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German Re-education in the US Occupation Zone, 1945-1948

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Candidate for the degree

Bachelor of Arts

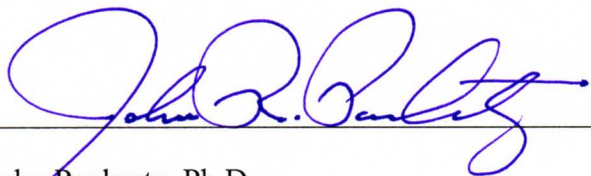
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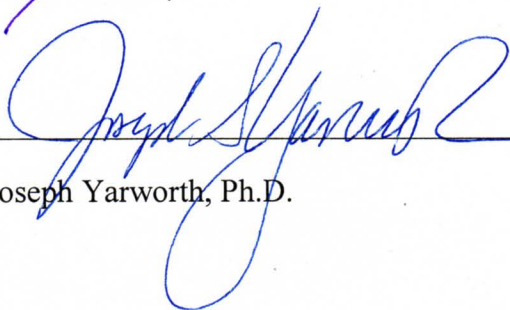
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In early spring 1945, as Allied tanks crossed the Rhine bridgeheads and rolled into Germany, Nazi officials alongside the military continued to conduct business as usual, setting up new perimeter defenses, maintaining roads, or keeping track of the population's needs. So did schools. Teacher Klara Reisener kept a diary in which she notes the shifts in the defending and attacking soldiers, all the while attempting to teach her classes, amid the ever increasing difficulties in instructing pupils as buildings are destroyed, leaving only a few rooms to conduct lessons.¹ By September, four months after the Nazi collapse, Reisener was allowed to teach again, under horrendous conditions. It was a makeshift solution, which reflected the fact that "For much of World War II it was not anticipated that the Allies would need in any significant sense to 'govern' Germany once victory was secured."²

By the time of the July-August 1945 Allied conference in Potsdam, just outside Berlin, all four Allies had seriously backtracked and rushed tentative plans into place. For example, Section II A7 of the conference's agreement states:

German Education shall be so controlled as completely to eliminate Nazi and military doctrines and to make possible the successful development of democratic ideas.³

Such broad terms, however, were fraught with confusion. For example, Hermann Rohrs describes the aim of re-education of Germany as: "...to overcome nationalism, militarism, and the ideology of National Socialism"⁴ The Germans, in the view of the occupiers, had become a

¹ Klara Reisener, "Kriegsende und erste Nachkriegszeit aus deutscher Sicht: Bericht der Flaesheimer Lehrerin Klara Reisener, 1945," < http://www.lwl.org/westfaelische-geschichte/portal/Internet/finde/langDatensatz.php?urlID=1552&url_tabelle=tab_quelle > (accessed March 2014).

² David Phillips, "Reconstructing Education in Germany. Some Similarities and Contrasts in the Postwar and Post-Unification rethinking of Educational provision," in Leslie J. Limage, *Democratizing Education and Educating Democratic Citizens* (London, UK: Routledge, 2001), 51.

³ Phillips, 52.

⁴ Hermann Rohrs, "Education for Peace: A Neglected Aspect of Re-education in Germany." *Oxford Review of Education* 15.2 (1989): 147-64. 147.

society filled with guilt: “The collective guilt implicated everyone in the crime...”⁵ However, the Allies were quick to realize that to impose a full program might prove difficult. After all, much in the image of teacher Klara Reisner, the German administration still existed and could make headways in instituting changes. Yet it, too, was at a loss in the face of the great destruction Germany had undergone. As one Bavarian official in the US occupation zone noted, the state of offices and buildings was so dire that the spaces available became quickly overfilled and turned into a “Sauerei” (pigsty).⁶

The thesis proposes to consider American efforts in the reconstruction of Germany with a focus on reforms in the education realm. By 1948, when American occupation ended and was handed back to the Germans with an eye to the fusion of the Western zones and the eventual formation of the Federal Republic Germany had benefited considerably from American influence and could start moving towards further reform successfully. While German education reforms were key to transforming the socio-political German landscape, they could not have happened without the input of United States.

After World War II, Germany was a nation in need of reform. United States sought a plan to de-nazify and then re-educate the Germans in an attempt to create a democratic, peaceful society. The process was a somewhat daunting task for United States, as the Germans would have to acknowledge the need to change themselves and their personal ideologies. After all, a survey from the Office of Military Government, United States (OMGUS) acknowledged that at least 15 % of Germans distrusted left-wing parties, and 33% worried that Jews might gain

⁵ Hermann 149.

⁶ Winfried Müller, *Schulpolitik im Bayern im Spannungsfeld von Kultusbürokratie und Besatzungsmacht 1945-1949* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1995), 16, cited in Phillips, 52.

the same rights as their German Christian brethren.⁷ Yet United States could enjoy one small advantage: there was a tradition of democracy, however, tenuous, thanks to the Weimar Republic (1919-1933) that suggested at least one generation of Germans in addition to the German exiles could pick up the remnants of Germany and turn it into a democracy. However complicated the process, United States began what would become years of questionnaires de-nazifying the system, rebuilding the schools, re-creating the textbooks, and educating the teachers. Many problems along the way delayed the process, thus the goal at times seemed to be more difficult to achieve. Because of pressing matters with the Soviet Union, occupation in Germany was forced to end, but not before several changes had been created to ensure Democracy and peace within society using the education system.

Historiography

Germany's rebirth after World War II is an essential historical event that had lasting effects on Western society at-large. It bore great implications for both the Cold War by making West Germany an ally, and for the post-Cold War era by confirming the democratic ideals of the German state as it absorbed East Germany into its realm. Many studies until the 1990s focused on the political and economic reorganization of Germany under the occupation. Since then, however, many more studies have separated the occupation forces' work from the German efforts to rebuild the shattered nation.

Because of the complexity of Germany's divisions in 1945, thousands of studies now exist regarding the various facets of Germany reconstruction in each of the occupation zones. Most discussions of socio-cultural reform, however, revolved around university education and

⁷ Anna J. Merritt and Richard J. Merritt, eds., *Public Opinion in Occupied Germany: The Omgus Surveys, 1945-1949* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1970), 40.

music and theater. When education at-large has been discussed, it involved mostly reforms carried out in the British zone.⁸ This historiography changed in the past two decades, when scholars in United States and Germany renewed their interest in the Organization of the Military Government of United States (OMGUS) and the copious open records it left behind. In parallel, they reexamined German narratives of the era, including the categories of gender and memory.⁹

Education, too has gained a foothold in historiography. As Brian Puaca notes, the theme has at times been ignored because scholars viewed educational reform a failure. By academic standards, the accelerated end to the American occupation in favor of giving Germany its sovereignty would qualify. However, by using OMGUS' records and other historians' work, Puaca was able to identify what many people are unaware of which includes the initiatives taken towards forming a better, peaceful and democratic Germany. The process of de-nazifying and re-educating the German society would employ these initiatives. Puaca's work offers substantial guidance in identifying and understanding the challenges of reforming an educational system with an eye to wider goals. In so doing, he offers a helpful corrective to the work of Helen Liddel.

Evaluating the educational system the Americans 1940s, Helen Liddel believed that Americans had put the educational system in a position to fail. While firing Nazis seemed a good idea, the procedures used caused a dearth of teachers. On the other hand, in the longer run, Liddel and Puaca agree that new conditions were created for a rebirth of education, one that also

⁸ Heide Fehrenbach, review of Gabriele Clemens, ed. *Kulturpolitik im besetzten Deutschland, 1945-1949* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1994), *H-German Book Reviews*, March 1996, <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=328> (accessed March 2014.)

⁹ See for example, Robert Moeller, ed., *West Germany Under Construction: Politics, Society and Culture in the Adenauer Era* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997.)

cast Germany into an ally. For this to happen, however, would require complicated steps that included, among other things, denazification, rebuilding and teacher training.

1933-1945: The Nazi Background

Nations rely on educational systems to train their population into productive citizens as well as to inculcate cultural values that contribute to the identification with the state's goals. In the case of dictatorships, the personal agenda of a leader as well as the associated ideology not only rely on education, but modify it without consensus to affirm the system's alleged infallibility. Hitler identified quickly the need to incorporate German youth into his designs for a thousand-year Reich. This proved to be a brilliant tactic because children's minds are easily conformed and converted because of their inexperience and willingness to accept what they are told.

Nazism's reform of education helped spread National Socialist ideology: "Nazi leaders viewed the German youth as a catalyst for change away from what they regarded as the decadent political system of the Weimar Republic towards the new 'national community' of the future."¹⁰ Modifications to the system began as soon as Hitler took power as Chancellor in 1933. The process of *Gleichshaltung* (coordination) of society, whereby every facet of German society was to be nazified, allowed for the exclusion of teachers on the grounds not only of alleged racial impurity, but also political opportunity.

By 1934, "all of the ministries of education in the various states were brought under the direct control of a central head."¹¹ This was one way for the Nazi leaders to ensure that they had

¹⁰ Lisa Pine, *Education in Nazi Germany*, (Oxford, UK: Berg, 2010), 4.

¹¹ Carl Donald Dalke, *The Democratic Re-Education of German Youth in United States Zones of Occupation*, (Kansas State College of Agriculture and Applied Science: 1950), 16.

firm control over the entire ministry. Dealing with one central department was easier than dealing with several at once. Another step towards controlling the education system was the creation of the National Sozialistische Lehrerbund (National Socialist Teachers' League). Another key step towards controlling the education system involved implementing the goals of the NSLB¹². Founded in 1929, the organization had two main functions: to "provide reports on the political reliability of teachers for appointments and promotions" and to "ensure the ideology indoctrination of teachers."¹³ To complete the infiltration into German education, the Nazis had to keep data on the progress of the school program reform and control of the teachers. The NSLB created a teacher training program, required of all teaching candidates in Germany, with the aim of transforming all German teachers into 'National Socialists Volkserzieher' (people's educators).¹⁴ The official teacher's manual contains Education Minister Bernhard Rust's statement regarding Nazi educational aims: "The German school in the Third Reich is an integral part of the National Socialistic order of living. It has the mission, in collaboration with other phases [sections] of the Party, to fashion and mold the National Socialistic Being according to Party orders."¹⁵ This "ideal" included considerable physical education and para-military activities. These would be implemented until the end of the war. Rust committed suicide on May 8, 1945.

Teacher resistance did occur, but opponents were quickly silenced. According to Marjorie Lamberti, "Elementary teachers, for the most part, staunchly resisted Nazi attempts to

¹² The NSLB, or National Sozialistische Lehrerbund stands for the National Socialist Teachers' League; it was dissolved in 1943 for financial reasons. See Fritz Schäffer, "Nationalsozialistischer Lehrerbund," *Historisches Lexikon Bayern*, http://www.historisches-lexikon-bayerns.de/artikel/artikel_44923 (Accessed April 2014.)

¹³ Pine, 15.

¹⁴ Pine, 15.

¹⁵ Dalke, 18.

subvert the educational system for their own ends.”¹⁶ Thus, teachers’ resistance did exist for long, as to keep their job, teachers who had passed the initial *Gleichshaltung* screening had to follow Nazi rescripts. All universities, including those training educators, were under the same rules. The professors were licensed by the state (which was run by the Nazis), and teachers also had to gain the approval of the Reich Ministry (also run by the Nazis) in order to continue/begin teaching: “The granting of the license was contingent upon acceptance of the National Socialist ideology and conformity with the regulations of the Education Ministry.”¹⁷ The Nazis hoped to create teachers who believed in their ideology and would, in turn, share it, almost by osmosis, with their classes.

The curriculum between 1933 and 1945 was also nazified. It involved biology, physics/chemistry, geography, history, math, and religious studies. Each of these branches underwent a thorough review process. In physics, for example, teaching any notion associated with relativity was forbidden because it was deemed a “Jewish science.”¹⁸ These classes were not typical of what would be taught in today’s classrooms. In biology students learned of German Lebensraum or living space.¹⁹ The study of Physics/Chemistry was thus based on what would be most helpful to the war effort, thus the bettering of technology in the classroom occurred. In Geography students learned the boundaries of homeland and what the political geography looked like in Germany. Math enabled students to compute statistics as well as understanding problems dealing with national political issues. Racial studies taught the children

¹⁶ John Cornell, Review of Lamberti, Marjorie, *The Politics of Education: Teachers and School Reform in Weimar Germany*, H-Education, H-Net Reviews, December 2003. 1.

¹⁷ Dalke, 17.

¹⁸ See Christie Macrakis, *Surviving the Swastika: Scientific Research in Nazi Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993)

¹⁹ Lebensraum or Living Space was a key component to Hitler’s ideology and what he talked about most often. Living space was a concept that he felt every pure German deserved. It was a way to say that the Germans needed to get rid of all the non-aryans to make room for the Aryans so that they could thrive.

who the 'pure blood' Germans were and who would not count as such.²⁰ The entire curriculum focused around the political ideology that the Nazis supported. Religious studies were a difficult theme, as fascist ideology rejected church teachings. By 1937, such classes were deemed optional, and even were replaced by courses on the history of the Nazi party.²¹ Teachers lectured constantly to the children on these topics, and it worked to the Nazis' advantage. By the end of World War II, however, children were not even able to attend school because of the bombings or because they themselves had been drafted into work details or military training. What the Allies found, then, was a broken nation where everything, including ideas, required a new start. This combined destruction and occupation period entered German parlance as "the zero hour."

Denazification

After World War II, the Allies split Germany into four separate occupation zones controlled by Britain, France, the Soviet Union and United States. Each zone was to deal with the reconstruction of Germany in its own way and had to make decisions on such issues as education, economy, and local administration. While Britain and France left Germany (though not Berlin) only 18 months after occupying it (they kept a small military presence there,) the Americans stayed in Germany until 1948. At that point they left the Germans to conduct revitalization of their country.²² America would use the occupation years to attempt to create a society that would turn from National Socialism towards Democracy and avoid Communism. The Americans would attempt to re-educate the society and integrate the ideology of peace into

²⁰ Pine, 51.

²¹ Benjamin Sax, and Dieter Kunz, *Inside Hitler's Germany: A Documentary History of Life in the Third Reich* (Lexington, MA: DC Heath, 1992), 305.

²² Masaako Shibata. *Japan and Germany under the US occupation: a comparative analysis of post-war education reform* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2005).

education. By denazifying Germany, re-educating them, and implementing democracy, the Germans would learn to become a peaceful nation.²³

Following the surrender of Germany a key step towards creating peace and democracy was the issuance by SHAEF (Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force);²⁴ this was a combination of United States and British headquarters for the denazification process. Although SHAEF was dissolved in July of 1945, the Potsdam Agreement created the directives towards the denazification of Germany. “Perhaps the most controverted phase of denazification is the so-called ‘removal-from-office’ program. The Potsdam Agreement required that: All members of the Nazi Party who have been more than nominal participants in its activities and all other persons hostile to Allied purposes shall be removed from public and semi-public office, and from positions of responsibility in important private undertakings.”²⁵ Because of the Potsdam Agreement, all teachers teaching during the Nazi Regime were asked to leave, and an initiative to find Democratic teachers began. However, this was quickly realized to be a faulty system, thus OMGUS was created by the US to aid this process.

Among the other countries involved in occupying Germany, United States’ vision and implementation of denazification soon gave way to new concerns. Geopolitically, the fear of a worldwide confrontation with the Soviet Union called for splitting up European allies and, if possible, making Germany one of them. While punishing the Nazi leadership was a given, how far would one go in hunting mid-level Fascists? Thus, punishment of individuals involved in Nazism risked creating a power vacuum that would gut the socio-economic and administrative structure of Germany. The solution, reached after considerable discussion in American circles,

²³ Herman Rohrs, “Education for Peace: A Neglected Aspect of Re-Education in Germany,” *Oxford Review of Education* 15 (1989): 147-164, accessed November 25, 2013, 147.

²⁴ Elmer Plischke, “Denazification Law and Procedure,” *The American Journal of International Law* 41 (1947):807-827, accessed November 24, 2013. 807.

²⁵ Plischke, 814.

was to offer a kind of redemption process. United States created a Committee on Post-war Programs that noted the following: “the basic assumption underlying this approach [of re-education] is that Germany is ill rather than guilty. The cure will involve measures of social and mental therapy calculated to reduce paranoid tendencies.”²⁶ United States wanted to attempt to change the mindset of the Germans rather than punish them for something that had been drilled into their heads.

Building a new Germany would take time and compromise between the two nations. The organization that would perform the first step in revitalization would be known as OMGUS.²⁷ The initial goal of denazification began in 1945 through initiatives presented by OMGUS. After the initial steps of denazification of the education system were complete, OMGUS began the re-education of Germany. It would become its objective to create “changes in German education [were] necessary for the OMGUS to make American efforts for the creation of a democratic Germany visible to the world.”²⁸ As Konrad Hugo Jarausch stated in his book *After Hitler: recivilizing Germans, 1945-1995*, in order to “shed light on the darkness of the Nazi past,” a questionnaire was created for all Germans to complete.²⁹ When completed, this questionnaire was meant to denazify the community; it was going to separate the people who were Nazis from the Germans who refused to support that ideology, making them bystanders to the entire Nazi Regime.

According to Title 8: Education and Religious Affairs, under General Policies for Education, the purpose was to “eradicate Nazism and German militarism in all their aspects from the German educational system and to establish an affirmative program of re-orientation which is

²⁶ Shibata, 190.

²⁷ OMGUS stands for the Office of Military Government, United States. This was an organization created to assist in the re-education and the de-nazification of Germany.

²⁸ Shibata, 117.

²⁹ Konrad Hugo Jarausch, *After Hitler: recivilizing Germans, 1945-1995* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2006).

designed to eliminate completely Nazi and militaristic doctrines and to encourage the development of democratic ideas.”³⁰ In this directive United States stated without reservation, its complete ideals when it came to dealing with schools: the elimination of the old ideals and a development and a movement towards Democracy. Thus, OMGUS’s first objective was to divide up the Germans according to a special questionnaire. This program was somewhat effective; however, the denazification process angered many Germans because too few big Nazis were avoiding punishment while too few little Nazis were bearing the brunt of this United States led operation. The society was greatly affected; many people filled the questionnaire and lost their jobs immediately. The education system, because of their forced involvement with the NSLB, saw many job losses. Overall one could say, this questionnaire was highly unsuccessful and time consuming

“on the one hand, there were those willing to adapt, who carried out their work in the party and its organizations so well that it was impossible to guess that they actually did not support the political system...there were those in this group that identified with their work, so that there was no clarity as to the extent of their power and lack of scruples”.³¹ \

During this time period, it would be difficult to change the Germans’ ideology, for far too many years their Nazi occupiers had drilled the ideology and living style into their heads leaving some Germans with no recollection of what life was like before Nazism.

The teacher questionnaires were composed of many different questions. One of the Forms (Form A) had the following questions to determine the extent of ones Nazi involvement:

“1. Last Name 2.Last Name at the time of birth 3. First and middle names 4. Date of Birth 5. Nationality at Birth 6. Present Nationality 7. Place of birth 8.Permanent address and telephone number 9. Occupation (profession) 10. Business address and type of duty 11. Membership in the Nazi Party 12.Type and number of identification 13. Purpose of travel 14. Places and zones to be visited,

³⁰ National Archives and records (NARA), OMGUS RG: 260, Records relating to education, 312.1 Report Heath Service Gen Relieve Acct R. Not through Regulations Box 89, Title 8 Education and Religious Affairs.

³¹ Rhors, 149.

the address of the places of destination, and name of the concern/firm 15. Date of departure from...by... 16.Points of crossing the line of demarcation 17. If the petitioner travels with children under 16, give their names and addresses...”³²

This questionnaire was one of many used to determine ones’ level of involvement with the Nazi Regime. The information gave United States enough information about someone to determine his/her involvement in the Nazi Regime. Even without the questionnaire, it may be obvious who was involved because the Nazis wrote everything down and kept good records. After taking this questionnaire, the Germans were categorized into five different categories of involvement. The first was the highest ranking of involvement, thus loss of job was imminent and non-reversible. The second was a level of advised recommendation, which also led to loss of job. The third was a discretionary no-adverse recommendation. The fourth included people with no sign of being an active Nazi; these kept their jobs. The fifth included people who showed evidence of anti-Nazi activity, thus saving their jobs completely. In a way, after the war, these records hurt people because they would be directly corresponding to the Nazi Regime through paperwork.

During the reopening period the teacher shortages in some areas became so drastic that the issue became unimaginable. Records created by OMGUS show the impact that denazification had on the teachers and the inevitable affects it had on the schools. One document states that a school needs 125 teachers. They have appointed none but have 67 recommendations, thus leaving this school with 125 vacancies to be filled “less number appointed as recommended.”³³ This survey taken by United States shows the need for teachers, and several more documents show the same or even greater numbers. Many schools were required to fill out a survey in order for United States better to understand and calculate the significance of the situation. The

³² NARA, OMGUS, RG 260. Records re-cultural exchange and school reopenings, Teachers and teacher training through textbooks, Box 78, Questionnaire.

³³ NARA, OMGUS: RG 260, Re-Opening secondary schools applications A-Z Voll through Reopening of Schools, Box 90, “Reopening of Elementary Schools”.

document was called “Education and Religious Affairs Report Form Reopening of Elementary Schools,” and it showed the following for a school in Landkreis Ebermannstadt. Fifty percent of the teachers were still qualified to teach at the reopening of the school, which also means fifty percent of them were deemed Nazis and denazified from the system. This survey also goes into the amount of space needed and amount of space that would need to be fixed. For this specific school, out of 40,000 In sq. ft, none of it was suitable for classes to be held. This number and amount gives an indication of the destruction that Germany saw after World War II. Not only were the Germans attempting to get their lives back together and out of the destruction, but they were trying to re-educate and re-learn values that would aid them in a better Germany. ³⁴

In a letter written in October 1947, G.E. Steinhe describes perfectly the difficulty and complexity that would surround United States plausible re-education of the German society.

“The Education Division of Military Government is in full and hearty agreement with the expressed desire of the Policy Enforcement Branch to thoroughly cleanse German universities of Nazi, militaristic, or other undesirable elements. It is realized that the thorough denazification of German universities is only the first negative but absolutely necessary step in the process of building a positively democratic Germany.”³⁵

Denazification was important.

Re-education

In understanding the complexity of re-education in post-World War II Germany, one must understand the issues surrounding denazification, OMGUS the organization that led re-education and the vast amount of destruction both socially and physically that had impacted the

³⁴ ³⁴ NARA, OMGUS: RG 260, Re-Opening secondary schools applications A-Z Voll through Reopening of Schools, Box 90, “Education and Religious Affairs Report Form Reopening of Elementary Schools”.

³⁵ NARA, OMGUS RG: 260. Records Re cultural exchange and school reopenings Denazification 39, Box 58.

Germans daily for years. Re-education was taken very seriously by United States. The Germans were accepting of many changes but also hesitant of others. America knew that if change were to occur, the German society would need to be taught democracy and peace. Eventually the Germans would be left on their own to apply what they saw fit.

The idea of re-education did not come about right away. Initially several other plans were considered for Germany. One suggestion from Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau argued that “Germany should be reconstructed as an agricultural country without a potential for industrial development.”³⁶ This option was not employed for various reasons. Many people disliked it because as General Clay put: “the Allies could not afford to waste the industrial potential in Germany, which was larger than any industrial potential in Europe”.³⁷ America’s initial goal was to create a Germany that would be independent of other countries. Germany would become politically independent and at the same time understand the ideals of democracy and the evils of communism.

United States wanted to create a society that was able to think for itself. Prior to the Allied occupation, the Germans had experienced an authoritarian era that ended in war, an unstable though flourishing democracy, and Nazism. Thus, in order to re-educate and teach new ideologies, the Germans would have to relearn what was punishable and not punishable. Ultimately, the “questioning of earlier forms of education in order to achieve a better, more stable future and as such is more than mere discussion: it is the investigation of what is historically possible.”³⁸ In questioning the earlier forms of education, United States was able to evaluate further what would be sustainable and what would be most efficient for the Germans. The process of re-education was not taken lightly, nor was it the ultimate solution to all the

³⁶ Shibata, 107.

³⁷ Shibata, 108.

³⁸ Rohrs, 148.

issues throughout Germany. United States saw the process of re-education as a way to fix long-term issues. Initiating such changes by creating goals and programs would positively impact society. Germans would be able to rethink their position on government, society, and education.

In August 1945, the schools opened the doors to the teachers who had made the cut to the teachers who had attended emergency certificate training to be certified teachers, or to those had not been kicked out of the program based on their Nazi level of participation. The first step though was not to have students attend classes; the first step to opening the school doors was to begin by purging the schools of the Nazi ideology.

“The re-opening actually began with the closing of the schools. The first teachers had scarcely been assigned work when the order was issued to carry out the denazification programme before re-opening the schools, which in this case meant above all submitting textbooks and other materials for approval.”³⁹

The first big step in re-education would actually be a step backwards from the final goal.

Re-education affected many different areas of Germany from society, economics, to government. One of the first impacts felt by society was not entirely related to education. After all, in a survey of Bavarian schools, some 250 children polled in 1946 offered a surprising response. Most were unconcerned about politics or voting. Their primary worry was steady access to food.⁴⁰ Free school meals were, indeed, offered in schools in the Maerican zone to ensure many children a place to get one good meal a day since everything had been ripped from them during the war.

The youth of Germany would be the most difficult to change, in ideologies and also in structure. According to educationalist Eduard Spranger “Never has a generation studied in more tragic circumstances than between 1946 and 1949...”⁴¹ Structure of schools was very different

³⁹ Rohrs, 151.

⁴⁰ Merritt and Merritt, p. 86.

⁴¹ Puaca, 7.

from what many had grown up with. The Germans had, in the past, mainly allowed only the wealthy to attend school. When United States took over occupation, one of the main changes occurred in the system was the ability for all children, rich and poor to go to school. There would be a school that students of all social statuses could attend.⁴²

Curriculum had been drastically changed under the Nazi Regime, and its main goal was “glorifying rural life, idealizing manhood, and elevating the military above all other spheres of society.”⁴³ This is why, once United States had accomplished the restoration of buildings, and had restored some of the materials, the focus became curriculum. The teachers, although just newly trained and many without any experience at all, would have to teach these pupils at times more than what they knew.

One of the main studies on which teachers focused during re-education was Social Studies. Social Studies would prove to be one of the most controversial, new forms of study in which the Germans participated. In 1946 the American Occupation Zone started the teaching of Social Studies again as a means to “reorganize and modernize the German schools.”⁴⁴ Social Studies and history were means to discuss democratic ideals, and to expose Germans to the discipline would help them cast a critical eye on their past.

According to OMGUS, the most basic, important elements that would need to be added into the curriculum within the schools were as follows: “Cooperative human relations, Organic group unity, Stable emotional control, and intelligent behavior.”⁴⁵ One of the more interesting of these four elements is the cooperative human relations. Further along in the document, OMGUS

⁴²Punca, 19.

⁴³ Puaca, 22.

⁴⁴ Puaca, 132.

⁴⁵ NARA, OMGUS RG: 260.

explained what they meant by it by saying: “children should learn to like people of all ages, to feel at home with adults and to have security with their peers.” This directly corresponds to the de-nazification ideology that United States was attempting to enforce. Because the Hitler Youth had put a strong emphasis on their leaders as their primary support system with parents and teachers providing less of an importance in their children’s lives, it would take a strong initiative like the cooperative human relations to reverse this strong ideal.

At the same time schools were closed, analysis of the textbooks and other educational materials were reviewed. It would take more than just a few months to recreate and de-nazify the materials. In fact, it would take the first two years of the occupation to create materials for the students and teachers to use without even touching on the pedagogy. Not only was there a process to denazify the information and create a democratic formula to the textbooks, but the Germans were lacking some of the most basic materials within the classroom:

Physical destruction on a great scale has directly or indirectly reduced the number of school buildings available...combined with Nazi and post-Nazi purges, has reduced books and reference material almost to nothing. Denazification, prisoners-of-war, war losses, have reduced the number of teachers and youth leaders available and raised the average age of those remaining to over fifty.⁴⁶

With so much in educational support missing in Germany, all of these things had to be supplied before education and pedagogy could even be touched.⁴⁷ However, the urgency of getting children back into schools meant that the two would occur in parallel. By 1948, OMGUS surveys showed that while concerns had abated, they remained strong in areas such as Stuttgart where rebuilding had been slow.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Liddell, 30.

⁴⁷ Puaca, 24

⁴⁸ OMGUS report 95 (25 February 1948), reprinted in Merritt and Merritt, 203.

United States focused on long term assistance for the Germans. The Nazis had created an educational system in which the function was to promote the Nazi ideology and gain further support for the Nazi Regime.⁴⁹ United States had to reverse the ideology that had created such a detrimental education system. The curriculum was based off of “glorifying rural life, idealizing manhood, and elevating the military above all other spheres of society.”⁵⁰ It was also a system based on forming a strong alliance with the Hitler Youth while causing a decrease in the significance of parents and teachers as support systems. The main focus, especially towards the end of the war, was to make secondary education one year less so that children could enter the military system sooner. All of these ideals and norms within education would have to be reversed with nearly 50% of the teachers gone and many newly trained teachers just beginning.⁵¹

There were significant issues to overcome in the first years of occupation; some were vital components to the re-education process and thus needed to be dealt with before education could be accomplished. One of the first to overcome was the rebuilding of school buildings that had been destroyed because of the Allied bombing tactics used throughout World War II. City school buildings felt the effects quite drastically when it came to damage. In Berlin out of 608 schools, 124 had been destroyed and 111 needed repairs.⁵² Once there were buildings available to the Germans, the issue became heating and lighting within the schools. Because of the shortage of coal if the classroom could not be heated, then no school could take place. The children often wore rags, thus, the school needed to be heated in the winter to remedy the lack of clothing. In addition, the visual impact of reeducation came even sooner.⁵³

⁴⁹ Puaca, 22.

⁵⁰ Puaca, 22.

⁵¹ Puaca, 15.

⁵² Puaca, 25-26.

⁵³ Puaca, 26-27

The first vision of re-education was occupation, as soldiers lived and worked throughout Germany. Part of their jobs would be to assist in the rebuilding and renovating of schools. While this was going on, German youth became captivated with the American lifestyle associated with the American soldiers.

“Our life was gradually, but increasingly colored American,” one youngster described, recalling his fascination with US radio broadcasts: “This was the voice of another, unspoiled world,” which attempted “to bring the ways of democracy, coated with the comforts of the American lifestyle, to us authoritarian-minded Germans.”⁵⁴

Basically, the American soldier became a role model for the German youth and school children. Any chance the children received, they wanted to be a part of their world. This along with food provided at school created a want in the children to attend school. Something in which they may not have been accustomed during the war since many children did not attend.

The issue of materials, building spaces, and pedagogy became only minor issues when compared to the issue of teaching. Teachers who taught before the advent of Nazism did so in a way comparable to that of United States. Unfortunately, when Hitler took over the education system, he created a system based off of Nazi ideology. This made many teachers either leave the education system completely, agree to the terms of Nazism and still keep their democratic ideologies, or completely conform to the Nazi ideology and teach their students in the strictest manner. Thus, once the war ended only teachers with no Nazi sentiments or prior Nazi affiliation as an active leader could teach, thus a shortage of teachers became a widespread issue.

There tended to be a drastic difference in how things should be handled in the classroom based on the teacher's age. The older teachers felt that there needed to be a strict authoritarian presence in the classroom just like in the 1918s (Weimar Republic). The younger teachers did

⁵⁴ Konrad Jarausch, *After Hitler: recivilizing Germans, 1945-1995* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 107.

not want to go this route and wanted to give the students more freedom.⁵⁵ This situation tended to lead to unnecessary tensions between the two parties. However, it was not all bad in education, for it began to advance a different sector of the society: women.

One of the positives to the shortage of teachers was the fact that women were beginning to enter the profession in great numbers. The education system became a place for them to prosper in the aftermath of World War II. It also offered “jobs for the middle classes in the civil service.”⁵⁶ This formed a positive image in some Germans’ minds, because although many Germans were deemed Nazis and forced out of jobs, there were still many who were able to capitalize on the denazification process.

The solution that OMGUS created for the teacher shortage would only be a temporary fix. As the emergency program was enacted, teachers were being trained quickly and put into classroom with limited experience very quickly. This option led to many young teachers practicing their art, which was an issue for concern as well. If these teachers were younger, they had grown up in the Nazi Regime and thus had preconceptions of what should be taught in a school. The other option for battling the teacher shortage was to go back to the elderly teachers who had taught during the Weimar Republic and left during the Nazi Regime. “...the teaching profession now consists of elderly men and women who were in their prime during the Weimar period and are sometimes described today as ‘Hitler’s rejects,’ or of young teachers, without experience, who were themselves educated during the Nazi period.”⁵⁷ Although seemingly appalling, this was not necessarily so.

⁵⁵ Puaca, 16.

⁵⁶ Helen Liddell, “Education in Occupied Germany: A Field Study” *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)* 24, no.1 (1948): 30-62, 32.

⁵⁷ Helen Liddell, “Education in Occupied Germany: A field Study.” *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)* 24, no.1 (1948): 30-62, 31.

As a 1947 OMGUS survey noted, Germans were generally misinformed about what went on in their schools. This was not so much part of a lack of concern as it reflected the tradition of letting teachers decide on matters pertaining to children's education. This almost obsequious respect for teachers' prerogatives is reflected in attitudes towards corporal punishment that also speaks to the socio-political background of parents who accepted such notions of physical reprisal:

Large majorities (65%) in AMZON [The American Zone of Occupation] and a smaller majority of 51 per cent in West Berlin approved granting teachers the right to whip or beat "very disobedient and very unruly children." Significantly, however, those who opposed (30%) tended to hold their opinion more strongly than proponents: 54 per cent of the former group in AMZON said that their feeling was very strong whereas only 48 per cent of those favoring corporal punishment said that their opinion was very strong; comparable figures in West Berlin were 61 and 46 per cent, respectively. Parents gave high approval to corporal punishment in the schools regardless of whether their children were in or out of school (between 62 and 69 per cent). Only three groups in the AMZON population failed to register majority approval of the proposal to permit corporal punishment: the highly educated, communist party affiliates, and those with no church affiliation. Among CDU/CSU followers, those with seven years or less of schooling, women, Catholics, those who were never affiliated with the NSDAP, and small town people there were more proponents of corporal punishment than among their counterpart groups.⁵⁸

Such an attitude contrasts markedly with American designs and suggests that many Germans, although democratically inclined, accepted the need for disciplining as part of proper socialization. Beyond such notions, however, this survey points out to the notion that simply "imposing" democracy without consideration for local social mores would have been doomed to failure. Incorporating Germans' notions of education, and thus growing towards democracy, was in fact as important.

Among the three shortages within United States occupation zone (teachers, buildings, books/materials), teachers were the most significant item on which to focus first. "At least

⁵⁸ "German attitudes towards corporal punishment in schools," Meritt and Meritt, 169-170.

50,000 teachers [were] needed in the elementary schools if the accepted ration of one teacher to each class of forty children is to be attained.”⁵⁹ This number is not nearly as astonishing as in Greater Hesse where “33 per cent of the teachers [were] untrained.”⁶⁰ This meant that newly trained, inexperienced teachers were leading the educational system, and with the shortage teaching would be that much more difficult. Because of the shortage of teachers, United States started a strict and quick certification program of training that would allow for temporary teachers after just months of training them.⁶¹

According to Helen Liddell’s primary research conducted in 1948, “teachers who had been denazified [were] not being re-instated without much delay, if at all. Germans blame[d] the American authorities for the existence of a law which many American officials admit to be mistaken while declaring themselves in the face of ‘the law’.”⁶² In other words, the Americans had created a system which put all teachers during the Nazi era in a position to fail and be taken out of their jobs. However, the system did not initially have a solution to the drastic decline in numbers of trained teachers for the new education system that was to be underway in Germany.

The issue of newly trained, inexperienced teachers would be a hindrance on the learning of the German students, more specifically, the older students who only had a couple years left of their education. In a letter written in November of 1947, addressed to General Clay from a Dr. Mariellies Mauk, the topic of teachers becomes a central issue. As Dr. Mauk states: “Our students who have only four years out of their entire life-time to accomplish their studies are in urgent need of their teachers as experts of their branches; the teachers available at present cannot

⁵⁹ Liddell, 45.

⁶⁰ Liddell, 45.

⁶¹ Puaca, 15.

⁶² Liddell, 45.

fill the large gaps!”⁶³ This letter makes clear a fault in the denazification process. By eliminating almost all the teachers, the students were being taught by adults who, in some cases, had just learned the material themselves. Compared to the former teachers, many of whom were experts in their respective field, the younger teachers were somewhat inadequate.

In a letter sent from James E. King, Jr, November 11th, he addresses the concerns of a Miss Mauk who writes about the denazification process and the absence of some teachers within a University. It is interesting to note the response from Mr. King because it is blunt, and furthermore it shows the great emphasis that was put on the specific qualifications of new teachers for the US occupation years. Mr King states: “He cannot accept your standpoint that all German university professors who had become Nazis, are harmless people and should be amnestied in a summary way. They are the teachers of the future generation of professions in Germany.”⁶⁴ This statement in itself, proves that United States was not easily swayed from reinstating teachers. If the teachers were Nazis, they were not allowed to teach the new generation. The teachers had to be people who had not been active Nazis; these teachers had to accept the Democratic and peaceful ideology United States was imposing upon the Germans.

However, it is necessary to contrast such frustration with the perceived satisfaction Germans felt regarding their school system under occupation. A June 1947 survey suggested that

A solid majority (62%) of the public in the Land of Wuerttem-berg-Baden expressed satisfaction with the ability of the schools, under normal conditions, to fulfill the needs of German youth.⁶⁵

In a letter written in October 1947, G.E. Steinhe describes perfectly the difficulty and complexity that would surround United States plausible re-education of the German society.

⁶³ NARA, OMGUS RG: 260: Letter between Dr marielles Mauk to Mr James S King, Jr. in Berlin Germany.

⁶⁴ NARA, OMGUS RG: 260: A document talking about Cooperative Human Relations.

⁶⁵ Meritt and Merritt, 163.

“The Education Division of Military Government is in full and hearty agreement with the expressed desire of the Policy Enforcement Branch to thoroughly cleanse German universities of Nazi, militaristic, or other undesirable elements. It is realized that the thorough denazification of German universities is only the first negative but absolutely necessary step in the process of building a positively democratic Germany.”⁶⁶

The United States understood from the beginning that in order to gain a more democratic Germany, and a more peaceful nation, a step in the opposite direction would have to be taken first. This step backwards would keep the nation in a rut for a many years before the positive aspects would outweigh the negatives.

Although many schools began functioning again in 1945, others were still completing their qualifications for teachers in 1948 and thus were not officially allowed to open. According to a letter written in February of 1948, art teachers could not be considered for the school at the moment because a “comprehensive plan for the training of all teaches, which would have to be approved by this office” would have to occur.⁶⁷ In other words, the search for teachers would not be a quick fix for United States or Germany. The loss and limited amount of teachers would continue to affect the school system and also the students themselves.

In order to form enough teachers, training was still occurring in a quick fashion in July of 1949. It involved what was known as in-service teacher training. The in-service teacher training occurred “with a two weeks course on language instruction and an additional course on English.”⁶⁸ Another report coming Summer of 1949 reported on the Teacher Education Exchange Trip to United States. This was also a way for United States to attempt to teach more Germans how to teach and further understand Democracy. The report taken by OMGUS in June

⁶⁶ NARA, OMGUS RG: 260: Records Re cultural exchange and school reopenings Denazification 39, Box 58.

⁶⁷ NARA, OMGUS RG 260: Records of United States Occupation Headquarters, WWII, Records re cultural exchange and school reopening, Box Number 76.

⁶⁸ NARA, OMGUS: RG 260, Records re the work of the Educational Services Section, Teacher Training Vol. II through Theological Faculty-Wurzburg, Box 106.

of 1949 talks about the results of an exchange for one school, all the results ended up being a positive for the school and the students. The person in charge of the Paedagogisches Institute, after the exchange program, realized that more independent study and the ability to choose more classes was an important characteristic that he wanted to integrate into his school.⁶⁹

Children were perhaps the most greatly affected of the society during Hitler's Nazi Regime. Their education was mangled into a propaganda machine focused on de-structuralizing the family and creating Nazi loyalists and for the cause. After the war, these children would be the group most difficult to change; some had been born in the middle of the Nazi Regime and, thus, knew nothing other than that. During the war "...war boys and girls were Party's strength, some were 'spotters' for anti-aircraft, defenses, and were alike without civil and parental discipline."⁷⁰ These children were also deliberately taken out of their parent's control and forced into the Nazi ideology.⁷¹

The youth would need to be reorganized and reborn in order for the Germans to have a chance at Democracy. Everything starts with the children, and if they did not believe or if they held the same ideologies as they were taught during the Nazi Regime, Germany would forever be a National Socialist society. United States created many different programs, organizations, and initiatives in order to assist in the re-organization of thought for the Germans. The GYA was given the task of "...reducing juvenile delinquency in United States zone, and the long range objective of demonstrating and teaching democratic concepts to those Germans who may, in the

⁶⁹ NARA, OMGUS: RG 260, Records re the work of the Educational Services Section, Teacher Training Vol. II through Theological Faculty-Wurzburg, Box 106.

⁷⁰ Liddell, 35.

⁷¹ Liddell, 34.

years to come, guide their country to membership in the peaceful family of nations”⁷² This organization was run by United States Army, and it gained some success.

Other initiatives created by United States during the occupation of Germany included recreating youth activities. What was once a Nazi purview came under the control of Germans with the help of United States. By 1947, United States created a policy on youth organization:

“on youth recreational activities, general policy is to discourage premature indoctrination of youth under eighteen and to encourage civic and political education of youth on nonpartisan basis—such as Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, a YMCA, and other well established international youth and youth-serving organizations—without abridging religious freedom or interfering with internal affairs or the voluntary character of acceptable youth organizations.”⁷³

The goal was to eliminate the desire in the youth to dedicate themselves to one society before they were old enough to understand the society and its ideals. United States also wanted to pursue a re-education on the importance of family and teachers versus one group such as the Hitler Youth.

Children would be an essential, delicate group on whom the United States would need to focus its attention if Germany was to create and continue democracy. As one US military government report said in May 1946: “Youngsters have become at the same time the hope and the problem of the German people.”⁷⁴ They would be the most difficult to assimilate into the new system and also be the most essential in creating a democratic nation. One way that United States assisted in creating a democratic ideology among the youth was creating German Youth Activities. “The establishment of youth clubs where American soldiers played sports with German youths, watched movies, or listened to jazz also helped loosen latent tensions.”⁷⁵ These

⁷² Liddell, 48.

⁷³ Liddell, 47.

⁷⁴ Petra Goedde, *GIs and Germans: culture, gender and foreign relations, 1945-1949* (New Haven: Yale University Press 2003).

⁷⁵ Jarausch, 108.

children were brought together along with Americans into a calm setting. “More effective yet were the official exchange programs that began in 1947-1948, and brought some 12,000 Germans to United States by 1955.”⁷⁶ German children were re-exposed to the idea of playing games, being crafty, and, under the US occupation, to live the “American way of life.”⁷⁷ Basically, these programs were created to implement democracy and an American understanding into the German youth, and they was successful to some degree.

Because the Americans focused on the youth, they were able to assume that the society knew nothing and had to “be taught how to use the power of citizenship morally, responsibly, and democratically. Youth education could thus serve as a model for the democratization of the rest of the German population, turning Americans into schoolmasters and Germans into students of democracy.”⁷⁸ One of the main goals for the Americans was to teach a peace. “In this situation, education for peace would have provided an existential point of orientation for the new beginning in the midst of changed circumstances.”⁷⁹ Education would teach many things to the students, and relations with the soldiers and Youth Activities made it easier to teach peace to all. Even in America during this time period, peace education was at the core values in the education system. According to an article written in the New York Times in April 1945, “The role that teachers must play in helping the nation to achieve its peace aims was stressed yesterday by leading educators.”⁸⁰ This is a key piece of evidence that points towards a meeting of minds between Americans and Germans as they dealt with educating German youth.

⁷⁶ Jarausch, 108.

⁷⁷ Liddell, 48.

⁷⁸ Petra Goedde, *GIs and Germans: culture, gender and foreign relations, 1945-1949* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 128.

⁷⁹ Rohrs, 148.

⁸⁰ NEW YORK TIMES page 26. April 22, 1945. “Teacher Honor Hillman, Union presents awarded for his leadership of CLO-PAC”.

The success of the American assistance to the German-led youth program is hard to determine, but the attitudes of parents towards it helps evaluate German reactions to it. As a summary of the OMGUS surveys relates,

Although few parents said that their children were taking part in the Army program, parents generally did not object to THE OMGUS SURVEYS / 143 participation. Almost all (94%) of the parents who had heard of the program and who thought that the program was designed to teach the American way of life, and 88 per cent of the parents who had heard of the program but thought that their main purpose was to keep children off the streets would have permitted their children to participate. Even among parents whose children had not yet participated in the program, 84 per cent said they would give permission to participate. Those who knew about the Army program most often approved the program. Among those who had not heard of the program, only 37 per cent approved, while 68 per cent of those who had heard of the program approved of it. Three-quarters (77%) of those parents whose children had participated approved of the Army Youth Program.⁸¹

American influence in the American zone of occupation was not only welcome, but overall positive. This informs further positive reactions in the longer term to American-initiated and German-led changes, which were essential to make Germany democratic.

The youth of Germany would be the most difficult to change, in ideologies and also in structure. According to educationalist Eduard Spranger “Never has a generation studied in more tragic circumstances than between 1946 and 1949...”⁸² One of the main changes in education came in the structure for the children along with material. Structurally, the Germans had, in the past, mainly allowed only the wealthy to attend school. When United States took over occupation, one of the main changes occurred in the system was the ability for all children, rich and poor to go to school. There would be a school that students of all social statuses could attend.⁸³

⁸¹ Merritt and Merritt, 141-143.

⁸² Puanca, 7.

⁸³ Puanca, 19.

In a report entitled “Summary of Report to President Truman on Youth in Germany” written by Most Reverend Bernard J Sheil, D.D. the report states that “German youth can be saved. Nazi influence is not too deep. But it is deep enough to require long and hard work on the part of the Americans.”⁸⁴ Following this comment come a few different options and recommendations for the Americans. Some of the more significant were: a study of democracy and the implementation of youth leaders and groups, the rebuilding of the schools and finding qualified teachers, and the beginning of an exchange program for German youth and teachers. ⁸⁵ Much, in fact, is left to the youth to decide, as much as to teachers and education leaders. The process was not complete, but it was in motion.

Conclusion

From 1945 to 1948, the re-education of Germany would become a key element in United States’ goal of creating a more democratic nation and a strong ally. This plan would not succeed, but would clear the way for generations of Germans entering and exiting the education system to complete the process. When in the late 1960s students protesting at German universities asked their professors and parents what they did in World War II, their slogans capped a slow maturing process that combined denazification and reeducation: it had taken a generation.

Other factors account for the slow process, which goes beyond the silence that surrounded German guilt for decades. For example, this thesis could not take into account other complex issues, such as parochial education, and with good reason: In a nation with no separation of church and state, it would be Germans, who overwhelmingly supported teaching

⁸⁴ NARA, OMGUS: RG 260, Records Re the Work of the Youth Activities Section, *Education- General Education Mission through Daily File*, Box 138.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.* 96.

religion in schools and who would have to deal with the slow process of secularization. OMGUS had made a note of that issue, but did not take it up with local authorities.⁸⁶

What United States offered through its various programs, then, was a seeding process as well as an ideal. The denazification process turned out to be weak and compromised due to the Cold War. The Germans were forced to weaken themselves before they were able to strengthen themselves. Teacher training, on the other hand, proved more successful as new methods and materials were offered, winning over younger instructors. What the latter point also showed, however, was that it was necessary for the citizens of Germany to want change before it could be successfully implemented. The lesson would bear fruit in soft diplomacy like the Fulbright grants given to foreigners to study in United States. In occupation policy, however, the case of Germany is unique. Germany had prior conceptions of what democracy was because of the Weimar Republic. However, some occupation zones of the United States have failed when attempting to democratize the region because the occupied country needs to want to change. There also needs to have been prior institutions that supported to some degree democracy. Attempting to occupy and democratize Iraq in 2003 shows that prior involvement in democracy and a complete breakdown of the country and the people is needed in order to be effective. It also suggests that policy and ideals are insufficient to implement a successful educational policy.

Thus denazification and reeducation in Germany was a process that would have been more successful given more time and resources. It took breaking down the entire country and taking a step back to progress into the country it is today. The ideals spread throughout this time period would endure the years following the war. While many Germans found it difficult to look past the Nazi Regime, it was the youth that would change and create a more democratic peaceful country.

⁸⁶ Merritt and Merritt, 82, 203.

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