was the branch of the Communist Party that operated within the Soviet Zone in Germany; as such, their actions were largely an extension of the will of the Soviet Union.

²³ *Socialist Unity Party Appeal for a German People’s Congress for Unity and a Just Peace*, 26 November 1947, Ruhm 260.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 261.

At the London Conference, these communists, most likely under the control of the Soviet Union, could push for a unified Germany in which communist, and by extension Soviet, influence could be spread. Consequently, on 15 December 1947 the British proposed that the Conference be adjourned so that the British government could take “time to study the problem as it now is in all its aspects.”²⁵ The British government wanted to prevent communist and Soviet politicians from attending the conference because their power and influence in Germany would grow if they attended. Even though a unified Germany would probably hasten the country’s economic recovery, a unified Germany would also be much more susceptible to the spread of Soviet influence. “A divided Germany had the additional political advantage of keeping the Soviet Union out of the western part of Germany.”²⁶ The Soviet Union had grown very powerful and influential in Europe, and stopping the spread of its control in Germany by dividing the nation would allow the western powers to retain control of at least half of the country. In addition, western Germany contained the British and American zones, including the Ruhr’s industrial powerhouse, and it was important to the British that the Ruhr and its potential not fall out of western control.

“By 1946 ‘political-strategic’ motivations were ultimately more important in deciding the course of British policy than economic considerations. This might explain the determination with which the British blocked Soviet attempts to keep the question of Germany’s economic unity, reparations etc. open.”²⁷ As long as the British controlled the Ruhr, British policies such as the pursuit of economic recovery would continue to be pursued there; “A Germany divided, with the wealthy Ruhr looking westwards, was a safer bet for the west than a united Germany

²⁵ *Extract from Marshall’s Statement Proposing the Adjournment of the London Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers, 25 November – 15 December 1947, 15 December 1947, Ruhm 261-268.*

²⁶ Marshall, *Origins*, 11.

²⁷ Marshall, *Origins*, 11.

that might fall under communist influence.”²⁸ If the Soviet Union gained control of the Ruhr, they would, of course, use it differently and without the prosperity of the United Kingdom or the United States in mind. Therefore, in order to prevent the spread of communism and Soviet influence and to maintain control over the Ruhr, the western powers shied away from discussions of German unification and sought to preserve a divided Germany.

In addition to fearing the spread of Soviet power and influence, the western powers also had strong ideological biases and fears concerning communism itself. They wanted at all costs to stop the spread of communism as an ideology, and policies with that goal in mind greatly affected policies in other areas of the German occupation. Economically, the spread of communism appeared linked to poverty and unrest. In this way, the British goal of stopping the spread of communism coincided with their goal of economic recovery in Germany. “If Germany prospered, it would be less prone to communism – so Germany had to be revived.”²⁹ The threat of communism further motivated the British in their attempt to resuscitate and stabilize the German economy and, as will be discussed in chapter three, helped bring the other western powers around to the British point of view regarding the German economy. The threat of communism also intensified efforts to install democratic political structures in Germany and root democracy in the country before communism could take hold. “The onset of the Cold War made the development of political structures urgent. The first democratic local government elections were held in the British Zone in the autumn of 1946.”³⁰ Fears of communism further motivated the British to pursue economic recovery and democratization and likely drove them to redouble their efforts in those areas.

²⁸ Deighton, “Cold-War Diplomacy,” 21.

²⁹ Deighton, “Cold-War Diplomacy,” 21.

³⁰ Barbara Marshall, “British Democratisation Policy in Germany,” in *Reconstruction in Post-War Germany*, ed. Ian Turner (New York: Berg, 1989), 194.

The Cold War had the added effect of essentially ending constructive political and diplomatic discussions among the allies regarding the occupation of Germany. The Soviet Union and the western powers began to see the other as a threat, and instead of working together to benefit both Germany and each other they began to use political discussions over Germany to fight for power. “Both the Soviet Union and the western powers viewed each other’s motives with considerable apprehension and thought they were responding to a threat from the other,” even if no such threat actually existed.³¹ These responses to threats, real or otherwise, drew attention away from the German people and the needs of the country and changed, to some degree, the goals and motives of the occupying powers. For example, after the very first attempts to work together, it became apparent that Britain “[refused] to deal constructively with the Soviet Union over Germany.”³² In the eyes of the British, the goals of the Soviet Union were oriented towards the growth of Soviet power and not the recovery of Germany or the recovery of the other allied powers, and so they would not come to agreement with the Soviets. The British also feared the spread of communism, which was naturally associated with the Soviet Union and was probably a major goal of theirs, and did not want to work with the Soviets for that reason; all in all, the British saw themselves as so different from the Soviets that no agreement could be reached, and preventing the Soviet Union from gaining power and influence became more important than working together for the benefit of Germany and its people.

Conclusions

The nature of international politics at the end of the Second World War and the relations among the major powers – France, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the Soviet Union – had a considerable impact on the way the British handled the occupation of Germany in their

³¹ Deighton, “Cold-War Diplomacy,” 34.

³² Deighton, “Cold-War Diplomacy,” 28.

zone. The goals and demands of the other allied powers focused on security, denazification, reparations, limiting the levels of German industry, and using the coal from the Ruhr for reconstruction. The ways the other allied powers wanted to handle the occupation were, however, often at odds with the way the British wanted to handle it, with these conflicts on the international scale often having the result of creating chaos, contradictory policies, and confusion within the British zone. The British desired mainly the economic recovery of Germany, both in order to improve the European economy as a whole and to lower the massive costs they were incurring by occupying and supporting a struggling Germany. They also wanted, as time wore on, to further involve the US in the German occupation and to ensure continued US support and aid.

The British goals of promoting economic recovery by having higher maximum levels of industry in important, and potentially militarily dangerous, industries such as coal and steel and drastically reducing the amount of coal sent out of the country so that it could be used to rebuild in Germany conflicted with the desires of the other allies. France, the US, and, earlier on, the Soviet Union, all put diplomatic pressure on the British to maintain security with low limits on industries whose products could be used for weapons or other warlike purposes; to enforce harsh denazification policies despite the fact that denazification was imprecise, time-consuming, expensive, and often resulted in the removal of key executives; and to send large amounts of reparations, in money and in goods, to France and the USSR to repay damages done in those countries, even though money, coal, and other goods were desperately needed in Germany itself to rebuild the shattered country and get the economy running again. The British had no choice but to cater to the demands of the other allies on some occasions, but at other times were able to

exert their own influence, creating a quagmire of different policies and international goals for the Ruhr and the British zone as a whole.

The stirring of the Cold War started affecting everything as it developed, and the Cold War could be called the principal motivator of the division of Germany. Fears of communism and the Soviet Union tainted every decision made and influenced changes in policy both within Germany and internationally. Within Germany, the growing threat of the spread of communism galvanized the democratization process and hurried the transfer of control to German elected bodies and also convinced the other western powers that Germany's economic recovery and eventual prosperity should be pursued in order to prevent the spread of communism to western Germany. On an international scale, the economic bizonе fusing the British and American zones was created to help lower the costs of occupation for the two countries, speed economic growth, and to keep the USSR out of western Germany by ensuring a united, and democratic, western half.

This very tense and rapidly shifting international situation, caused by allied conflicts over the details of the occupation and by the onset of the Cold War, forms the context for other aspects of the British occupation, for international diplomatic and political motivations colored every decision the British made regarding their occupation.

CHAPTER 3 DENAZIFICATION

Denazification, or the removal of Nazis from positions of responsibility in Germany, was one of the major goals the Allies had set for the occupation of Germany. They were focused on destroying Nazism, preventing its resurgence, and bringing democracy to Germany, and they wanted to ensure that as many Nazis as possible were arrested, removed from positions in which they could pose a threat to the Allies, and brought to justice. The British, however, had other goals in other areas of the occupation which conflicted, to some degree, with this goal of strict and thorough denazification. One of these other main goals was economic restoration, which conflicted with their intent to denazify because many of the Nazis who needed to be removed were experts or professional administrators in highly important economic sectors, such as coal mining, and their removal would wreak havoc on British attempts to restore the economy. Denazification would have a similar impact on democratization, since many of the Nazis being removed held responsible positions in government; these positions had to be filled with people who were inexperienced and required training, slowing down the democratization effort as well. The Allied pressure on the British to denazify was very strong, but their desire to restore the economy was conflicted with that pressure, and their attempts to resolve the resulting conflict through compromise caused more problems than they solved in both areas.

British Denazification Methods and their Failings

In order to achieve denazification in their zone, the British used three main methods, all linked to one another. These three main methods were the *Fragebogen*, or questionnaires; the British bureaucracy that made decisions based on the *Fragebogen*; and later, in 1946, the panels

of Germans who decided whether the German individual in question was affiliated with the Nazi party. Even after the Germans took responsibility for denazification through these panels, however, the British retained veto power, keeping some measure of control over the process. Each of these methods had flaws and failings in one way or another, and these flaws compounded to detract from the effectiveness and efficiency of the overall denazification effort. The weaknesses in the *Fragebogen* were that they generated an enormous amount of paperwork for the British bureaucracy to process, that their processing therefore was too slow, and that only people who were applying for or already had jobs were required to fill them out and then appear before the panels, a dangerous loophole. The panels of German inquisitors failed because the British had to approve everything they decided on, they were inefficient, and they became a way for Germans to gain personal advantages over one another rather than a way to truly denazify.

In addition, the very nature of the attempt to denazify Germany right after the war ended, when the British were full of mistrust for all Germans, carried its own inherent weaknesses. Because they had not lived and worked in Germany while it was under the Nazi regime, the British had trouble distinguishing actual Nazis from people who had joined the party in order to survive, and needed to rely on assistance from German civilians and anti-fascists; however, the British distrusted all Germans, even anti-fascists and others having nothing to do with the Nazi party, and placed a certain amount of guilt for the war on the population as a whole. Therefore, they were reluctant to turn to the Germans for aid, and tried to denazify on their own, which often resulted in some known Nazis escaping punishment while other, innocent Germans were punished for nothing.

First of all, rules and guidelines for denazification in all four zones were set up by the Allied Control Council in late 1946. *Control Council Directive no. 38: the Arrest and*

Punishment of War Criminals, Nazis, and Militarists and the Internment, Control, and Surveillance of Potentially Dangerous Germans states that “the object of this paper is to establish a common policy for Germany covering:”

- (a) The punishment of war criminals, Nazis, Militarists, and industrialists who encouraged and supported the Nazi Regime.
- (b) The complete and lasting destruction of Nazism and Militarism by imprisoning and restricting the activities of important participants or adherents to these creeds.
- (c) The internment of Germans, who, though not guilty of any specific crimes are considered to be dangerous to Allied purposes, and the control and surveillance of others considered potentially so dangerous.¹

These stated goals for Allied denazification can be considered to have been, at least loosely, the goals held by the British for their own denazification efforts, since the British were a part of the Allied Control Council and therefore had a hand in writing this directive. In the same directive the Allies also outlined and described the membership of the five categories into which people would be grouped based on their level of adherence to Nazism. The categories were as follows:

1. Major offenders;
2. Offenders (activists, militarists, and profiteers);
3. Lesser offenders (probationers);
4. Followers;
5. Persons exonerated (Those included in the above categories who can prove themselves not guilty before a tribunal.)²

The directive goes on to list the definitions of membership in each category and the sanctions that should be placed against the members of each category. Only “persons exonerated” were totally free from sanction, and the only people who belonged in that category were those who “not only showed a passive attitude but also actively resisted the national socialistic tyranny to

¹ *Control Council Directive no. 38: the Arrest and Punishment of War Criminals, Nazis, and Militarists and the Internment, Control, and Surveillance of Potentially Dangerous Germans*, 12 October 1946, Ruhm 168.

² *Control Council Directive no. 38: the Arrest and Punishment of War Criminals, Nazis, and Militarists and the Internment, Control, and Surveillance of Potentially Dangerous Germans*, 12 October 1946, Ruhm 170.

the extent of his powers,” and this status had to be proved before a tribunal.³ These Allied guidelines set a foundation for how denazification should be approached in Germany in general: legalistically, based on a pre-written set of guidelines, with people in question being brought before a tribunal that would judge and punish them. This foundation, combined with other weaknesses inherent in the Allied attempts to denazify, hindered the British in their attempts to denazify from the beginning.

Denazification in the British Zone in general also came with its own inherent limitations, which stemmed mostly from the way the British approached the problem. First of all, they knew very little about the composition of the German population. “Denazification was by its very nature outside the ability of outsiders to handle. ... The Germans themselves knew the difference between the card-carrying paterfamilias trying to earn a living, persecuting no one, and the block warden reporting to the party. Yet the British ... insisted on shouldering the task of distinguishing them.”⁴ The British took it upon themselves to denazify their zone, unwilling to let the Germans help them “because they were all automatically suspect[.] German civilians were not accepted as partners by Military Government officers.”⁵ This suspicion intensified the complexity and difficulty of the denazification effort, because the British had to expend more time and effort attempting to discern Nazis from innocents.

The British did not want to base their denazification efforts on political distinctions, preferring a “‘legal’ approach” in which “membership of the NSDAP became the yardstick by which implication with the regime was measured.”⁶ However, this legalistic method was

³ *Control Council Directive no. 38: the Arrest and Punishment of War Criminals, Nazis, and Militarists and the Internment, Control, and Surveillance of Potentially Dangerous Germans*, 12 October 1946, Ruhm 170.

⁴ Patricia Meehan, *A Strange Enemy People: Germans under the British 1945-50* (London: Peter Owen Publishers, 2001), 100-101.

⁵ Meehan, *A Strange Enemy People*, 48.

⁶ Marshall, *Origins*, 48.

“bureaucratic and slow,” and “also did not take account of all those who were known to have benefited from the regime without being officially party members, whereas thousands of innocuous party members [were] penalized.”⁷ Often, British attempts to isolate and punish members of the Nazi party resulted in the arrest of guiltless citizens or people who had joined the party because circumstances forced them to, while some actual Nazis were allowed to escape unscathed. This fact represents one of the major failings of the British denazification efforts: because of the nature of circumstances and attitudes at the beginning of the occupation, some Nazis went undetected and unpunished, causing the British to fail to accomplish their stated goal of completely denazifying their zone of occupation.

Since the British were unwilling, at first, to rely on German advice to isolate Nazis, they used instead a method that was also being used by the Americans: long questionnaires, called *Fragebogen*, that every German had to fill out. These *Fragebogen* were designed to determine if the German in question was a Nazi, and were “the chief instruments of denazification ... ;” however, some of the questions were “vague,” some were “unintentionally humorous,” and some were just plain ridiculous, such as the questions on “how much you weighed, scars, distinguishing features, religion,” “titles of nobility,” and “earnings.”⁸ The questions on the *Fragebogen* were often inane, confusing, and badly worded, and frustrated the German citizens who were forced to fill them out. Despite the flaws in the *Fragebogen*, however, the British still relied on them as a tool to aid the panels in deciding what category a person belonged in. Anyone who had a job or was applying for one had to fill out a questionnaire. Giles MacDonogh writes that “if you wanted to get on, you faced the ‘inquisition’ and filled in the form with its

⁷ Marshall, *Origins*, 48.

⁸ MacDonogh, *After the Reich*, 344-345.

‘sometimes stupid questions’, otherwise you were out of work and deprived of ration tickets. If you were not careful, you were declared a war criminal to boot.”⁹

Because the *Fragebogen* were issued to Germans all over the zone, there was soon an avalanche of paperwork to sort through. This huge amount of bureaucratic work put a damper on the already questionable efficiency of the *Fragebogen*. One British occupier wrote that “denazification is not everywhere proceeding as fast as seems desirable owing to the complete inability of Field Security to deal with *Fragebogen* (Questionnaires) in the numbers which are now being submitted to them.”¹⁰ The British staff responsible for sorting through the *Fragebogen* were soon buried in paperwork, with the effect that the results of the questionnaires, as well as the following hearings before panels, were delayed until the bureaucracy could catch up. These delays caused denazification efforts to move forward slowly.

“In the initial stages [denazification] was carried out by Allied officials.”¹¹ In early 1946, however, the Allies decided that “German Denazification Panels were to be set up which were to sift through questionnaires filled in by all Germans and make recommendations to the allies.”¹² The Allies, including the British, maintained control of denazification for a while, but turned some of the responsibility over to the Germans as distrust faded. These German panels were not free of flaws either, however, and these flaws also contributed to the mixed success of the British denazification effort. One of the biggest flaws in this system was in the nature of the screening process. “Any German who applied for a responsible post had to be cleared first by his local panel,” over which the British retained veto control,¹³ but there was “a loophole. Only those who were seeking employment had to present themselves to the panels, and it was thus possible

⁹ MacDonogh, *After the Reich*, 348.

¹⁰ Qtd. in Marshall, *Origins*, 50.

¹¹ Ebsworth, *Restoring Democracy*, 162.

¹² Marshall, *Origins*, 54-55.

¹³ Ebsworth, *Restoring Democracy*, 11.

for a known Nazi ... to live on quietly without suffering any other disadvantages.”¹⁴ The overall result of this loophole was that “well known Nazi activists were seen to be left unscathed whereas convinced non-Nazis seemed to suffer for their commitment.”¹⁵ The existence of this loophole represents a serious flaw in the British denazification system.

Finally, after the panels of Germans had taken the place of the British officials, eventually they began to use the panels for their own ends. The British could not watch and execute their veto power over all of the panels at once, and indeed Raymond Ebsworth writes that the veto powers were “hardly ever used.”¹⁶ “Denazification too often simply deteriorated into a process where denunciations were made to obtain personal advantages.”¹⁷ Because of the complicated, slow, and confusing bureaucratic procedures, and the inattention of the British, the Germans on the panels were able to use their positions of power for their own gain, causing even more Germans who were not actually Nazis to be accused of such and arrested. The bureaucratic methods of the *Fragebogen* and the tribunals of Germans evaluating their peers constituted a denazification effort that “was considered ... ponderous and inefficient.”¹⁸ Since some Nazis were escaping punishment in their zone, and in their place innocents and people against whom the Germans on the panels had personal grudges were being arrested and sentenced, the British cannot be said to have achieved total success in their denazification efforts.

The Conflict between Denazification and Economic and Administrative Efficiency

Aside from the general weaknesses in the methods the British used to denazify, their efforts were also further complicated by their conflicting needs to both denazify and maintain and build up the devastated German economy and administration. This conflict caused chaos

¹⁴ Ebsworth, *Restoring Democracy*, 17.

¹⁵ Marshall, *Origins*, 56-57.

¹⁶ Ebsworth, *Restoring Democracy*, 162.

¹⁷ Marshall, *Origins*, 56-57.

¹⁸ Marshall, *Origins*, 55.

and confusion in the denazification effort, and the British ended up letting more Nazis go free, since they were experts in important industries, while harmless party members or innocents were arrested and punished.

The conflict the British felt between sustaining the economy and the administration and satisfying their goal of denazification was a very real and difficult situation. “Very frequently the previous Nazi incumbent in a post was the local expert, and a refusal to reinstate him might mean delays which in key departments like the food offices could have serious consequences for the public.”¹⁹ This fact represented an important problem the British had to solve: how to continue denazifying while still leaving some experts in their positions. The British did attempt to tackle this seemingly unsolvable problem; however, their solutions caused more problems for denazification, and for other areas of the occupation, than deciding one way or the other may have. They issued “a new directive” on denazification “specifically for the British Zone” that, they claimed, “allowed sufficient latitude for the German administration and economy to be built up.”²⁰ This directive, rather than finding a balance between denazification and economic and administrative build-up as it was intended to, caused denazification efforts to swing back and forth between too much denazification and not enough. For example, in 1945, the “Crafts Department of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry” in Hanover, a city in the British Zone, recommended that “only 38 master craftsmen should be prevented from working (out of several thousands in the city!) because of their too close association with the previous regime.”²¹ It was recommended that most of the craftsmen be left in their positions because their labor was needed; however, dismissing only 38 out of thousands probably left far too many Nazis free and unpunished.

¹⁹ Ebsworth, *Restoring Democracy*, 9.

²⁰ Turner, “Denazification,” 247.

²¹ Marshall, *Origins*, 54.

On the other hand, too many experts were dismissed from the coal industry, with disastrous results, especially considering the vital role coal played in reconstruction all over Europe and the demands being placed on German coal to fulfill this need. “The manner in which denazification was being implemented had denuded the [coal] industry of many of its competent officials, and those remaining were in such a state of uncertainty about their future that they were incapable of giving their best service.”²² The British were attempting to find a middle ground between ridding important industries and governmental departments of their experts and important employees and leaving too many Nazis in positions of responsibility, thereby failing to meet their denazification goals. However, the compromises the British made created a lot of chaos in their zone and resulted in many Nazis remaining in their posts in some industries while most of them were dismissed in others.

When Control Commission Directive 38 was written in late 1946, it put renewed emphasis on denazification in Germany as a whole. “The concern within the CCG was with restricting the scope of denazification ... it was of the utmost importance that all unnecessary denazification should be avoided.”²³ However, the Allies, especially the Americans, were leaning more heavily on the British to denazify. The Americans were insistent that “all party members, however nominal,” be dismissed despite “administrative necessity, convenience, or expediency,” but “membership of the party had been virtually a condition of employment in many departments of the administration in Germany.”²⁴ Pressure from the Americans and other Allies made the conflict between the economy and denazification an even more pressing issue. The publication of ACC Directive 38 “created a conflict between the need to purge German society of Nazism and the need, not merely to keep the revived German administration working,

²² Meehan, *A Strange Enemy People*, 105.

²³ Turner, “Denazification,” 249.

²⁴ Meehan, *A Strange Enemy People*, 90.

but to provide the inhabitants of the British Zone with food, water and some protection from disease. ... [It] was precisely the development of such conditions that would favour the recrudescence of Nazism.”²⁵ This conflict was clear and remained central to the problem of denazification even as late as fall 1946. If the British pursued their denazification efforts too heavily, the economy and new administration would suffer, which would in turn engender resentment among the German people and might lead to unrest or the resurgence of fascism. On the other hand, if the British failed to denazify enough, they would be put under serious pressure and scrutiny by the Americans and the other Allies.

The solutions the British tried to implement in order to alleviate this conflict did not produce successful results, however. “The more moderate occupationally related measures carried out in the British Zone caused sufficient chaos and disruption to provoke serious concern.”²⁶ Some industries were disrupted despite attempts to limit denazification, and Nazis were left unpunished in others. The chaos resulting from denazification in the Ruhr area is a clear example of the results of this conflict the British felt. “In the Ruhr all the mining engineers were dismissed as Nazis. Then there were explosions that claimed hundreds of lives.”²⁷ Many other industries and sectors of the new German administration had similar problems as the British attempted to pursue moderate denazification strategies.

The Effects of Conflicting British Motivations on the Denazification Effort

Instead of making the German industries and government more efficient, two of their other goals for the occupation, the British, with their moderation and conflicting goals, caused chaos and the loss of German public support. Also, the main goal of denazification, finding and dismissing Nazis, was not totally achieved because many Nazis, especially the ones who had

²⁵ Turner, “Denazification,” 256.

²⁶ Turner, “Denazification,” 239.

²⁷ MacDonogh, *After the Reich*, 349.

been in positions of power and responsibility during the Nazi regime, went free. Many Germans became disillusioned with the British Military Government, and indeed in their own new governments, for several reasons having to do with British denazification policy. The *Fragebogen* angered Germans because many of the questions were ridiculous and seemed useless; there was a lack of differentiation between actual innocence and guilt which caused a loss of state credibility. Also, many industries were disrupted by the random and chaotic denazification efforts, which scared workers because they could be arrested as a Nazi even if they had not been an important party member. The conflict the British were presented with was a very difficult problem, but their solution to it did not successfully denazify, nor did it allow for economic and administrative growth. In addition, public opinion of the denazification policy, and the British Military Government in general, was waning both in Germany and in Great Britain as the populations of both countries observed the chaos the policy was causing.

Public opinion in both Germany and Great Britain was beginning to turn against the British Military Government and their failing denazification policy. In Germany, feelings were mixed. Some were irritated at the slow speed and the tendency of the British to leave more important Nazi party members in their posts, especially considering the numbers of unimportant party members and even innocent people not in the party that were being arrested. One Military Government official wrote that “the bulk of public opinion in this RB²⁸ is in favour of a clean sweep and, ignoring administrative expediency, is perplexed at our retention of such borderline cases,” and Barbara Marshall concluded that “denazification in the eyes of many Germans was ... not thorough enough.”²⁹ The average German citizen wanted to see his or her Nazi

²⁸ *Regierungsbezirk*, an administrative district.

²⁹ Marshall, *Origins*, 52.

oppressors punished for their crimes, and resented seeing them go unpunished simply because their arrest would disrupt some industry or administration.

In addition, “the Germans ... were annoyed to see the Party big-shots go free while the authorities continued to harass rank-and-file members who had done nothing monstrous.”³⁰ The more important Nazis, who had actually been harming the German people, were not punished because doing so would damage industrial and/or administrative efficiency, but average German citizens who had only been nominally involved in the party were being arrested, and were often sent to internment camps.³¹ The *Fragebogen*, too, were a source of discontentment among the German people, especially the more intellectual Germans, who were insulted by the banality of the questions.³² Even in Great Britain the people were beginning to be tired of the chaotic and confusing denazification policy in the British Zone. “By the end of 1946, public opinion in Britain was tiring of the manifold complexities of the programme and was increasingly pre-disposed to ... wind up denazification as quickly as possible.”³³ One of the effects of the denazification policy in the British Zone was that the populations of both Great Britain and Germany grew to dislike the way it was proceeding and to want to see changes.

On the other side of the equation, however, were the officials in the Military Government and the British branch of the CCG, whose industries and departments were being torn apart and thrown into chaos by the denazification policy. “Bitter protests were received from Military Government officials, battling to get the German economy moving again, about the catastrophic effects of denazification in their sectors.”³⁴ These officials needed further relaxation of denazification standards, or at least some regulation of the confusion caused by conflicting

³⁰ MacDonogh, *After the Reich*, 268.

³¹ MacDonogh, *After the Reich*, 414.

³² MacDonogh, *After the Reich*, 258.

³³ Turner, “Denazification,” 261.

³⁴ Turner, “Denazification,” 258.

directives on denazification, in order to get their industries running efficiently again. This need is because denazification impacted industry particularly negatively, both because needed experts and supervisors were being arrested and because the wealth of directives on denazification, in addition to the British tendency to arrest unimportant party members or innocent civilians, caused so much chaos and uncertainty that workers were in a near constant state of unease and fear. “The disruption caused by denazification, the uncertainty which surrounded the process of appeal and reinstatement, and the fear and suspicion which the policy invoked, all hindered production at the works.”³⁵ Workers feared denazification, and this fear alone put another damper on industrial production, adding to the ways in which denazification was negatively impacting industry.

Conclusions

Various problems were caused by British attempts to resolve the conflict between the economy and denazification and to cope with the flaws that were built in to the methods they chose to denazify, with the most central of those problems being that the British failed to completely denazify: many Nazis who should have been arrested escaped punishment. Nazis ended up going free for several reasons, including the corruption of the German tribunal panels, the fact that many important party members were left alone because they were experts whose knowledge and experience was needed in industry or administration, and the inability of the British to separate those who willingly joined the Nazi party and those who joined out of fear. In addition to causing the British to partially fail to achieve their most basic goal for denazification, the solutions the British presented also caused a myriad of other problems in their zone.

The welter of directives which caused such confusion, the disruption of some industrial and administrative organizations, the resentment of the population at a policy which was seen as punishing the ‘small fry’ but letting the ‘big fish’ escape,

³⁵ Turner, “Denazification,” 258.

the scope provided for corruption, hypocrisy and deception – all of these have rightly been seen as hallmarks of British denazification.³⁶

The problems inherent in denazification were many, and the conflict between denazification and industrial and administrative progress and efficiency presented a very difficult problem that needed to be solved. However, the way the British Military Government tried to solve these problems only resulted in causing chaos in their zone, reducing industrial production in a number of ways, and causing public opinion in both Germany and Great Britain to turn against them.

Finally, the “fundamental error behind the denazification policy” was that “it failed to create a belief in a state of law because it failed to differentiate between the innocent and the guilty.”³⁷ Another of the primary goals the British, and indeed all of the Allies, at least in the beginning, had for their occupation was to reconstruct Germany and turn it into a unified and legitimate state once again. British denazification policy was causing the Germans in their zone to lose faith in the state and the law as legitimate and unbiased governing tools and to realize, at least somewhat, that the only true power in the British Zone at the time was the British Military Government. No matter how many concessions they made to the various German administrative apparatuses, the British were still in charge, and their rule was chaotic and unpredictable.

³⁶ Turner, “Denazification,” 266.

³⁷ MacDonogh, *After the Reich*, 351.

CHAPTER 4 DEMOCRATIZATION, RE-EDUCATION, AND THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT

In addition to denazification, “the ‘democratisation’ of Germany,” a term that implied the realignment of the German government and people away from fascism and toward democratic thinking and action, “was one of the key phrases of Allied occupation policies in Germany.”¹ In keeping with this goal, the British actively pursued democratization in their zone, attempting to ensure that democracy would grow and thrive in Germany. The intent was to democratize Germany through a number of means, including changing German government structures, such as local and provincial level governments and the civil service; changing the education system and curriculum to instill democratic principles in the German youth; attempting to reeducate German adults in democracy through the media and special civil and government service training schools; and controlling the operation, licensing, and influence of political parties and other German organizations such as trade unions.

However, the British wanted democracy in Germany to resemble the way democracy works in Great Britain, and occasionally used their influence as the occupying power to force the Germans to bend to their will, even if that will contradicted what the Germans had decided democratically. They were, for the most part, convinced that part of the reason the Nazis were able to take over in Germany was the ‘weakness’ of the previous German democratic system. This attitude is an example of the underlying anti-German condescension and tendency to think of Germans as second-class human beings, called by some authors the ‘colonial spirit,’ that pervaded the British Military Government and their branch of the Control Commission Germany

¹ Marshall, “British Democratisation Policy,” 189.

(CCG). This attitude affected the implementation of British ideas, good or bad, making them more difficult to carry out since for the most part the British officials in charge did not respect the elected German officials or even the German people as a whole. In addition, the CCG itself was overstaffed and many of its employees were incompetent. All of these factors, in addition to the monumental nature of the task they were facing, combined to ensure that even when the British were successful in achieving their goals regarding the German government, their attitudes towards the Germans as a group caused the Germans to resent them and grow increasingly anti-British.

British Attitudes and their Impact on the Democratization Process

Although the attitudes and opinions outlined in this chapter were by no means held by every member of the British occupation, the majority of the Military Government and CCG staff members, especially those in the upper echelons, looked down their noses at the Germans as a group. Their attitude toward the Germans influenced the decisions they made regarding democratization and the reconstruction of the German government and often lead to unnecessary over-supervision, condescension toward elected German officials, and negligence of the average German citizen's problems and issues.

Many of the members of the British occupation had the opinion that there was an intrinsic German nature that contributed to the takeover of the Nazis and made the Germans more difficult to educate in the ways of democracy. For example, "appended to every report" of the results of surveys conducted by the Public Opinion Research Office (PORO) in Germany "was the extraordinary disclaimer ... which suggested that 'educated' Britons might find German views 'irritatingly naïve and stupidly illogical'."² The higher-ups in the PORO attached this

² David Welch, "Priming the Pump," in *Reconstruction in Post-War Germany*, ed. Ian Turner (New York: Berg, 1989), 235.

message to every report that was sent out of their office, clearly indicating their biased views of the Germans. This office was responsible for discovering the opinions of average Germans and notifying the rest of the British Military Government of their findings, and yet they believed that the Germans were naïve and stupid, which opinions would probably have corrupted the empirical purity of their research in addition to negatively influencing the opinions of the rest of the Military Government. In his book, one member of the British Military Government wrote that the British included a lot of rules and laws in the *Länder* constitutions because “[the Germans’] tendency to obey the law and therefore such ‘rules,’ might well help to make them better democrats.”³ This author, and apparently many other British officials, did not believe that the Germans were capable of being democratic or of understanding the way democracy works. It seems that they felt that, because of this supposed intrinsic inability of Germans to be democratic, they would have to make many rules and work hard to educate the German populace before democracy in Germany would be possible.

The British backed up these negative opinions of the Germans, and the belief that they were not capable of democracy unguided, by pointing to the fact that Nazism rose out of the democratic Weimar Republic. The British “claimed that local government in Germany had never been democratic and that this lack of basic democratic experience at the local level was responsible for the ease with which the Nazis had been able ... to take over,” and they felt that “what was needed in Germany was a lesson in basic democracy as practiced in Great Britain.”⁴ The British believed that experience in the way democracy works is necessary for a democracy to function properly, and blamed the relative newness of the Weimar government structures for the rise of Nazism.

³ Ebsworth, *Restoring Democracy*, 135.

⁴ Marshall, *Origins*, 94.

In keeping with their opinions of the Germans as a people, the British found the German government systems that were in place before 1933 to be inadequate and contributive to the rise of fascism, and chose to attempt to replace them with the more enlightened British way of doing democracy. Even though “the systems of local government in operation” before 1933 “were clearly based on democratic principles,” the British decided that they must “eradicate” the old local government system and reconstruct it completely.⁵ The fact that British apparently felt that the old German system was not good enough and their subsequent decision to completely remake the local government system both point to the attitude the British had; this example of the kinds of decisions made by the British occupiers clearly indicates their tendency to look down on the Germans as intrinsically naïve and unaware of democracy. What the British replaced the old German local government system with was, naturally, modeled on the current British system. “[British] reasoning was strongly influenced by the local government system in force” in Britain.⁶ The British viewed their own systems as superior to the German ones, even though the old German system had been democratic; this choice points to an obvious bias against the Germans as a people.

This anti-German bias did not go unnoticed by the Germans themselves. Raymond Ebsworth, who was a member of the British Military Government, wrote that “some broad-minded officials agreed with us, but on the whole [German] officialdom was hostile.”⁷ The elected and appointed German officials in their burgeoning new government systems resented British attempts to fit Germany into the British mold. Many of the British ideas were essentially implemented by force, using dictates and directives, so that the British could be sure their ideas would last. However, when they tried to promote legislation without making Military

⁵ Ebsworth, *Restoring Democracy*, 78-79.

⁶ Ebsworth, *Restoring Democracy*, 81.

⁷ Ebsworth, *Restoring Democracy*, 99.

Government directives, “there was an outstanding instance of the failure of such methods of lobbying.”⁸ Ironically, the British were attempting to democratize Germany using undemocratic means, and when they did try to go through the democratic system legitimately their ideas were rejected. In addition, after the *Länder* were established in 1947 they began altering their policies to reflect their opinion of the British and the force-feeding of British ideas into German systems. “All four Länder of the British zone ... discarded much of the British-inspired detail” in their government systems in the spring of 1947.⁹ The Germans were aware of British opinions of them, resented the imposition of so many British policies and ideas into their government systems, and rejected or eliminated many British elements of the new government systems whenever possible. British attitudes and opinions were having a negative impact, from their perspective at least, on one of their goals for the democratization of Germany, which was to install a British-style democracy there.

Another example of a British occupational institution that was negatively affected by British attitudes toward and opinions of the German populace was their branch of the Control Commission Germany. Many of the British CCG members had “too much colonial spirit,” and generally felt that “the individual German is a person to whom no attention need be given at all.”¹⁰ The term ‘colonial spirit’ refers to the way the British officials interacted with each other and with the German people: they acted as if Germany was a British colony, with a ‘backward’ people to enlighten and a government and civil structure to reorganize, and were disinclined to mix socially with Germans or even lower-ranking British officials. “There is thus considerable evidence of a lack of understanding and sympathy for working class organizations among

⁸ Ebsworth, *Restoring Democracy*, 128-129.

⁹ Ebsworth, *Restoring Democracy*, 61.

¹⁰ Marshall, *Origins*, 23.

Military Government officers.”¹¹ Average German citizens, their problems, and their organizations did not interest the brass in the British Military Government. These officers resisted the growing influence of the new German trade unions and made efforts to curb these organizations’ creation and growth through complicated, and unfamiliar, legislation.¹² British opinions of the Germans as second-class citizens, due to their so-called ‘colonial spirit,’ caused the Military Government and the CCG to autocratically restrict the growth of a natural and important part of any democratic system, the trade unions, despite the fact that they were supposed to be democratizing the country.

In addition to being permeated by people with negative attitudes toward the Germans, the CCG was also poorly run, overstaffed, and generally staffed with incompetents or people who did not care about the individual German. The CCG in general had “a lack of overall policy, a cumbersome occupation structure, [was] over-staffed but lacking in expertise and often pervaded by a ‘colonial spirit’.”¹³ More detailed discussion of the CCG and the many aspects of its failures and negative impacts on the German people will follow in Chapter Six, but for now it is applicable that many of the CCG’s members looked down on the Germans, and their attitude resulted in the duplication of many jobs within the bureaucracy. There was “tight supervision of all German organizations,” and nearly every German official had to have his work supervised and often approved by a British Military Government member, with the result that there were often two people assigned to one job.¹⁴ “A vast but aimless bureaucratic machinery came into existence. It was only because of the devotion of the ‘men on the ground’ that impressive

¹¹ Marshall, *Origins*, 71.

¹² Marshall, *Origins*, 70.

¹³ Marshall, *Origins*, 23.

¹⁴ Marshall, *Origins*, 199.

practical results were achieved.”¹⁵ The magnitude of the CCG’s bureaucracy, most of which was unnecessary, combined with the needless duplication of many German bureaucratic institutions and officials due to British attitudes, significantly delayed the functions of government in Germany. Any resolution made by German local governments, for example, had to go through miles of red tape before it could be enacted, and plans that were made by German officials, elected or appointed, had to be approved by the burgeoning British CCG. “In their frustration, the Germans felt that the British stifled German local initiatives and had actually delayed the rebuilding process.”¹⁶ The subchapters below will illustrate in greater detail the effects British attitudes had on the various aspects of the democratization effort in the British Zone.

Reforming Government Structures

The reformation and reconstruction of German government structures, such as local government systems, *Land*-level government systems, and the civil service, played a large role in the British democratization effort. At the *Land*, or provincial, level, the biggest changes that were made were in the division and recreation of the *Länder*, or provinces, themselves. *Länder* were being redrawn in all four zones, and in the British Zone the major task at hand was to divide the enormous state of Prussia into smaller *Länder*. The zone, which had consisted mostly of the “former state of Prussia” but had also contained several other much smaller provinces, was divided into “four *Länder*: North-Rhine-Westphalia (which had been set up largely to accommodate the industrial complex of the Ruhr), Schleswig-Holstein, Hamburg, and Lower Saxony.”¹⁷ Drastic redrawing of provincial geographical boundaries was being done all over Germany, not just in the British Zone, but the decisions were being made by the occupying powers alone. “The people themselves were never consulted” about the changes in *Land*

¹⁵ Marshall, *Origins*, 27.

¹⁶ Marshall, *Origins*, 40.

¹⁷ Marshall, “British Democratisation Policy,” 199-200.

boundaries, and “there was some popular resistance.”¹⁸ In many cases, the divisions and combinations of *Länder* threw people who disliked each other together, or divided previously strongly united groups; the case of the creation of Lower Saxony is a good example, because it was created by incorporating, among others, “Brunswick and Oldenburg,” two *Länder* whose respective populations had been rivals for a very long time.

In terms of governmental structure, each *Land* had a parliament, administrators, and cabinets, and eventually a written constitution.¹⁹ The actual powers given to the *Land* governments by the British were limited, however, and the British listed many powers which required Military Government supervision or remained directly under the control of the Military Government. *British Military Government Ordinance No. 57: Powers of Länder in the British Zone* outlines which powers are granted to *Land* governments, including “ecclesiastical affairs,” “development and ownership of industries,” “housing and town planning,” “food and agriculture (subject to Schedule C items 5 and 6),” “construction and maintenance of highways,” “certain taxes specified by the Military Government,” “factory legislation,” and “press, associations and meetings.”²⁰ Almost everything else, including nearly everything having to do with the economy, land reform, distribution of food, demilitarization and reparations, foreign affairs, currency, and national defense, among a multitude of other concerns, remained under the Military Government’s control. Importantly, this ordinance also states that “nothing in [it] shall be deemed to limit the power of the Military Governor to disallow any Land Legislation.”²¹ The Military Government conceded some powers to the newly-forming *Länder* and their

¹⁸ Ebsworth, *Restoring Democracy*, 126-127.

¹⁹ Ebsworth, *Restoring Democracy*, 128, 135.

²⁰ *British Military Government Ordinance no.57: Powers of Länder in the British Zone*, 1 December 1946, Ruhm 195.

²¹ *British Military Government Ordinance no.57: Powers of Länder in the British Zone*, 1 December 1946, Ruhm 192-195.

governments, but they retained control of a great many more powers and also reserved the right to veto any decision made by the *Länder*; this ordinance effectively left all power in the hands of the British, allowing them to make a small concession to the Germans without having to compromise their security concerns.

The changes the British made in government structure at the local level were much more drastic. They implemented sweeping changes early in their occupation, intending to model the German local government system after the one that was in place in Great Britain. The British imposed in the local government system “a clear division of responsibilities between council and council committees on the one side and the administration on the other,” with the administration being subordinate to the elected legislature.²² “The Directive” that they issued regarding the reform of local government structures “envisaged the introduction into local government of the British ‘dual system’ with its elected council and the Mayor as representative head elected by it, as well as the creation of the office of full-time, permanent Town Clerk.”²³ The British separated the legislative and executive branches of government at the local level, making the executive subordinate to the elected legislature and turning executives into instruments and enforcers of legislature rather than policy makers. The German people were unsure about these changes to the local government system, calling it “*Zweispurigkeit*,” a “duplication of work,” and “it was not always easy to explain to the layman why it had suddenly become necessary to have two heads instead of one in their town or village.”²⁴ These drastic changes the British made in the way government was set up at the local level confused the German populace, many of whom “remained unconvinced” at first;²⁵ over time, however, the Germans adapted to this new form of

²² Ebsworth, *Restoring Democracy*, 86.

²³ Marshall, *Origins*, 95.

²⁴ Ebsworth, *Restoring Democracy*, 87.

²⁵ Ebsworth, *Restoring Democracy*, 86.

government, and kept it almost intact, with only a few changes, such as the retention of the *Regierungspräsident*. The British were successful in implementing “the institutional changes” they made in the German local government structure, but were not so successful in their “proposed changes in the civil service.”²⁶

The British were not as successful with the German civil service as they were with the local government. In reforming the local government structure, the British used directives and other mandates, effectively implementing their desired changes by force. However, when making changes to the civil service, the British issued resolutions but never gave them the force of law. Also, in the beginning months of the occupation they relied on the older, traditional German civil service to run things, effectively giving the traditional ways a foothold that later attempts at change could not budge. These factors, along with others, combined to seriously hinder British attempts at changing the structure and organization of the German civil service. “The British did not succeed in getting their way on important issues such as ... the political activity of civil servants” because their “attempt to democratise by democratic means ... worked in favour of German traditionalism.”²⁷ In keeping with their attempts to democratize Germany, the British tried to implement their intended changes to the civil service system without issuing a directive; their efforts failed, however, and because they did not make a forced directive concerning the issue the Germans were able to pursue their own ideas on the subject. “Despite Allied efforts the traditional structure of the German civil service re-emerged,” complete with a “continuity of status, rights and conditions for the civil service.”²⁸ The civil service retained the association of its members with an elevated social status that it had traditionally had. In addition, “German opposition was particularly stiff – and successful – against the British proposal that

²⁶ Marshall, *Origins*, 95-96.

²⁷ Marshall, “British Democratisation Policy,” 208.

²⁸ Marshall, “British Democratisation Policy,” 205.

civil servants should abstain from political activity and turn into public servants ‘above party politics.’”²⁹ The German civil service remained much the same as it had been before 1933; the British were unable to fully implement even their most important desired changes, such as their goal that the civil service and its members should not be involved in politics, but should remain outside of them as instruments of the political system.

The fact that the British were only successful in implementing their desired changes to German government structures when they did so by force is telling. It demonstrates the fact that the British, with their negative attitudes toward and opinions of the Germans as a group, were generating resentment and anti-British sentiment in the German people, especially in German government officials. These officials would wait until the British had ceded more powers to the *Land* governments, and then pass their own reforms and laws without considering “the general principles laid down by the British.”³⁰ When the British attempted to introduce their changes as any German citizen would, by going through the German democratic system they were supposed to be supporting, their ideas were eventually overturned.

Ironically, despite the fact that they claim to have been aiming for democracy in Germany, the British were afraid, for security reasons, to allow the Germans to form political parties. The British suspected that “some potent German force might re-emerge which could threaten British security” if political parties were allowed to form.³¹ Raymond Ebsworth writes that “there was at the time a strong feeling ... that we must somehow enable the Germans to take over political responsibility without permitting them to form political parties.”³² Yet concerns

²⁹ Marshall, *Origins*, 103.

³⁰ Ebsworth, *Restoring Democracy*, 179.

³¹ Marshall, “British Democratisation Policy,” 209.

³² Ebsworth, *Restoring Democracy*, 22-23.

about security took precedence over the goal of democratization, and the British wanted to attempt to keep the Germans out of politics as long as they could.

Education and Re-Education

Another aspect of the British democratization effort was the education and re-education of the German people. The British felt that by educating German youth to be ‘democratically-minded’ and reeducating German adults to be aligned toward Britain and democracy, mainly through manipulating the media, the minds of the German populace would be realigned toward democracy.

The rationale behind Britain’s policy of re-education in the period 1945-55 was to change the political behaviour and social outlook of the German people by means of a fundamental restructuring of all the means of opinion and communication. In practice this control was to extend beyond the press, radio and cinema, to include the entire education system.³³

Controlling the media and its output was seen as merely another method of ‘democratizing’ the Germans, and seems not to have been seen as a method that attempted to corrupt the integrity of the supposedly free press. In addition, the British wanted to reorganize and control the press such that it would help disseminate British ways of thinking and make the populace more amenable to accepting British changes to their government systems and other ways of life. “The media were seen not as a means of re-establishing German culture but as a means of projecting British values and the British way of life.”³⁴ Democratization and ‘British-ization’ seemed to have become one and the same in the eyes of the British, who wanted to use the media to democratize Germany by exporting their own values there. This attitude did not strike the British as culturally invasive, however; ‘British-izing’ the Germans was seen as the only way to truly democratize them, since the ability for democracy, to the British, did not exist in German

³³ Welch, “Priming the Pump,” 215.

³⁴ Welch, “Priming the Pump,” 224.

culture. Therefore, the British still wanted the press to resemble the free press in other democratic countries, and these two desires combined such that “the long-term goal was an “‘objective’ press” that would be “impartial and pro-British.”³⁵ This statement is in itself a contradiction, as it is impossible for the press to be both impartial and pro-British; however, the contradictory nature of this approach to the media reflects the contradictory nature of other aspects of the British occupation. The attempts of the British to turn the media, which in a democracy are supposed to be independent and free from government control, into a British-controlled and British-oriented propaganda machine betray the influence their attitudes had on their decisions. It seems that the British felt that it was more important for the Germans to begin adopting British cultural practices than for the Germans to regain their own.

In addition to controlling the media in order to attempt to sway the minds of the Germans toward the British point of view, the British also intended to use the media to convince the Germans of their guilt, for security reasons – they did not want a repeat of the aftermath of Versailles. “It is our object,” quotes a report from Hanover in 1945, “to educate the German people in our way of life, to make quite certain, this time, that they are never under delusions as to who started this war in 1939.”³⁶ Democratization, for the British, also necessarily included ensuring that the Germans were aware of their own guilt for the war; if the Germans did not have some measure of guilt, in addition to the other security risks they might not feel that adopting democracy was necessary for Germany, making them more resentful of the occupying powers for forcing democracy on them.

Censorship, too, was a big factor in democratization through the media; the British could not afford to allow the press to publish anything that resembled fascist ideas or anti-Allied

³⁵ Welch, “Priming the Pump,” 225.

³⁶ Marshall, *Origins*, 30 (endnote).

sentiment, or might compromise Allied security. Control Council Directive no. 40 details what the German press and political parties were not permitted to publish, including “articles which:”

- (a) contribute towards the spreading of nationalistic, pan-Germanic, militaristic, fascist or anti-democratic ideas;
- (b) spread rumors aimed at disrupting unity amongst the Allies, or which cause distrust and a hostile attitude on the part of the German people towards any of the Occupying Powers;
- (c) embody criticism directed against the decisions of the Conferences of the Allied Powers on Germany or against the decisions of the Control Council;
- (d) appeal to Germans to take action against democratic measures undertaken by the Commanders-in-Chief in their zones.³⁷

Through censorship and other forms of control, the British used the media to try to circulate pro-British ideas and reeducate the German people in democracy while maintaining Allied security, which to the British was the same as the British way of life.

Instead of making the Germans more pro-British and bringing them around to British points of view, however, British attempts at re-education and controlling the media resulted in added resentment from the German people and an increasingly anti-British press. David Welch writes that “continued attempts at re-education remained unpopular” with the Germans even after the German public opinion of the British Military Government began to rise during the winter of 1946-47, and that even controlling the licensed newspapers with “pre-publication censorship and post-publication scrutiny ... proved too big a job for ISC’s already overstretched officers.”³⁸ Because the British could not handle the job of censoring and otherwise controlling all the elements of the German press, “political party newspapers” were created that “reflected the views of their parties which were by and large anti-CCG,” and “a large portion of the available circulation” began “to represent the views of outspokenly anti-British parties.”³⁹ By attempting

³⁷ *Control Council Directive no. 40: Policy to be Followed by German Politicians and the German Press*, 12 October 1946, Ruhm 179.

³⁸ Welch, “Priming the Pump,” 233, 226.

³⁹ Welch, “Priming the Pump,” 227.

to manipulate the media and turn it into a vehicle for spreading British cultural values and pro-British views in their continued efforts at re-education, the British in fact turned the press against them, and many political newspapers turned up that were anti-British. The attitude the British had which convinced them that the German people needed re-education in order to become democratic, along with their apparent opinion that British cultural values were more ‘right’ and more important than German ones, hindered the re-education process by turning the press, and therefore at least some of the population, against them.

Re-education of adults was not the only way the British used education to help democratize the German people; they also made changes to the German education system, altering curricula, textbooks, and teaching methods to remove any traces of Nazism and replace them with democratic ideas. “During the previous regime, every aspect of teaching had been impregnated with Nazi doctrine,” and in some subjects “indoctrination had begun in the infant school.”⁴⁰ After replacing the many Nazi elements that had been introduced into textbooks, teaching examples, and school curricula, the British attempted to educate the German youth in democratic ideals. They believed that “it was only necessary to send an army of democratically trained educational experts to Germany to take over the schools and in due course young German democrats would emerge.”⁴¹ Education, they thought, was the key to ensuring that Germany remained democratic, since in the British opinion the Germans were not inherently capable of being democratic. Educating the young in ‘democracy’ from an early age would allow the British to train them to believe that the Allied cause was just and the changes made by the British were benefiting Germany.

⁴⁰ Meehan, *A Strange Enemy People*, 166.

⁴¹ Ebsworth, *Restoring Democracy*, 159.

Conclusions

In discussion of the attitudes and opinions of the British occupiers, it is important to note that the opinions mentioned were by no means held by every member of the British Military Government. Many of the people serving ‘in the field’ or at lower levels did not look at the Germans in a condescending or prejudiced way at all, and most of the people who were prejudiced against the Germans and harbored ethnocentric ideas were in the upper echelons of the various British Military Government structures and the CCG. Still, of the British who were in power in the British Zone in Germany, their attitudes about the Germans were, for the most part, condescending and ethnocentric. In some cases these attitudes had negative impacts on their democratization efforts.

Many of the British in occupation thought the Germans, because of their inner nature, were unable to sustain democracy in their own nation, and had to be taught how to live democratically by their British occupiers. They saw the people they were trying to democratize as “an ‘incurable’ German race” that needed to be reeducated,⁴² and felt that German opinions and ideas were “stupid” and “naïve.” In addition, the British occupational leaders felt that the way to properly democratize Germany was to export their own cultural values, ideas, and institutions to Germany intact. They tried to make Germany over in the British image, attempting to remake German government structures, education systems, and even the German media and the ideas and ways of life of the German people in the British mold. Even though the British were supposed to be helping the Germans acclimate to new structures of government and ways of life, their attitude was highly condescending and engendered some amount of resentment in the German populace, regardless of the success or failure of the changes that were made.

⁴² Welch, “Priming the Pump,” 234.

The effects the British attitudes had on their democratization efforts are multitudinous. Their local- and *Land*-level government and organizational changes remained largely intact, but in the case of the local changes the German people did not understand the new system and considered its duality to be wasteful of time, and the redrawing of the *Länder* was not well received by the general populace and threw some rival groups of people into close contact with one another. These alterations the British made to the German local and *Land* governments remained mostly unchanged largely because they backed them up with force; when the British tried to change the German civil service by going through democratic channels, instead of making their changes by force, the Germans rejected most of their ideas and formed the civil service in their own way. The fact that the British had to use the equivalent of force to enact their democratizing changes in Germany hints at an underlying anti-British sentiment on the part of the German people; this sentiment was probably generated in large part by the British occupiers' ethnocentrically prejudiced attitudes towards them.

The press, too, reveals a general anti-British sentiment that must have been felt by a decent proportion of the German population. Despite British attempts to use the press to disseminate British cultural values, intending to make the media, and by extension the population, pro-British, they did not have the manpower to censor all of the newspapers, and eventually more and more newspapers were able to distribute openly anti-British ideas.

The people in charge of the British Military Government felt that making the Germans more British and replacing old German governmental institutional practices with British ones were the most logical ways to democratize Germany. However, because their attitude toward the Germans was so negative, they failed to achieve some of their goals and even engendered more anti-British sentiment in Germany.

CHAPTER 5 RECONSTRUCTING THE GERMAN ECONOMY

The German economy within the British Zone was connected to and affected by many factors, especially the wants and needs of the other Allied powers and British efforts in denazification and democratization. The recovery of the economy in the British Zone was especially important to the Allies, as was security, and the Allies responded to these different aims by making directives and demands that sometimes conflicted with one another. These Allied restrictions and demands caused many powerfully limiting complications in the economy.

The other objectives the British had for their occupation, such as denazification and democratization, were tied to the economy as well. Contradictory policies and efforts concerning those other objectives also negatively affected the economy in many ways. Finally, the many different sectors of the economy, such as the various industrial sectors and farming, were interconnected as well; therefore, although it would seem that only a few industrial sectors were restricted by Allied directives and the chaos caused by British policy, many other sectors relied on those chaotic few, and problems in a few industries ended up rippling outward and crippling the entire economy in the British Zone. Nearly all sectors of the economy, no matter how far removed, were connected, and failures and limitations in several areas worked together to effectively stagnate the economy, devalue the currency, and allow barter trading and the black market to thrive.

British Policies and Motivations, Allied Pressures, and their Impact

The many and various pressures, both from within the United Kingdom and from the Allies, that motivated British economic policy complicated British attempts to reconstruct the

economy and contributed to hindering their progress in that area. The motivations the British themselves had included preserving and rebuilding their own economy, reconstructing economic and agricultural apparatus in Germany in order to reduce British spending there, and denazifying German industries and other economic structures. Rebuilding the German economy was of vital importance to the British, because only when the economy was self-sustaining in the British Zone could the British cease funneling millions of dollars into the zone to feed its people and keep the economy running. With this goal in mind, the British attempted to make concessions to economic reconstruction in other areas of the occupation, especially in denazification; however, these compromises only resulted in throwing the other areas of occupation into chaos and confusion and did not hasten or even contribute to economic reconstruction. In many cases, British attempts at compromise only made their zone's economic situation worse.

Some of the goals the British had regarding the German economy were self-serving in character. They wanted to rebuild the economy in their zone, but their motivations for doing so were not all altruistic. The cost of maintaining the zone and feeding its people was catastrophically high, and the British wanted to reduce those costs. Also, the British economy was recovering from the war as well, and they did not want to rebuild the German economy so well that it began doing better than the British one. The British were "worried about money, especially as Britain did not have much. ... Britain's economic handicap was patently obvious. ... In 1945-6 alone, Germany cost the taxpayer £74 million, while the British people had to put up with a continuation of wartime rationing."¹ The British people would not long put up with continued rationing while paying millions in taxes so that their former enemies, a defeated nation, could rebuild their economy.

¹ MacDonogh, *After the Reich*, 500-501.

In order to reduce costs by reducing imports, the British attempted to use policy to encourage the growth of food and production of necessary goods within the zone. “Their desire to see more goods made in the Zone was clearly based largely upon self-interest,” as they were “trying to staunch the dollar loss which the Zone represented.”² While increased self-sufficiency could be seen as beneficial for Germany and the British Zone, it would be less vital if the Germans could rely on income from their exports of coal; most of the coal being exported was in the form of reparations, so it did not earn the Germans any money. Self-sufficiency becomes more important when the balance between imports and exports is thrown off, especially for the British, who were paying for the imports into their zone because the Germans could not.

Although their motivation might have been selfish in nature, the British still intended to restore the German economy. Economic reconstruction was a major goal for the British, since it would bring with it reduced costs for Britain and increased coal and other exports for reparations while easing the minds of the German people and helping prevent a resurgence of unrest or fascism. To these ends, “the aims of the occupation [were] economic stability and reduction of British expenditure in Germany.”³ While the British had other goals for their occupation as well, such as pursuing denazification, ‘democratizing’ their zone and reconstructing its government structures, and meeting Allied demands for reparations and dismantling, the central motivation in their occupation was economic recovery, both for Germany and for Britain. In a statement regarding the British Military Government’s policy in Germany, Ernest Bevin, British Foreign Secretary, stated that “we [the British] wish to see established ... economic conditions which will enable Germans and the world outside Germany to benefit in conditions of peace from

² Farquharson, *Politics of Food*, 201.

³ Turner, “British Policy,” 89.

German industry and resources.”⁴ The British believed that the German economy was central to the European economy as a whole, and that therefore economic recovery in Germany would lead to economic recovery and prosperity in the rest of Europe, Britain included. Restoring the German economy was a key British goal for their occupation for several reasons; most of these reasons were centered on reducing British occupational costs and helping rebuild the British economy, but they nonetheless represented a move toward benefiting Germany by rebuilding its economy.

Although the British were motivated to reconstruct the economy in their zone, their execution of this motivation did not work very well. The policies and plans made by the British were inefficient and were not very effective in controlling or regulating the economy. “An Economic Planning Committee (EPC) was established ... to coordinate economic activity and the allocation of scarce resources,” but “by December 1945 it had become clear that this federal planning system was inadequate to the task.”⁵ Even in the first year of occupation, British policies for controlling the German economy were failing to do just that.

The British planning system suffered from a number of deficiencies most of which were probably inevitable. The plans ... were essentially short-term, subject to sudden production changes and based on inadequate and inaccurate data. ... In practice, planning was reduced to a perpetual iterative process of readjustment and reconciliation of sectoral plans. Furthermore, the attempt to direct resources to the so-called ‘basic industries’ ... led inevitably to the emergence of a succession of bottleneck sectors. In response to these bottlenecks the authorities mounted a series of ‘battles’ ... to overcome the shortages. Yet these special efforts were by definition extraneous to the plan and in effect amounted to overriding the plan without openly admitting it.⁶

The system the British were using to try to control the economy in their zone was not adequate, and the British constantly had to make alterations and adjustments to their plans, sometimes

⁴ *Extract from a Statement by Bevin Concerning the British Government’s Policy on Germany*, 22 October 1946, Ruhm 181.

⁵ Turner, “British Policy,” 75.

⁶ Turner, “British Policy,” 76.

contradicting their previous plans in order to try to make the system work. As a result, “the economic plans of the British ... were either punitive or nebulous or contradictory.”⁷

Eventually, “the British ... moved towards reinstating central planning of production. ... The plans were ambitious, purporting to provide a plan for total production and distribution, but were not accorded sufficient authority by the British, with the result that industrial production functioned largely outside effective controls.”⁸ At first, British planning constituted little more than the British constantly rushing to react to sudden changes in the economy, changing and contradicting their previous plans as it became clear that they were not working. However, their attempts to federalize control of the economy did not work either, and they began losing control of parts of the economy completely. Their “control mechanism did not operate with anything like full efficiency in the occupation period.”⁹ British economic policies and plans were inefficient, poorly organized, reactive, and sometimes contradictory, and therefore sections of the economy began slipping out of British control. The British were motivated to reconstruct the economy in their zone, but their plans and controls for doing so were inefficient and ineffective.

The Germans, especially Germans of some standing, noticed this ineffective planning of their economy and were made suspicious by it. They suspected that the British were handling the reconstruction of the German economy badly on purpose, in order to exploit it and also allow the British economy to grow faster. “Adenauer believed that UK policy was intended to gain competitive advantage for British industry ... his views [were] widely shared by trade unionists, industrialists, and German officials.”¹⁰ In addition to being unable to successfully control the

⁷ Mark Roseman, “The Uncontrolled Economy,” in *Reconstruction in Post-War Germany*, ed. Ian Turner (New York: Berg, 1989), 95.

⁸ Wendy Carlin, “Economic Reconstruction,” in *Reconstruction in Post-War Germany*, ed. Ian Turner (New York: Berg, 1989), 45.

⁹ Farquharson, *Politics of Food*, 200.

¹⁰ Turner, “British Policy,” 86.

German economy, British economic planning, by failing so badly, also engendered suspicion in German economic and political leaders, who thought that the British were running their economy poorly on purpose in order to gain an advantage over them.

Their own goals were not the only pressures influencing the way the British handled the reconstruction of the economy in their zone. The Allies, too, had a significant influence, especially regarding industry, reparations, food imports, and denazification; the British Zone contained the vital Ruhr industrial area, which in turn was the main center of coal mining in Germany. As discussed in Chapter Two, the Allies were interested in maximizing coal production in the British Zone so that plenty of coal could be exported as reparations, and therefore the Allies were very interested in retaining influence over the British Zone. The Allies, particularly France and the Soviet Union, demanded a certain amount of coal in reparations from the British Zone, which demands they had enough influence to ensure were met, thanks to the Potsdam Conference and other agreements. As a result, the British were required to send a certain amount of coal to the Russians and the French, detracting from the supply available to the Germans to rebuild.

At Potsdam, it was concluded that “Germany was to be treated for economic purposes as one unit.”¹¹ This principle allowed the Allies to demand reparations from the British Zone and, in theory at least, the British were also able to demand food and other resources from the other Allied Zones. Even before the war, the British Zone had not been able to grow enough food to support its population, just because of the zone’s geographic layout. Based on the Potsdam agreement by which the British were forced to send coal in reparations, the British hoped that “Four-Power control would ... organise some inter-zonal food transfers,” forcing the Soviet Union to send some of the food grown in eastern Germany to the British Zone in exchange for

¹¹ Farquharson, *Politics of Food*, 30.

the large amount of reparations being sent out, but “they were again to be disappointed.”¹² Naturally, the Soviet Union did not pay for the reparations it took out of the British Zone, but it also did not hold up its end of the bargain by sending food in return; in effect, the British Zone was being denied of its ability to purchase more food by reparations being taken out, but no food was coming in from eastern Germany, so the British were forced to buy and import food to their zone themselves. Allied influences were playing a major role in increasing British costs for maintaining their zone, which costs in turn motivated British economic policy as discussed above.

Allied interests and influences lay in other areas besides reparations as well; the Allies, especially the Americans, were interested in ramping up denazification in the British Zone as well as ensuring that all of the industries and plant listed in the *Control Council Plan for Reparations and the Level of Post-War German Economy* were dismantled. In a statement on the German economy, the US Department of State declared the following:

The security interest of the United States and its Allies requires the destruction in Germany of such industrial capital as cannot be removed for reparation ... It will evidently be necessary to destroy specialized installations and structures used in shipbuilding, aircraft, armaments, explosives, and certain chemicals which cannot be removed as reparation. Non-specialized installations and structures in the same fields may have to be destroyed in substantial part ...¹³

The Americans were adamant that certain industries that were, or could be, used for warlike purposes be dismantled at least in part. However, some of these industries were important for reconstruction in Germany. The chemical industry, for example, was responsible for synthetic fertilizer, oil, and rubber, all of which were necessary for farming and transportation, but heavy restrictions were placed on the chemical industry because its products could also be used in making bombs and gas weapons. The Allied Control Council, the Americans especially,

¹² Farquharson, *Politics of Food*, 30.

¹³ *Extracts from Statement by the United States Department of State on the Reparations Settlement and Peace-time Economy of Germany*, 11 December 1945, Ruhm 93.

required for security reasons a significant amount of industrial dismantling and put heavy restrictions on how much could be produced in different German industries. However, a high amount of industrial dismantling would have adverse effects on the German economy and make reconstruction more difficult.

Finally, the other areas of the British occupation also had an effect on their attempts to reconstruct the German economy. Denazification, especially, had a noticeable impact on the economy, since many industrial and other economic leaders had also been members of the Nazi party. When these leaders and experts were dismissed from their posts, chaos erupted. Mining experts had been removed, so the miners were unsure of their work and accidents increased, which lowered industrial productivity. The British attempted to compromise between denazification and the economy by retaining some of these experts and leaders despite their connections with the Nazi party, but these compromises just resulted in some Nazis going free while people who had only been nominally affiliated were arrested; uncertainty and fear grew among the workers, who found the system to be arbitrary and resented the fact that so many Nazis went unpunished, and their productivity diminished as a result. Also, even though the British were trying to reconstruct the economy in their zone, it cannot be forgotten that they were doing so for their own reasons and were not necessarily altruistic in their motivation. Many British people held the entire German populace accountable, and in his statement on British policy Bevin remarked that “it must not be forgotten that crimes were committed and millions of Germans were implicated in those crimes, and Nuremberg by no means wipes the slate clean. We must behave like decent and sensible human beings and not like Nazis, but I appeal to the country not to allow itself to be indulging in sloppy sentiment.”¹⁴ Both denazification policies

¹⁴ *Extract from a Statement by Bevin Concerning the British Government's Policy on Germany*, 22 October 1946, Ruhm 186.

and the British attempts to reconcile denazification with economic growth resulted in detracting from industrial production and overall economic recovery.

Industry

Industry, especially the coal industry, was very central to the economy and also to its problems. During the war, the Ruhr was devastated by Allied bombing, wreaking havoc on the heart of German industry. The British would have to rebuild the Ruhr, and German industry, almost from the ground up. Coal was essential for reconstruction not just of the economy but also of the war-torn British Zone as a whole, as it was required for running factories and power plants and providing fuel to keep the populace warm, among other necessities. However, the Allies demanded a large portion of the coal produced in the Ruhr area in reparations, and the coal industry's production was also further limited by the levels of industry agreements made by the Allied Control Council. Without enough coal, the reconstruction effort was effectively bottlenecked, and the myriad other problems the British had to deal with, such as the chronic lack of food for the workers and their families, the dearth of industrial experts and miners caused by denazification and its effects, and the housing and fuel deficiencies that were plaguing the zone, could not be solved. Coal and food were inextricably linked, such that without enough food the amount of coal being produced was too small, but without enough coal the amount of food the workers needed to continue mining could not be produced, since farming machinery and the factories that made fertilizers relied on coal to operate.

Dismantling and the levels of industry agreements also put severe limitations on everything involved in rebuilding the economy, since both together sharply reduced the maximum amounts each industry could produce, coal included. Some industries, like heavy machinery, machine tools, and chemicals, were severely limited even though their products were

vital for farming, mining, and other important sectors of the economy. The limitations and demands placed on German industry by Britain and her allies drastically reduced the economy's ability to grow and rebuild.

While the Allies deemed it necessary for security reasons, the dismantling of German industry was a critical blow to the already shattered German economy and detracted from the efforts to rebuild it. In the *Control Council Plan for Reparations and the Level of Post-War German Economy*, the Allied Control Council stated that “the general effect of the Plan is a reduction in the level of industry as a whole to a figure about 50 or 55% of the pre-war level in 1938.”¹⁵ Overall, including all of the dismantling, reparations, and restrictions placed on the German economy under occupation, the Allies estimated that they would be reducing it to half the level it had been at before the war. This level seems remarkably low, especially considering the growth that some other economies, like the American one, had experienced since 1938 and the ravaged state Germany and its economy were in after the war ended. The Control Council Plan goes on to list which industries are forbidden and what the maximum levels of production were for all non-restricted industries.

For the machine tool industry there will be retained 11.4% of 1938 capacity, with additional restrictions on the type and size of machine tools which may be produced. ... In the heavy engineering industries there will be retained 31% of 1938 capacity. These industries produce metallurgical equipment, heavy mining machinery, material handling plants, heavy power equipment (boilers and turbines, prime movers, heavy compressors, and turbo-blowers and pumps). ... In other mechanical engineering industries there will be retained 50% of 1938 capacity. This group produces constructional equipment, textile machinery, consumer goods equipment, engineering small tools, food processing equipment, woodworking machines, and other machines and apparatus.¹⁶

Many essential tools and industries required for construction, farming, and mining, all of which were economic sectors that were vital to rebuilding Germany, had heavy restrictions placed on

¹⁵ *Control Council Plan for Reparations and the Level of Post-War German Economy*, 28 March 1946, Ruhm 117.

¹⁶ *Control Council Plan for Reparations and the Level of Post-War German Economy*, 28 March 1946, Ruhm 115.

them by the Allied Control Council; these restrictions in industries such as machine tools, mining machinery, woodworking machines, and food processing equipment, would bottleneck the German economy, which was reliant on such industries in order to feed the populace, repair and rebuild homes and factories, and mine for coal. Coal, food, and the reconstruction of buildings demolished during the war were all vitally important to rehabilitating the economy in the British Zone, and yet progress in these areas was being limited by dismantling and low maximum levels of industrial production.

Allied decisions on dismantling and restrictions on levels of industry greatly affected the British Zone, where a large percentage of Germany's industrial power was located and where food production was not enough to feed the zone's population. For example, the Allies "argued for the abolition in Germany of the nitrogen and synthetic oil industries, as part of dismantling German war potential," but "these very sectors were urgently required for artificial fertiliser production."¹⁷ The loss of these industries would further inhibit British attempts to grow more food within the zone itself in order to reduce imports. Steel, too, was affected by the levels of industry agreements, since it was both an important war industry and an important industry for reconstruction and production of machine tools, heavy machinery, vehicles, consumer goods, and many other necessities. "78% of German crude steel production was controlled by six steel concerns located in the Ruhr;"¹⁸ the harsh restrictions placed on the steel industry would especially affect the British Zone, limiting both the steel industry there and any industries that depended, at least in some way, on steel or steel products. Although dismantling and/or restricting the production levels of industries considered dangerous or important for the resurgence of a warlike economy is logical from a security standpoint, Allied policies regarding

¹⁷ Farquharson, *Politics of Food*, 201.

¹⁸ Isabel Warner, "Allied-German Negotiations on the Deconcentration of the West German Steel Industry," in *Reconstruction in Post-War Germany*, ed. Ian Turner (New York: Berg, 1989), 157.

the German economy were very restrictive and had adverse effects on British efforts to rebuild the economy in their zone.

The British tried to tone down the application of dismantling and levels of industry restrictions in their zone, but their attempts did not alleviate the problems dismantling caused. “British delegates ... were attempting to preserve enough industrial plant to enable the German population to maintain a standard of living equivalent to the European average while not burdening the occupying powers with the cost of financing necessary German imports.”¹⁹ For reasons discussed above, the British wanted to hasten the German economy’s recovery, and attempting to preserve industrial plant and lessen the effects of dismantling in their zone was one way of helping the economy’s growth. The “lack of progress” in dismantling in the British Zone “was the result of decisions on political priorities, and in this period the promotion of economic recovery took precedence.”²⁰ British attempts to hinder the dismantling process in their zone were not unsuccessful, but they did not prevent dismantling completely, nor did they prevent the strife and unrest that resulted from the dismantling process. “Dismantling in the Ruhr area and in Lower Saxony led to open confrontation and violent clashes between protesting workers and dismantling teams in which police and troops had to intervene.”²¹ Despite British attempts to reduce the damage done to the economy in their zone by dismantling and the levels of industry restrictions, both still had negative effects on industry and on the ability of the economy to function. Key industries like coal, steel, and synthetic fertilizer were restricted to lower levels of maximum production by the Allied Control Council, and were further hindered by restrictions on other sectors of the economy that caused bottlenecks in the economy as one sector waited on necessary supplies from other sectors whose production was severely limited. In this way,

¹⁹ Kramer, “British Dismantling Politics,” 131.

²⁰ Kramer, “British Dismantling Politics,” 138.

²¹ Kramer, “British Dismantling Politics,” 148.

dismantling and levels of industry restriction policies affected all of the German economy, not just the sectors to which they were applied.

Coal was of vital importance to the German economy; it was used as fuel in power plants, factories, homes, and all sorts of other applications, and therefore it was required by nearly every other industry in the zone. However, the zone's coal resources were limited by levels of industry restrictions both in coal and in other industries it relied on, and were further drained by substantial amounts of coke and coal being earmarked for export to France and Russia. The British were well aware of the importance of coal to the economy in their zone. In his statement on British policy in Germany, Bevin declared that "the greatest single improvement" to the British Zone's economic situation "would be to increase the coal output of the Ruhr;" he goes on to say that "in spite of all efforts, we can only do this by retaining in Germany temporarily more coal which is at present exported, and so rehabilitate the German coal industry."²² In their *Plan for Reparations and the Level of Post-War German Economy*, the Allied Control Council recognized the fact that the Ruhr would need to produce as much coal as possible. The Plan states that "coal production will be maximized as far as mining supplies and transport will allow. The minimum production is estimated at 155,000,000 tons (hard coal equivalent), including at least 45,000,000 tons for export."²³ However, mining supplies and transportation were both industries that were greatly affected by the levels of industry restrictions put down in that same plan. Mining supplies were limited by restrictions on steel, machine tools, and heavy machinery, and transportation was limited by restrictions on steel, synthetic oil, and synthetic rubber; with the industries coal depended on being severely limited by restrictions placed by the Allies for

²² *Extract from a Statement by Bevin Concerning the British Government's Policy on Germany*, 22 October 1946, Ruhm 183.

²³ *Control Council Plan for Reparations and the Level of Post-War German Economy*, 28 March 1946, Ruhm 116.

security reasons, coal production would suffer because of a lack of tools and equipment and a dearth of transportation available to move the coal once it had been mined.

In addition, the people in the British Zone suffered from chronic food shortages, and much of the zone, especially women and children who did not receive extra rations for being laborers in key industries, was still on starvation rations as late as the summer of 1947.²⁴ “Under these conditions an occupation would be well-nigh impossible, as low food supplies to the Ruhr meant less coal, which in itself entailed still less food.”²⁵ Coal production and the amount of food reaching the mouths of the German people were tied together in what is called “the coal-food link.”²⁶ This link was “of paramount importance” because of how closely a drop in production followed a drop in rations and how a rise in rations for coal miners and their families resulted in a rise in production levels: “only a little extra food was needed to work wonders in facilitating work performance.”²⁷ The fact that rations in the British Zone were constantly low meant that coal production suffered still more because its workers were not getting the calories they needed to do the hard work involved in mining.

In addition to levels of industry restrictions in other areas and food shortages, two other factors also contributed to the inhibition of coal production in the British Zone: labor shortages and housing problems. Partly because of denazification, the mining industry was rife with accidents and uncertainty; workers did not know who would be labeled a Nazi next, as the British denazification system seemed random, sometimes arresting innocent people while letting known Nazis go unpunished. Because of the dangers and the uncertainty, the British were having difficulty attracting workers to the mining industry. It became necessary to try to force

²⁴ Farquharson, *Politics of Food*, 222.

²⁵ Farquharson, *Politics of Food*, 45.

²⁶ Farquharson, *Politics of Food*, 46.

²⁷ Farquharson, *Politics of Food*, 46.

laborers to work in the mines, but even coercion did not keep the workers there for long. “The CCG’s Manpower Division ... set the administrative wheels in motion to detect usable labour and to ‘direct’ (in other words, coerce) it to the mines. ... The directed labour did not stay in the mines, often fled in the first week of employment and frequently absconded with the work-clothing that was so hard to replace.”²⁸ Even when forced, German laborers would not work in the coal mines in the Ruhr. There were too many accidents, the British denazification policy made them uneasy, and the work was difficult and dangerous. In addition, the amount of rations the miners were getting kept rising and then falling again; when the British cut the miners’ rations, they simply left their jobs. Despite their efforts to increase the size and productivity of the mining workforce, “the British had, in effect, not only not regenerated the workforce but actually reduced its productive capacity.”²⁹

Housing, or more specifically the lack thereof, was another factor that reduced the productivity of the coal mines by inhibiting British labor recruitment efforts. The Ruhr had been devastated by Allied bombing during the war, and housing there did not escape obliteration. “No one entering the Ruhr could fail to be struck, moved even, by the sheer scale of housing destruction.”³⁰ The British were attempting to attract workers to the Ruhr area, especially to the coal mines, but these workers and their families had no place to live; nor was there any housing for new workers to move into. In addition, repairs and housing reconstruction were slowed down by the levels of industry restrictions, since reconstruction relied on woodworking tools, transportation, and coal, among other industrial products, all of which were limited, directly or indirectly, by restrictions on industrial production. “All mining *Kreise* say that repairs for

²⁸ Roseman, “The Uncontrolled Economy,” 97.

²⁹ Roseman, “The Uncontrolled Economy,” 102-103.

³⁰ Roseman, “The Uncontrolled Economy,” 107.

miners' housing are practically at a standstill owing to lack of building materials and labour."³¹ Reconstruction of housing in the Ruhr went excruciatingly slowly, and even "towards the end of 1946, when the workforce began growing more swiftly, the housing situation was completely unprepared[;] ... there was no free barrack or hostel accommodation left in the Ruhr. This was a major blow to the whole recruitment programme."³² Labor shortages, which were intensified by the lack of housing availability in the Ruhr, further diminished from the overall production capability of the Ruhr's coal industry.

The effects of the lowered production capability of the coal industry, and of other industries, were significant and applied to many different sectors of the German economy. "Coal shortages were an ever-present inhibiting factor" in nearly every other industry, as well as in domestic life, since coal was one of the main sources of fuel for stoves and power plants.³³ Agriculture was hit especially hard. The low amounts of coal being produced resulted in "persistent shortages of fuel [that] cast a blight over agriculture."³⁴ Because of low levels of production in other industries, caused both by the shortage of coal and by Allied restrictions, "output of synthetic fertiliser, as of other commodities required for farm production, was also held back."³⁵ Farm production was limited by the lack of coal, and the production of coal was likewise limited by lowered farm production and the scarcity of transportation. "Lack of coal and steel brought in its train other important shortages in the agrarian sector which were quite distinct from tools and machinery. Even milk deliveries were held up by the problem of finding cans."³⁶ The Allies' limiting the levels of industrial production as harshly as they did caused a

³¹ Roseman, "The Uncontrolled Economy," 112.

³² Roseman, "The Uncontrolled Economy," 108.

³³ Farquharson, *Politics of Food*, 48.

³⁴ Farquharson, *Politics of Food*, 47.

³⁵ Farquharson, *Politics of Food*, 47.

³⁶ Farquharson, *Politics of Food*, 52.

wave of shortages and bottlenecks that affected nearly every sector of the economy. Even innocuous sectors that seemed to have nothing to do with a wartime economy, such as milk delivery, were adversely affected by limitations in other areas of the economy. Bevin stated that “the fact is the industry there [in the Ruhr] is run down and destroyed, and stocks are almost exhausted; the workers are becoming worn out on their poor diet, and are disturbed by lack of certainty about the future of German industry.”³⁷ Wartime destruction and postwar dismantling, and the subsequent restrictions of levels of industrial production, had far-reaching effects on German industry, effects that British planning could do little to remediate.

Food, Currency, and the Black Market

Some of the results of the problems plaguing the German economy and the inability of the British to adequately solve those problems were widespread and continuous food shortages and the development of an extensive black market. Food shortages were caused by bottlenecks and problems in industry and by the fact that the British did not import enough food to make up for what was not grown inside the zone. These food shortages enabled the zone’s flourishing black market, but the black market also perpetuated the food shortages, because even when farmers did grow enough food, they preferred to sell it on the black market where they would receive goods, not worthless Reichsmarks, in exchange. These factors, in addition to the valueless nature of the Reichsmark, currency which the Germans were forced to use but which was not valued outside of Germany and could not be traded on the international market, combined to intensify and prolong the food shortages that plagued the British Zone from the beginning of the British occupation and continued even as long as 1947.

³⁷ *Extract from a Statement by Bevin Concerning the British Government’s Policy on Germany*, 22 October 1946, Ruhm 183.

The food shortages that afflicted the British Zone during the early years of the British occupation were severe, often approaching starvation levels. “There was a significant change in economic life after the collapse ... shortages of food and consumer goods became much more serious.”³⁸ After Germany fell to the Allies and the British took over governance of their zone of occupation, the economy had already been chaotic for some time. Industries had been destroyed in the war or were being dismantled or restricted by the Allies, and food production and delivery within the zone were also doing very poorly. “As the shortage of home-grown food was not entirely compensated for by imports, ... the net result was an overall food shortage as persistent as it was severe in degree.”³⁹ The drop in food production was maintained by limits on industrial production in other sectors of the economy as well as by the lack of sufficient coal, and the British, in their attempts to cut costs, were not importing enough food to make up for that shortfall.

The food available to the German population was rationed, and the amount of food rationed to each person was counted in calories per day (cpd). In the summer of 1945, not long after the British had first taken over their zone of occupation, “the general expectation in occupation circles was for some 1,200 calories daily for the non-farming population from the coming harvest. ... Actual issues were often as low as 800 calories per day.”⁴⁰ The amount of energy an average person needs just for survival, not even including any heavy labor, is about 2,000 cpd, depending on height and weight; the German people were not even getting half of that amount in 1945. Nor did their situation meaningfully improve over time. As late as 1947, the rations that were actually distributed were averaging at about 1,000 cpd, even though “the nominal scale in the British Zone was then 1,550 calories per day;” nominal numbers were often

³⁸ Carlin, “Economic Reconstruction,” 49.

³⁹ Farquharson, *Politics of Food*, 59.

⁴⁰ Farquharson, *Politics of Food*, 45.

misleading, since “rations were by no means always issued in full.”⁴¹ Even in the Ruhr, “the crucible of German recovery,” food rations fell to “devastatingly low levels,” which fact “was a striking indication of the scale of German food shortages.”⁴² The British were aware that the lack of adequate food in their zone was a major problem and a hindrance to production and reconstruction, but the mandates made by the Allied Control Council and the inability of their planning system to control the economy prevented them from fixing the food problem. In a report written in late 1947, the British wrote that “the supply of food presents a somber picture. Of all the German problems it is the most vital and will continue to be so for some years.”⁴³ The food shortage was still one of the central crises affecting the German economy and its recovery, but the British had been unable to solve it.

In addition to being severe and difficult to solve, the food shortages in the British Zone also negatively impacted industrial production and hampered the ability of the British to achieve their occupational goals. “Everything really revolved around the coal-food cycle: recovery depended on coal from the Ruhr and this was affected, obviously enough, by nutritional levels for miners and their families. Low rations equalled limited coal output, and this in itself restricted the amount of food grown and distributed, as the fuel was needed for food processing, for threshing by electricity and for synthetic fertiliser.”⁴⁴ Coal was not the only industry that was impacted by the food shortages, however. They also affected other industries, both directly, for the same reasons the coal industry was impacted, and indirectly, through the negative impacts on the coal industry. Nor did the food shortages only affect industry physically through the workers’ lack of energy and ability to work hard. “The psychological impact of the cuts was

⁴¹ Farquharson, *Politics of Food*, 222.

⁴² Roseman, “The Uncontrolled Economy,” 116.

⁴³ *Extracts from the Eighth Report from the House of Commons Select Committee on Estimates, Session 1946-7: British Expenditure in Germany*, 20 October 1947, Ruhr 254.

⁴⁴ Farquharson, *Politics of Food*, 28-29.

probably more decisive than their direct physical implications and productivity was harder and longer hit than the mere calorie loss would warrant.”⁴⁵ Industrial production was hit very hard by the perpetual shortages of food in the British Zone, but it was not the only aspect of the occupation that was affected. The chronic shortage of food “was hamstringing the whole industrial life of the [British Zone] and effectively preventing the British from obtaining their political objectives in Germany” as well.⁴⁶ The shortage of food in the British Zone was ongoing and severe, and it negatively impacted many other sectors of the economy and even other areas of the British occupation.

Food shortages were one of many side effects of the collapse and long chaotic attempt at reconstruction of the German economy. The German currency, the Reichsmark, suffered irreparable damage as a result of the war and the measures taken by the Allies following their takeover. Since the currency had become effectively worthless and there was a persistent shortage of both food and consumer goods, a black market barter economy grew and began to thrive, detracting from British attempts to restore the economy in their zone to a fully and normally functioning state. “The Reichsmark had become useless as fully functional money, not because of the devaluation of the currency through open inflation, but because of the extreme shortage of goods available for purchase compared with the nominal purchasing power.”⁴⁷ The shortages caused by lowered levels of industrial production in key industries like steel and coal exacerbated the devaluation of the Reichsmark. British troops were, unwittingly or otherwise, also contributing to this devaluation. Each serviceman received a certain quota of consumer goods, such as chocolate and cigarettes, and “by selling these articles directly to the Germans, servicemen acquired marks which they exchanged for sterling at the field cashier before going

⁴⁵ Roseman, “The Uncontrolled Economy,” 117.

⁴⁶ Farquharson, *Politics of Food*, 59.

⁴⁷ Carlin, “Economic Reconstruction,” 50.

home on leave or on demobilization. ... The Treasury was paying out vast quantities of sterling to purchase valueless marks.”⁴⁸ The Reichsmark was losing value for many reasons, including the scarcity of goods and food and the fact that the silver that backed the currency’s value was being taken out of the country by British soldiers returning to England.

In a cyclic process not unlike the coal-food cycle, the devaluation of the Reichsmark also contributed to the scarcity of food and goods in the British Zone. “The long delay in producing a more acceptable currency also contributed to producers retaining their goods in case they exchanged them for a form of money which immediately turned out to be worthless.”⁴⁹ Producers did not want to sell their food and goods for currency because the currency was worthless, and so they held on to their products and bided their time, waiting for currency reform or simply trading their goods on the black market instead. Because the currency reform was so long in coming, people were reluctant to sell their goods and food, but their reluctance further reduced the amount of goods available in the legitimate market, which in turn contributed to the perpetuation of Reichsmark’s valueless state.

The valueless nature of the Reichsmark and the scarcity of food and goods available in the legitimate market also spurred the growth of the black market and of trading by means of barter compensation. There was, therefore, a “tendency in postwar Germany to guard supplies for one’s own people, and to revert to a barter economy.”⁵⁰ The German people “engaged in barter as the sole means left of obtaining objects of real value. Even those peasants who were willing to trade for money naturally got more of it on the black market.”⁵¹ Goods could not be bought with money, because the money was worthless. Barter trade and trading on the black

⁴⁸ Meehan, *A Strange Enemy People*, 116-117.

⁴⁹ Farquharson, *Politics of Food*, 202.

⁵⁰ Farquharson, *Politics of Food*, 54.

⁵¹ Farquharson, *Politics of Food*, 202.

market grew until “in the British and US Zones at least half of commercial activity was transacted on a barter compensation basis.”⁵² Since the Reichsmark was worthless as currency, the German people turned to barter trading as the only remaining means of acquiring things of value.

The black market, too, flourished in the crippled economic conditions of the British Zone in the immediate postwar period. “With a cigarette worth more than a hundred-mark note even the old nobles were happy to make a little money smuggling cigarettes across the green frontier. An American cigarette was worth a suburban railway ticket, and a packet counted as a major bribe.”⁵³ Cigarettes were very valuable in the black market, and turned into a kind of currency themselves. The legitimate markets were unable to provide enough goods or food no matter how much money people had to trade, and so the German people turned to the black market, trading cigarettes instead of money. The black market was so rampant that even workers preferred not to be paid in money, since more could be acquired by trading goods or food on the black market. “Many prospective workers asked to be paid partly in food (*Naturalien*), which they could exchange on the Black Market for clothes.”⁵⁴ Both barter trade and the black market functioned by nature outside British controls: both ignored legitimate currency in favor of trade for food or goods like cigarettes, and because such trade eliminated currency the British could not control it by manipulating price and wage controls. The fact that the British could not control barter trading and could not reduce the prevalence of the black market further detracted from their ability to control the economy as a whole. People were bartering goods for food and vice versa, keeping both out of the legitimate markets and thereby contributing to the overall shortages of both food and goods.

⁵² Carlin, “Economic Reconstruction,” 51.

⁵³ MacDonogh, *After the Reich*, 372.

⁵⁴ Farquharson, *Politics of Food*, 56.

Conclusions

Economic recovery in the British Zone was stifled for several reasons that worked together, each intensifying the impact of the others. Allied pressures and British motivations played a large role in the decisions that were made about the German economy. The British themselves were interested in reducing the cost of their occupation, and carried out this interest by promoting economic self-sufficiency and growth of food within the zone, with limited success. The Allies as a group were very focused on security and the prevention of any renewed warlike activity from the German people; therefore they took steps to dismantle and/or harshly limit the production of industries they deemed to be necessary for a wartime economy, which dismantling and restrictions had drastic effects on German industry and the economy as a whole. Severe restrictions were not applied to many side industries that were not considered to be as dangerous as those, such as steel, that were severely restricted. However, most of these industries relied, in some way, on the products of industries that were severely restricted, and this reliance meant that the economy in general was slowed down considerably by limitations on relatively few sectors.

Denazification, dismantling, and widespread food shortages also detracted from overall industrial productivity, particularly in the coal industry. Coal was considered vitally important by the Allies, who wanted to maximize its production in order to receive more coal in reparations, but limitations on other industries, food shortages, and pressures to denazify mining and other experts hampered productivity for both physical and psychological reasons.

While food shortages contributed in a major way to the lowered levels of industrial production in the British Zone, the opposite was true as well: low production levels in the coal, steel, synthetic fertilizer, and other necessary industries also detracted from overall amounts of food being produced and delivered. Because the British were trying to reduce their spending in

Germany, they did not import enough food to completely make up for the reduced amounts being produced in the zone, which resulted in prolonging the food shortages that were plaguing the zone. In addition, the fact that industrial and food production were both low contributed to devaluing the currency, which combined with the aforementioned shortages of both food and goods to create a thriving black market and barter trade system.

On the whole, Allied pressures and ACC mandates, British motivations, and limitations on industrial production all combined to seriously hinder both economic recovery in general, with bottlenecks in industrial production and reconstruction, and British attempts to control the economy, because the barter and black market systems that kept the economy somewhat functional operated outside British controls. Therefore, it is unsurprising that British attempts to plan for recovery and otherwise control the economy in their zone failed. A number of factors, many of which were effectively outside British control, converged to hinder economic growth and reconstruction.

CHAPTER 6 EFFECTS ON THE GERMAN PEOPLE

Surrounding and underpinning all of the other aspects of the first years of the British occupation of northwestern Germany was the suffering of the German people, which was caused in no small part by the problems, mistakes, and oversights associated with those other occupational aspects. British denazification policies, and their attempts to reconcile denazification and economic progress, resulted in many innocent Germans being arrested and imprisoned, in some known Nazis going unpunished, and in generating a great deal of fear and uncertainty among the populace. Their efforts in democratization and reeducation were patronizing and over-bureaucratic, and as a result a certain level of anti-British sentiment grew, particularly in the German press. The British Military Government, CCG, and other governmental organizations were also extremely overstaffed, and often were run by incompetents and people who were prejudiced against the Germans; the British bureaucracy was slow and inefficient, and many of its staff members were indifferent toward the Germans and their problems. Overall, though, the area of the occupation in which problems had the greatest negative effect on the German people was the economy. Shortages in food and consumer goods, as a result of low levels of industrial production, resulted in widespread starvation, with people resorting to black-market barter trading even for life's basic necessities.

In addition, the whole occupation carried with it an undercurrent of condescending, prejudiced, and negative British attitudes toward the German people as a whole. Many of the British occupiers, especially those in positions of greater power or authority, looked down on the Germans as if they were second-class citizens, a kind of 'lower race' that needed to be instructed

in proper ways of life but whose people did not deserve the kind of treatment that British people deserved. Understandably, considering the fact that they had been fighting a bitter war for four years, some British people disliked or even hated Germans, but this dislike extended into unjustified prejudice for many. These derisive attitudes toward the German people that were shared by many of the British occupiers affected their actions and decisions in occupational government. Since the German people did not really matter to them, they soon began not to mind that Germans were starving and freezing to death while they lived, comfortable and well-fed, in the Germans' old homes.

Effects of Denazification and Democratization

Denazification and democratization combined make up a twofold effort by the British to politically realign the German people as well as the German government by removing followers of Nazism, restructuring the German government, and indoctrinating the German people in the ideas of democracy. The side effects of these efforts were many and various: denazification efforts negatively impacted both economic and administrative efficiency by removing key personnel from both areas; the new government structures and attempts at reeducation provoked resentment among the German people; and the fledgling German bureaucracy was overshadowed by the slow, overstaffed, and inefficient British CCG that slowed down any administrative actions that needed to be taken. In addition, the British tried to reconcile their denazification efforts with the damage they were doing to the German economy and government structures, but these attempts merely caused more chaos, confusion, and uncertainty as known Nazis were left in their positions because they played important economic or administrative roles while innocent Germans or innocuous party members were arrested due to the inaccurate and easily corruptible methods the British were using to denazify.

Part of the reason so many innocent people were arrested as Nazis was the fact that the British were allowed to arrest people based only on suspicion, as outlined in ACC agreements on denazification.

Those who could not be charged with any criminal offence but who were considered to be ‘persons dangerous to the Occupation or its objectives’ were to be arrested and interned. It was the effect of this catch-all clause which was to create among the Germans the feeling that nothing had changed: that they were still living under the Nazi regime.¹

Because of the calamitous effects denazification was having on the effort to rebuild the German economy, the British chose to leave many Nazis in their positions of responsibility rather than risk disaster when key experts in important sectors, such as mining, were removed. However, the British still had to appear to be denazifying in their zone in order to satisfy Allied demands.

Because of this pressure to continue denazifying, the British continued making arrests, using flawed and sometimes internally corrupted methods of locating ‘Nazis’ or suspicious persons.

“People quite unconnected with the Nazi party were being arrested. Many millions of Germans had suffered under the Nazis and opposed them as far as they were able; they were now classed as guilty.”² As a result of flawed methods and attempted compromises, many innocent people or people who had only paid lip service to the party were being arrested on the basis of mere suspicion while more important members of the Nazi party were going free. The nature of the British denazification effort made the Germans feel very uncertain about their futures, as if they could be arrested at any moment, not unlike the feeling that pervaded the country during the Nazi regime.

In addition to causing considerable anxiety and mental anguish among the general population, the British denazification effort also caused, in some cases, extreme physical

¹ Meehan, *A Strange Enemy People*, 69.

² Meehan, *A Strange Enemy People*, 72.

suffering as well. Many Germans who were accused of being Nazis were arrested on the spot and taken away to prisons that were not unlike concentration camps. “To the Gestapo methods of incarceration without charge, trial or expectation of release were added appalling living conditions: near-starvation, ill-treatment and in some cases torture.”³ The British who were holding these Germans prisoner neglected them, gave them terrible living conditions, fed them very little, and in some cases tortured them; most of these prisoners were not even associated with the Nazi party. The prisoners were not the only ones harmed by their long internment, either. “As the internees had no income and were not paid for work done in the camp, they could do nothing to provide for their families.”⁴ The families of people who were arrested and imprisoned, in most cases wrongfully, as a part of British denazification efforts were also harmed by the prisoners’ arrest, long incarceration, and subsequent lack of income. “As time went by, the uncertainty ... alienated the population, which had initially accepted the purge of Nazism.”⁵

British democratization efforts, and the government and bureaucratic structures that were built up as a part of those efforts, also negatively affected the German people. A major contributor to this negative impact was the negative attitudes the British had towards the Germans. Many of the British in occupation considered all Germans to be at least partially guilty for the Nazi regime and its crimes, and this impression of guilt showed through in British attempts to ‘reeducate’ the German people in ideas of democracy. “A report by a Political Intelligence officer stated, ‘An important section of Germans ... have an acute sense of responsibility on behalf of the German state and nation, but no acute sense of personal guilt and bitterly resent attempts to make them feel equally guilty with Nazis.’”⁶ In addition to betraying

³ Meehan, *A Strange Enemy People*, 74.

⁴ Meehan, *A Strange Enemy People*, 77.

⁵ Meehan, *A Strange Enemy People*, 107.

⁶ Meehan, *A Strange Enemy People*, 107.

their feeling that the Germans were, as a group, guilty, the British also had a condescending attitude toward the Germans. Ebsworth wrote that “inevitably there developed on our side a patronizing attitude without our even noticing it. It was the rich talking to the poor, or at best the country squire talking to the villagers at a local meeting.”⁷ By treating them as if they were all guilty of the crimes of the Nazis and condescending to them as if they were, as a people, incapable of being democratic without instruction and aid, the British created resentment among the German people.

The other main effect the British democratization effort had on the German people was to greatly slow down any administrative efforts they made. The CCG and other branches of the Military Government were overstaffed, and many of the leaders in the various Military Government institutions were prejudiced against the Germans as a people. One British official of lower rank wrote that he “found the Royal Army Medical Corps to be mostly staffed by incompetents – and sycophants – and on the administrative side absolute buffoons.”⁸ This description could have applied to any number of branches of the British Military Government during the early years of the occupation. In addition, many of these staffers who were incompetent were also apathetic about the Germans and their problems.

The worst features of the CCG are its complicated structure; the incompetence of many senior officers; far too many officers who know nothing about Germany, nothing about economics, little about administration. Because they do not understand the job they choose the wrong assistants. In many cases, disinclination to work, combined with desire to have a good time, breeds indifference to suffering: ‘I don’t care if the Germans starve.’⁹

The ultimate result of the British democratization efforts was an overall indifference on behalf of many British Military Government workers toward the suffering of the German people, and the

⁷ Ebsworth, *Restoring Democracy*, 105.

⁸ Roy Bainton, *The Long Patrol: The British in Germany since 1945* (London: Mainstream Publishing, 2003), 231.

⁹ Qtd. in Meehan, *A Strange Enemy People*, 63.

resulting negligence of German problems probably played a role in exacerbating their suffering. Also, this indifference combined with the condescending attitude British 'reeducation' carried with it to generate an overall anti-British sentiment among the German people. Through compromise, inefficiency, inaccuracy, indifference, and condescension in their denazification and democratization efforts, the British contributed to the suffering, both mental and physical, of the German people while simultaneously provoking increasing amounts of resentment among them.

The Economy and the Black Market

Of the three main areas of the British occupation, the economy and its problems had arguably the worst effects on the German people. Allied dismantling policies added to lowered levels of industrial production and also robbed a significant number of Germans of their jobs; meanwhile, the reduced industrial production that resulted from Allied levels of industry restrictions lowered the amount of consumer goods and food available. "Fertilizer production was sharply reduced ... the fishing fleet was kept in port while people starved. British soldiers actually blew up one fishing boat in front of the eyes of astonished Germans."¹⁰ Poor planning was a defining feature of the British attempts to rebuild the German economy, and Allied dismantling policies called for the destruction of all kinds of industrial plant. Shipyards in Hamburg were destroyed, which "was a short-sighted policy that removed the possibility of work for the starving people, and wantonly destroyed useful property."¹¹ Dismantling and the levels of industry restrictions reduced the amounts of production in all manner of economic sectors and also took away many jobs the Germans could have worked to try to feed themselves and their families.

¹⁰ James Bacque, *Crimes and Mercies: The Fate of German Civilians under Allied Occupation 1944-50* (London: Warner Books, 1998), 91.

¹¹ MacDonogh, *After the Reich*, 260.

The shortfalls in industrial production also had the terrible side effect of also lowering food production levels. “Unable to feed themselves adequately from home production, the Germans were trying desperately to increase production for export, but they were seriously hampered by the Allied reparations policy.”¹² Because of the chaotic and highly depressed state of the economy, the food shortages in the British Zone were harsh and persistent, and these shortages were exacerbated by Allied policies and bungled British attempts to solve the economy’s problems with planning and controls. “The famine that began in 1945 spread over all of occupied Germany and continued into 1948.”¹³

The food shortages were so extreme that people began slowly starving to death, and “the British and Americans, fearing disease and unrest that might imperil their armies, were forced to import large quantities of food to maintain civil order.”¹⁴ However, the amounts of food that the British imported were not enough to adequately feed all of the people in the zone, and so the food was rationed. “The actual rations issued for three months in the Ruhr section of the British zone for average people amounted to only 800 calories per day,”¹⁵ and “in the winter of 1945-46 ... the daily ration for the average adult ... was 1,042 calories.”¹⁶

The rest of the world was not experiencing famines or major shortfalls in food production during the early years of the occupation, and yet because of the various conflicts within the economy, and also because of British unwillingness to pay the high cost of importing more food, there was a long and harsh famine in Germany. “[The Germans] began dying when world food

¹² Bacque, *Crimes and Mercies*, 95.

¹³ Bacque, *Crimes and Mercies*, 97.

¹⁴ Bacque, *Crimes and Mercies*, 96.

¹⁵ Bacque, *Crimes and Mercies*, 115-116.

¹⁶ Bacque, *Crimes and Mercies*, 36.

production was 97 per cent of normal.”¹⁷ The following account serves as a grim example of the famine and extreme shortage of consumer goods and fuel in Germany during this time period:

The zone had never been self-sufficient. ... Two workers froze to death for want of warm bedding. ... At midday the workers received a thin, evil-smelling soup. An hour later they were hungry again. A hundred men were suffering from dropsy. One of the British officers allowed them to take leftovers from the mess – although this was highly illegal.¹⁸

Allied restrictions, enforcement of dismantling and denazification policies, and demands for reparations played a large role in hamstringing the economy in the British Zone, but poor British planning and execution of various policies also contributed. Food shortages and shortages of consumer goods and coal plagued the zone, affecting all of the Germans who lived there.

Many people had no choice but to resort to barter trading and the black market in order to acquire the food and necessities they needed; the German currency, the Reichsmark, was valueless because of the state of the economy. “Until [the currency reform] happened barter was still the means by which people normally lived. A woman wanting to have her hair washed, for example, had to bring with her the soap, a towel and five pieces of wood. Wood was an important commodity, especially in winter.”¹⁹ The basic means of commercial exchange had broken down, reducing the German economy to barter exchange; even services like hairdressing had to be paid for in commodities, like fuel for the fire, rather than in valueless Reichsmarks. “Cigarettes were widely used as barter. Two would buy you a shampoo and set, five cigarettes a perm – although this was against the rules, of course.”²⁰ The British occupiers and their wives participated in barter trading as well, as they could not buy consumer goods or services with money any more easily than German citizens could, despite their status as occupiers.

¹⁷ Bacque, *Crimes and Mercies*, 130.

¹⁸ MacDonogh, *After the Reich*, 258.

¹⁹ MacDonogh, *After the Reich*, 373.

²⁰ Bainton, *The Long Patrol*, 100.

Rations were so scarce and inadequate that “if you were lucky you might obtain a glass of watery beer or a cup of beef broth on presentation of a ration coupon.”²¹ Considering this fact, most people went out not to obtain rations but to trade on the black market:

The black market was often based in the main railway station. ... If you moved along the mass you could hear the offers of butter, dripping, flour, cigarettes – Chesterfields of Luckies were the best – or gems, coffee, chocolate or soap. ... An opera glass yielded a kilo of dried peas and a bacon rind. On another occasion a camera was hocked for a goose.²²

The only way for people to engage in commerce was to trade goods for food and vice versa, in a large, open-market type format. Since they could grow their own food, farmers or people who lived in the country had an easier time, but there was a great “difference in standards of living between town and country [in] the pre-currency reform days,” and those in the cities had no option but to barter on the black market for such food as the farmers were willing to trade for.²³ The fact that the economy was so depressed that people were forced to trade by barter instead of with currency betrays just how uncertain life must have been in Germany during the early years of the British occupation.

Low levels of industrial production also affected the speed of reconstruction and the amount of coal that was being produced; housing was not being rebuilt fast enough, and there was not enough coal to heat German homes during the winters. Even as late as January 1948, “there was still a blackout[,] and most Germans lived in cellars.”²⁴ There was simply not enough coal or other essential industrial products for reconstruction of the many buildings that had been destroyed by Allied bombing during the war. In addition, the winters of 1945-46 and 1946-47 were both extremely cold, and many people did not have adequate housing or enough coal to

²¹ MacDonogh, *After the Reich*, 375.

²² MacDonogh, *After the Reich*, 374-375.

²³ Ebsworth, *Restoring Democracy*, 103.

²⁴ Bainton, *The Long Patrol*, 67.

heat what homes they did have. “It wasn’t just the lack of food that killed, it was the extreme cold. In the winter of 1945-46 the coal ran out.”²⁵ As a result, people froze, and the next winter was not any better; the problems facing the economy had not been rectified, and so there were still extreme shortages of food, coal, housing, and consumer goods. “The winter of 1946-7 was possibly the coldest in living memory. . . . The cannon oven gave off an intense heat, but only for a short period, as the rations of fuel were soon burned up.”²⁶ The Germans were not receiving enough caloric intake to keep their bodies warm naturally, and the additional lack of sufficient housing and coal just made their problems worse.

By contrast, the British officers and Military Government officials were living very well. There was a great disparity “between the accommodation and food in the officers’ mess and the miserable, half-starved hovels outside. Much of Germany was uninhabitable.”²⁷ And yet the Germans had no alternative: they had to try to survive in this terrible environment, where nearly all of the basic necessities of life – food, shelter, and the ability to keep oneself warm – were in short or no supply. Even children were affected. “Many German children had become feral. They had lost one or both parents, or had simply become estranged from them. In the big towns they lived in holes in the ground like the rest, begging or scavenging for food.”²⁸ The effects of this economic crisis on the German people were disastrous. They starved, froze, lived in inadequate housing or no housing at all, and had to resort to black market barter trading in order to feed themselves and their families. The British failure to rectify the economic situation in their zone had calamitous effects on the zone’s population.

²⁵ MacDonogh, *After the Reich*, 368.

²⁶ MacDonogh, *After the Reich*, 507.

²⁷ MacDonogh, *After the Reich*, 253.

²⁸ MacDonogh, *After the Reich*, 315.

Prisoners of War

The main areas of denazification, democratization, and economics were not the only aspects of the British occupation that in some way exacerbated or perpetuated German suffering in the British Zone; mistakes and negligence in other areas negatively affected the Germans as well. The capture and treatment of German Prisoners of War is one example of just such an area: it is not considered to be as overarching as some other areas of the occupation, but it still affected the lives of millions of German citizens. British treatment of their German Prisoners of War during the early years of their occupation caused the direct suffering of many millions of Germans, and it also had detrimental effects on many other Germans and German society as a whole.

After the war ended, the British had captured a large number of German Prisoners of War, whom they used as forced labor both in Germany and in Britain. The motivations for keeping Prisoners of War after the war ended and using them as forced labor were probably many, and may have included the fact that the costs of maintaining the occupation were very high, the fact that reconstruction efforts in the British Zone were going very slowly, that POWs were a source of free labor, and that Germany had vigorously bombed Great Britain during the war, and using captured German soldiers as labor to repair the damages could be seen as a way of getting revenge. Whatever the British motivations were for keeping and using as forced labor millions of German POWs, the fact remains that they also abused and mistreated these prisoners, causing them, their families, and German society as a whole great physical and mental harm.

“In May 1945 the British admitted to having 2.5 million prisoners.”²⁹ These prisoners would end up being “forced labourers ... the Allies would be possessed of full and complete authority inside Germany and will thus be empowered to make compulsory use of German

²⁹ MacDonogh, *After the Reich*, 407-408.

labour, military or civilian, for whatever purposes they deem proper.”³⁰ The British planned on using their POWs as forced labor, but this idea was not new. “The idea of using POWs as slaves was aired at Moscow in 1943. The originators of the proposal were the British. ... They were to be a ‘work force’ and were to be retained for an indefinite period.”³¹ POWs could be forced to work for the British, cleaning up rubble, aiding in reconstruction, or in any number of other areas. For example, Klaus Meinssen wrote in his daily memoir that he was forced to participate in “Arbeitsdienst,” or ‘work-service,’ in the city of Tellingstedt in Schleswig-Holstein for several hours every day from June 4 until July 27, the day of his discharge.³² A POW captured in Germany in May 1945, after Germany had surrendered, Meinssen was force-marched through Denmark to northern Germany and kept there for nearly two months, doing forced labor for the British, until he was finally allowed to return to his family in Hamburg. He was only 18 years old.

British use of POWs as forced labor was not confined to Germany, either; “the British ... were using some 400,000 German prisoners as low-paid forced labour in the United Kingdom.”³³ They brought German POWs to the United Kingdom to work there, repairing damage from German bombing for example. The British captured and used as forced labor, both in Germany and in the UK, millions of German soldiers, many of whom were probably, like Meinssen, young men conscripted right at the end of the war.

Mistreatment of German POWs seemed to be par for the course for the British. In many cases these POWs lived in terrible conditions and had little to eat, and the British were not very sympathetic toward them. “The prisoners were living in barns and stables and receiving very

³⁰ Qtd. in Meehan, *A Strange Enemy People*, 23.

³¹ MacDonogh, *After the Reich*, 393.

³² Klaus E. Meinssen, *Taschenkalender*, trans. and ed. Nicole Meinssen, June 2 – July 27.

³³ Bacque, *Crimes and Mercies*, 61.

short commons from their captors.”³⁴ *Taschenkalender*, a concise daily memoir written by Klaus Meinssen during the summer of 1945, while he was a prisoner of war held by the British, contains several examples of the way they treated their POWs. For example, during his forced march in late May and early June, Meinssen got sick and had diarrhea and body pains for three days, but was forced to continue to march and work regardless of his sickness.³⁵ Also, during the first week of marching, his feet were very sore, swollen, and painful, but the British took no pity on him, and he had to keep marching twenty to thirty kilometers per day. On May 14 he lost a boot, and on May 20 he writes that he was permitted to resole his boots, which had probably worn through.³⁶ Meinssen also notes when he stays or interacts with “German-friendly” people, such as farmers or other country folk, which means that the British were probably not very kind or civil towards their German prisoners.³⁷

Finally, the *Taschenkalender* is very sparse and concise, with only details Meinssen felt were important written down, and yet consistently meals are mentioned, as if he is being fed very little and it is a notable occasion when he has decent food, such as pea soup.³⁸ The concise nature of the *Taschenkalender* also illuminates the meaning of Meinssen’s consistent mention of his accommodations when he slept inside a building; he and the other POWs were probably not being accommodated very well even when they were near towns.

The British did not treat their POWs very well, forcing them to march long distances with little food and despite any illnesses or injuries they may have had. Also, many POWs were forced to engage in work-service for an undetermined amount of time before they were discharged, if they were discharged at all. “Some soldiers with homes to go to were gradually

³⁴ MacDonogh, *After the Reich*, 407-408.

³⁵ Meinssen, *Taschenkalender*, May 28 – June 1.

³⁶ Meinssen, *Taschenkalender*, May 7 – 14, May 20.

³⁷ Meinssen, *Taschenkalender*, May 22, May 23, May 27.

³⁸ Meinssen, *Taschenkalender*, May 20 – 22, May 25.

released,” as Meinssen was.³⁹ However, this was not the case for all British POWs, some of whom did not even have homes because of the destruction that took place during the war. The POWs held by the British were poorly treated and were conscripted into forced labor without pay, away from their families, who also suffered because while the POWs were captive they could not work to support their families. German society as a whole suffered from British treatment of their POWs and from the fact that the British brought hundreds of thousands of POWs to the UK to do forced labor there instead of in Germany. “The withholding for so long of so many men from their homeland and families was to have a fearful effect on the social fabric of Germany during the first post-war years.”⁴⁰ While British use and treatment of prisoners of war was not one of the main focuses of their occupation, it still serves as an example of another small area in which British occupational actions, well-intentioned or otherwise, had negative effects on the German people.

Relations between the Germans and the British

Underneath all of these other negative effects the British occupation was having on the German population was an undercurrent of negative British attitudes. Many of the British occupiers, especially those with higher rank in the Military Government, looked down on the Germans as second-class citizens. They were prejudiced against the Germans just because they were German, and also considered themselves to be better, and more enlightened, than this ‘colonial race’ they were occupying. This anti-German attitude on behalf of the British pervaded nearly every aspect of their occupation in small ways, such as negligence or indifference in bureaucracy or lack of sympathy for the Germans’ plight, which in turn motivated them not to work as hard to solve German problems. The British also tended to blame the entire German

³⁹ MacDonogh, *After the Reich*, 407-408.

⁴⁰ Meehan, *A Strange Enemy People*, 30.

population for Nazism and treat all Germans as if they were guilty. This poor treatment, combined with British condescension and prejudice, generated resentment among Germans. Nonetheless, the Germans held their tongues, for fear of punishment from the British, who were in complete control as the zone's occupying power.

The tendency of British officers to retain a 'colonial spirit' while in occupation was discussed in Chapter Five; these officers considered the Germans to be inferior to the British as people, based only on nationality and not on the personal merits of members of either group. "A former British administrator from Nigeria who arrived to take charge of one branch requested a list of staff under the headings 'European and non-European.' It was an aspect of British control of which the Germans were aware, and it was much resented."⁴¹ Many of those in power in the Military Government were almost 'racist' against the Germans, as if being from Germany could class one as a different race or somehow made one a different kind of person than someone from the United Kingdom.

This condescension and anti-German bias were not the only negative attitudes the British had toward the Germans, however; they also considered the Germans to be guilty, as a group, of Nazism, and sought to punish them accordingly. "Positive antipathy towards the Germans was part of the official instruction of those British – military and civilian – who were to live and work among them."⁴² Leaders in the British Military Government made anti-German sentiments a kind of occupational policy, such that even those officials who might have been friendly toward the Germans had to treat them coldly. This automatic suspicion extended to the denazification effort as well, leading the British to be suspicious of any German regardless of whether they had actually committed a crime, and because of a clause in the Allied denazification policy they were

⁴¹ Meehan, *A Strange Enemy People*, 60.

⁴² Meehan, *A Strange Enemy People*, 54.

allowed to arrest anyone they were even suspicious of. Even if a person was found innocent of being a Nazi, the British Military Government was still suspicious of him. “Anyone who was exonerated from the crime of being a Nazi remained guilty of being a German,” and many of the British people in Germany at the time thought that no German could be trusted, just because they were German.⁴³ “The argument by members of the Control Commission that the Germans could not be trusted was still current. The feeling had long been mutual.”⁴⁴ The British distrusted the German people they were occupying, and this distrust melted into many areas of the occupation in subtle ways; it was picked up by the German people, who resented the fact that they were being discriminated against based on their nationality. Thus, British attitudes generated resentment and anti-British sentiments among the German people while also corrupting the denazification effort and enabling the arrest of innocent German civilians who had had no part of the Nazi party.

There was also a sharp contrast between British and German standards of living. The British, for the most part, saw this contrast as a normal part of life in Germany, and must have felt in some way that the Germans deserved to live in poverty because of their inherent guilt for Nazism. One British woman, the wife of a Military Government official, wrote the following about her stay in Germany: “the environment contrasted favourably with my earlier period in Germany when the streets had been strewn with bricks and mortar. ... We lived in a beautiful house in Bunde, which had been requisitioned from the owner of a cigar factory.”⁴⁵ This woman did not feel for the Germans, whose city it was that had laid in ruins the last time she visited; she only cared that the rubble had inconvenienced her, and was pleased that it had been cleaned up for that reason. She also did not mind that the previous owner of the house and his family had

⁴³ Meehan, *A Strange Enemy People*, 92.

⁴⁴ Meehan, *A Strange Enemy People*, 66.

⁴⁵ Bainton, *The Long Patrol*, 91.

nowhere to live since they were kicked out of their house; her indifference to the German plight seems to have been characteristic. One woman, who had been a little girl during the occupation, writes that her mother was an outcast from British society because she was kind to a German family.

Herr and Frau Marker, with their two small sons, had to move into two rooms and a kitchenette. ... I remember visiting their apartment and not being able to understand why they had to put up with such cramped conditions whilst we lived in the rest of their five-bedroomed home. ... [Mother] was ostracized for being kind to the Marker family.⁴⁶

Not all of the British people who were living in occupied Germany shared these negative attitudes, but many of them did, and those who did not share these attitudes generally had no option but to go along with the way things were. One British wife wrote that “life for the Germans then was very hard, as food for them was short and their cities were badly damaged by the bombing, with many of them still living in ruins. Life for us, in contrast, was very good, with plentiful and varied food, much better than we had ever been used to at home. The social life was good, too.”⁴⁷ This woman understood that the Germans were suffering, but the fact remains that the British were living much better than the Germans were. Captive German troops who were being used as forced labor did not have good living conditions, either, if Meinssen’s memoir is to be taken as an example. “At 1400 quartered with country folk, slept well from 2000 on. ... Arrived at the final destination up to discharge. Good quarters with Farmer Petersen in a barn.”⁴⁸ POWs, who were working hard clearing rubble and otherwise aiding in the reconstruction of areas that had been destroyed in the war, were living in barns with German civilians or sleeping outside for weeks since there was no housing available for them. The

⁴⁶ Bainton, *The Long Patrol*, 127-128.

⁴⁷ Bainton, *The Long Patrol*, 100.

⁴⁸ Meinssen, *Taschenkalender*, June 1 – 2. Mr. Meinssen was quartered, along with the rest of the prisoners, among the townsfolk in Tellingstedt, which is where they stayed to work as manual labor for the British until they were gradually discharged.

British occupiers, on the other hand, were requisitioning whatever housing was left intact for their own use, leaving the Germans who had been living there to fend for themselves.

The Germans' reactions to this ill-treatment and negativity from the British were mixed. On the one hand, they began to resent the British and their occupation, but on the other hand the British were still in control of their lives, so many Germans kept their distance. The press, especially newspapers for German political parties, was vocally anti-British; the actions and writings of the German press, discussed in Chapter Five, are clear indications of the levels of anti-British sentiment that were building up in Germany as time wore on. However, most average Germans did not speak out against the British.

The Germans reminded [one] of army recruits who know that whatever they do they will be wrong. If they were cooperative, both occupiers and occupied might sneer at them as collaborators. If they were uncooperative the occupiers' worst impressions would be confirmed.⁴⁹

The Germans were unsure of how to act in the presence of British officials. "It is true that some friendships sprang up in spite of all the difficulties, but to most Germans the British were the Occupying Power. They were people who should be treated with respect when encountered, for obvious reasons, but from whom one should keep the right distance."⁵⁰ Most British officials were prejudiced, or at least biased, against the Germans as a people, and those who were not found it difficult to build up relations with the Germans because of this distance. The Germans reacted to negativity and poor treatment from the British by keeping their distance and choosing to interact with the British as little as possible. Fear of retribution kept the majority of Germans from speaking or acting against the British in any way, but they seldom willingly made friendships with the occupiers whose mistakes were perpetuating their misery and who treated them like second-class citizens. "Denied all power and independence, with no future prospects,

⁴⁹ Meehan, *A Strange Enemy People*, 46.

⁵⁰ Ebsworth, *Restoring Democracy*, 106.

occupied by nations unable to find any agreed policy, they could see neither a beginning nor an end, ‘and we shrug our shoulders and say “They asked for it”.’⁵¹

Conclusions

The various mistakes, problems, and conflicts in the different areas of the occupation affected the German populace in different ways, but nearly all of these effects were bad. Chaos, inaccuracy, corruption, and conflicting motivations in denazification resulted in the wrongful imprisonment of many Germans, their subsequent abusive treatment in prisons, and the failure to arrest many known Nazis because their knowledge and expertise were needed. Problems in the economy were many, and resulted in lost jobs, the lack of fuel, the lack of housing, and suffering or death from cold and famine. The British had captured hundreds of thousands of POWs and forced them to labor for the British both in Germany and in the UK for indeterminate periods of time, preventing them from supporting their families, until they were finally released; this practice damaged the prisoners themselves, their families, and even society itself because of how many families and lives were torn apart. Finally, the Germans endured terrible conditions while the British Military Government officers lived richly, were prejudiced against by the British, and had to submit to them without complaint for fear of punishment or retribution.

The mistakes the British made and the problems and inefficiencies of their occupation did more than just slow down reconstruction: they had severe consequences for the German people, who starved, froze, and suffered mentally and physically while the British Military Government above them did little to end their misery and treated them like second-class citizens.

⁵¹ Meehan, *A Strange Enemy People*, 113.

CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSION

The British occupation of Germany from 1945 – 1947 was marked by its inefficiencies, problems, and conflicting objectives. Each of the three main parts of the British occupation had different goals and motivations, and these goals and motivations often conflicted with each other, with disastrous results. In addition, the British were being continually pressured by demands from the other Allies, and the constant undercurrent of British anti-German attitudes tainted all of the actions the British took and generated anti-British sentiments among the German people.

International politics affected many decisions the British made regarding their occupation, and the Allies' effect on the occupation of the British Zone was not negligible. The other Allies all wanted to make the restrictions on German levels of industry in 'dangerous' sectors more stringent than the British did, for security reasons, and although the British were able to raise the restrictions to some degree, the levels that were agreed upon in 1946 were still too low. The Allies also demanded large amounts of coal in reparations, decreasing the amount of coal available to the Germans both for consumption and for sale on the international market. These two Allied decisions had major effects on the economy in the British Zone, effects that the British could do little to counteract. The Allies also pressured the British to step up their denazification efforts, preventing them from scaling denazification back in order to promote economic growth. Finally, the beginnings of the Cold War made the British suspicious of the Soviet Union and added impetus to the motivation to get the German economy going: people living in poverty are more susceptible to conversion to communism.

The other Allies were not alone in pursuing denazification, however. Denazification was one of the three key areas of the British occupation, and it was one of their goals to remove Nazis from positions of responsibility in their zone. However, the way the British undertook the denazification effort was flawed and contradictory, and their denazification methods were inaccurate and prone to corruption. The denazification of experts in industry was causing increased accidents and decreased productivity in industry, and so to try to rectify this problem they let some Nazis go free; however, this practice negated their stated goal of denazification, since known Nazis were not being arrested, and yet denazification continued to wreak havoc on the economy anyway. Because of corrupt and inaccurate methods, the British ended up letting some known Nazis go free while innocent people were being arrested, imprisoned, and abused in prisons; this fact generate a great deal of uncertainty and fear among the German people. In addition, once they were arrested, the Germans who had been accused of being Nazis were kept in prisons reminiscent of concentration camps, starved, abused, and sometimes tortured. The British goal in denazification was precisely that: removal and punishment of Nazis, and yet their execution of denazification policy damaged the economy and allowed Nazis to evade arrest while thousands of innocent German civilians were interned, sometimes for years, without trial and maltreated.

The German economy was in dismal condition when the British began their occupation, and their efforts to speed its recovery failed. As was noted above, the Allies decided on low levels of industry in key industries like steel, synthetic oil, and chemicals, and they also demanded large amounts of coal in reparations; therefore, production in all the sectors of the economy was kept low because the industries were all interconnected and were especially dependent on coal. Food production was low as well, and for the same reasons. The food

shortages were so bad and lasted so long that imports could not make up for the shortfall, and the Germans suffered from a widespread famine for three years after the end of the war. The Reichsmark was valueless due to the lack of consumer goods and food available to buy no matter what the price, and people had to resort to barter trading on the black market just to get the food and goods they needed. People slowly starved because of the consistently low calorie per day rations and froze in the winter because of the lack of coal and consumer goods like blankets. British denazification efforts were further lowering industrial production, both because of the removal of experts and because the uncertainty and fear caused by the chaotic and contradictory execution of denazification policy. International politics also had a huge impact on economy in that Allied agreements were largely responsible for the low levels in industrial production that had such disastrous effects on the other aspects of the economy.

Democratization was the third of the main goals the British had for their occupation. They intended to remake the German government in the British image and reeducate the Germans in how to be democrats. However, many of the British occupiers had a condescending and prejudiced attitude toward the Germans and thought that they were incapable of democracy and had to conform to British ways in order to learn to be democrats. Also, the Germans did not necessarily like the new government structures being imposed on them by the British, and rejected British changes to the civil service because it was the only area the British chose to try to change democratically. As a result of British attitudes, the Germans, especially the press, grew increasingly anti-British. Finally, focusing on democratization resulted in the creation of a large and redundant bureaucratic system, since a German bureaucracy had been created and staffed but was not trusted yet, for security reasons, and so their every decision was double-

checked by the British bureaucracy. In this way, the British democratization effort subtly detracted from efforts in the other areas.

The three main goals the British had for their occupation, and the conflicts and contradictions between them, had several negative effects on the German people in the British Zone, but other, more subtle aspects of the occupation had negative effects as well. Prisoners of war, for example, were mistreated and used as forced labor, which detracted from the paid workforce, made it hard for the POWs' families to survive, and created rifts in society. Also, many of the British officials were prejudiced against the Germans, thought they were all collectively guilty of Nazism, and were not sympathetic to their suffering or to the fact that British efforts were making it worse. These negative attitudes, combined with the negative effects of British efforts in other areas of the occupation, made life generally terrible for the Germans. They suffered from starvation, a three year famine, a lack of necessary consumer goods, a worthless currency that necessitated barter trading, and being occupied by the condescending and prejudiced British Military Government.

The British tried to compromise between each of the areas of their occupation, hoping to minimize the damage each did to the others. These areas, especially denazification and economic recovery, were highly interconnected. However, the compromises the British tried to make to accommodate all of their goals only made things chaotic in all three areas without really ending the conflicts between them. The British occupation was rife with problems, mistakes, and contradictions, not all of which were entirely their fault, but the British attempts to solve these problems did not work, and as a result of this failure the suffering of the German people was exacerbated and prolonged.

The British had motivations and goals in each of their main occupational areas: some of their goals for each area even conflicted with each other, in the economy for example, and by trying to pursue all of their goals at once the British ended up not meeting any of them.

Therefore, the main conclusion of this thesis is that the conflicting motivations of the British, and their attempt to pursue all of them by compromising between them, resulted in problems and chaos instead, and ended up causing a great deal of grief, suffering, and hardship for the German people.

APPENDIX A
TRANSLATION OF *TASCHENKALENDER*

Surrender and forced march from Denmark to Germany. Helsingør, 1945.

Saturday, May 5, 0800. Surrender of the German troops in Denmark. We prepare for the forced march to Germany.

Monday, May 7. Reveille at 0500, by 1000 everything was finished. We marched 25km toward Hillerød. Midday break for 2 hours. At 1900 we arrived at a copse near Hillerød. Very tired. Overnight stay in the field, the night very cold, icy. Foot pains.

Tuesday, May 8. Reveille at 0500, a longer march to Roskilde (40km). We rested 3 times, twice for 15 minutes, once for 90 minutes. Weather is hot. Our packs in the wagon. Threw away gas masks and 2 cannisters. Much foot pain after 20km by bicycle to the sea outside Roskilde. Arrival at 1800. Wonderfully bedded. Bathed. Slept well in the field.

Wednesday, May 9. Reveille at 0800. Beautiful weather. Heard music and news on the radio. Very little foot pain. At midday it got cloudy, wind and rain. At 2130 movement out to Ringstedt (30km). Without packs. 2 15 minute rests. Only good cold provisions and warm coffee.

Thursday, May 10. Arrived in Ringstedt at 0400. Slept well from 0500 to 1400 in the forest, in spite of a thunderstorm, wind and rain. Meeting with British motorized units. Moved out to Sorø (28km) at 2300.

Friday, May 11. Arrived at the forest behind Sorø at 0600. Light foot pain. Slept well from 0700 to 2000, after that no foot pain. Good weather. Moved out at 2400 (20km).

Saturday, May 12. March over Slagelse to 10km outside of Korsør. Arrived at 0600. Bedded on a pasture near a homestead. Slept well in the field from 0700 to 1300. Washed thoroughly in the homestead. Hot food. Good weather. Light foot pains. Moved out with packs at 1800 to 4km outside Korsør (6km). Long rest from 1900 to 2100. Turned in our pistols at 2300 in Korsør (4km). In a ferry at 2330.

Sunday, May 13. Departure of the ferry to Nyborg at 0200. In Nyborg at 0400. Slept on the pasture northwest of Nyborg from 0600 to 0900. At 0900 left the (storage place) for an unknown reason (8km). Long rest from 1200 to 1600. March to the resting place (10km). Lots of buttermilk. Slept well in the forest from 2100 on. Ankle swollen.

Monday, May 14. Woke up at 1100. 1 boot was left alone. Cloudy with wind. Moved out in storm and rain, over Odense to 5km behind Odense (28km). Until now a most terrible night. Feet very swollen. Lots of pain.

Tuesday, May 15. Arrived at the resting place at 0500. From 0600 to 1600 slept. Feet were wrapped firmly with rubber bandage. Forest. Moved out at 2200 with light packs.

Wednesday, May 16. (30km) Marched superbly to 15km outside Middelfort with good weather and little foot pain. At 0430 arrived at a resting place in a pine forest. From 0500 to 1600 slept well on soft moss. Washed in the lake. Taps (“tattoo”) at 2000. One rest day.

Thursday, May 17. Slept well until 0800. Beautiful, bright morning. Washed in the sea. From 0900 to 1000 cleaned weapons, for the last time. 2 rest days. Sunbathed on soft moss. Pea soup for lunch. The destination of the whole march: Lüneburg Heath, there dismissal. On May 20 a little border should be crossed over. Taps at 2100.

Friday, May 18. Peter’s birthday. Reveille at 0800 and got ready for marching. At 0900 moved out to the very small border bridge (20km) with resting place in the woods. From 2100 to ...

Saturday, May 19. ... 0300 slept. 0500 marched over the 1km border bridge up to 6km away from Kolding (20km). Lighter march, arrival at 1030. Bedded in the forest by a spring.

Sunned in the afternoon. No foot pains. Slept well from 2100 to ...

Sunday, May 20. ... 1000. Washed. Pea soup. Sunned in the afternoon, allowed to resole 2 boots. Went to rest at 2100. Slept well until ...

Monday, May 21. 0500. At 0600 marched with light packs in beautiful weather, the destination 9km away from Haderslev (25km). At 1200 with a ½ hour rest we reached our goal. At Kolding. Taps at 2100. Milk. From Nyborg often encountered by Englishmen.

Tuesday, May 22. Reveille at 0900. From 0600 to 2000 it rained. The tent remained waterproof. Milk. Pea soup. German-friendly people from Kolding. Taps at 1000.

Wednesday, May 23. Reveille at 0330. At 0500 marched without packs or guns up to 11km away from Abenrun (22km). Weather cloudy. Arrived at 1200. From 1300 – 1700 slept in the barn on white straw near German-friendly country men. Milk.

Thursday, May 24. Reveille at 0600. At 0700 movement of quarters to 2km outside Apenrade ...

Friday, May 25. Slept very well in the barn from 2100 to 1000. (9km) Milk. At 1300 warm food. Carrots, Goulash. Pudding, Rhubarb. Sunned during the afternoon and stuffed stockings. Washed towels and bandages. Taps at 2200.

Saturday, May 26. Reveille at 0800. Weather: cloudy and rainy. Washed gear in the afternoon. At 1530 went on a search for food. An order at 1600 to move out in ½ hour at 1630. Returned from food searching at 1700. The unit moved out. With water laundry, acquired bread and all the packs caught up to the troops. At 2200 landed in a barn 10km outside of Greuse.

Sunday, May 27. (16km) Slept until 0700. Marched with packs at 1000. 1515 English inspection, 1530 passed Greuse. Well received by the Germans with water and tea. Over Flensburg. 15km past Greuse came upon a forest with a camp at 1900.

Monday, May 28. From 2100 – 0700 slept. Cloudy. Marched in pouring rain at 0900 to 20km away from Husum (25km). Arrived near some farmers at 1500. At 2000 it got very quiet. Slept poorly until ...

Tuesday, May 29. 0800. Very great body pains and diarrhea. Much skimmed milk. It went quiet at 2000. Sunnier day.. slept better. ~~until~~

Wednesday, May 30. Lunchtime barley. Milk soup. Sunny. Diarrhea. Less body pains. In the afternoon stitched on a woolen sleeping bag. Taps at 2000.

Thursday, May 31. Reveille at 0400. Sleeping bag lasted well. Moved out at 0600. (23km) Sun. Through cross-country marching cut off 7km. At 1300 reached the goal, Scheime. From ...

Friday, June 1. ... 2100 until 0500 slept. Sunny. Warm pea soup. No diarrhea, no body aches. Moved out at 0600. (25km) In Schwabstedt handed in rifles. 12km south of Friehstadt passed over the Eider by Mordfeld lock. Kleve. At 1400 quartered with country folk, slept well from 2000 on.

Saturday, June 2. Reveille at 0800. At 1430 moved out over Glüsing, Schalkholz, and Tellingstedt (12km). Arrived in Welmbüttel, 3km behind Tellingstedt, at 1700. Arrived at the final destination up to discharge. Good quarters with Farmer Petersen in a barn. Sunny weather. Taps at 2000.

Sunday, June 3. Slept well until 0800. Wrote up manner of work. Taps at 2100.

June 4 through June 10. Reveille at 0800. 1000 – 1200 work service. 1200 midday, 1300 – 1500 midday rest. 1500 – 1630 sports or roll call or singing. Taps at 2200. Wednesday for

the first time news pamphlets from Hamburg. Had guard duty Friday from 0300 – 0500.

Sunday June 10 – Dad's birthday. No work service.

June 11 through June 17. Reveille at 0800. 0930 – 1130 work service. Ate at 1200. 1300 – 1500 midday rest. 1600 – 1700 stenography. Taps at 2300. Monday the first man was discharged. Thursday 10 men discharged. Sunday there was no work service, 3 men discharged.

June 18 through June 24. Reveille at 0700. Work service 0830 – 1100. Ate at 1130. Midday rest 1300 – 1500. Stenography from 1600 – 1700. Work service Thursday and Friday 1500 – 1600. Monday 1 man discharged. Wednesday 6, Thursday 1, and Friday 1 discharged. Saturday evening and Sunday vaudeville show. No work Sunday. Taps at 2300.

June 24 – July 8. Reveille at 0700, taps at 2300. 0800 – 1100 work service. 1100 lunch. 1200 – 1400 midday rest. June 25 2 men discharged. June 27 made a visit to the scapegoat, Süderholm. June 28 10 men left. June 30 wrote a card to home. July 3 my birthday, laundry. July 3 cards to mom.

July 9 – July 22. Reveille at 0700, taps at 2300. 0800 – 1100 work service. 1100 lunch. 1200 – 1400 midday rest. 1430 – 1600 work service. 18 men sent away. July 12 the leave-taking of Battalion Commander Major Siegeroth. July 14 wrote a card to mom. July 17 a card from mom, a card from Peter. July 21 wrote a card to mom.

July 23 – July 26. Reveille at 0800, taps at 2300. 0800 – 1100 work service. Ate at 1100. 1200 – 1400 midday rest. 1430 – 1600 work service. July 23 2 cards from mom, 1 from Aunt Manni. July 24 1 card from mom, 1 from Aunt Manni. July 26 1 card from mom.

Friday, July 27. Reveille at 0800, taps at 2300. 0900 – 1100 work service. 1100 lunch. 1200 – 1400 midday nap. 1430 – 1600 work service. 1900 command to finish.

Saturday, July 28. To discharge. 0700 the leave-taking of Regiment Commander Major Mügge.

0730 moved out to Tellingstedt. 0830 arrival in the discharge area, Tellingstedt. Delousing, hand over of waist belt etc., personnel absorption, paybook inspection, briefing in the tent camp.

Sunday, July 29. Rest day. 1200 lunch. Reveille and taps were not fixed.

Monday, July 30. English paybook inspection, medical checkup, English inspection for the purpose of marking blood type. Discharge papers, transfer of pay book. Stitching on of the golden triangle.

July 31. Rest day.

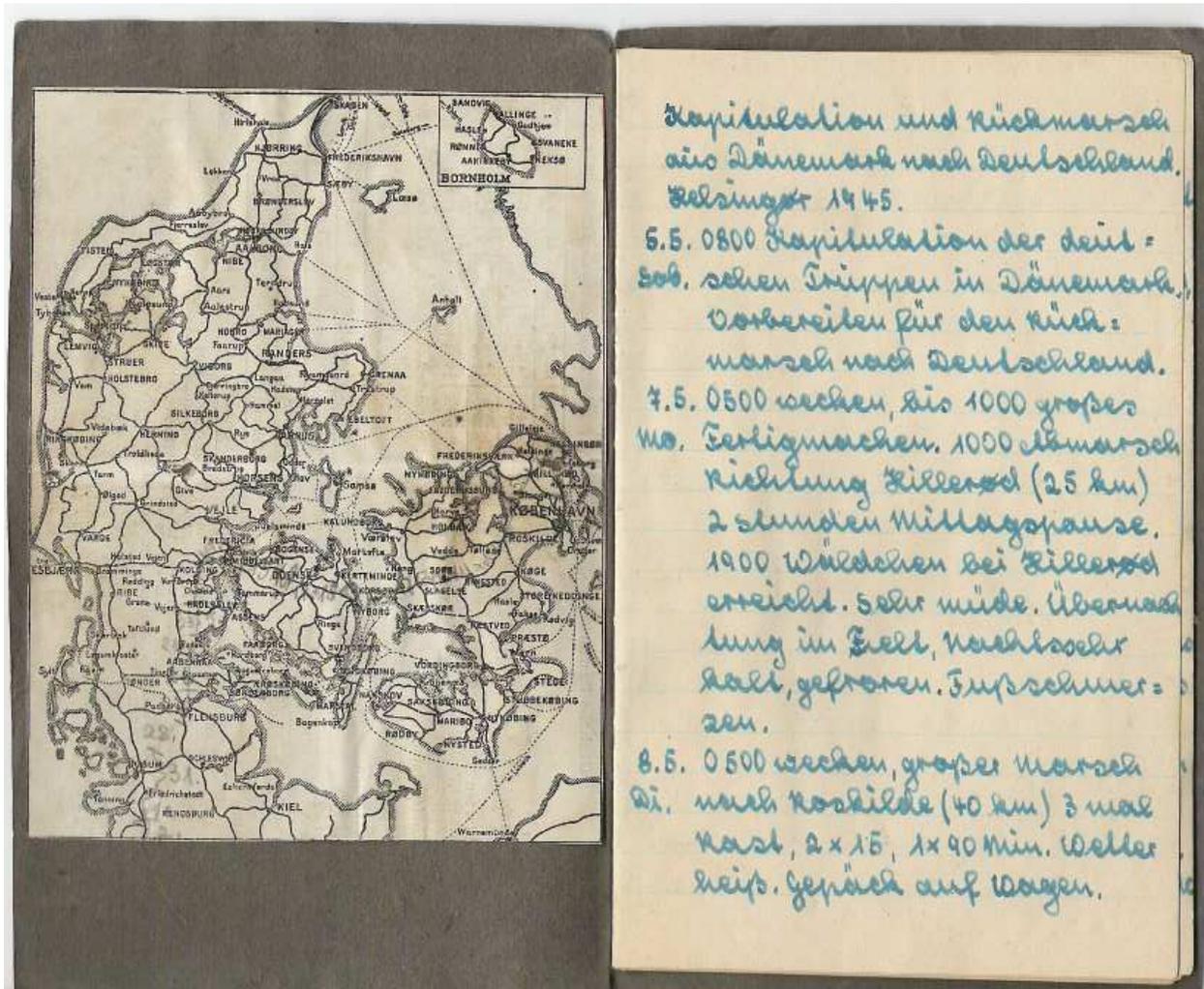
August 1. Rest day. Finishing of the evacuation.

Thursday, August 2. 0800 gathering. Received discharge money, English pack inspection.

1000 departed in a truck. 1300 arrival in Segeberg. Work stamp.

Friday, August 8. 0830 left Segeberg by passenger train. Arrival at 1230 at Hamburg Central Station. 1330 at home.

APPENDIX B
TASCHENKALENDER



Kapitulation und Rückmarsch
aus Dänemark nach Deutschland.
Selsinger 1945.

6.5. 0800 Kapitulation der deut =
sob. sehen Truppen in Dänemark,
Vorbereiten für den Rück =
marsch nach Deutschland.

7.5. 0500 wecken, bis 1000 großer
Mo. Fertigmachen. 1000 Abmarsch
Richtung Kilenesol (25 km)
2 Stunden Mittagspause.
1900 Wäldchen bei Kilenesol
erreicht. Sehr müde. Übernacht
lung im Feld, Nachtsehr
kalt, gefroren. Fuhrschmer =
zen.

8.5. 0500 wecken, großer Marsch
Si. nach Roskilde (40 km) 3 mal
Rast, 2 x 15, 1 x 90 Min. Wetter
heiß. Gepäck auf Wagen.

Fig. 1: Taschenkalender Pages 1-2

Gasmaske u. 2. Gasmaske weg-
 geworfen. Fußschmerzen groß
 Nach 20 km mit Fahrrad bis
 See vor Roskilde. Ankunfts
 1800. Kerzlich gelagert. Gebet-
 det. Im Zelt gut geschlafen.

9.5. 0800 wecken, Wetter kerzlich.
 Mi. Musik u. Nachrichten am
 Funkgerät gehört. sehr we-
 nig Fußschmerzen, ab Mit-
 tag bewölkt, Wind und Re-
 gen. 2130 abmarsch nach
 Ringstedt (30 km). Ohne
 Gepäck. 2 x 15 Min. Rast. Nur
 gute Kaltverpflegung und
 warmen Kaffee.

10.5. 0400 Ringstedt erreicht. Von
 20. 0500 bis 1400 im Wald gut geschla-
 fen, trotz Gewitter, Wind u. Reg.
 1. Begegnung mit motorisiert

engl. Einheiten. 2300 ab:
 marsch nach Sorø (28 km)

11.5. 0600 Wald hinter Sorø erreicht
 Frei. Leichte Fußschmerzen. Von
 0700 bis 2000 gut geschlafen,
 danach keine Fußschmer-
 zen. Wetter gut. 2400 ab
 marsch (20 km)

12.5. Marsch über Slagelse bis
 20. 10 km vor Rosør. Ankunfts
 0600. Gelagert auf Weide in
 Nähe v. Gehöft. 0700-1300 gut
 im Zelt geschlafen. Gründlich
 im Gehöft verwaschen. Warmes
 Essen. Wetter gut. Leichte Fuß-
 schmerzen. Abmarsch mit
 Gepäck um 1800 (6 km) bis 4 km
 vor Rosør. Große Rast von
 1900 bis 2100. Pistolenaufgabe.
 2300 (4 km) in Rosør. 2330 auf Feld

Fig. 2: Taschenkalender Pages 3-4

13.5. Abfahrt der Fähre nach Ny-
sol. Borg um 0200. 0400 in Nyborg.
Von 0600-0900 auf Weide NW
Nyborg geschlafen. (8 km)
Um 0900 Verlassen des Lager-
platzes auf unbekannter
Wasserstr. (10 km) Gr. Rast von
1200-1600. Marsch zum Rast-
platz. (1 km) Viel Kullermilch
Von 2000 ab im Wald gut
geschlafen. Hühner geschaf-
ten.

14.5. 1100 aufgewacht, Stiefel be-
no. sollen lassen. Wolzig u. Wind.
2200 abmarsch in Sturm und
Regen über Odense bis 5 km
hinter Odense. (28 km) Sicher
schlimmste Nacht. Fuß sehr
geschwollen. Große Schmerzen.

15.5. 0500 Rastplatz erreicht. 0600
Di.

bis 1600 geschlafen. Fuß mit
de mit Gummibinde fest
umwickelt. Wald. 2200 ab-
marsch mit leichtem Gepäck
16.5. (30 km) Bis 15 km vor Mittel-
Mi. Fahrt bei gutem Wetter und
wenig Fußschmerzen. Herr-
lich marschiert. 0430 Rast-
platz im Tannenwald err.
Von 0500-1600 auf weichem Moos
gut geschlafen. Am See
gesehen. 2200 Zapfen-
streich. 1. Rasttag.

17.5. Bis 0800 gut geschlafen.
20. Rast. Morgen. Gesehen
am See. 0900-1000 waffenre-
nigen, letztes mal. 2. Rast-
tag. Auf weichem Moos ge-
schlafen. Mittags Erbsensup-
pe. Ziel des gesamten Mar-:

Fig. 3: Taschenkalender Pages 5-6

sches: Lüneburger Heide,
 dort Entlassung, am 20. 5.
 soll kleiner Kelt überschrit-
 ten werden. 2100 Zapfenstr.
 18.5. Peters Geburtstag. 0800 wech-
 frei. den und Fertigmachen zum
 Abmarsch. 0900 Abmarsch
 bis zur hl. Bellenbüche (20 km)
 Waldtrastplatz. 2100 bis
 19.5. 0300 geschlafen. 0500 Abmarsch
 sob. über 1 km lange Bellenbüche
 bis 6 km vor Halding. (20 km)
 leichter Marsch, duhüpft
 1030. Im Wald bei Quelle
 gelagert. Nachmittags ge-
 sunt. Keine Fußschmerzen.
 2100 gut geschlafen bis
 20.5. 1000. Quaschen. Erbsensuppe
 sob. ne. Nachmittags gesund u.
 2. Stiefel besolen lassen.

2100 zur Ruhe gegangen. gut
 geschlafen bis
 21.5. 0500. 0600 Abmarsch mit reich-
 Mo. dem Gepäck bei schönem Wetter
 Ziel 9 km vor Zanderles. (25 km)
 um 1200 mit 1/2 Stunde Rest
 Ziel erreicht. über Halding. um
 2100 Zapfenstreich. Milch. Ab
 Nyborg oft Begegnung v. Engländer.
 22.5. um 0900 aufgewacht. von 0600-
 Di. 2000 Regen. Zelt nicht gehalten.
 Milch. Erbsensuppe. Ab Halding
 deutschfreundliche Menschen.
 1000 Zapfenstreich.
 23.5. 0330 wachen. 0500 Abmarsch ohne
 Mi. Gepäck, ohne Gepäck bis 11 km vor
 Abmarsch. (22 km) Wetter müde.
 duhüpft 1200. von 1300-1400 bei
 deutschfreundl. Bauern in der
 Scheune auf weichen Stroh ge-

Fig. 4: Taschenkalender Pages 7-8

schlafen. Milch.

24.5. 0600 wecken. 0700 Verlegung des Do. Quartiers bis 2 km vor Rheinwache

25.5. Geschlafen 2100 bis 1000 sehr gut frei in Scheune. (9 km) Milch. 1300 warmes Essen. Kartoffeln, 1 Äpfel, Gulasch, Zucchini, Khabarber. Nachmittags gesund und stümpe gestopft. Land- und Färschenthaler gewaschen. 2200 Zapfenstech.

26.5. 0800 wecken. Wetter: kühe und sob. regnerisch. Nachmittags Zeitung gewaschen. 1530 auf Brotsorgung gegangen. 1600 Befehl in 1/2 Stunde um 1630 abmarsch. Um 1700 vom Brotsorgen zurück. Einheit abmarschiert. Mit warmer Wäsche, besorgtem Brot und sämtlichem Gepäck

Truppe eingeholt. 2200 in Scheune 10 km vor Grenze gelandet

27.5. (16 km) bis 0700 geschlafen. 0800. 1000 abmarsch mit Gepäck. 1555 Kontrolle der Engländer. 1530 Grenze passiert. Von den Deutschen mit Wasser und Tee gut empfangen. Über Bensburg. 15 km hinter der Grenze um 1900 am Wald zum Lager angekommen. (25 km)

28.5. Von 2100 - 0700 geschlafen. Frühe Mo. 0900 abmarsch in strömendem Regen bis 20 km vor Zusum (25 km) 1500 Aufenthalt beim Bäumen. 2000 zur Ruhe gegangen. Schlecht geschlafen bis

29.5. 0800. Sehr gr. Leibschmerzen und Di. Durchfall. Viel Magermilch. 2000 zur Ruhe gegangen. Sonnig

Fig. 5: Taschenkalender Pages 9-10

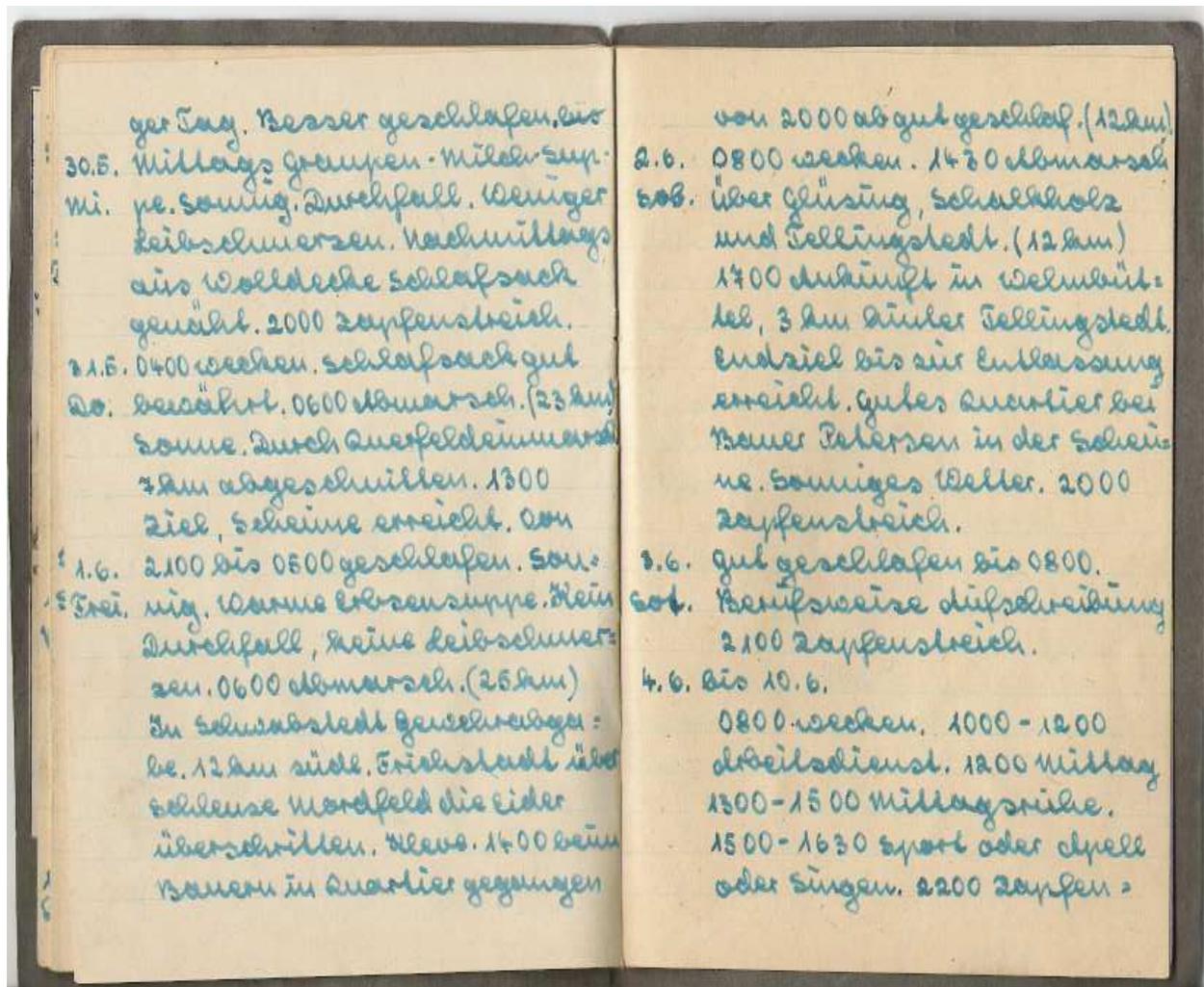


Fig. 6: Taschenkalender Pages 11-12

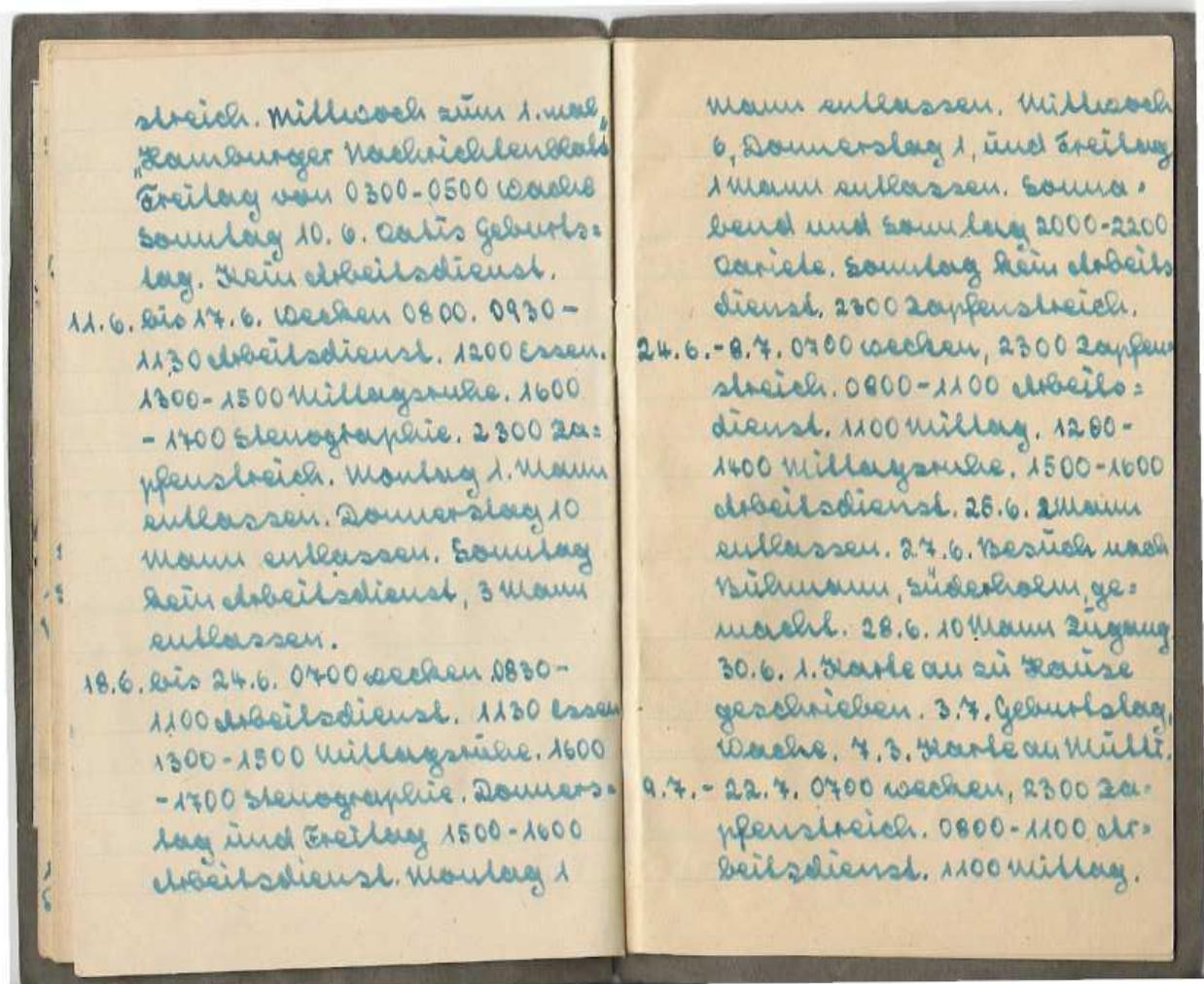


Fig. 7: Taschenkalender Pages 13-14

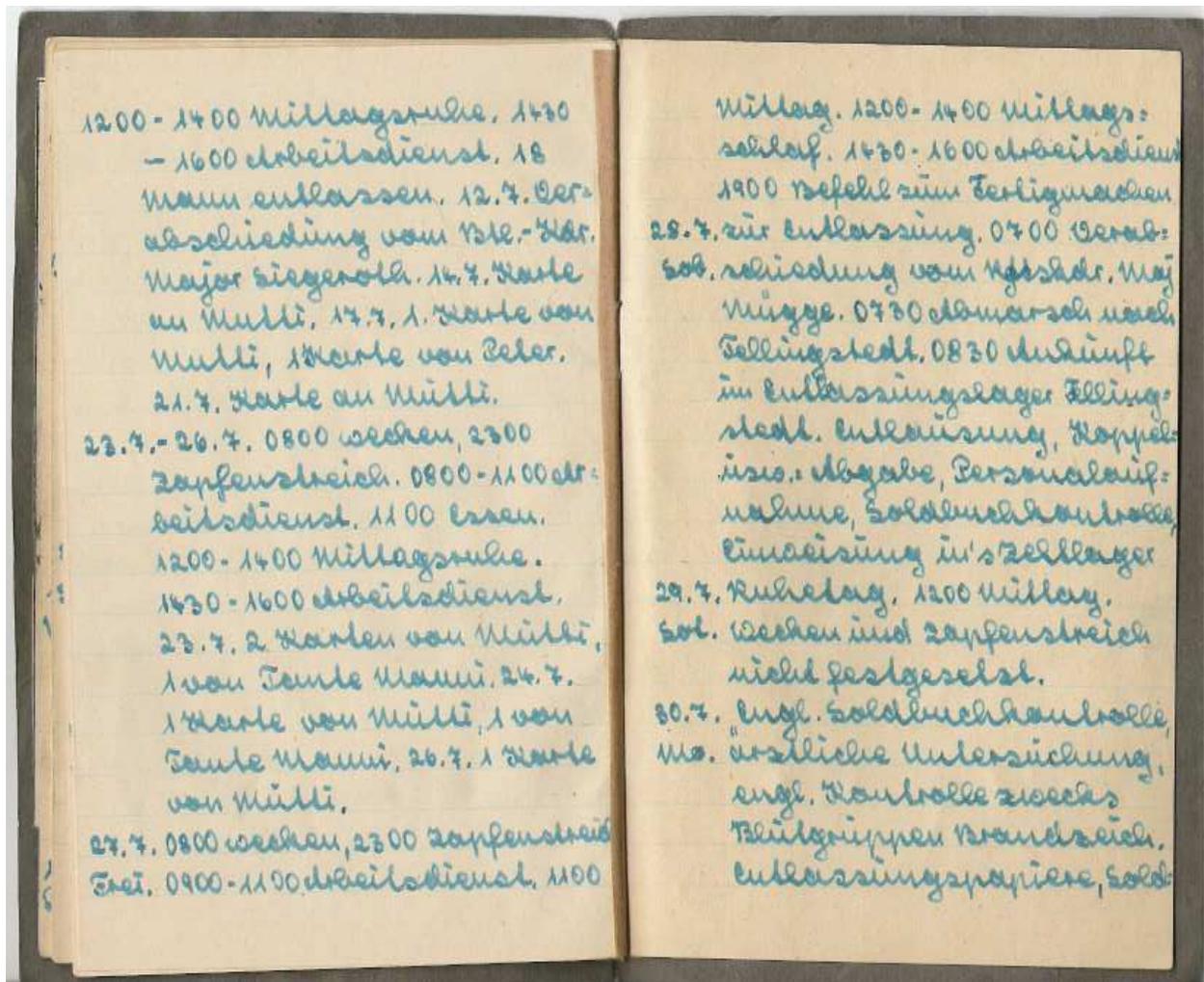
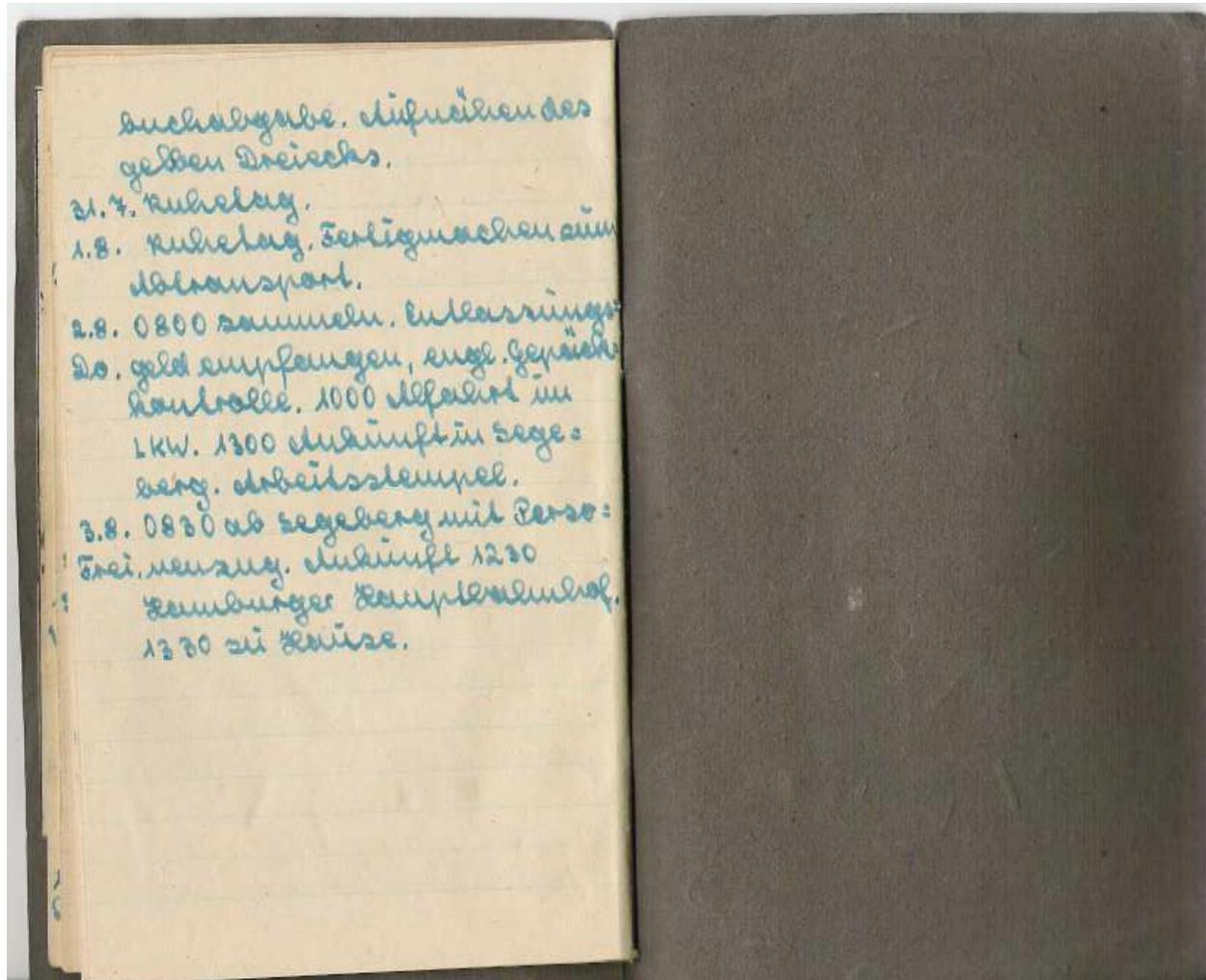


Fig. 8: Taschenkalender Pages 15-16



Buchabgabe. Aufsuchen des
gelben Dreiecks.

21. 7. Ruhetag.

1. 8. Ruhetag. Fertigmachen zum
Abtransport.

2. 8. 0800 sammeln. Entlassung

20. Geld empfangen, engl. Gepäck
kontrolle. 1000 Abfahrt im

LKW. 1300 Ankunft in Sege-
berg. Arbeitsstempel.

3. 8. 0830 ab Segeberg mit Perso:

Frei. neuzug. Ankunft 1230
Königsberger Hauptbahnhof.
1330 zu Künze.

Fig. 9: Taschenkalender Page 17

APPENDIX C
MAP OF GERMANY, 1945



Fig. 10: Map of Germany, 1945¹

¹ MacDonogh, *After the Reich*, x-xi.

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