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The Transformative Power of Culture in
Occupied Germany 1945–1949

GUEST EDITED BY

LARA FEIGEL AND ELAINE MORLEY

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Introduction

ELAINE MORLEY

In 1945 Britain, America, Russia and France sent occupation armies to reconstruct the country they had just destroyed. The British and American (but not the Soviet or French) armies incorporated writers and filmmakers (including former Germans) donning military uniform alongside professional civil servants and soldiers. Some were chosen because of their profession. Initially, the Anglo-American governments saw literature and film as possessing transformative properties, which would be useful in enabling them to convert the Germans to democracy and in securing a lasting peace for Europe; latterly, they found the arts useful when competing with the USSR. Others were selected because they spoke German (often following visits in the 1920s and 1930s when Germany was a popular destination for young British liberals). They counted in their number the writers John Bayley, Peter de Mendelssohn, Stephen Spender and Rex Warner, and filmmakers Alberto Cavalcanti and Humphrey Jennings from Britain, and the writers W. H. Auden, Klaus and Erika Mann, James Stern, and Carl Zuckmayer, and filmmakers Erich Pommer and Billy Wilder from America. Alongside the Anglo-American occupiers, there were cultural organizations and groupings established at the time, including UNESCO, that shared a belief in the transformative power of culture and, though neglected by scholarship until now, also played a role in shaping the cultural reconstruction of Germany in these years. These diverse actors, therefore, form a hitherto ignored element in the cultural history of occupied Germany and postwar Europe.

Given that this was a military occupation, the cultural figures and organizations were anomalous—they did not necessarily follow their instructions to view all Germans as clear-cut enemies. Against the backdrop of a crumbling British empire, they understood that this was different from the British experience of governing in India or Africa. Assuming the role of occupiers and architects of a more peaceful Europe,

they were aware that the defeated Germans also had their own historic *Kultur*, which many of the individuals involved admired.¹ Thus the division between rulers and ruled was not straightforward, in part because former émigrés now wielded power on behalf of the Allies in the cultural sphere (though both governments were ambivalent about employing émigrés to govern Germany) and often brought with them a very different notion of culture from that of the policy-makers.

An official report on 'Our Problem in Germany' produced by the US Occupation authorities (OMGUS) in 1946 stated that

no matter what rearrangements of an economic, political or geographical nature are made in an effort to eliminate the German menace to peace, no settlement will be permanent nor effective unless basic changes occur in German culture.²

This was an injunction to the staff on the ground to transform culture in Germany, but 'culture' itself here is ambiguous. It is not synonymous with German *Kultur*, which refers to the (usually high) arts. Instead it seems to bring together the three definitions of culture outlined by Raymond Williams in his book *Keywords*, where he suggests that 'culture' is used: i) as a noun referring to a 'general process of intellectual, spiritual and aesthetic development'; ii) as a noun referring to 'a particular way of life, whether of a people, a period, or a group'; iii) as a noun referring to 'the works and practices of intellectual and especially artistic activity'.³ Both American and British statements about German culture in this period tended to elide these meanings of culture, and in the statement just quoted the term 'culture' is used both to denote the German way of life and German artistic products. What is especially interesting is that one definition of culture was seen as possessing the power to transform another, so that culture (the arts) could be used to transform culture (the way of life and mentality). It could do this specifically by showcasing the culture (way of life/mentality) of other peoples, especially that of the occupiers, through examples of culture (the arts) first-rate enough to impress the Germans, who as a nation were seen as generally unusually knowledgeable and receptive to *Kultur* (the arts).⁴ Culture therefore was both going to be transformed and to be itself an agent of transformation.

These aims could be both idealistic and cynical. In Stephen Spender's view, culture was going to transform the Germans and British alike into world citizens capable of creating a pan-European peace. This is also the ideal expressed in the constitution of UNESCO, which states that 'since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed'.⁵ But for many officials, culture was

simply going to teach the Germans how to behave more like the British and Americans in order to succumb more easily to a strange new form of colonial rule. 'The Germans are not divided into good and bad Germans', stated the booklet issued to British personnel before leaving for Germany. 'There are only good and bad elements in the German character, the latter of which generally predominate.'⁶ British and American culture in the hands of bureaucrats sharing this mentality was not going to be idealistically propagated. The situation became still more complex with the effective onset of the Cold War in 1947, when culture became a weapon in the battle between superpowers taking place in Berlin. Now Anglo-American culture had to compete with Russian culture, in order to convince the Germans that they would rather be governed by the Americans than the Russians. This collection probes the ways in which the instrumentalization of culture by the various powers in Germany in the 1930s and 1940s differed.

How did the Allies attempt to transform culture in Germany and were they successful? Were they more intent on transforming the artistic products produced by the Germans or importing their own culture, and did this constitute a unilateral cultural transfer or a more reciprocal cultural exchange? Was this a case of the imposition of the victorious, hegemonic Anglophone culture on the defeated, uncivilized Germans reminiscent of the colonial era? To what extent is this different from the activities of 'independent' figures of the past, like Thomas Carlyle and J. W. Goethe, T. S. Eliot and E. R. Curtius, who had previously attempted to encourage cultural exchange between the Anglophone and the Germanophone worlds? Were they not also driven by a belief in the transformative power of culture and a desire to promote peace through greater intercultural understanding? What was the relationship between individual attempts to transform culture and those undertaken by organisations like UNESCO, the Kulturbund zur Demokratischen Erneuerung Deutschlands and the Congress for Cultural Freedom? Was the desired cultural exchange on the part of the occupation authorities and the other organizations and groups in the period really simply an extension of wartime propaganda in the postwar period? Was this an exercise in propaganda or in cultural diplomacy, and did this change after the onset of the Cold War? Need propaganda be seen as the morally questionable force it is today, or can it be a more morally neutral attempt to convey a useful message?⁷

These are some of the questions explored in this volume. Collectively, the articles investigate key figures and organizations involved in renewing

and transforming Germany from 1945-1949 and the materials they produced or reshaped. Drawing on fresh archival research, each of the six contributions takes the over-arching theme of the belief in the transformative power of culture and interrogates its expression in individual instances of intercultural encounters. The first three articles focus on groups and organizations whose guiding insight was the belief in the transformative properties of cultural products. UNESCO's work in this period was focused on fostering cultural exchange through the dissemination of international culture, including literature and fine art, but also by physically moving people to a foreign context so that they might confront and as a result better understand the 'other'. Similarly the Congress for Cultural Freedom and the Writers' Congresses in these years represent institutional embodiments of the belief in the transformative power of culture.

Stephen Brockmann's article offers a comparison of two major cultural organizations in Germany: Johannes Becher's Kulturbund zur Demokratischen Erneuerung Deutschlands and the Congress for Cultural Freedom spearheaded by Melvin Lasky. These were funded by the USSR and US governments respectively. To begin with, the Kulturbund managed to unite both East and West with its belief in the transformative power of culture and also with the view that German culture itself needed to be transformed. Culture needed to become more politically engaged so that it might provide a bulwark against fascism in the future. However, following the so-called Nuremberg interregnum, the rhetoric between East and West shifted and this change was cemented with the vituperative exchange between Melvin Lasky and the Soviets. While the East sought to transform politics via culture, the West sought to transform culture via politics. Both the Kulturbund and the Congress for Cultural Freedom eventually became front organizations for the Soviet and American governments. The spirit of co-operation of 1945 was in its death throes by the autumn of 1947 and Europe was once again divided along ideological lines. Culture had managed to transform Germany, but not in the ways originally hoped for.

Helmut Peitsch and Dirk Wiemann focus on a range of international cultural conferences held in the 1940s which sought to pass resolutions addressed to governments and the public alike. Through analysing the proceedings from these gatherings, they trace the shift in the West from anti-fascism to anti-communism. They set figures like Alfred Andersch in contrast to Stephen Spender, in that, to begin with, the latter still held out some hope of communication between the East and the West, unlike

the former. Their contrasting opinions on how postwar Europe ought to be reconstructed were analogous to the wider political climate of the time. Peitsch and Wiemann focus on two conference attendees, Hans Meyer and Olaf Stapledon, whose moderate voices were sidelined by the anti-totalitarian rhetoric of the West, a tendency which is also registered in the journals *Ost und West* and *Der Monat*.

Elaine Morley's article brings another major organization of this period into the conversation for the first time, the newly founded United Nations Educational Cultural and Scientific Organization (UNESCO). Like the occupiers of Germany, the organization endowed culture with transformative and rehabilitative properties and engaged in similar practices to mobilize culture to this end. Furthermore, while funding for both the Occupation and UNESCO came largely from the same sources, both engaged in parallel practices of fostering intercultural experience, but in virtual isolation of each other until 1948. Through comparing and contrasting a trio of similar practices for instrumentalizing culture to transform morals and public opinion in Germany, as employed by both the Occupation and UNESCO, Morley re-conceptualizes their activities with recourse to theories of propaganda and cultural diplomacy.

The second group of articles examines specific attempts at cultural transformation in this period. Abby Anderton's contribution focuses on the American occupiers' belief in the power of music to convert the Germans to racial and religious tolerance. The American military thought that music could be redemptive in the service of democracy and could be mobilized as a weapon to defeat Nazism and transform Germany. To this end, the US Government sponsored American musicians who for racial or religious reasons would not have been tolerated in Nazi Germany, in order to demonstrate the democratic nature of American classical music. Thus the conductor of the Berlin Philharmonic, Leo Borchard, was replaced by the Guyanese American conductor, Rudolph Dunbar. However, not least from observing segregation in the US Army, the Germans knew that this was also a lesson which the Americans themselves needed to learn. Furthermore, when Yehudi Menuhin travelled to Germany to play in a camp for displaced persons (DPs), he made a number of conciliatory gestures (by playing German music and with German musicians), which were not well received by the DPs. Music had the power to divide as well as to unite. Often the American musicians performing in Germany were seen as offering propaganda rather than soft diplomacy. The American-born artists were often met with apathy. If anyone was transformed then it

was not the Germans but the Americans, who changed the way that they conducted international relations in the 1950s.

Lara Feigel examines a series of individual attempts by writers and filmmakers visiting Germany to transform the culture they found there, and finds that in the end Germany had more effect on them than they had on Germany and the Germans. The unwitting consequence of this attempt at cultural exchange was that the experience in Germany transformed these individuals as creative artists, leading them collectively to create a new genre of art which she terms 'outsider rubble literature'.

Erwin Warkentin's essay focuses on the British authorities editing Wolfgang Borchert's play *Draußen vor der Tür* (*The Man Outside*) for radio broadcast, and argues that the changes made were political and shed light on the British approach to ideologically reorientating the Germans. The editors, Hugh Carleton Greene (Graham Greene's brother, later the Director-General of the BBC) and David Porter (a writer and producer for the BBC) excised criticism of the Occupation and of the denazification programme. Furthermore, references to German suffering and suicide in the play were also removed. The British believed that the broadcast of the play would have a transformative effect on the German population and it duly became the most popular play of the period. However, it also had an unexpected effect on the occupying authorities. The BBC writer and producer, Porter, went on to introduce the play to the Anglophone world; he translated the original play and produced it for the BBC in 1948. In 1949 the play was staged in New York under Erwin Piscator's directorship.

Taken as a whole, this volume opens up two fields of research which have hitherto received relatively little attention in the discipline of comparative cultural studies: the Occupation of Germany and the overlapping concepts of cultural diplomacy and propaganda. The Occupation of Germany is a unique field for comparatists to explore given the fact that in this period five major world cultures – American, British, French, German and Soviet – were literally rubbing shoulders in Germany. Furthermore, all of the essays are comparative studies in that their approach is cross-disciplinary – they explore literature, music and culture alongside politics, international relations and military history. Some are concerned with charting and assessing the dissemination and reception of foreign cultural figures and products (Morley, Anderton and Feigel) or foreign powers shaping home-grown ones (Warkentin) for political and/or ethical purposes in the context of post-war Germany.

Other essays assess the roles played by culturally and politically complex organizations and groupings in fostering international understanding through cultural means in the immediate postwar years: the Kulturbund zur Demokratischen Erneuerung Deutschlands which was funded by the USSR but concerned with German culture, the Congress for Cultural Freedom which was funded by the US but operated in Germany, the more international UNESCO, and a number of international conferences (Brockmann, Peitsch and Wiemann, and Morley). Given that these cultural organizations and groupings were not limited by national, cultural or linguistic boundaries and that they actively sought to promote cross-cultural engagement, it is sensible that their work be considered by comparative cultural studies.

The collection of essays also draws attention to the uneasy divide between cultural diplomacy and cultural relations, where the latter refers to activities which occur independently of state involvement. The essays raise questions about whether it is ever really possible to be independent of the state and, conversely, if it is possible for writers and artists, though salaried to a state, to suppress their own individual interests and convictions and serve those of the state exclusively. Are the activities of individuals and groups funded by states any less valuable or interesting as vehicles for fostering cross-cultural exchanges in contrast to those cross-cultural constellations which allegedly occur 'organically'?

Taken as a whole, this volume spotlights the five years after the war as a moment when culture mattered far more than it had in previous decades. Whether or not the attempt at cultural transformation by these actors was successful, the attempt itself was crucial, as was the widespread sense that the arts, through becoming more politically engaged and more international, could play a major role in fostering peace and reconstituting a society. This attitude also coincided with the wider return to the concept of world literature and to the revival of comparative literature by US-based émigrés and exiles, including René Wellek and Erich Auerbach. As these articles will show, though in the five years after the war the Allies and cultural organizations may have failed in their aim to use culture to transform the German nation as they had hoped, they did succeed in creating a cultural scene in Germany in which cultures from different nations come constantly, often combatively, into play with each other. Furthermore, an unexpected outcome of their efforts was that the transformation was not one-way; the agents of transformation were themselves transformed in the process.

NOTES

- 1 For example, Stephen Spender. See John Sutherland, *Stephen Spender: The Authorized Biography* (London: Penguin, 2005), pp. 107–108.
- 2 ‘Our Problem in Germany’, OMGUS, 1946. RG [record group] 260, Box 242/5, NA [National Archives], Washington, DC.
- 3 Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (London: Fontana, 1976). For a discussion of the differences between ‘culture’ and *Kultur* see Jessica C. E. Gienow-Hecht, ‘Art is Democracy and Democracy is Art: Culture, Propaganda, and the *Neue Zeitung* in Germany, 1944–1947’, *Diplomatic History*, 23.1 (1999), 21–43.
- 4 For the Allies’ view of German receptivity to culture see Gabriele Clemens, *Britische Kulturpolitik in Deutschland 1945–1949: Literatur, Film, Musik und Theater* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1997), p. 67.
- 5 UNESCO Constitution: < http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=15244&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html > [accessed 20 February 2016].
- 6 Brigadier W. E. van Cutsem, ‘The German Character’, 9 March 1945, NA FO 371/46864.
- 7 See Douglas Walton, ‘What is Propaganda, and What Exactly is Wrong with it?’, *Public Affairs Quarterly*, 4.11 (1997), 383–413.

ESSAYS

Establishing Cultural Fronts in East and West Germany

STEPHEN BROCKMANN

Abstract:

This paper examines the development of German postwar culture in the eastern and western zones as a function of the felt need to use culture in the denazification of Germany. The Kulturbund (Cultural Federation for the Democratic Renewal of Germany), founded by the exile writer Johannes R. Becher in 1945, was the primary institutional expression of this concern, which was widespread among the four occupying powers and German anti-Nazis. At the same time, however, there was a strong feeling in the postwar period that traditional German culture itself needed to be called into question and transformed because of its previous failure to prevent the triumph of Nazism. The paper explores the initial antifascist consensus, characterized by broad cooperation among the occupying powers and relative cultural conservatism, and the way that this consensus began to break down in 1947 under the pressures of the emerging Cold War. This breakdown led to increasing emphasis, after 1947, on the need to transform culture itself, and to growing criticism of traditional cultural conservatism. This emphasis was particularly strong in the western parts of Germany and differentiated the west from the east. It received institutional expression in the creation of the Congress for Cultural Freedom in 1950.

When we examine the cultural documents of the immediate postwar period in Germany, we are immediately confronted with a belief in the transformative power of culture—that is, with the belief that culture has the power to change politics and society for the better. It was an assumption that both sides in the emerging Cold War held in common. Another powerful belief that was common all over Germany, and on both sides of the Iron Curtain, was the idea that culture itself had to be transformed. This belief did not necessarily fit easily with the notion that culture could be used to enable a political transformation; in fact in some ways it contradicted it. The desire for a transformation of culture itself emerged from a belief, widespread after the end of the war, that traditional German culture had failed to provide a sufficient

bulwark against Nazism. In order to serve as such a bulwark in the future, therefore, German culture had to be transformed in a specific way: it had to become more political. Only a more consciously political culture—a culture that openly opposed Nazism—could help to prevent the return of dictatorship and destruction in the future. For this reason there was strong pressure in both the eastern and western occupation zones after 1945 for German culture to transform itself in an explicitly political, antifascist way, although this pressure manifested itself in different ways. Ultimately, and paradoxically, this pressure for a political transformation of German culture had more impact in the west than in the east.

Implicit, and often explicit, in the pressure for a cultural transformation was a devastating critique of the purported quietism of traditional German culture, including the culture of the so-called ‘inner emigrants’ in Nazi Germany—intellectuals who had withdrawn into cultural biospheres and cultivated their own interests while trying to avoid being sucked into politics. The first major cultural debate in postwar Germany addressed the merit (or lack thereof) of inner emigration, and of the cultural quiescence associated with it. In that debate no less a figure than Thomas Mann charged the purveyors of traditional culture in Nazi Germany with barbarism for having gone about their business in the midst of the dictatorship as if nothing terrible were happening.¹ Mann argued that such quietism amounted to a whitewashing of the Nazi dictatorship. The rhetorical example he chose to illustrate his point was Beethoven’s opera *Fidelio* (1805), about oppressed prisoners trying to free themselves from tyranny. Mann contended that it was perverse for the purveyors of German culture to have performed this opera about liberation in the midst of the Nazi dictatorship, as if they themselves had not been implicated in its themes: ‘How was it possible that Beethoven’s *Fidelio*, this celebratory opera destined for the day of German self-liberation, was not banned in Germany during those twelve years? It was a scandal that it was not banned, and indeed that there were highly cultivated performances of it, that singers could be found to sing it, musicians to play it, and an audience to listen to it.’² The kind of cultural obtuseness associated with performing an uplifting opera about liberation in the midst of Nazi enslavement, Mann charged, had papered over Germany’s real condition rather than hastening the day of liberation. Far from encouraging slaves to liberate themselves, it had encouraged slaves to entertain the illusion that they were actually free.³

Of course there were plenty of defenders of traditional culture in Germany after 1945, and by no means did everyone share Mann's criticisms. Nevertheless, it was clear to many intellectuals that traditional German culture had failed to prevent the Hitler dictatorship, and some intellectuals even shared Mann's belief that German culture had been misused to obfuscate the rise of Nazism. For this reason there were calls all over occupied Germany for German culture to become more self-consciously political. Gert H. Theunissen, a Christian journalist who was later to work for West German radio, published a powerful critique of cultural quietism in the second issue of the newly (re)founded journal *Die Weltbühne* in 1946. Theunissen's critique is both eloquent and representative. He gave his article the title 'The German Intellectual and Politics' ('Der deutsche Intellektuelle und die Politik'), and in it he insisted that German literary intellectuals needed to free themselves from what he saw as their elitist contempt for politics. Indeed, he argued, 'the question about the German intellectuals and their relationship to politics [...] has never before been such a matter of conscience as it is today', at a time when Germans were trying to recover from the catastrophe of Nazism.⁴ The Nazis, Theunissen asserted, had exposed the partisans of cultural quiescence in Germany as ridiculous 'buffoons' ('Hanswürste') throwing them to the mercy 'of fanatisized masses'.⁵ Theunissen also claimed that 'the true creators of the spirit', creative intellectuals throughout history like Aeschylus, Dante, Shakespeare and Dostoevsky, 'were all without exception political beings', and that, therefore, modern German intellectuals' distaste for politics was in reality a betrayal of the true calling of the intellectual – what he, echoing Julien Benda, called 'intellectual treason'.⁶ Theunissen's solution was to make culture into the 'Gewissen' ('conscience') of Germany rather than a 'sanftes Ruhekissen' ('cushy pillow') that 'said yes to all terror and sanctioned murder [...].'⁷

This critique is representative of many similar critiques of cultural quietism in postwar Germany. Such critique played a decisive role in the foundation of the Kulturbund zur Demokratischen Erneuerung Deutschlands (Cultural Federation for the Democratic Renewal of Germany) shortly after the end of the war. The Kulturbund was the most important cultural organization in postwar Germany. It was an institutional embodiment of the belief in the transformative power of culture. The Kulturbund was originally created in the Soviet zone, at the behest of Communist apparatchiks, and with the cooperation of Soviet occupation forces. The involvement of Communists, however, should

not prevent recognition of the significance of the Kulturbund for other groups and occupation zones as well. In fact during the first two years of its existence, before the Cold War really got going in autumn 1947, the Kulturbund was active and had members in all four occupation zones, not just in the Soviet zone or in East Berlin. The very *raison d'être* of the Kulturbund was precisely *not* to be a Communist organization but rather to appeal in as broad a way as possible to all antifascist German intellectuals, particularly to bourgeois intellectuals. The programme of the Kulturbund was to use culture as a power to transform and reeducate the German people away from Nazism and toward democracy. Although it ultimately had more of an impact on East German than on West German culture, the Kulturbund nevertheless exerted a powerful cultural pull throughout occupied Germany, especially in the immediate postwar period, when there was still a good deal of cooperation among the powers occupying Germany, and when cultural leaders agreed on the goal of using traditional culture as a tool for denazification. In what follows, I will examine the Kulturbund and its goal of using culture to transform Germany, and then explore one of the primary western responses to the Kulturbund, the Congress for Cultural Freedom, which was founded in 1950. Both of these organizations, from different political positions, sought to use culture to achieve a political transformation, and both also sought, in different ways, and with different emphases, to transform culture itself in an explicitly political way. This article will explore the use of culture as a transformative power in both eastern and western Germany in the postwar period, and it will also differentiate the way that traditional culture was viewed in both parts of Germany as ripe for transformation and political renewal.

'CLASSICAL POLITICS'? THE KULTURBUND, 1945–1947

Because planning for the Kulturbund had been going on for almost a year before the final defeat of Nazi Germany in 1945, its history offers unique insights into the role that leading German intellectuals chose to assign culture in the postwar transformation of the nation. In essence planning for the Kulturbund began in Moscow in the early autumn of 1944, at a time when the ultimate outcome of the war was already clear but Hitler's defeat was still many months away. The primary planning meeting was held on September 25, 1944 in Communist leader Wilhelm Pieck's room at the Hotel Lux in Moscow, where many German Communists and high-level leaders of the Communist International (Comintern) lived.⁸

This venue is a reminder that the key figures involved in planning for the Kulturbund were confronting not just one dictatorship, but rather two. The people meeting in the Hotel Lux in the early autumn of 1944 were survivors not just of the Hitler dictatorship but also of the Stalinist purges of the late 1930s, during which some of their comrades had disappeared, sometimes never to come back. This was the fate of a number of German intellectuals, including the prominent Communist writer Ernst Ottwalt, a pioneer of German proletarian literature in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Ottwalt died in a prison camp in Siberia in 1943.

The most important figure in the planning for postwar German culture was Johannes R. Becher—later, in 1954, to become the first Culture Minister of East Germany. Becher was a former Expressionist poet with immense talent who had become a Communist in the early 1920s. At the meeting at the Hotel Lux, Becher gave a speech to fellow party members in which he argued that the key to the ideological transformation of postwar Germany would be to win ‘the great mass of the population, i.e. the majority of the German people’ over to an antifascist cultural and political attitude. Becher’s plan was not to focus merely on an elite group, and certainly not merely on fellow Communists. He believed that it would be crucial to encourage ‘a mass atmosphere of outrage against fascism-imperialism’ in postwar Germany. Becher suggested that this could be achieved by convincing the German people that the Nazis had harmed not just foreigners but also ordinary Germans—i.e. that Germans were, to a substantial extent, victims of Hitler. Key groups needed for this reeducation programme were, he believed, teachers, professors, pastors and representatives of what he called ‘literature in the broader sense (including film, press, radio and theatre)’.⁹ The task of reeducation, he asserted, was nothing less than ‘national liberation and reconstruction on the most massive scale in the area of ideology and morals’.¹⁰ Communist leaders chose Becher to lead the cultural commission that emerged from this meeting. Its task, as specified by the Party, was ‘to draft measures for the ideological reeducation of the German people in an antifascist-democratic spirit and to formulate specific tasks that will be assigned to literature, radio, film and theatre’.¹¹

Planning for, and the ultimate creation of, the Kulturbund in 1944–1945 was governed by the so-called popular front strategy that dominated Communist thinking for over a decade from the mid-1930s until the second half of the 1940s. The designation ‘popular

front' comes from the 'Front populaire' in France, which controlled the French government in 1936–1937 under Prime Minister Léon Blum. The strategy was that all antifascist political forces, rather than fighting against each other, should join together to oppose fascism. This strategy was in turn a response, and a corrective, to the previous policy of internecine conflict among left-wing parties, particularly the split between German Communists and Social Democrats. As left-wing political strategists among both the Communists and the Social Democrats believed, the conflict within the left, especially the German Communist Party's approach of designating the Social Democrats 'social fascists', had helped to pave the way for the victory of Hitler in January of 1933. Hence these leaders believed that German antifascists ought to join forces in the fight against Hitler. The popular front strategy was, of course, to some extent an instance of closing the barn door after the horse has bolted. It nevertheless had a powerful impact on antifascist intellectuals in the 1930s and 1940s. It was in the spirit of the popular front that the Kulturbund was initially conceived in Moscow in the early autumn of 1944 and then ushered into being in Berlin in the early summer of 1945.

The idea of the Kulturbund as a 'front' organization initially had this very specific historical meaning. Later, however, the 'front' concept came to be seen as a clever tactical ploy in which the Communists pretended to keep themselves in the background while in reality they were controlling events. In other words, the concept of a 'front' organization was subsequently perceived as merely deception and bad faith, and that is sometimes the way that the development of culture in the Soviet zone immediately after 8 May 1945 has been portrayed. In the specific historical circumstances of the 1930s and 1940s, however, it is important to see the 'front' concept as not just a Communist strategy of deception and intrigue, but also as a Communist self-critique of previous party strategy and a recognition of the need to work together with other organizations and people. No doubt some leaders approached this strategy in bad faith and with mental reservations. But Becher and many other Kulturbund leaders were quite sincere in their desire for a broad antifascist front involving large numbers of non-Communists, and that is precisely why so many bourgeois and non-Communist cultural figures joined them – and why the Kulturbund, and Becher himself, later came in for criticism in the GDR.¹²

Becher flew from Moscow to Berlin a month after the end of the war, on 10 June 1945. He immediately set about creating the Kulturbund,

which was officially recognized in all of Berlin's occupation sectors by mid-July 1945. By the end of 1945 the Kulturbund had adherents in all of the German occupation zones and in all segments of the population, just as Becher had planned. Prominent among the Kulturbund's founding members were cultural leaders who had remained in Germany during the Nazi period, that is, precisely the inner emigrants who were being criticized at the same time by Thomas Mann. These inner emigrants included the famous actor Paul Wegener, the theatre critic Herbert Ihering, the budding young Communist intellectual Wolfgang Harich, the pastor Otto Dilschneider, the writer Bernhard Kellermann, the philosopher Eduard Spranger, and the scholar Bernhard Bennedik. Although the Communist Becher became the Kulturbund's first and most important president, the Kulturbund was intended to be a nonpartisan but strictly anti-Nazi organization offering an ideological home to anyone, whether bourgeois or socialist, who opposed Nazism. The habitus of the Kulturbund was distinctly bourgeois, not Communist. This caused one Soviet officer to complain in November of 1945 about what he saw as the Kulturbund's 'bourgeois tendencies in art and literature; futurism, impressionism, etc.'¹³ Becher's cultural predilections were so bourgeois that in 1946 Sergei Tulpanov, the highest-ranking Soviet military officer responsible for culture in the zone, attempted to have him removed from the presidency of the Kulturbund. Tulpanov charged that, 'in his whole intellectual approach, Becher is not a Marxist. It is true that he is not oriented directly toward England and America, but rather toward western European democracy. It is embarrassing for him to admit that he is a member of the Central Committee [...]'¹⁴ Becher survived Tulpanov's attack because he found support among other high-ranking Soviet operatives who shared his more 'bourgeois' approach to literature and art, particularly political adviser Vladimir Semyonov and Soviet Marshal Vasily Sokolovsky, who became the leader of Soviet forces in the zone in 1946, succeeding the conqueror of Berlin, Marshal Georgy Zhukov.

Becher was largely responsible not only for formulating Communist cultural strategy but also, to a remarkable extent, for implementing it. In his first public speech after arriving in Germany in 1945 he stressed above all the totality of the German catastrophe and the consequent need for a radical transformation of politics via culture: 'The first thing that we must recognize is the shameful magnitude, the moral depth of our defeat. [...] This defeat [...] in the magnitude of its culpability and in the profundity of its shame is incomparable in all of world history.'¹⁵ In

Becher's view, it was not just the period of the Nazi dictatorship that was problematic. Hitler, he believed, had cast a pall on all of German history: 'The entirety of our historical development is put in question, must be examined anew and given new answers.'¹⁶ Any serious response to the totality of the Nazi catastrophe therefore had to be total itself.

These sentiments were incorporated into the foundation of the Kulturbund in the late spring and early summer of 1945. The Kulturbund's original manifesto, promulgated in June of 1945, shortly after Becher's arrival in Berlin, specified that the organization's goal was 'to reawaken the greatness of German culture, the pride of our fatherland, and to reestablish a new German spiritual life'. The references to 'the greatness of German culture' and 'the pride of our fatherland' were hardly a demand for a radical transformation of German culture itself; rather, these words pointed to a desire to use traditional German culture to transform politics. Germany's cultural values, the manifesto emphasized, had been perverted: 'Nazism buried the true values of German culture, those connected to names like Goethe, Schiller, Lessing and numerous philosophers, artists, and scientists, or it falsified them in the most shameful way with its misanthropic teachings [...]. German culture became a tool in Hitler's criminal predatory war.'¹⁷ The Kulturbund, in other words, created a juxtaposition between Nazism and 'the true values of German culture' and urged the rejection of the former and the return to the latter. The conservative glorification of traditional German culture meshed well with the classicist predilections of Soviet occupation authorities. As Tulpanov later put it, 'the ideological struggle simply had to touch the entirety of the cultural past, including the personality and work of the greatest German, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe'.¹⁸

In line with such sentiments, the Kulturbund charged that the German intelligentsia had made itself culpable in the perversion of the highest values of German culture:

We must admit that the magnificent heritage of German classicism and humanism was not strong enough within the German intelligentsia to give it an indomitable power to resist the Nazi regime. It is true that remarkable individuals demonstrated strength in resistance and stood their ground, but in its entirety the intelligentsia succumbed to seduction and terror.¹⁹

Here too we see an emphasis on 'the magnificent heritage'. The problem is not with this heritage itself; the problem is that this heritage was simply 'not strong enough within the German intelligentsia' to prevent

the triumph of Nazism. The solution, therefore, is straightforward: to strengthen rather than weaken 'the magnificent heritage of German classicism' and use it as a political tool for the transformation of Germany, and, in particular, of the German intelligentsia. While the declaration might seem undiplomatic in its apparent condemnation of German literary and cultural elites for their cooperation with Nazism, such ideas were widespread in the immediate postwar period. Many bourgeois literary intellectuals shared them. In fact some bourgeois intellectuals were even more critical of German elites than the Communist Becher. Bernhard Kellermann, for instance, a prominent bourgeois writer who was one of the founding members of the Kulturbund, went much further than Becher in accusing German elites of having been coopted by Nazism. At the founding meeting of the Kulturbund, Kellermann threatened these elites with shame and punishment: 'The "Kulturbund" will name their names and shame them in front of the whole nation'. Indeed, Kellermann promised, the Kulturbund 'will, in the face of the whole nation, and all of humanity, brand the glowing iron of shame upon their brow'.²⁰ Kellermann vowed that the Kulturbund would 'grab you by the chest and scream into your face the fearsome question: "Why did you drag Germany's honour into the dirt? Why? Why?"' He demanded: 'Answer! And be accursed!'²¹

Whereas the bourgeois Kellermann was quite radical in his condemnation of German cultural elites, the Communist Becher, in accordance with popular front strategy, was more conciliatory. Rather than invoking a specific guilt shared only by specific people, Becher invoked the more general concept of collective German guilt and implicitly included himself in that guilt: 'As a people we were, in our entirety, too weak [...]. This political-moral, historical weakness makes us all partially guilty for Hitler's war crimes'.²² The collectivization of German guilt, and Becher's implicit inclusion of himself among the guilty, took some of the sting out of Kellermann's attack on German elites, and demonstrates how, even in addressing the controversial problem of German guilt, Communists like Becher were seeking to appeal to as broad a coalition of supporters as possible. Becher did not want to alienate potential allies by being too specific about who was guilty and who was not. Unlike Kellermann, he did not want to name names.

At the ceremonial meeting marking the Kulturbund's creation, Becher proclaimed that the guiding star of cultural policy in postwar Germany should be respect for the accomplishments of German culture, coupled

with an insistence that culture and politics should no longer exist in opposition to each other, but rather complement one another:

In the political and moral attitude of our people we must now give clear, strong, convincing, shining expression to this rich heritage of humanism, of classicism, to the rich heritage of the workers' movement. Our classicism never corresponded to a classical politics. On the contrary, in our political actions we always acted against our best traditions. We were never able to find a political expression that corresponded to those high cultural achievements. We must now get beyond this unholy contradiction between intellect and power, which has led to the worst catastrophe in our history, and which ultimately even destroyed any free intellectual activity.²³

What is notable about this declaration is that it is primarily a call for the use of culture to transform German political life, and not a call for a radical transformation of German culture itself. Becher does not insist on eliminating or even altering classicism; on the contrary, he sees classicism as a desirable goal. What he demands, however, is an extension of classicism into the political realm, i.e. an explicit declaration of culture's sovereignty over politics. At the same time, he calls for a recognition by German cultural elites that they have a specific political responsibility in the democratization of Germany, and as a Communist he makes the claim that Goethe and Schiller, far from being the dialectical opposite of Communism, were in fact precursors of the human and social liberation that he believes Communism to represent. The programme that Becher laid out for the Kulturbund, and for the resurrection of cultural life in postwar Germany, was an idealistic one, informed by the bourgeois German cultural tradition. It sought, however, to overcome what Becher and others saw as the primary problem of that cultural tradition: the split between *Geist* (intellect or spirit) and *Macht* (power). Instead Becher and the Kulturbund sought to create an indivisible unity between politics on the one hand and culture on the other. The coming Germany, Becher hoped, would be an incarnation of 'classical politics' ('klassische Politik') in which the ideas of Lessing, Goethe and Schiller would not remain mere dreams, but would actually become reality. Germany, Becher hoped, not only had a classical past but a 'classical future' ('klassische Zukunft').²⁴ It was the responsibility of German intellectuals to make that 'classical future' a reality.

Although this programme was primarily being formulated in the eastern zone, it had many admirers, and parallels, in the western zones. As just one example, the great historian Friedrich Meinecke suggested in his book *Die deutsche Katastrophe* (1946) that cells of admirers of

classical culture, and particularly of the works of Goethe, ought to be established throughout the defeated country, and that those who steeped themselves in that culture would 'detect something indestructible—a German *character indelibilis*—in the midst of all the destruction and misfortune of our Fatherland'.²⁵ The Kulturbund actually did establish such cells, and it gave them an institutional structure. It emerged as a direct result of Communist planning, but its impact and significance corresponded to a genuine groundswell among German intellectuals in all four zones during the postwar period. In the immediate aftermath of the war there was a widespread belief throughout Germany that a strengthened traditional culture could offer a bulwark against, and a solution to, the radical problems facing the nation.

'THEY DO IT, AND THEREFORE WE HAVE TO DO IT TOO': COLD WAR
PRAGMATISM, 1947–1949

The twin concepts of a popular front against Nazism and of the need to use German culture as a tool for the ideological reeducation of the German people prevailed throughout occupied Germany for over two years, from May of 1945 until around October of 1947, and these goals also met with broad approval from all four occupying powers. This period, which the American historian Jeffrey Herf has aptly called 'the Nuremberg interregnum', was characterized by relative harmony among the occupiers vis-à-vis the treatment of Germany – what Ian Buruma has labelled the '1945 consensus', or what the East German writer Stephan Hermlin, a decade after the end of the war, referred to as the 'Geist von 1945', the spirit of 1945.²⁶ There were at least three factors that led to a change in the autumn of 1947. First, the rhetoric and actions of the Soviet Union became more confrontational, as Communists began to take over the countries of the eastern bloc, including Romania and Czechoslovakia. Such political moves were accompanied by cultural antagonism as well, with speeches by Stalin's ideological henchman Andrei Zhdanov condemning the bourgeois culture of the West as fundamentally fascist in nature. In effect, this kind of rhetoric precipitated the abandonment of the popular front ideology of the 1930s and most of the 1940s, and a return to intolerance and confrontation. It was, in essence, a return to the 'social fascism' rhetoric of the final years of the Weimar Republic. Second, the United States also moved toward greater confrontation as hard-nosed anti-Communists within the Truman administration got the upper hand over the dreamers and idealists of the Roosevelt

administration. In this context we can think, among other things, of the establishment of the Central Intelligence Agency in 1947 on the basis of the wartime Office of Strategic Services, which its critics had sometimes mockingly called 'Oh So Socialist'.²⁷ Obviously, for both Soviet and American strategists, the future of postwar Germany was key, and hence, for Americans too, ideological struggle in the emerging Cold War focused in the first instance on Germany and its capital, Berlin.

There is a third factor in this drama that is sometimes overlooked by those who view developments in postwar Germany as merely a reflex of great power politics—of what was happening in Moscow or Washington. That factor is the Germans themselves. One should not forget their ability to make an impact on events, an ability that very much included West German conservatives, anti-Communists, and purveyors of traditional culture. The conflict between the two superpowers as the Cold War got under way offered these and other Germans a unique opportunity to assert their own interests—to exploit the tensions between the superpowers to their own advantage. Bertolt Brecht observed this in the autumn of 1948 when he arrived in Germany for the first time after the end of the war and complained that 'the Germans are scrimmaging [...] in the vortex' arising from the resistance of the other occupation powers to Soviet actions.²⁸ Brecht believed that ordinary Germans were not exercising self-criticism, or attempting to construct a new society or transform their culture in any meaningful way. They were, rather, taking advantage of the growing rift between the Soviet Union and its former Western allies. That rift, Brecht believed, offered recalcitrant Germans, including former Nazis, an opportunity and an excuse to retain more or less the same belief and behaviour systems to which they had adhered during the Nazi period. For ordinary Germans, Brecht suggested, the nascent cold war presented an opportunity *not* to learn from the mistakes of the recent past. As Brecht put it: 'the Germans are rebelling against the command to rebel against Nazism; only a few have the standpoint that an enforced socialism is better than none at all.'²⁹ It goes without saying that Brecht's standpoint was precisely that.

The key venue for the change in cultural tone among the former World War Two allies as the Cold War got under way was the German Writers' Congress that took place in Berlin in October of 1947. More than anything else, it was this congress that really cemented the Cold War in place on an intellectual level, establishing a long-term cultural split between the East and the West. During the congress and its aftermath, one can see all three factors leading to the cultural divide

at play. This divisiveness is somewhat ironic, since Becher and the Kulturbund had initially planned the congress as a demonstration of antifascist unity in German culture – a reinforcement of the popular front strategy. The fact that such a demonstration failed, in spite of Becher's best intentions, is a clear indication that the Kulturbund was up against political and cultural forces that were stronger than its own desire to preserve the unity of German culture. To some extent the congress did succeed in overcoming the split between inner emigrants and cultural exiles – one of Becher's primary goals. Becher achieved this by giving inner emigrants a prominent role in the congress itself – for instance making the distinguished writer Ricarda Huch honorary president of the congress. But some of the Soviet participants in the congress, especially the playwright Vsevolod Vitalievich Vishnevsky, harshly criticized American culture for its alleged 'hatred of humanity and militarism', while praising Soviet culture for its purportedly simple desire for peace, and urging 'that German writers and the German people' should 'find their place in the ranks' of peaceful pro-Soviet culture.³⁰

It was in the context of such Soviet attacks on American culture as a successor to German fascist culture that a young and completely unknown American participant in the congress, the journalist Melvin Lasky, took the podium and proceeded to turn Soviet rhetoric on its head. In Lasky's view it was the Soviet Union, and not the United States, that had inherited from Hitler the mantle of the greatest threat to what he called 'cultural freedom'. The term 'cultural freedom' was to have massive reverberations in the coming years. Lasky was also critical of the United States, but these criticisms were later forgotten in the midst of the scandal caused by his forceful attack on the Soviet Union. Lasky's intervention in 1947 should not be seen as a well-planned, orchestrated attack by the United States government on cooperation among the Allies, and in fact US authorities were sufficiently displeased with Lasky after the congress that they briefly considered removing him from Germany for creating bad blood between the US and the Soviet Union.³¹ Lasky's 'cultural freedom' speech can be seen as the symbolic beginning of the cultural Cold War in Berlin, Germany, and Europe. It had implications on both sides of the Iron Curtain.

In 1948, just a year after the Berlin congress, with funding from the American government, Lasky founded the monthly cultural journal *Der Monat*, which became one of the most important forums for opinion and debate in postwar Germany – and which, not coincidentally, prominently argued for an engaged, politicized culture that would overcome

traditional cultural quietism. This cultural approach contrasted directly with that of the Kulturbund, which began to face increasing problems in the west immediately after the end of the Berlin congress. The most prominent and longest-lasting critique of traditional cultural quietism published in *Der Monat* came in 1949, the year of the two hundredth anniversary of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's birth, from the young Swiss writer Max Frisch, who famously invoked the proximity between Goethe's Weimar on the one hand and the Buchenwald concentration camp on the other.³² Frisch's criticism of traditional German culture was entirely in line with Lasky's own approach, outlined a year earlier in the US journal *Partisan Review*, where Lasky had complained about German intellectuals who had allegedly 'learned nothing' and 'read nothing, since 1933', and were instead slavishly devoted to 'the passive appreciation of the art of a happier era', especially German classicism.³³ Lasky's criticism of German classicism points to a clear difference between his approach to culture and that of Johannes R. Becher. Whereas Becher had insisted on the need to transform politics via culture, Lasky was focusing primarily on the need to transform culture via politics.

Der Monat later served as a model for the US-funded creation of other high-brow anti-Communist journals, such as *Encounter* in the United Kingdom and *Preuves* in France. Less than three years after the Berlin congress, in June of 1950, Lasky, again with US funding, organized a spectacular meeting of anti-Communist intellectuals from all over the Western world in West Berlin: the Congress for Cultural Freedom. That Congress, in turn, marked the beginning of the most important anti-Communist cultural organization in postwar Europe, also called the Congress for Cultural Freedom. All of these developments went back to the 1947 German Writers' Congress, and they represented a clear – albeit gradual – move by the US government to covertly support the development of an anti-Communist intellectual front in Germany, Europe and indeed the world. The Congress for Cultural Freedom was in essence a kind of US-funded Anti-Communist International. For the Congress, as for Lasky himself, Soviet Communism had taken the place of Hitler's Nazism as the chief threat to human liberty. The negotiations between Lasky and representatives of the US government in Germany (OMGUS) suggest that Lasky, far from being a mere agent of US secret services acting only at their behest, was actually pushing the US government to adopt positions and strategies that were more confrontational and aggressive than many government officials wanted.

The Congress for Cultural Freedom – both the Berlin meeting and the organization that emerged from it – was also driven by a ‘front’ strategy that closely paralleled the ‘front’ strategy of the Communists themselves in the 1930s and 1940s. Whereas the Communists’ strategy had been antifascist, however, and had upheld the value of traditional German culture, the strategy developed by Lasky and other US cold warriors in the late 1940s was first and foremost anti-Communist, and tended to focus on cultural iconoclasm and modernism at the expense of classicism and idealism. If the Communists in the 1930s had argued for a coming together of all intellectuals of good will to fight the threat of fascism, then Lasky and his allies, in the late 1940s and early 1950s, argued for a coming together of all intellectuals of good will to fight the threat of Communism. Just as the Communists in the 1930s had sought to downplay their own control and funding of the popular front strategy, and of the organizations that emerged from it, so too Lasky and his allies also downplayed American funding for the new anti-Communist ‘front’ strategy. In fact the American philosopher James Burnham, one of the primary architects of the new strategy, defended funding for his wife’s travel to the Congress for Cultural Freedom in Berlin in 1950 as ‘necessary to make certain that the other delegates shall regard me as a private individual’ rather than a representative of the US government.³⁴ Burnham’s participation in the congress was funded by the so-called Office of Policy Coordination (OPC), a covert intelligence group created in 1948 and ultimately folded into the CIA several years later. The entire Congress for Cultural Freedom, as well as its associated journals, were also funded by the US government, especially the OPC, which had access to a great deal of money at the end of the 1940s thanks to a kickback scheme involving payments from the Marshall Plan. As one participant later recalled, the anti-Communist front in western Europe had so much money that ‘we couldn’t spend it all’.³⁵

How can one understand these cultural developments at the outset of the Cold War, as well as the role of figures like Melvin Lasky in Berlin and James Burnham in the United States? It is important to recognize that Burnham and Lasky, and many other anti-Communist American intellectuals of the late 1940s and 1950s, were by no means traditional conservatives. On the contrary, they were former Communists themselves, and specifically former Trotskyists. They hated Stalin and Stalinism, but they also understood Communist strategy better and more intimately than most liberal or conservative intellectuals. Whereas Trotsky had enthusiastically endorsed avant-garde artistic movements,

Stalin's approach was more conservative and classical. American-inspired Cold War strategy therefore also tended to endorse avant-garde and modernist approaches to art, and Lasky and his associates tended to emphasize art and culture that were critical and nonconformist rather than state-supporting or conservative. The basic strategy employed by American intelligence in the context of the Congress for Cultural Freedom, and also in other instances of anti-Communist ideological agitation, was a kind of ideological jiu-jitsu: to use the very methods of the Communists against them. Burnham had argued in one of his memos for the OPC that '[t]he basis and aim of Soviet strategy imply the basis and aim of the only feasible American counter-strategy'.³⁶ One participant later recalled that the fundamental message of national security memorandum NSC 10/2, which established the Office of Special Projects – quickly renamed the Office of Policy Coordination – in 1948, was quite simple: 'All it said was, they do it, and therefore we have to do it, too.'³⁷ Arthur Cox, who worked as a CIA staffer in the 1950s, later recalled: 'The feeling was we had to fight fire with fire, to use communist methods to fight communists'.³⁸ If the Communists had front organizations and large meetings of pro-Communist intellectuals, then American strategy in the postwar years was to maintain anti-Communist front organizations and to generate synergy among anti-Communist intellectuals. That is precisely what was happening in West Berlin toward the end of the 1940s and in the early 1950s.

For the cultural strategy of the US government, antifascism had essentially been transformed into anti-Communism. During the Second World War the US and the Soviet Union had been allied in the struggle against Nazism; now, however, at the beginning of the cultural Cold War, Communism came to replace fascism. It represented the present 'totalitarian' threat. Melvin Lasky precisely described the new constellation in his invocation of Berlin's significance as a venue in June of 1950:

What city could be better suited for a congress with the theme of cultural freedom than this island of liberty, which has successfully resisted the forces of dictatorship? Every participant in the congress can take a look at this border. At this point, at this Brandenburg Gate, on this sectoral border the great questions over which freedom and totalitarianism diverge have come to their most dramatic escalation.³⁹

In other words, for Lasky West Berlin represented cultural freedom, whereas East Berlin represented cultural servitude. Berlin was not just a city, it was a symbol. And it was to remain a symbol for the next

four decades. The American anti-Communist cultural strategy, most prominently implemented at the Congress for Cultural Freedom in 1950, set in place ideological structures that were to remain relatively stable throughout the Cold War, and that continue to have an impact on culture and politics today.

Of course the Kulturbund in East Germany was also in essence a 'front' organization and driven by a 'front' strategy. The leaders of the Kulturbund therefore felt understandably threatened by the prominent emergence of the Congress for Cultural Freedom in 1950, and they promptly moved to expose US government funding for the Congress to a broader public:

It is a fact that this congress is [...] taking place under the aegis of the American secret services. The organizer of this congress is the police spy Melvin J. Lasky, who is seen from the outside as the editor-in-chief of the international magazine *Der Monat* [...]. Mr. Lasky, an employee of the American secret services [...], was declared the General Secretary of this congress by the agency that controls him [...]. A 'cultural congress' arranged by a police spy – this world scandal was reserved for the 'American century'.⁴⁰

The Kulturbund referred to the financing of the Congress for Cultural Freedom by American intelligence as 'the greatest cultural scandal of our century'.⁴¹ The Kulturbund's exposure of US support for the Congress occurred long before similar Western revelations at the end of the 1960s, which caused something of a scandal at the time.⁴² In 1950, however, the Kulturbund's revelations went virtually unheard in the West. Anyone who wanted to know about that funding, could know; but few in the West wanted to know.

Lasky, Burnham and other developers of anti-Communist cultural strategy benefitted greatly from the actions of the very Communists against whom they were fighting. After 1947 the Soviet Communist Party and the Socialist Unity Party (SED) in the zone were moving away from their own previous popular front strategy of the 1930s and 1940s. As Soviet rhetoric and policy became increasingly confrontational toward the end of the 1940s, US cold warriors therefore had an easier time creating their own cultural 'fronts', designed to exclude the very Communists who had created the 'front' strategy in the first place. For this reason a 1948 speech in Wrocław, the formerly German city of Breslau, by Alexander Fadeyev, the First Secretary of the Soviet Writers' Union, was a gift to American Cold War strategists. Fadeyev charged Western intellectuals with 'an odious profanation of the human condition', 'with a hateful battle against reason, and with

the exaltation of the irrational'.⁴³ The climax of his speech came when he asserted that 'if jackals could learn to use a typewriter, and if hyenas knew how to write with a pen, what they would "compose" would without doubt resemble the books of the Millers, the Eliots, the Malraux, and other Sartrists'.⁴⁴ Fadeyev's speech was hardly calculated to increase the chances of a Soviet-led cultural front with Western antifascists, but it did help to alienate Western intellectuals from the Soviet Union, and increase the chances of an American-led anti-Soviet cultural front championing the concept of 'cultural freedom' for nonconformist intellectuals. In 1948, Fadeyev's rhetoric was still unpopular and problematic for many Communist intellectuals, even on the eastern side of the Iron Curtain, since it lessened the chances for a successful cultural front led by the Communists. But two years later, at the congress that established the East German Writers' Union in 1950 – immediately after the end of the Congress for Cultural Freedom in West Berlin – the rhetoric of divisiveness and vituperation held sway. Johannes R. Becher, for instance, called the Congress for Cultural Freedom a 'congress of spies and warmongers', and, much like Fadeyev at the Wrocław conference two years earlier, he proclaimed that he and his fellow socialist writers had no interest in dialogue with its organizers, but only in confrontation.⁴⁵ The Western literary intellectuals who had assembled in West Berlin, Becher asserted, had long since ceased to be 'German, French, English, American writers', and had instead transformed themselves into 'henchmen of the warmongers', thus becoming 'gangsters disguised as men of letters'.⁴⁶ Citing Maxim Gorky, Becher suggested that such enemies, if they did not surrender, deserved annihilation.⁴⁷ Such rhetoric hastened rather than hindered the cultural split in Germany. By 1950 Becher, who had committed himself to overcoming German division, had succumbed to the rhetoric of division himself. Nevertheless, Becher never completely abandoned his vision of a broad antifascist front unified in the idealistic celebration of traditional German culture, and his commitment to such a front was to create problems for him in the years between 1950 and his death in 1958.⁴⁸

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One further point needs to be made with respect to the cultural split of the late 1940s and early 1950s. Neither Lasky nor Burnham, nor most of the German proponents of a cultural Cold War against

Communism, were arguing for an apolitical culture or for *l'art pour l'art*. On the contrary, they were arguing for an entirely partisan culture. Like the Kulturbund, the Congress for Cultural Freedom was urging intellectuals to acknowledge their responsibility for responding to and helping to shape political events. However, unlike the Kulturbund, Lasky and the Congress for Cultural Freedom focused primarily on the need to transform culture itself rather than on the transformative power of culture. They were less interested in using traditional culture as a way to wean Germans off Nazism than they were in criticizing traditional cultural quietism and encouraging German intellectuals to join a broad anti-Communist front. The Congress for Cultural Freedom was hence not, at least in the first instance, a return to the cultural quiescence that both Thomas Mann and the Kulturbund had criticized in 1945, and that Theunissen had skewered a year later. One of the most prominent phenomena associated with the cultural Cold War over the next few decades, however, was the paradoxical return of a purportedly depoliticized notion of culture in a highly political form.⁴⁹ The most prominent representative of the depoliticized notion of culture in the west in 1950 was Gottfried Benn, the modernist poet and 'inner emigrant', who had supported the Nazis in the 1930s and condemned German exile intellectuals like Thomas Mann. Now, in 1950, Benn issued his aesthetic and political programme as a plea for the absolute autonomy of art and literature, and a rejection of any aesthetic culture that smacked of politics or social engagement. The true artist, Benn stressed, was 'cynical and does not pretend to be anything else'.⁵⁰ True modern art, he insisted, is absolutely not a 'lesson for anyone, it is just a reflection of the painful and the tender [...]. It is a recognition' and its laws dictate 'that the bearer of art should *not* put himself forward in person and join the conversation' in a political or socially relevant way.⁵¹ Here Benn cited Friedrich Nietzsche, whose reflections on nihilism and on the consolation of autonomous art in an otherwise meaningless world he saw as foundational: 'art as the last metaphysical activity within European nihilism'.⁵² With evident pleasure Benn admitted that his conception of the artist was completely antisocial: 'the great majority of the art of the past century is addictive art created by psychopaths, lop ears, coughers—: that was their life, and their busts are on display at Westminster Abbey and in the Pantheon.'⁵³ Nevertheless, Benn added, the artistic creations of these psychopaths clearly justified their abnormal, antisocial lives: 'their works stand above both: without blemish, eternal, the blossom and shimmer of the world.'⁵⁴ Benn had argued two years

earlier, in 1948, during the Berlin Air Lift, that what was destroying the West was 'not at all... the totalitarian systems or the crimes of the SS', but rather 'the abject surrender of' the Western 'intelligentsia to political concepts'.⁵⁵ In other words, the real response to the failure of German culture in the first half of the twentieth century had to be a return to apolitical, quiescent German culture – the precise opposite of the Kulturbund plan, and also of the programme laid out by the Congress for Cultural Freedom in 1950.

Benn's celebration of autonomous art therefore stands in direct contrast to the idea of enlisting Western intellectuals in the cultural Cold War against the Soviet Union. Benn stayed away from the Congress for Cultural Freedom, and no one at the Congress spoke in favour of his conception of art and literature as fundamentally asocial or antisocial – although Lasky's admiration for nonconformist, critical modernist art offered a potential commonality with Benn's approach. Over the course of the 1950s that potential was developed further: the politicized conception of anti-Communist artistic struggle propagated by the Congress for Cultural Freedom in West Berlin in June of 1950 ultimately fused with the apolitical notion of culture propagated by Benn and others. As a result, the very apolitical nature of art in the West came to be glorified and celebrated in a paradoxically political way. Hence, in the West, where the concept of an apolitical art held sway, art and culture were paradoxically just as politicized as they were in the East.

NOTES

- 1 For more on this debate, see Stephen Brockmann, *German Literary Culture at the Zero Hour* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2004), pp. 90–114.
- 2 Thomas Mann, 'Warum ich nicht nach Deutschland zurückgehe', in Mann, *Gesammelte Werke in Zwölf Bänden*, 12 vols (Frankfurt: S. Fischer, 1960), XII: *Reden und Aufsätze* 4, 953–962. Unless otherwise noted, all translations from German-language sources are my own. 'Wie durfte denn Beethovens *Fidelio*, diese geborene Festoper für den Tag der deutschen Selbstbefreiung, im Deutschland der zwölf Jahre nicht verboten sein? Es war ein Skandal, daß er nicht verboten war, sondern daß es hochkultivierte Aufführungen davon gab, daß sich Sänger fanden, ihn zu singen, Musiker, ihn zu spielen, ein Publikum, ihm zu lauschen.'
- 3 Mann, 'Warum ich nicht nach Deutschland zurückgehe', p. 957. 'Es hieß,' he charged 'die Verkommenheit beschönigen, das Verbrechen schmücken.'
- 4 Gert H. Theunissen, 'Der deutsche Intellektuelle und die Politik', *Die Weltbühne*, 1.2 (24 June 1946), 41–44 (p. 44). 'Die Frage nach den deutschen Intellektuellen und

- ihrem Verhältnis zur Politik [...] ist noch niemals zuvor in Deutschland derart eine Gewissensfrage gewesen wie gerade heute.'
- 5 Theunissen, 'Der deutsche Intellektuelle und die Politik', pp. 41–44 (p. 42); 'fanatisierter Massen'.
 - 6 Theunissen, 'Der deutsche Intellektuelle und die Politik', p. 43. 'die wahren Schöpfer des Geistes', 'waren alle insgesamt politische Wesen', 'intellektuellen Verrat'. 'Plötzlich also zieht sich der Intellektuelle in seinen elfenbeinernen Turm zurück, läßt die Politik als die einzige Möglichkeit, auch in Deutschland endlich zu einer wahren Gesellschaft und nicht nur zu einem Kegelklub zu gelangen, bedenkenlos im Stich.' 'jedoch allen Terror gutgeheßen und jeglichen Mord [...] sanktioniert [hat]'.
 - 7 'Der deutsche Intellektuelle und die Politik', p. 44.
 - 8 Johannes R. Becher, 'Bemerkungen zu unseren Kulturaufgaben', in Becher, *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 16: *Publizistik II 1939–1945* (Berlin and Weimar: Aufbau, 1978), 362–366; see also p. 751.
 - 9 Jens Wehner, *Kulturpolitik und Volksfront: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Sowjetischen Besatzungszone Deutschlands 1945–1949*, vol. 1 (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1992), p. 64. 'die breitesten Volksmassen, d.h. die Mehrheit des deutschen Volkes' 'eine Massenstimmung der Empörung gegen den Faschismus-Imperialismus' 'Literatur im weiteren Sinne (Film, Presse, Radio, Theater eingeschlossen)'.
 - 10 Magdalena Heider, *Politik-Kultur-Kulturbund* (Cologne: Wissenschaft und Politik, 1993), p. 17. Emphasis in Becher's original; '*nationales Befreiungs- und Aufbauwerk größten Stils auf ideologisch-moralischem Gebiet.*'
 - 11 Wehner, *Kulturpolitik und Volksfront*, I, 64. 'Maßnahmen zur ideologischen Umerziehung des deutschen Volkes im antifaschistisch-demokratischen Geist auszuarbeiten und im einzelnen jene Aufgaben zu formulieren, die dabei der Literatur, dem Rundfunk, dem Film und dem Theater zukommen'.
 - 12 For more on this criticism, and on the early history of the Kulturbund, see my book *The Writers' State: Constructing East German Literature, 1945–1959* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2015).
 - 13 Norman M. Naimark, *The Russians in Germany: A History of the Soviet Zone of Occupation, 1945–1949* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1995), p. 402.
 - 14 Alexander Behrens, *Johannes R. Becher: Eine politische Biographie* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2003), p. 236.
 - 15 Wehner, *Kulturpolitik und Volksfront*, II, 444. 'Das erste, was es zu erkennen gilt, ist die schmachvolle Größe, die moralische Schwere unserer Niederlage. [...] Diese Niederlage [...] steht in der Größe ihrer Schuld, in der Tiefe ihrer Schmach in der ganzen Weltgeschichte unvergleichlich da'.
 - 16 Wehner, *Kulturpolitik und Volksfront*, II, 444. 'Unsere gesamte geschichtliche Entwicklung ist in Frage gestellt, muß neu überprüft und neu beantwortet werden.'
 - 17 Gerd Dietrich, *Politik und Kultur in der SBZ 1945–1949* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1993), p. 216. 'die große deutsche Kultur, den Stolz unseres Vaterlandes, wieder erwecken und ein neues deutsches Geistesleben begründen'. 'Der Nazismus hat die wahren deutschen Kulturwerte, wie sie mit den Namen von Goethe, Schiller, Lessing und zahlreicher Philosophen, Künstler und Wissenschaftler verbunden sind, verschüttet oder durch seine menschenfeindlichen Zweck- und Nutzlehren aufs schändlichste

- verfälscht. Die deutsche Kultur wurde Werkzeug des verbrecherischen Raubkrieges Hitlers’.
- 18 Sergej Tjulpanow, *Deutschland nach dem Kriege (1945–1949): Erinnerungen eines Offiziers der Sowjetarmee*, edited by Stefan Doernberg (Berlin: Dietz, 1986), p. 290; ‘der ideologische Kampf mußte einfach die gesamte kulturelle Vergangenheit berühren, so auch Persönlichkeit und Werk des großen Deutschen Johann Wolfgang von Goethe’.
 - 19 Dietrich, *Politik und Kultur in der SBZ 1945–1949*, pp. 216–217. ‘Wir müssen gestehen, daß das große deutsche klassische humanistische Erbe auch in der deutschen Intelligenz nicht mehr so lebendig war, um eine unerschütterliche Widerstandskraft gegenüber dem Naziregime zu verleihen. Wohl bewiesen hervorragende Einzelne Widerstandskraft und Standhaftigkeit, die Intelligenz in ihrer Gesamtheit ist Verführung und Terror unterlegen.’
 - 20 Wehner, *Kulturpolitik und Volksfront*, II, 447. ‘Der “Kulturbund” wird ihre Namen nennen und sie vor dem ganzen Volk anprangern’. ‘wird ihnen vor dem ganzen Volk und der ganzen Menschheit das glühende Eisen der Schande in die Stirn brennen’.
 - 21 Wehner, *Kulturpolitik und Volksfront*, II, 447; ‘euch an der Brust packen und die fürchterliche Frage ins Gesicht schreien: “Warum habt ihr Deutschlands Ehre in den Schmutz getreten? Warum? Warum?”’ ‘Antwortet! Und seid verflucht!’
 - 22 Wehner, *Kulturpolitik und Volksfront*, II, 445. ‘Wir waren als Volk in unserer Gesamtheit zu schwach [...]. Diese politisch-moralische, geschichtliche Schwäche macht uns alle mitschuldig an dem Kriegsverbrechen Hitlers.’
 - 23 Johannes R. Becher, ‘Auferstehen!’ in Becher, *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 16, *Publizistik II 1939–1945* (Berlin and Weimar: Aufbau, 1978), pp. 454–462 (p. 461). ‘Dieses reiche Erbe des Humanismus, der Klassik, das reiche Erbe der Arbeiterbewegung müssen wir nunmehr in der politisch-moralischen Haltung unseres Volkes eindeutig, kraftvoll, überzeugend, leuchtend zum Ausdruck bringen. Unserer Klassik ist niemals eine klassische Politik gefolgt. Im Gegenteil, wir haben in unseren politischen Handlungen dem Vermächtnis unserer Besten stets zuwidergehandelt. Wir haben niemals den jenen hohen Kulturleistungen gemäßen politischen Ausdruck gefunden. Aus diesem unheilvollen Widerspruch zwischen Geist und Macht müssen wir heraus, der uns zum schwersten Verhängnis unserer Geschichte geworden ist und der letzten Endes auch jedes freie Geistesschaffen vernichtet hat.’
 - 24 Johannes R. Becher, ‘Auferstehen!’ p. 461; and Wehner, *Kulturpolitik und Volksfront*, II, 923.
 - 25 Brockmann, *German Literary Culture at the Zero Hour*, p. 131. In German: ‘Wer sich ganz in sie versenkt, wird in allem Unglück unseres Vaterlandes und inmitten der Zerstörung etwas Unzerstörbares, einen deutschen *character indelebilis* spüren’.
 - 26 <<http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/1945-welfare-state-retreat-by-ian-buruma-2015-05>> [accessed 1 May 2016]. Stephan Hermlin, ‘Not und Hoffnung der deutschen Literatur: Rede anläßlich des II. Gesamtdeutschen Dichter- und Schriftstellertreffens auf der Wartburg’, *Der Schriftsteller*, no. 11/12 (June 1955), 1–4 (p. 3).
 - 27 See Rosalee McReynolds and Louise S. Robbins, *The Librarian Spies: Philip and Mary Jane Keeney and Cold War Espionage* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security, 2009), p. 72.

- 28 Bertolt Brecht, *Werke: Große kommentierte Berliner und Frankfurter Ausgabe*, edited by Werner Hecht, Jan Knopf, Werner Mittenzwei, and Klaus-Detlef Müller (Berlin, Weimar and Frankfurt: Aufbau and Suhrkamp, 1987–2000), vol. 27, p. 285. This standard edition is referred to hereinafter as BFA; ‘die Deutschen tummeln sich mehr in dem Strudel’.
- 29 BFA 27, 285. ‘Die Deutschen rebellieren gegen den Befehl, gegen den Nazismus zu rebellieren; nur wenige stehen auf dem Standpunkt, daß ein befohlener Sozialismus besser ist als gar keiner.’
- 30 Brockmann, *German Literary Culture at the Zero Hour*, p. 153.
- 31 Giles Scott-Smith, “A Radical Democratic Political Offensive”: Melvin J. Lasky, *Der Monat*, and the Congress for Cultural Freedom’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, 35.2 (2000), 263–280 (p. 269). The US government itself was beginning to shift to a more explicitly anti-Communist approach. Lasky’s October 1947 intervention simply came too early for OMGUS. If it had come half a year later, it would have been more in line with US policy. As it was, the fact that Lasky remained in Berlin and was allowed to establish *Der Monat*, and later on spearhead the Congress for Cultural Freedom, is a clear indication that his approach represented the dominant trend. In order to explore these developments in more detail, significant additional archival work will be necessary; but such work will probably take time, since even now, well over half a century later, the U.S. government has not yet made all relevant documents available.
- 32 Brockmann, *German Literary Culture at the Zero Hour*, pp. 123–124, 154.
- 33 Cited from Giles Scott-Smith, ‘A Radical Democratic Political Offensive’, p. 267; from Lasky, ‘Berlin Letter’, *Partisan Review*, 15.1 (1948), 60.
- 34 Cited in Hugh Wilford, *The Mighty Wurlitzer: How the CIA Played America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), p. 79.
- 35 Evan Thomas, *The Very Best Men—Four Who Dared: The Early Years of the CIA* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995), p. 40.
- 36 Wilford, *The Mighty Wurlitzer*, p. 79.
- 37 Thomas, *The Very Best Men*, pp. 29, 30.
- 38 Thomas, *The Very Best Men*, p. 62.
- 39 ‘Was will der Berliner Kulturkongreß? Melvin J. Lasky, der Generalsekretär des Kongresses für kulturelle Freiheit, antwortet’, *Die Neue Zeitung*, 23 June 1950, p. 6. ‘Welche Stadt könnte für einen Kongreß über das Thema der kulturellen Freiheit besser geeignet sein als diese Insel der Freiheit, die mit Erfolg den Kräften der Diktatur widerstanden hat? Berlin ist die Grenze, an der sich zwei verschiedene Welten gegenüberstehen. Jeder Kongreßteilnehmer kann diese Grenze in Augenschein nehmen. An diesem Punkt, an diesem Brandenburger Tor, an dieser Sektorengrenze sind die großen Fragen, in denen Freiheit und Totalitarismus auseinandergehen, zur äußersten dramatischen Steigerung gekommen’.
- 40 ‘Offener Brief des “Kulturbundes zur Demokratischen Erneuerung Deutschlands” an einige Teilnehmer am sogenannten “Kongreß für kulturelle Freiheit”’, *Sonntag*, 2 July 1950, p. 4. ‘Es ist eine Tatsache, daß dieser Kongreß unter dem Protektorat des amerikanischen Geheimdienstes [...] stattfindet. Der Organisator dieses Kongresses ist der Polizeispitzel Melvin J. Lasky, der nach außenhin als Chefredakteur der internationalen Zeitschrift “Der Monat” figuriert [...]. Herr Lasky, Angestellter des amerikanischen Geheimdienstes [...], wurde von seiner

- ihm vorgesetzten Behörde zum Generalsekretär dieses Kongresses bestellt [...]. Ein "Kulturkongreß", arrangiert von einem Polizeispitzel, dieser Weltskandal blieb dem "amerikanischen Jahrhundert" vorbehalten.'
- 41 'Offener Brief', p. 4. 'den größten Kulturskandal unseres Jahrhunderts'.
- 42 'Offener Brief', p. 4.
- 43 M. A. Fadeev, 'La science et la culture dans la lutte pour la paix, le progrès et la démocratie', in *Congres mondial des intellectuels pour la paix Wrocław – Pologne 25–28 août 1948* (Warsaw: Bureau du secrétaire général, 1949), pp. 20–31 (p. 24). All translations from this source are my own.
- 44 Fadeev, 'La science et la culture', p. 25. For another account of this speech and the congress, see Anne Hartmann and Wolfram Eggeling, *Sowjetische Präsenz im kulturellen Leben der SBZ und frühen DDR 1945–1953* (Berlin: Akademie, 1998), p. 69. There are few accounts in English of the Wrocław conference in general and Fadeyev's speech in particular, and there is no published English-language translation of the complete speech. The proceedings of the conference, including Fadeyev's speech, were, however, published in French, and that is the language from which I have translated parts of Fadeyev's speech, which was of course originally delivered in Russian.
- 45 Johannes R. Becher, 'Schlußwort auf einem Schriftstellerkongreß', in Becher, *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 17, *Publizistik II 1946–1951* (Berlin and Weimar: Aufbau, 1979), pp. 348–358 (p. 355); 'Spitzel- und Kriegsbrandstifter-Kongress'.
- 46 Becher, 'Schlußwort auf einem Schriftstellerkongreß', p. 355; 'deutsche[n], französische[n], englische[n], amerikanische[n] Schriftsteller'; 'Handlanger der Kriegshetzer'; 'literarisch getarnte Gangster'.
- 47 Becher, 'Schlußwort auf einem Schriftstellerkongreß', p. 355.
- 48 For more on this, see my book *The Writers' State: Constructing East German Literature, 1945–1959*, especially pp. 245–278.
- 49 See Giles Scott-Smith, *The Politics of Apolitical Culture: The Congress for Cultural Freedom and the Political Economy of American Hegemony 1945–1955* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002).
- 50 Gottfried Benn, *Doppelleben: Zwei Selbstdarstellungen* (Wiesbaden: Limes, 1950), p. 51; 'zynisch und behauptet auch, gar nichts anderes zu sein'.
- 51 Benn, *Doppelleben*, p. 53. 'Belehrung für irgendwen, es ist nur ein Gedanke an das Schmerzliche und Zarte [...]. Es ist eine Erkenntnis, und es ergibt sich aus ihr, daß der Kunstträger in Person irgendwo hervortreten oder mitreden *nicht* solle'
- 52 Benn, *Doppelleben*, p. 54. 'die Kunst als letzte metaphysische Tätigkeit innerhalb des europäischen Nihilismus'
- 53 Benn, *Doppelleben*, pp. 52–53. 'der größte Teil der Kunst des vergangenen Halbjahrhunderts ist Steigerungskunst von Psychopathen, von Alkoholikern, Abnormen, Vagabunden, Armenhäuslern, Neurotikern, Degenerierten, Henkelohren, Hustern –: das war ihr Leben, und in der Westminsterabtei und im Pantheon stehen ihre Büsten'
- 54 Benn, *Doppelleben*, p. 53; 'über beiden stehen ihre Werke: makellos, ewig, Blüte und Schimmer der Welt'.
- 55 Cited in Brockmann, *German Literary Culture at the Zero Hour*, pp. 157, 158; 'gar nicht [...] [den] totalitären Systemen oder [...] SS-Verbrechen' 'dem hündischen Kriechen seiner Intelligenz vor den politischen Begriffen'.

Transformation of ‘Culture’: From Anti-Fascism to Anti-Totalitarianism

HELMUT PEITSCH AND DIRK WIEMANN

Abstract:

Focusing on a selection of reports and comments on a range of international cultural conferences held between 1941 and 1949, this article traces how the deployment of the term ‘culture’ underwent significant changes that tie in with the consolidation and subsequent Cold-War collapse of the anti-fascist consensus. As a consequence of the emergent hegemony of an anti-totalitarian orthodoxy in the Western sphere of influence, the few individuals who, like Olaf Stapledon or Hans Mayer, attempted to mediate between the ideological blocs found themselves increasingly isolated between the enemy lines. The process of polarization that increasingly rendered such individual project futile is manifest in the agendas of the cultural conferences at Wrocław, Paris and New York as well as in the reports and commentary in the most influential German post-war journals.

In 1949, Alfred Andersch published an anthology entitled *Europäische Avantgarde* (*European Avant-garde*) assembling essays by non-German authors (with the exception of Eugen Kogon) published in journals of the Western zones of occupied Germany in the previous four years. The thrust of both the collected contributions and their editorial framing makes *Europäische Avantgarde* a symptomatic document of the ways in which some of the core concepts of the anti-fascist alliance of the Second World War—such as ‘freedom’, ‘culture’, and the very idea of ‘Europe’ itself—had undergone significant alterations by the end of the 1940s. In the following pages we will trace some of those modifications and interpret them as indicative of the overarching ideological shift in the West from ‘anti-fascism’ to ‘anti-totalitarianism’. In this endeavour we will restrict ourselves to a generically circumscribed but indicative corpus of texts, namely a selection of reports and comments on a range of international cultural conferences held between 1941 and 1949.

One such report is included in Andersch’s anthology: the contribution by Stephen Spender, the only English writer represented in the

collection, who is characterized in an appended biographical note as writing 'a mixture of activism and pure poetry' and hence as 'the ideal embodiment of that type of intellectual who does not escape into the "ivory tower"'.¹ His contribution, 'Auf der Suche nach Europas Bestimmung' ('In search of Europe's destiny'), is a report on a cultural conference entitled *The European Spirit* held in Geneva in 1946, which was to become the first in a series of conferences called *Geneva International Meetings*.² Spender's main point here is that the prospects and 'vocation' of Europe cannot be discussed by Europeans alone but that Americans, Russians and the subjects of colonial nations should also take part.³ Focusing especially on the speeches delivered by Julien Benda, Karl Jaspers and Georg Lukács (the only speaker in Geneva who referred to the Soviet Union and to colonial nations), Spender not only rejects 'the idea of a geographical unity of Western culture concentrated in Europe'; he also questions the expectation that anti-fascism might engender the 'possibility of unity' between East and West.⁴ In his discussion of Lukács's contribution, Spender does not mention the latter's plea for winning the peace by continuing the 'alliance of 1941', through which, for Lukács, 'world history had given democracy the undreamt-of chance of a political, social and ideological renaissance'; however, he takes up Lukács's distinction between various kinds of liberty⁵: While conceding a marked difference between the 'economic freedom' claimed by the Soviet side and the 'liberal freedom' advocated by the West, Spender suggests nonetheless that a fundamental idea of freedom is shared by both sides – an overarching notion of liberty that emerges only through a collation of the communist critique of liberalism and the liberal critique of economism.⁶

Andersch had first published Spender's article as early as 1947 in the US-licensed journal *Der Ruf* which he co-edited with Hans Werner Richter, who later that year founded the *Gruppe 47* (Group 47). In *Der Ruf*, he added to Spender's two-page report on Geneva his own half page of commentary in which he also mentions Lukács with conspicuous frequency but, unlike Spender, with open hostility.⁷ Andersch explained Lukács's agenda in terms of the category of cultural freedom. As 'the only one who had come from the camp of strict Marxism', Lukács, Andersch insinuated, took part 'only to preach stubbornly the subordination of the individual, especially of the intellectual individual, under the community'.⁸ In conclusion, Andersch called for future 'European Conversations' that would turn the meeting at Geneva – portrayed as a 'first attempt at building an oasis' – into 'a permanent institution'.

Compared to Spender's report, Andersch's assessment appears strikingly possessive: 'As long as man's current spiritual crisis is violently covered up within the power sphere of Marxism, such conferences as the one in Geneva will always be conferences of the West only.'⁹ Whereas Spender's view of future meetings of intellectuals from all parts of the world was inclusive, Andersch's was explicitly exclusive not only in terms of cold-war dichotomies but also in its blatantly highbrow resentment of 'the masses':¹⁰

It was the elite of Europe which met in Geneva [...]—by the way completely ignored by the German press—a small group of intellectuals (the expression may be used exactly because it makes the mass instinct see red—even without Goebbels's propaganda) [...] who will be of decisive importance for the cultural and political development of Europe because they affirm the primacy of the spirit with an unparalleled courage without catching the old European disease of locking up this spirit in the ivory tower of artistic isolation.¹¹

Taking its cue from the contrast between Spender's and Andersch's discrepant assessments of how, on what principles and by whom European culture should be reconstructed and further developed, this article examines the emergence and consolidation, in the immediate post-Second World War period, of what we call the anti-totalitarian orthodoxy in the wake of what the American historian Geoff Eley has described as 'the collapse of the antifascist consensus': 'After antifascism had eased the Left's western acceptance, the Cold War removed it again, returning left-wing socialists and Communists to the margins.'¹² In the course of this development, writers and audiences gradually came to accept the exclusion of former allies and partners in the name of intellectual liberty without perceiving this as contradicting the idea of freedom of expression; or, as the CIA's historian Michael Warner has it, without seeing that it belied the suggestion 'that debate in the West was truly free, with room for all shades of anti-totalitarian opinion'.¹³ By no means only in the West, a substantial forum for this debate was provided by the international cultural conferences at which intellectuals, writers, politicians and artists gathered to discuss the role of culture in international politics, often with the aim of passing resolutions addressed to governments and the general public alike.

Retrospectively, the shift from anti-fascism to anti-totalitarianism can be reconstructed by a reading of the proceedings of and commentaries on a series of such conferences held between 1941 (when the anti-fascist consensus was budding) and 1949 (when Western culture had nearly completely succumbed to the anti-totalitarian orthodoxy). In the limited

space of this article, we will restrict our discussion to the ways in which two German journals—the Soviet-licensed *Ost und West* and the US-licensed *Der Monat*—covered the international cultural conferences which were held between the Geneva conference on ‘The European Spirit’ (1946) and the Berlin ‘Conference for Cultural Freedom’ (1950). These are the ‘World Congress of Intellectuals in Defence of Peace’ held in Wrocław in August 1948; the ‘Cultural and Scientific Conference for World Peace’ (aka the ‘Waldorf Conference’) in New York in March 1949; the ‘World Congress of Fighters for Peace’ in Paris and Prague in April 1949; and, also in Paris and in April 1949, the ‘International Day of Resistance to Dictatorship and War’. In order to properly appreciate the polarized and polarizing thrust of these events, we will first briefly delineate how the emergent anti-totalitarian orthodoxy increasingly pushed other perspectives to the margins. By focusing on two individual voices—Olaf Stapledon and Hans Mayer—that articulate alternatives to the anti-totalitarian orthodoxy in the name of the anti-fascist unity of the Second World War, we hint at the dynamics that effectively rendered such articulations irrelevant, odd and unintelligible.

The immediate postwar years were a moment when culture could have been transformative in building a united Europe, brought together by its anti-fascist commitment, and when the common ground across the political spectrum could have been strengthened through the various cultural conferences. However, what becomes clear from an examination both of the conferences themselves and of the reports on them in the German press is that such common ground quickly disintegrated as Europe divided along the East-West line, and both the communist and the anti-communist cultural figures became more entrenched and single-minded in their views. Ultimately, by examining some of the key participants in these conferences and the publications that reported on them, we will show how and why culture lost its transformative power.

OLAF STAPLEDON AND THE ANTI-FASCIST CONSENSUS

It is helpful to begin by looking back at the moment when the anti-fascist consensus still rendered political inclusiveness possible. In retrospect, the two international PEN conferences held during the Second World War in London in 1941 and 1944, may be seen as epitomizing a cultural politics aimed at facilitating a substantial social reconstruction and redistribution in the name of heightened democratization. According to Geoff Eley,

The years 1943–47 were a rare moment of European history—the moment of antifascist unity [...]. Reading Cold War divisions back into this time distorts its dynamics, which on the contrary produced a radical openness. The war brought a powerful shift to the left, bringing socialists and Communists center stage in entirely new ways. [...] the heady hopes of the Liberation created openings for radical transformation.¹⁴

The 17th congress of PEN International was held in London in September 1941 and published as *Writers in Freedom*; the proceedings of the 1944 'Conference called by the London Centre of the International P.E.N. to Commemorate the Tercentenary of the Publication of Milton's *Areopagitica*' appeared as *Freedom of Expression*. One of the differences between these two wartime PEN conferences and publications is the first-time representation of British Communist authors at the 1944 conference: J. B. S. Haldane spoke as 'A Materialist on Freedom and Values', Ivor Montagu lectured on 'Soviet Writers and the War', and F. D. Klingender delivered 'A Marxist Contribution'.¹⁵ At the time, the presence of communists obviously did not appear out of the ordinary: Haldane, Montagu and Klingender were inserted into a pluralist line-up that included, besides literary historians and other experts, representatives of various Christian and Judaist denominations, a 'Theosophist's View', an anarchist, a Fabianist, and—not least—two non-European perspectives (Ch'ien and Mulk Raj Anand). This diverse composition of the conference can be interpreted as an indicator of the antifascist consensus and the shift to the left that Eley reconstructs for the mid-1940s.

A virtual embodiment of that consensus but also of its vicissitudes in the postwar period can be seen in the chief organizer of the *Areopagitica* conference: the British philosopher and science fiction writer Olaf Stapledon, who had been elected to the British PEN executive committee in 1942.¹⁶ Stapledon's centrality to the 1944 event is complemented by his increasing marginalization in the course of the subsequent five years. The controversial 1948 Wrocław conference, in which Stapledon took part as a delegate, caused a major stir in Britain, where mainstream press coverage was generally negative,¹⁷ and left Stapledon and the other British signatories to the conference resolution exposed to hostile invectives. To make matters worse, at the 1949 New York (or Waldorf) conference, Stapledon gained some involuntary prominence as the only West European participant who was allowed to enter the United States, after the visas for all other British, French and Italian invitees had been withdrawn. Due to this policy of enforced exclusion, attendance

was effectively restricted to participants from the USSR and Eastern Europe and from the US itself. As a consequence, like the Wrocław congress of 1948, the Waldorf conference was bound to appear as a 'communist front affair', in which Stapledon unwittingly appeared as *the* sole representative of Western Europe – or, from our perspective, as a visual embodiment of the isolation of any position that kept referring back to the antifascist consensus.

If Stapledon is remembered today at all, it is as a pioneer of speculative fiction. There is in fact a remarkable continuity between his sci-fi oeuvre and his essayistic and activist writings inasmuch as Stapledon seems to have brought a science-fiction-derived detachment to his persistent and thoroughly earthly commitment to precisely that antifascist consensus that so rapidly evaporated after 1945. It was perhaps this 'cosmic' detachment that rendered Stapledon virtually immune to the ideological imbroglios of the postwar rollback. His reference point and implied addressee were not so much his own contemporary audience but a futuristic humanity to come. In his contribution to the 1941 PEN Conference on 'Writers in Freedom', he proclaimed that 'man is at heart still largely sub-human' and that, as a consequence, cultural politics (and not least, literary practice) should commit itself actively to the fostering – more precisely: the bringing-forth – of the advent of true humanity.¹⁸

Interestingly but not surprisingly, Stapledon's own statements in the period between 1941 (the 'Writers in Freedom' PEN Conference) and 1949 (the Waldorf conference) gravitated around the notions of 'culture' and 'freedom'. Unlike the cold warriors around him, he refused to fetishize individual liberty and insisted that 'freedom alone is not enough'.¹⁹ Instead, he stated in his most systematic rumination on the issue – the 1949 article 'Personality and Liberty' – that the individual could only come into full realization through responsibility for the community. Notably, Stapledon here invoked all the watchwords of the other side – 'the spirit', 'the individual', 'art', 'freedom' itself – in order to relativize their alleged absolute validity:

The way of the spirit is essentially a way not for the isolated individual but for individuals in genuine community with each other. This is obviously true in the case of personal love and social service; but it is equally true, though less obviously so, in art and intellection. In their higher reaches these are essentially operations in and for a 'we'. And in the last resort the 'we' is nothing less than the ideal community of all personal beings.²⁰

This was a Stapledon leitmotif rehearsed all through the 1940s and the Cold War. Hence his assertion that many contemporaries, all members of a not yet fully realized humanity, were ready for 'the free giving of the self in service of true community, or more precisely in service of the potentiality of the human species for personality-in-community'.²¹

Such a dialectics of individual liberty and collective obligation was rendered increasingly marginal in the postwar years, as becomes most apparent in the aftermath of the Wrocław conference and the ensuing public controversy over the role of intellectuals. Stapledon and his fellow communist-sympathizing 'Wrocławians' had by then long fallen from grace with the British mainstream and were heartily attacked, criticized and ridiculed in a barrage of articles, commentaries and letters to the editor in leading British papers.

The Wrocław conference was organized by Polish communist cultural activists to discuss the prospects of international collaboration of intellectuals under the auspices of what was perceived as an emergent new militarism in the USA and Western Europe. Accordingly, the role of writers, artists and academics in the defence of peace was a key issue at Wrocław. Yet the opening speech delivered by Alexander Fadeyev, representative of the Soviet delegation, immediately polarized the participants with the claim that all literature written by non-communists (Fadeyev explicitly names Eliot, O'Neill and Sartre) was necessarily reactionary. Stapledon was among the very few attendants who openly disagreed with Fadeyev without leaving the conference under protest. Instead, Stapledon stayed back and signed the Wrocław conference resolution – the 'peace manifesto' – which identifies capitalism as the main threat to world peace and accuses the US and British governments of aggressive warmongering. In the manifesto, the signatories agree to form, in their own countries, national cultural committees for peace. While at Wrocław, Stapledon accepted election to the newly formed British branch and 'was to become something like a professional pilgrim for the peace movement over the next months'.²²

In the aftermath of the conference, a notable exchange occurred with the British diplomat Lord Robert Vansittart, who had been one of the prime advocates of punishing Germany as harshly as possible at the end of the war. According to Vansittart, the Wrocław conference had been characterized by token anti-racism and anti-colonialism that were in fact orthodox 'Cominform' rhetoric and 'venomous drivel'. In this formulation, the Wrocław peace manifesto comprised 'the ordinary Cominform passage about the oppression of coloured races. Not a

word about the independence granted to India, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon'.²³ Needless to state, there was not a word in Vansittart's own statement about the systemic violence of empire nor about the fact that decolonization was not 'granted' but the outcome of long-drawn liberation struggles in the global South. Instead, Vansittart hurried to accuse the Wrocławians of being accomplices in a new racism that discriminated against white people: 'The "intellectuals" prefer not to see that white men are now far more viciously persecuted than black, and this by their Soviet friends.'²⁴

Appropriately, it was Stapledon who stood up to the challenge and responded to Vansittart in a series of letters to the editor of the *Manchester Guardian*. While conceding that he had been 'reluctantly forced to believe that there is great evil in the Russian State', Stapledon rehearsed his 'cosmic' conviction that 'with all its faults, the new Russia is the first great attempt at creating a just society'.²⁵ A foaming Vansittart retorted that 'Russian imperialism [...] is an abominable and reactionary thing, which in itself constitutes the only real danger to peace'. A week earlier, Stapledon had invited Vansittart to confront him in a public debate 'supported by two additional speakers of his own choice'.²⁶ Nothing is known about Vansittart's response to this offer.

HANS MAYER'S VIEWS OF THE INTELLECTUAL

Meanwhile, in Germany, the report on Wrocław in *Frankfurter Hefte* was commissioned by the editor Eugen Kogon from Hans Mayer, the only West German among the ten German intellectuals invited by the French and Polish writers' unions who had organized the event. Mayer, a leading Marxist literary critic, had escaped from Nazi Germany to France in 1933 and had moved to Switzerland in 1934; as an exile he collaborated with Max Horkheimer, Georges Bataille and Michel Leiris, among others, before he returned to West Germany in 1945. In the US-occupied zone he was appointed to the post of cultural director of Radio Frankfurt and of the DENA (German News Agency). Shortly after the publication of his report on the Wrocław conference, Mayer moved to the Soviet-occupied zone and was, as professor of German literature at Leipzig University, a leading cultural protagonist in the early years of the GDR. In 1963, he remigrated to West Germany, where he was recognized as an influential critical intellectual and close associate of his colleague at the University of Tübingen, the philosopher Ernst Bloch.

In 1948, Kogon introduced Mayer to readers of the *Frankfurter Hefte* as a 'friend and opponent', both being 'comrades' on the board of the Association of Victims of Nazi Persecution (VVN) in Hesse.²⁷ Kogon explained his choice with the observation that 'in the West, the voice of the West – and truly not only of its best representatives – has sufficiently been heard'.²⁸ Mayer, thus tacitly presented to the readers of *Frankfurter Hefte* as 'the voice of the East', focused his '*Reisebericht*' ('travelogue') on the 'debates on betrayal and responsibility of the intellectuals' which, according to Mayer, had been the dominant issue at the conference.²⁹

Slightly critical of the polarizing and exclusionary opening speech of the president of the Soviet writers' union, Alexander Fadeyev, Mayer explained Stapledon's contribution as the 'almost inevitable' reaction to Fadeyev's 'heavy provocation' that had caused Stapledon to argue against his own convictions in defense of T. S. Eliot's conservative mysticism.³⁰ Describing his own contribution to the congress, Mayer presented himself as a 'teacher' re-educating the German youth from racism; as a literary critic he had for instance reviewed the book on re-education, *Political Culture*, by the Cambridge professor Denis William Brogan, printed by the Overseas Edition of the British Military Government, confessing that he had not read 'a wiser and more humane book in years'.³¹ As a second focus of the congress Mayer identified the critique of racism and colonialism, which he presented in strongly emotional terms: 'Moving was the cry [...] of the negro from West Africa who received a standing ovation from the congress: "Whoever offends a Jew, whoever mistreats a negro, violates thereby the whole culture of humanity!"'³² Mayer mentioned only the 'American negro baritone Aubrey Pamskey' by name when he praised the speeches of 'important intellectuals of dark colour' delivering 'reports from India [given by Anand], China, Ceylon, Madagascar or West Africa'.³³

Before Mayer offered his own final evaluation of the congress, he criticized the reports by the Western press agencies that denigrated the gathering as a 'congress of hatred'.³⁴ Blaming the Western press agencies for not complying with the press guidelines of re-educating the Germans by 'distinguishing between "news" and "comments"', Mayer rejected their labelling of the congress as 'purely communist' and a mere 'reception of orders' from the Kremlin. Instead he emphasized that he had witnessed neither 'uniformity' nor 'insurmountable oppositions' in Wrocław. Conceding that he did not wish 'to underestimate the differences' between the ideological camps, Mayer first identified the opposition between two concepts of the intellectual, which the congress

had ultimately ‘revealed’;³⁵ and he secondly presented the congress as the beginning of an international debate about those two opposed concepts of the intellectual in the course of which ‘the real contrast’ would emerge ‘not between the majority and the minority in Wrocław, but with those who do not want dialogue but, rather, again “the continuation of politics with other means”’, i.e. war:³⁶

Ultimately, the debates revealed the opposition between a functionalist understanding on the one hand that conceives of the intellectual according to his/her potential and actual role in the crisis of our time, and a substantialist view on the other hand that assumes that intellectual achievements have a merit in their own right independent of their social effect.³⁷

The functionalist view was held by the majority, the substantialist by the minority in Wrocław. Generally, however, Mayer suspected that ‘the majority of contemporary artists and writers remained indebted to the heritage of bourgeois thinking’ and therefore supported the second view, which Mayer characterized as detrimental.³⁸

In a post-war world marked by a resurfacing of warmongering, the over-emphasis on intellectual freedom and detachment may have highly unexpected consequences for the artist himself. [...] It is conceivable that a politics of social enslavement of the intellectual may be implemented in the name of ‘intellectual freedom’.³⁹

In 1947, Mayer had reported to the founding congress of the Association of the Victims of Nazi Persecution of all four zones of occupation ‘that the Northwest German Broadcasting Company had issued a secret order that prohibited the usage of the term “antifascist” in all broadcasts in the British occupation zone’; in late 1948 he left the US Zone for Leipzig.⁴⁰ In the May 1949 issue of *Frankfurter Hefte* Eugen Kogon made a polemical remark against Mayer at the end of his article, ‘Der politische Untergang der europäischen Widerstandsbewegung’ (‘The political destruction of the European resistance’). Kogon railed against Hans Mayer and, in general, those ‘on the other side [*drüben*]’, by erroneously assigning to Aldous Huxley his elder brother Julian’s ‘nice saying [...] mockingly coined at the Wrocław congress of intellectuals in variation of the sentence “The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains”’: ‘The intellectuals have nothing to lose but their brains.’⁴¹ Mayer’s ‘loss of his brain’ was supposed to prove the general point made by Kogon:

The new front overlies the old one completely, although the vocabulary and the symbols often are still the same [...]. The one side says ‘anti-Fascism’ and aims at the ‘ruling capitalist-imperialist reaction’; the other side says ‘totalitarian

dictatorship' and hardly ever thinks of the national-socialist system, but almost exclusively of the Kremlin. Everywhere in the imagination, the enemy of today has replaced the enemy of yesterday.⁴²

OST UND WEST

At this point we will turn to considering publications rather than individuals, starting with Alfred Kantorowicz's Soviet-licensed journal *Ost und West*. This journal did not cover any of the four conferences of 1948 and 1949, but printed two speeches, one from the New York conference, the other from the first Paris conference: the Waldorf speech of the president of the Soviet writers' union, Alexander Fadeyev, and the contribution to the Paris conference by the American communist writer Howard Fast, who was on trial for treason in the US. This selection was clearly in line with the editor's *Abschied* ('farewell') claim for his journal's title—after the SED had decided to stop financing it—'that it was not about reconciling incompatible opposites, but about a *modus vivendi* of the opposites'.⁴³ The breakdown in relations between East and West is evident from the two speeches.

In contradistinction to his speech at Wrocław, Fadeyev's Waldorf speech '*Es lebe die Freundschaft der Völker!*' ('Long live the friendship of the peoples') refrained from any criticism of contemporary literature, in order to argue for the possibility of reconstructing the 'good relations between the United States and the Soviet Union':⁴⁴

[...] all the international problems which some people now present as insoluble have in fact been solved long ago by the leaders of our peoples and states in Tehran, in Yalta and in Potsdam in the spirit of that friendship which stretches back one and a half centuries and has been sealed by the blood of American and Russian soldiers [...] in the fight against the German Nazis' claim to world domination [...].⁴⁵

In the first part of his speech Fadeyev quoted nineteenth-century US presidents and Russian revolutionary democrats on friendly relations, in the second he gave figures for the circulation of American literature translated into 29 languages of the peoples of the Soviet Union; the living writers on this list were Theodore Dreiser, Erskine Caldwell, John Steinbeck, Ernest Hemingway and Langston Hughes. Only in the final part of the speech did Fadeyev comment on an article in the *Washington Star* which mocked English and French culture as motivating opposition to NATO in both countries and presents this article as evidence of 'a rootless cosmopolitanism which is nothing other than nationalist arrogance'⁴⁶: 'What we have here is probably the realization

of the Anglo-Saxon claims to world domination, propagated by Churchill in Fulton.⁴⁷

If the *Ost und West* editorial comment labelled Fadeyev's address to the Waldorf conference as 'a significant document of this time', the editorial comment for Howard Fast's speech in Paris went even further. It was called a 'rallying cry' (*Aufruf*) and 'an American counterpart to Zola's *J'accuse*'.⁴⁸ The editorial of the issue, titled 'Krieg oder Frieden' ('War or Peace'), claimed that '[t]he appeal of the great American writer Howard Fast to strengthen the front of peace, and the insights of the young Germans [...] of the war generation supplement each other'.⁴⁹

Fast demonstrated the danger of the US going the 'way to hell which Germany, Italy and Japan once went' by presenting a list of writers who had become victims of political persecution, among them Dalton Trumbo, Albert Maltz and Ring Lardner Jr, and by quoting extensively from an article by the French communist philosopher Roger Garaudy on the 'systematic degradation of culture' in the United States: Hollywood, comics, soap operas and especially the private detective who was called 'the epitome of the cleverly thought-out inhumanity of American style'.⁵⁰

The editorial of the *Ost und West* issue commemorating the French Revolution connected Fast's article, 'Frieden ist kein Geschenk' ('Peace Is No Gift'), with its own title 'The Bastille' by referring to the conferences in New York and Paris: 'The world peace congresses recently held in New York and Paris were signals for the fight against the erection of a world-wide American Bastille'.⁵¹ This image was quite different from the search for a *modus vivendi* claimed in the 'Farewell' editorial, but even further removed from Kantorowicz's explicit distancing from anti-Americanism in his portrayal of Howard Fast, published one month after the Wrocław conference:

The editor of the journal *Ost und West*, which from the first day of its existence has sincerely – without second thoughts – made a conciliatory case and advertised the great, noble ideas which from the East as well as the West get through to us, must be permitted to emphasize vigorously that neither the journal nor he himself is anti-American, just as he is not anti-Russian or anti-English or anti-Chinese.⁵²

Kantorowicz presented his own translation of a chapter of Fast's novel *Tom Paine* as proof of his statement.

DER MONAT

Der Monat, whose first issue was published two months after Wrocław, did not report on any of the conferences of 1949. However, the following

statement on the international situation from the editorial of the first issue clearly indicates what stance the journal would take—a stance which has been described by historians as a 'reaction to Wrocław'⁵³: 'Will Western civilization [...] be up to the onslaught of monstrous extent which most obviously threatens it today?'⁵⁴ The founding of *Der Monat* was one of the 'covert action[s]' taken by the US government which perceived Wrocław as part of a Soviet 'peace offensive', a term coined by the Secretary of State James Forrestal.⁵⁵ Accordingly, the foundational Congress for Cultural Freedom of 1950 in West Berlin was presented by one of its organizers, the editor Melvin J. Lasky, to the readers of his journal as 'Die Antwort des Westens' ('The Answer of the West') to the threatening Soviet 'cultural offensive' and at the same time as a private and spontaneous act of individuals.⁵⁶

Instead of reporting on the conferences of 1949, the journal referred to them only sporadically when publishing articles by participants who had changed their position; however, the anti-communist opposition at the Waldorf conference was squarely represented in the journal by its leader, Sidney Hook, the founder of Americans for Intellectual Freedom, whose articles were staple fare of *Der Monat*.⁵⁷ Hook was praised by the Committee on Un-American Activities in its published *Review of the Scientific and Cultural Conference for World Peace* for opposing the views of both Olaf Stapledon and Clifford Odets in particular. While the former, according to Hook, 'believes in working with Communists', the latter had claimed it was a 'fraud that the Soviet Union is making a war against the United States', while for Hook it was manifest that the Soviet Union 'in its ideological war [...] is obviously hostile and warlike'.⁵⁸

In *Der Monat* Hook defined 'Drei Grundzüge westlichen Denkens' ('Three principles of Western thinking'): the principle of free consent; the experimental and empirical approach to knowledge; and the recognition of the value of pluralism in a way that makes it possible to legitimate the national and international exclusion of communists and to present 'Die Zukunft der demokratischen Linken' ('The future of the democratic left') as lying in the coalition of 'all democratic elements'—from the non-fascist Right to the non-communist Left.⁵⁹ In December 1949 the inside cover of issue 14 quoted Hook claiming 'that *Der Monat* was "probably the best cultural-political journal of the whole world"'.⁶⁰

Der Monat did not however print the report Hook published in *Partisan Review* on the Paris Day of Resistance against Dictatorship and War: 'The prevailing mood [...] was as anti-American as it was

anti-Soviet.’⁶¹ In explaining the ‘opposition to the Atlantic Pact’ that ‘pleaded for a neutrality between what they called the two blocs, as if the liberties of Western Europe were threatened equally by the Soviet Union and the United States’, Hook developed two arguments which became defining topoi of ‘culture’. Firstly he explained the ‘incredibly low political level’ of the speeches with the fact that those who, like Arthur Koestler, James Burnham or Raymond Aron, ‘towered intellectually above most of the other participants present’, had not been invited.⁶²

From the standpoint that the current cold war is nothing but an opposition between two forms of economy – capitalism and socialism – apparently no particular analysis is necessary. [...] This primitivism in economic and political matters is not surprising because it is based on ignorance. [...] Primitivism in cultural matters, however, by people with developed sensibilities is something else again.⁶³

Hook referred to the culturally ignorant view that ‘there is no difference between it [the United States] and the cultural hell of the Soviet Union’ as a fallacy that was ‘sufficiently important to justify engaging oneself in the common fight of all democratic elements to prevent the Iron Curtain from advancing West – *a fight that cannot be won without American help*.’⁶⁴ Second, Hook explained this cultural ‘ignorance of conditions’ in the USA as ‘unwittingly supported by American novels of social criticism like those of Steinbeck, Lewis and Wright. (The French read these books as sober sociological reports about the current state of American culture.)’⁶⁵ Towards the end of his report, Hook came back to this point in order to call for an ‘informational re-education of the French public [...] to produce a revolution in this attitude: Its picture of America is a composite of impressions derived from reading the novels of protest and social revolt (Steinbeck’s *Grapes of Wrath* is taken as a faithful and *representative* account), the novels of American degeneracy (Faulkner) and inanity (Sinclair Lewis), seeing American movies, and from exposure to incessant Communist barrage which seeps into the non-Communist press’.⁶⁶

CONCLUSION

Both topoi – the elitist ivory tower and the falsification of American culture in novels of social criticism – also appear in Stephen Spender’s article ‘Writers in America’ (1949). Spender was introduced in the first issue of *Der Monat*: ‘After finishing his work for UNESCO, the English poet STEPHEN SPENDER, perhaps the most important of

his generation, has taken up a teaching position in the USA.⁶⁷ His article was a summary of his experience of US academia. He praised the universities for 'subsidizing American contemporary literature to a large extent' and called an 'original loneliness' its 'greatest achievement': 'I regard America as a country where opposition [...] is, after all, real', an 'opposition' 'against the vulgarity and commercialization which many people think of as most characteristic of America.'⁶⁸ Spender set Henry James's last novel *The Ivory Tower* against the novels of Faulkner, Hemingway, Steinbeck 'and other' contemporary writers whose work he interpreted as a symptom of cultural fatigue: 'one has the impression not of a vital, progressive society but of the Russia of Dostoevski and Chekhov. Yet one can hardly accept this as a witnessing of America.'⁶⁹

In 1949, Spender's elitist notion of high literary culture in the 'ivory tower' opposing mass culture was linked to a concept of Europe that included the US, but excluded not only the Soviet Union but also the colonial peoples. Comparing Spender's view of 1949 with the one of 1946 in Geneva—from which we started our attempt at reconstructing aspects of a process of transformation from anti-Fascism to anti-totalitarianism—what is striking is not only the exclusion of the 'two "Others"' of 'the Atlantic Community': 'the socialist Second World and the Third World', but also the disappearance of the notion of culture as a transformative power in global social change which had been part of the anti-fascist consensus.⁷⁰

NOTES

- 1 Alfred Andersch, *Europäische Avantgarde* (Frankfurt a. M.: Verlag Frankfurter Hefte, 1949), p. 164; 'eine Mischung von Aktivismus und reinem Dichtertum'; 'er verkörpert sehr rein den Typ des Intellektuellen der nicht in den "Elfenbeinturm" flüchtet.' All translations are our own, unless otherwise stated.
- 2 Nancy Jachec, *Europe's Intellectuals and the Cold War. The European Society of Culture and Post-war Politics, Culture and International Relations* (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2015), p. xvi.
- 3 Andersch, *Europäische Avantgarde*, p. 80. 'Amerikaner müssen dabei sein, die Gesichtspunkte der Russen müssen gehört werden und wahrscheinlich ebenso der Standpunkt der Kolonialvölker'.
- 4 Andersch, *Europäische Avantgarde*, pp. 79–80; 'die Idee einer geographischen Einheit der westlichen, in Europa konzentrierten Kultur'; 'Möglichkeit der Einigkeit'.

- 5 Georg Lukács, 'Aristokratische und demokratische Weltanschauung', in *Revolutionäres Denken*, edited by Frank Benseler (Darmstadt and Neuwied: Luchterhand, 1984), pp. 197–223 (pp. 221, 223). 'Bündnis von 1941'; 'daß die Demokratie von der Weltgeschichte eine ungeahnte Chance der politischen, sozialen und ideologischen Renaissance erhalten hat'.
- 6 Andersch, *Europäische Avantgarde*, pp. 81–82. 'Trotz der Unterscheidung zwischen 'ökonomischer Freiheit' und 'liberaler Freiheit' gibt es doch letztlich eine allgemeine Konzeption der Freiheit, auf die beide Seiten Anspruch erheben. In Diskussionen wie der in Genf ist dies die Idee einer Freiheit, die ihren Ursprung hat in der Kritik der Freiheit in den demokratischen Ländern durch die Kommunisten und der Kritik der Freiheit in Rußland durch die Demokraten'; 'In spite of the distinction between "economic freedom" and "liberal freedom", there is, in the last instance, a general conception of liberty that both sides claim. In discussions like the ones in Geneva, there emerges the idea of a liberty which originates in the communist's critique of liberty in democratic countries and the critique of liberty in Russia by the democrats.'
- 7 Alfred Andersch, 'Eine Konferenz des jungen Europa', *Der Ruf*, 8 November 1946, p. 13.
- 8 *Ibid*; 'freilich nur, um hartnäckig die Unterordnung des Individuums, besonders natürlich des intellektuellen Individuums, unter die Gemeinschaft zu predigen'.
- 9 *Ibid*; 'erste[n] Versuch, im Sinne Köstlers [*sic*] [...] eine Oase zu bilden'; 'eine permanente Einrichtung'; 'Solange die geistige Krise, in welche der Mensch geraten ist, innerhalb der Machtsphäre des Marxismus gewaltsam verschleiert wird, werden solche Konferenzen wie die Genfer immer nur Konferenzen des Westens sein.'
- 10 Andersch, *Europäische Avantgarde*, p. 82.
- 11 Andersch, 'Konferenz', p. 13. 'Es war die Elite Europas, die sich in Genf traf [...] – von der deutschen Presse übrigens völlig unbeachtet – eine kleine Gruppe europäischer Intellektueller (der Ausdruck sei gerade deshalb gebraucht, weil er vom Masseninstinkt – auch ohne Goebbels-Propaganda als rotes Tuch empfunden wird), [...] die für die kulturelle und politische Entwicklung von Europa von entscheidender Bedeutung sein würden, weil sie mit einem Mut ohnegleichen das Primat des Geistes verkünden, ohne in die alte europäische Krankheit zu verfallen, diesen Geist in den Elfenbeinturm künstlerischer Isoliertheit einzuschließen.'
- 12 Geoff Eley, *Forging Democracy: The History of the Left in Europe, 1850–2000* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 297, 301.
- 13 Michael Warner, 'Origins of the Congress for Cultural Freedom, 1949–1950', *Studies in Intelligence*, 38 (1995), 89–98 (p. 95).
- 14 Eley, *Forging Democracy*, pp. 288, 291.
- 15 Hermon Ould, ed., *Freedom of Expression. A Symposium Based on the Conference called by the London Centre of the International P.E.N. to Commemorate the Tercentenary of the Publication of 'Milton's Areopagitica' 22–26th August, 1944* (London et al.: Hutchinson, [1945]), pp. 63, 157.
- 16 Robert Crossley, *Olaf Stapledon. Speaking for the Future* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1994), p. 313.
- 17 John Jenks, *British Propaganda and News Media in the Cold War* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), p. 116.
- 18 Quoted in Crossley, *Olaf Stapledon. Speaking for the Future*, p. 200.
- 19 Olaf Stapledon, 'Freedom. Its Meaning', *Philosophy*, 18.70 (1943), 180–182 (p. 181).

- 20 Olaf Stapledon, 'Personality and Liberty', *Philosophy*, 24.89 (1949), 144–156 (p. 148).
- 21 Stapledon, 'Freedom', p. 182.
- 22 Crossley, *Olaf Stapledon. Speaking for the Future*, p. 363.
- 23 Lord Vansittart, 'Letter to the Editor', *Manchester Guardian*, December 16 1948, p. 4.
- 24 *Ibid.*
- 25 Olaf Stapledon, 'Response to Lord Vansittart', *Manchester Guardian*, December 22 1948, p. 6.
- 26 Lord Vansittart, 'Letter to the Editor', *Manchester Guardian*, February 3 1949, p. 4 and Olaf Stapledon, 'Letter to the Editor', *Manchester Guardian*, January 26 1949, p. 3.
- 27 Hans Mayer, 'Der Breslauer Weltkongreß', *Frankfurter Hefte*, 3 (1948), 975–980 (p. 975); 'Freund und Gegner'.
- 28 Mayer, 'Der Breslauer Weltkongreß', p. 975; 'im Westen die Stimme des Westens – und wahrlich nicht nur mit seinen besten Vertretern! – genug zu hören war'.
- 29 Mayer, 'Der Breslauer Weltkongreß', pp. 975, 978; 'Debatten über Verrat und Verantwortung der Geistigen'; 'eigentlicher und bedeutsamster Mittelpunkt des allgemeinen Gesprächs'.
- 30 Mayer, 'Der Breslauer Weltkongreß', pp. 975, 977.; 'fast "zwangsläufig[e]"; 'countrymen'; 'immer wieder [...] sehr scharfe[...] Attacke[n] gegen die heutigen Tendenzen [...] englischer Außenpolitik'.
- 31 Hans Mayer, 'Echte und falsche Kultur', *Heute und Morgen*, 2 (1948), p. 569 and Hans Mayer, 'Politische Kultur', Stephan Hermlin, Hans Mayer, *Ansichten über einige Bücher und Schriftsteller* (Berlin: Volk und Welt [1947]), 63–67 (p. 67).
- 32 Mayer, 'Der Breslauer Weltkongreß', p. 978. 'Ergreifend jener Ausruf des [...] Negers aus Westafrika, dem der Kongreß stehend eine Ovation bereitet: "Wer einen Juden beleidigt, wer einen Neger mißhandelt, vergeht sich damit an der gesamten Menschheitskultur!"'
- 33 *Ibid.*; 'amerikanischen Negerbariton Aubrey Pamskey'; 'bedeutende Intellektuelle mit dunkler Hautfarbe'; 'diese Berichte aus Indien, China, Ceylon, Indonesien, Madagaskar oder Westafrika'.
- 34 Mayer, 'Der Breslauer Weltkongreß', p. 979; 'Kongreß des Hasses'.
- 35 *Ibid.*; 'Trennung von "Nachricht" und "Kommentar"'; 'rein kommunistisch'; 'Befehlsempfang'; 'Uniformität'; '[u]nüberwindliche Gegensätze'; 'die Differenzen [...] zu unterschätzen'; 'enthüllten'.
- 36 Mayer, 'Der Breslauer Weltkongreß', p. 980; 'der wirkliche Gegensatz'; 'nicht zwischen der Mehrheit und Minderheit der Breslauer Konferenz [...], sondern zwischen jenen, die kein Gespräch wollen, vielmehr abermals eine "Fortsetzung der Politik mit anderen Mitteln!"'
- 37 Mayer, 'Der Breslauer Weltkongreß', p. 979. 'Die Debatten [...] enthüllten letztlich den Gegensatz zwischen einer Auffassung des Intellektuellen, die von seiner Funktion her bestimmt ist, von seiner möglichen und wirklichen Rolle in den Krise unserer Zeit – und einer Auffassung vom Eigenwert der geistigen Leistung unabhängig von ihrer Wirkung, die von der individuellen Substanz her bestimmt ist.'

- 38 *Ibid.*; 'ein Großteil der heutigen Künstler und Schriftsteller als Erbschaft des bürgerlichen Denkens'.
- 39 *Ibid.* 'In einer Welt des Nachkriegs und des erneuten Kriegsgeredes kann auch die Überbetonung einer [...] "geistigen Freiheit" und Bindungslosigkeit des Künstlers für ihn selbst höchst unerwartete Konsequenzen haben. [...] Es wäre denkbar, daß mit dem Ruf nach "geistiger Freiheit" eine Politik der gesellschaftlichen Versklavung der Intellektuellen betrieben werden könnte.'
- 40 1. *Internationale Länderkonferenz der VVN vom 15. bis 17. März 1947 in Frankfurt am Main*, reprint (Frankfurt a. M.: Röderberg, 1977), p. 3; 'daß eine geheime Anweisung besteht des Nordwestdeutschen Rundfunks (NWDR), daß in den Sendungen des Rundfunks in der gesamten britischen Zone das Wort "antifaschistisch" nicht mehr verwendet werden dürfe'.
- 41 Eugen Kogon, 'Der politische Untergang der europäischen Widerstandsbewegung', *Frankfurter Hefte*, 4 (1949), 405–413 (p. 413); 'das hübsche Wort [...], das ihnen auf dem breslauer [*sic*] Intellektuellen-Kongress Aldous Huxley, in Abwandlung des Satzes: "Die Proletarier haben nichts zu verlieren als ihre Ketten", spottend hinwarf'.
- 42 Kogon, 'Der politische Untergang', p. 408. 'Die neue Front hat die alte ganz und gar überlagert, obgleich der Wortschatz und die Symbole vielfach noch die gleichen sind [...]. Diese sagen "Antifaschismus" und zielen auf die "herrschende kapitalistisch-imperialistische Reaktion"; jene sagen "totalitäre Diktatur" und denken dabei kaum mehr an das nationalsozialistische System, sondern fast ausschließlich an den Kreml. Als Gegner hat in der Vorstellung überall der Feind von heute die Stelle des Feindes von gestern eingenommen.'
- 43 Alfred Kantorowicz, 'Abschied', *Ost und West*, 3.12 (1949), 77–101 (p. 94); 'daß es sich nicht um Versöhnung unvereinbarer Gegensätze handele, sondern um einen *modus vivendi* der Gegensätze'.
- 44 A. A. Fadejew, 'Es lebe die Freundschaft der Völker', *Ost und West*, 3.4 (1949) 85–89 (p. 87); 'die Wiederherstellung guter Beziehungen zwischen den Vereinigten Staaten und der Sowjetunion'.
- 45 *Ibid.* '[...] alle diese internationalen Probleme, die jetzt von einigen Leuten als unlösbar hingestellt werden, [sind] im Grund schon längst von den Führern unserer Völker und Staaten in Teheran, in Jalta und in Potsdam gelöst worden [...] im Geiste jener Tradition der Freundschaft, die anderthalb Jahrhunderte zurückreicht und durch das Blut amerikanischer und russischer Soldaten im letzten Krieg besiegelt worden ist [...] im Kampf gegen den Weltherrschaftsanspruch der deutschen Nazisten [...]'].
- 46 Fadejew, 'Es lebe die Freundschaft der Völker', p. 88.
- 47 Fadejew, 'Es lebe die Freundschaft der Völker', p. 89.
- 48 Fadejew, 'Es lebe die Freundschaft der Völker', p. 85 and Howard Fast, 'Die Intellektuellen im Kampf für den Frieden', *Ost und West*, 3.9 (1949), 3–9 (p. 3); 'als Zeitdokument Bedeutung besitzt'; 'ein [...] amerikanische[s] Gegenstück zu Zolas "*J'accuse*"'.
- 49 'Krieg oder Frieden', *Ost und West*, 3.9 (1949), 1. 'Der Aufruf des großen amerikanischen Schriftstellers Howard Fast, die Front des Friedens zu stärken, und die Erkenntnisse de[r] jungen Deutschen [...] der Kriegsgeneration ergänzen [sich].'

- 50 Fast, 'Die Intellektuellen', pp. 5–6, 9. 'Weg in die Hölle, den Deutschland, Italien und Japan einst gegangen sind'; 'die systematische Degradierung der Kultur'; 'der Gipfel der ausgeklügelten Unmenschlichkeit amerikanischen Stils.'
- 51 Maximilian Scheer, 'Die Bastille', *Ost und West*, 3.7 (1949), 1. 'Die unlängst in New York und Paris tagenden Welt-Friedens-Kongresse waren Fanale des Kampfes gegen die Errichtung einer weltweiten amerikanischen Bastille.'
- 52 Alfred Kantorowicz, 'Howard Fast', *Ost und West*, 2.9 (1948), 51–56 (p. 53). 'Man gestatte dem Herausgeber der Zeitschrift *Ost und West*, die sich vom ersten Tage ihres Entstehens an aufrichtig, ohne jeden Hintergedanken bemüht hat, der Versöhnlichkeit das Wort zu reden und für die großen, vornehmen Ideen zu werben, die sowohl vom Osten wie vom Westen her zu uns dringen, mit Nachdruck zu betonen, daß weder die Zeitschrift noch er selber antiamerikanisch sind, genauso wenig antiamerikanisch wie antirussisch oder antienglisch oder antichinesisch.'
- 53 Giles Scott-Smith, *The Politics of Apolitical Culture: The Congress for Cultural Freedom, the CIA and Post-war American Hegemony* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 86.
- 54 Melvin J. Lasky, '[Editorial]', *Der Monat*, 1.1 (1949), p. 3. 'Wird die westliche Zivilisation, die uns als das Erbteil der letzten zweieinhalb Jahrtausende überliefert worden ist, dem Ansturm ungeheuerlichen Ausmaßes gewachsen sein, der ihr ganz augenscheinlich heute droht?'
- 55 Scott Lucas, *Freedom's War: The American Crusade Against the Soviet Union* (New York: New York University Press, 1999), p. 64 and J. Samuel Walker, '"No More Cold War": American Foreign Policy and the 1948 Soviet Peace Offensive', *Diplomatic History*, 5 (1981), 75–91 (p. 89).
- 56 Melvin J. Lasky, 'Die Antwort des Westens', *Der Monat*, 2.22–23 (1950), 479–480 (p. 479) and Frank Trommler, *Kulturmacht ohne Kompass. Deutsche auswärtige Kulturpolitik im 20. Jahrhundert* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2014), p. 626.
- 57 Dwight Macdonald, 'The Waldorf Conference', *Horizon*, 19.5 (1949), 313–326 (p. 316).
- 58 Committee on Un-American Activities, US House of Representatives, *Review of the Scientific and Cultural Conference for World Peace Arranged by the National Council of the Arts, Sciences and Professions* (Washington, DC: Committee on Un-American Activities, US. House of Representatives, 1949), pp. 12–14.
- 59 Sidney Hook, 'Drei Grundzüge westlichen Denkens', *Der Monat*, 1.2 (1948–1949), 8–17 (p. 8); Sidney Hook, 'Die Zukunft der demokratischen Linken', *Der Monat*, 1.5 (1948–1949), 13–17 (p. 17).
- 60 Clare Flanagan, *A Study of German Political-Cultural Periodicals from the Years of Allied Occupation, 1945–1949* (Lewiston, NY: E. Mellen Press, 2000), p. 149.
- 61 Sidney Hook, 'Report on the International Day Against Dictatorship and War', *Partisan Review*, 16.7 (1949), 722–732 (p. 726).
- 62 Hook, 'Report on the International Day', pp. 724, 726.
- 63 Hook, 'Report on the International Day', p. 727.
- 64 Hook, 'Report on the International Day', pp. 727–728.
- 65 Hook, 'Report on the International Day', p. 724.
- 66 Hook, 'Report on the International Day', p. 731.
- 67 'Die Autoren des Monats', *Der Monat*, 1.1 (1948–1949), 111–112 (p. 112). 'Nach Beendigung seiner Tätigkeit für die UNESCO hat der englische Dichter STEPHEN

SPENDER, vielleicht der bedeutendste seiner Generation, einen Lehrauftrag [...] in den Vereinigten Staaten angenommen.'

68 Stephen Spender, 'Writers in America', *The Nation*, 15 October 1949, pp. 373–375 (pp. 373, 375).

69 *Ibid.*

70 Mary Nolan, 'Rethinking Transatlantic Relations in the First Cold War Decades', *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute*, no. 54 (2014), 19–38 (p. 19).

Intercultural Experience, the Anglo-American Occupation and UNESCO in Germany 1945–1949

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Abstract:

Independent of each other, though contemporaneous, the Anglo-American occupiers of Germany and the newly founded United Nations Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization employed culture to foster greater intercultural and international understanding in 1945. Both enterprises separately saw culture as offering a means of securing the peace in the long term. This article compares the stated intentions and activities of the Anglo-American occupiers and UNESCO vis-à-vis transforming morals and public opinion in Germany for the better after World War II. It reconceptualizes the mobilization of culture to transform Germany through engaging theories of cultural diplomacy and propaganda. It argues that rather than merely engaging in propaganda in the negative sense, elements of these efforts can also be viewed as propaganda in the earlier, morally neutral sense of the term, despite the fact that clear geopolitical aims lay at the heart of the cultural activities of both the occupiers and UNESCO.

UNESCO's guiding insight at its inception in 1945, to 'contribute to peace' through the 'spread of culture', is suggested in its declaration that 'since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed'.¹ What has hitherto been overlooked is that the purpose of this postwar organization, as set out in its constitution, chimes with the objective of the contemporaneous Anglo-American occupiers of Germany who, according to the US Military Governor Lucius D. Clay in his memoir, sought to use 'every available means' including 'the magazines, the press, the radio, books, moving pictures, the theatre, music, lectures and town meetings' to 'penetrate the German consciousness', in order to steer it away from war and towards peace and democracy.² In 1945, culture was viewed as a tool through which *both* UNESCO and the Occupation authorities

in Germany sought to execute their objectives of transforming morals and public opinion.³ UNESCO's constitution makes clear the investment in culture as a great transformer for banishing hatred and creating and sustaining peace. Culture was associated with education, justice, liberty and peace, and the spreading of 'culture' was considered a 'sacred duty'.⁴ The Anglo-American occupiers endowed 'culture' with similarly transformative and rehabilitative properties.⁵ In this respect both employ a conception of culture deriving from the Enlightenment, which relates to a 'general process of intellectual, spiritual and aesthetic development which was applied and effectively transferred to the works and practices which represent and sustain it'.⁶ Such similarities are remarkable because these simultaneous enterprises were funded by the same governments, but operated in isolation of each other until 1948.

This observation demands a closer analysis of the stated intentions and activities of UNESCO towards Germany particularly relating to 'reeducation' and culture, and the organization's official and unofficial connections with the Allied occupiers, not least because histories of the period overlook both UNESCO's role in the period and the parallels between its work and that of the coeval Anglo-American occupiers.⁷ As a corrective, this study offers a comparison of the stated intentions of the occupiers and UNESCO vis-à-vis books, exchange of persons and the phenomenon of information centres. Both the Occupation and UNESCO were largely funded by the US and Britain and operated in parallel, but in isolation of each other until they began to co-operate when UNESCO was granted permission to extend its activities to Germany in 1948.⁸ One question this raises is why such a seemingly inefficient mode of operation might have prevailed. It begs the question whether the aims and stated intentions of the Anglo-American Occupation and UNESCO regarding the dissemination of culture were really so similar, and if the differences between their objectives became clearer as the Cold War took hold. Both the Occupation and UNESCO had envisioned themselves as drivers of intercultural engagement in the hope of attaining peace through greater international and intercultural understanding. But how might their respective activities in this regard be conceptualized? Probing these questions might help to determine whether the Anglo-American Occupation and UNESCO were engaged in propaganda or cultural diplomacy, or, indeed, an admixture of these concepts, in the period 1945–49.

The once morally neutral term 'propaganda' gained a more negative charge in the decades after the Second World War; 'propaganda' is

nowadays commonly associated with the 'intentional deception and manipulation of a mass audience' with lies and illogical arguments, rather than with persuading the respondent to change their beliefs and to do, or abstain from doing, something.⁹ Nowadays, cultural diplomacy has supplanted the earlier, less negative usage of the term propaganda. The entangled histories of these concepts are, arguably, registered in attempts to define the newer one. Fayet likens cultural diplomacy to state control and propaganda, but Aoki-Okabe, Makita and Kawamura characterize cultural diplomacy as the promotion abroad of 'national culture' and as interactive international cultural exchange.¹⁰ While state involvement can be perceived as propaganda, the less *visible* the state remains, the more critics are willing to move their definition closer to cultural relations and benevolent long-term strategy, suggesting that the distinction between the concepts lies in perception rather than in anything intrinsic.¹¹ Cultural diplomacy thus characterizes attempts to change opinions and attitudes in order to achieve a particular geopolitical objective in the manner of more positive conceptions of propaganda, where the term denotes a 'biased kind of advocacy that is specifically designed to be persuasive', 'to get an audience to support the aims, interests and policies of a particular group by having the audience act in compliance with these aims and interests'.¹² According to Walton, the more negative type of propaganda comes into play when there is deception in the form of an 'illicit dialectical shift' whereby propaganda 'pretends' to be 'balanced', but 'covertly and systematically takes the one-sided approach characteristic of propaganda'. In assessing specific cultural activities of the British occupiers of Germany from 1945, Gabriele Clemens describes their work as 'propaganda' concerned with projecting a particular image of Britain. She argues that the impetus for this work stemmed from Britain's loss of power in the era of decolonization; projecting Britain was an attempt to shore up the perception of Britain at a time when its image as a powerful nation was fading.¹³ However, greater specificity is required when describing this work as propaganda. Was it propaganda in the sense of involving intentional deception and manipulation on the part of the proponent, or propaganda in the earlier sense, akin to cultural diplomacy nowadays?

Conceptualizing the work of UNESCO's cultural arm also casts light on the blurred boundary between definitions of propaganda and cultural diplomacy. While UNESCO is intergovernmental, it does not represent any one state. It was founded with a larger ethical question in mind; a

geopolitical objective, which was to foster a more peaceful world through promoting greater intercultural understanding. UNESCO sought to achieve this objective through facilitating a kind of showcasing of national cultures to an international audience. A comparison of the cultural activities of UNESCO and the Anglo-American occupiers in Germany (their aims and stated intentions of transforming German morals and public opinion in the final years of the 1940s), might allow for a more nuanced conceptualization of how culture was mobilized to transform Germany after the Second World War.

BOOKS

Anglo-American plans for the control of information through radio, press, news agencies, publications, music, opera and theatre in Germany were afoot as early as March 1943.¹⁴ The Anglo-American Psychological Warfare Division (PWD) of the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF) under the direction of the American Robert A. McClure oversaw this work. In April 1945 the 'Manual for the Control of German Information Services' was disseminated, providing the basis for information control in the British and American zones for the first months of the Occupation.¹⁵ The American Office of Warfare Information and the British Political Warfare Executive were responsible for supplying the Psychological Warfare Division with British and American books and films.¹⁶ Books were viewed by the occupiers as having a particular potency for the transformation of opinion in Germany in this period: 'Books have long played an important part in the life of Germans of all classes. Books have more influence in Germany than in the United States and in Germany they have more influence than newspapers and periodicals upon public opinion.'¹⁷ While the Allies consequently sought to limit the circulation of books which worked against the Occupation and promoted hatred, they also encouraged the production and distribution of those books which supported their aim of preserving peace.¹⁸

British book policy for Germany stipulated that selected English books would be translated, published and distributed in Germany by German publishers, and that English, but also international and German books, would be distributed in the British Zone. By far the most popular category of book disseminated in the British Zone between 1945 and October 1947 was 'Bellettristik' (fiction). Materials which presented the British way of life were second in terms of numbers.

In May 1946 the first 12,000 books were imported into Germany and included 4,000 copies each of Churchill's biography, *Erneuerung des Westens* (*Renewal of the West*) by Michael Roberts, and an RAF pilot's report, *Der letzte Feind* (*The Last Enemy*)¹⁹. While the British Political Intelligence Department thought that certain British books were best suited for the purposes of reeducation, the Information Services Control, which was more in touch with the situation on the ground in Germany, and aware of the scarcity of books and the hunger for reading materials among the German population, wanted funding to import European classics, such as Balzac, Gogol, Stendhal, Karl Kraus, Musil, Chekhov, Machiavelli, Plato and Bernard Shaw.²⁰ The American occupiers similarly actively facilitated the dissemination of foreign, albeit exclusively Western, literature in Germany by helping to restart publishers who had specialized in publishing foreign literature, but were shut down by the Nazis. Furthermore, the US authorities encouraged the reproduction of Western literature on rotary presses.²¹ For reeducation purposes the British Control Commission was also interested in books in Holland and Sweden which included 32,000 copies of contemporary works in translation by German-writing émigrés like Arnold and Stefan Zweig, Thomas Mann, Jakob Wasserman and Franz Werfel.²²

Despite the fact that the British (and American) occupiers sought to source foreign (not merely British) literature, Clemens argues that the British book programme for Germany was a propagandistic exercise, merely advertising 'British methods [...] British products' and British moral and political values, as well as British Occupation policy, adding that reeducation of the Germans was to be executed by providing positive British examples.²³ However, this point of view does not take into account the stated aim of both the American and British occupiers to introduce other Western literature to the Germans, as well as German-language exile writing. Furthermore, implicit in Clemens's assumption is a reductive view of the literary art of Elizabeth Bowen, Evelyn Waugh and Graham Greene, for example, as propagandistic in the more negative sense of the term.²⁴ The plays of Thornton Wilder, William Saroyan and Arthur Miller, and the prose of Hemingway, Faulkner and Thomas Wolfe are not without criticism of America, so it is difficult to argue that they are, in a simplistic way, merely performing propaganda for America.²⁵ Furthermore, there is no 'illicit dialectical shift' discernible here; in presenting British and American books to German citizens, it would be difficult for the occupiers to hide the fact that they were

engaging in a biased kind of advocacy of Anglophone and Western culture. On this basis, their work regarding books might be more accurately termed cultural diplomacy, or propaganda in the morally neutral sense of the term.

However, it was not only the occupiers who believed at this moment that books held a transformative power. And it was not only Germany which it was hoped could be transformed with the aid of books. UNESCO's cultural activities in the 1940s also involved the distribution of books. In practice this meant the distribution of 5,000 copies of five French classics by Stendhal, Rousseau, de Vigny, La Fontaine and Mérimée on behalf of the French government. In addition, the publishers of *Encyclopaedia Britannica* presented 300 sets for distribution, on UNESCO advice, to war-damaged countries. While the British occupiers in Germany engaged in the compilation of lists of works of Western literature, UNESCO sought to create a list of books which represented the best of each national literature from around the globe. The organization called on member states to submit lists of such works which were to be shared in an attempt to encourage cross-cultural engagement. UNESCO also asked for suggestions for books to be translated. It sought to distribute and recommend those books which it deemed projected a certain 'international' outlook (as opposed to the Western one which the occupiers advocated), and in this regard the arts and letters section invested much time in reviewing material. Likewise, the occupiers reviewed and selected books for translation through the establishment of the 'Book Selection Committee' in the summer of 1945 (comprising Elizabeth Bowen, Michael Sadleir, Michael Foot, Alan Pryce-Jones, Morgan G. Rees, Eliza M. Butler, Gerard W. Hopkins and Michael Balfour).²⁶ The task of this committee was similarly positive – to present the Germans with 'modern and especially international thought'.²⁷ The American occupiers likewise established a translation unit in Bad Nauheim and compiled lists of books for publishers to choose from.²⁸ There was an understanding in the Occupation that propaganda (in the sense of intentional deception) would be counterproductive.²⁹

In terms of UNESCO's hopes for Germany specifically, in early 1947 the organization surmised that the Occupation authorities sought to avoid propaganda in the 'cultural re-education of the Germans'.³⁰ UNESCO identified a dovetailing of its aims with those of the Occupation, but pointed out that it would be difficult for the individual occupying nations to avoid subjectivity, whereas a disinterested body like UNESCO could better coordinate the dissemination of books in Germany in order to

bring the German people 'into a feeling of oneness with the community of nations and the rest of the human family', and facilitate 'the ventilation of the German mentality through a concerted dissemination of international culture'. UNESCO would be better equipped for this work because of the organization's 'international perspective', and because it 'knows the sources of international culture that are to be prepared for school books, newspapers, radio programs, films, etc.'³¹ UNESCO proposed to include Germany in its surveys of needs for materials including books, radio and film, so that a supply channel could be established, adding that it could connect book distribution centres in Germany to other centres in its network for exchanging and distributing publications. Furthermore, UNESCO sought to improve the supplies of books in public libraries and to encourage the production of cheap books 'to bring the best that is written within the means of all people'. As part of its commitment to the interchange of culture, UNESCO sought to 'stimulate' translations of the classics of the 'various great world cultures and modern works, literary, scientific and social'. What UNESCO proposed, then, was to contribute to the transformation (through reeducation) of Germany, by assisting the Occupation's stated intention of presenting Germany with 'international thought' through the dissemination of books. Specifically, these activities had less to do with engaging in intentional deception and manipulation in the simply negative sense of propaganda, and were more about the occupiers and UNESCO attempting to persuade the Germans to adopt a better set of morals and opinions about other cultures in the hope of safeguarding peace.

TRANSFORMING OPINION IN GERMANY FROM WITHOUT

When in 1943 Winston Churchill asked for suggestions on how cooperation with democratic Germany could be promoted in the postwar period, Heinz Köppler, by now a naturalized Briton and Assistant Director of the German Section of the War Office, responded by saying that Britain ought to facilitate an exchange of views with Germans who distinguished themselves in the Weimar period (and had resisted Nazism).³² He suggested a residential centre be established where people would live and work on an equal footing to discuss the future of Europe. Though his response was lost at the time, when Attlee won the general election in 1945 Köppler was asked to put his ideas into action – bringing, in the first instance, prisoners of war to Wilton Park in Buckinghamshire for courses of study. The curriculum included

political, social and economic international affairs, civics, the projection of Britain, and German problems, with an emphasis on tutorials and discussion. Despite criticism from the War Office, the funding continued to flow for Köppler's enterprise, which he insisted would not become a mouthpiece for 'the British view on all burning topics', adding 'here philosophers and psychologists and historians lead discussions on such problems as freedom and planning; the mass and the individual; the law and politics; the various organisations of human groups; problems of leadership and the risks run by a free society and the methods to protect such a society'.³³ Germans at Wilton Park attended talks by leading thinkers such as A. J. P. Taylor, Bertrand Russell, Arnold Toynbee, and politicians such as Heath, Beveridge and Callaghan. From January 1947 civilians were brought over from the British and American zones of Germany for courses at Wilton Park. By the middle of 1948, 4,000 Germans had attended.³⁴ From the government's point of view, they were now consciously educating people to fortify West Germany as a 'bulwark' against Communism.³⁵ One of the major advantages of Wilton Park being in Britain was that Germans had an opportunity to 'see their problems in perspective' and come into contact with representatives of British institutions.³⁶ Influential figures who attended Wilton Park include: Wolfgang Abendroth (a lawyer who was involved in the constitutional foundation of postwar West Germany and who supervised the *Habilitation* of Jürgen Habermas), Ralf Dahrendorf (the sociologist, philosopher, political scientist and politician), lord mayors Wilhelm Kaisen and Willy Brundert, and politicians Rainer Barzel, Karl Wilhelm Berkan, Hildegard Hamm-Brücher, Herman Hocherl, Heinrich Köppler, Hans Jochen Vogel and Willy Weyer.³⁷

UNESCO also made the movement of people one of its priorities more generally for fostering international understanding for peace, but particularly in relation to Germany. In this regard, the organization had a 'Bureau for the Exchange of Persons', which it hoped could also tend to the needs of Germany and which sought to provide 'opportunities for mature persons, whether research workers, technicians, teachers, professors, artists, government officials, experts, leaders in workers' education to bring themselves more into the stream of world education, science and culture'.³⁸ UNESCO collected information on the needs and opportunities for fellowships, promoted and aided organizations in the countries of study with the administration of the fellowships, stimulated the provision of opportunities and helped donors with the awarding of the grants. The organization noted that it would give special

attention to those candidates who were recommended by a government department and who would be able to 'hand on the benefits of their study' on their return, adding that 'because of their exceptional opportunities to provide leadership in the reconstruction years, it is proposed that men in public administration and management be given a place in the programme of fellowship'.³⁹ This chimes with the selection criteria for Wilton Park, where individuals from business, civics, journalism, law, social services, politics, trade unionism, education and engineering were selected on a regional and functional basis.⁴⁰ Furthermore, the rationale recalls Köppler's concept of 'Multiplikatoren', suggesting that the self-styled 'old Wiltonians' would return to Germany, as 'sowers of the spirit' of the objectives and methods of debate which characterized Wilton Park and thus transform public opinion in Germany more generally.⁴¹ While there are of course differences in the approach – UNESCO, which promoted international rather than just Western culture, did not intend to send all its fellows to the same place in the English countryside, or to the US, for example – both the occupiers and UNESCO, though they had different objectives, believed in sending Germans abroad to put them into contact with other cultures and ideas, in order to rehabilitate them through fostering greater international understanding which in turn would change public opinion in Germany towards other cultures. Given that Wilton Park was run by a German (albeit by then a naturalized Briton) who was so outspoken in his criticism of the government's concept of reeducation, Wilton Park can hardly be seen as simply an exercise in propaganda in the negative sense of the term. Designating their respective efforts to acquaint German citizens with Anglophone or international culture through exchanges as propaganda, in the sense of intentional deception and through false and/or illogical arguments, does not accurately describe these comparable activities. By the same token, however, through sending Germans to Wilton Park, or the US, or somewhere else in the world, both the occupiers and UNESCO were attempting to push their own agendas of re-absorbing Germany into Western culture and fostering greater international understanding respectively.

TRANSFORMING GERMANY FROM WITHIN

Through the British Information Centres and the Amerika Häuser the Anglo-American occupiers sought to reeducate, denazify and thus transform Germany. This was executed through importing foreign

cultural products and through the mediation of ideas via talks, lectures, exhibitions and library resources. Large numbers of people visited the centres: by February 1948 the Hamburg Centre was visited daily by 1000 people, and at their peak in 1950, 14 million Germans visited the Amerika Häuser *per annum*. Clemens argues that while the name of the British information centres, 'Die Brücke', suggested that these establishments were to forge links between German and British or German and European culture in the sense of reciprocal exchange, their real aim was propagandistic in that they hoped merely to project an image of Britain to the German people.⁴² A closer look at activities of the information centres offers a more nuanced appraisal of their activities and objectives.

By September 1947 there were 64 information centres in the British zone. In Berlin and Hamburg they consisted of a library and reading room, as well as rooms for world news, news from Germany, a room for demonstrating the way of life in Great Britain and the dominions, rooms for exhibitions and a film studio.⁴³ In the other towns and cities they consisted of a reading room at the very least. Thousands of newspapers (between May and November 1947, from 27,000 to 30,000 daily newspapers) were imported into Germany's information centres from Britain. The centres also offered newspapers from other commonwealth countries, the US and other European countries. The US information centres contained on average 16,000 books and 4,000 films collectively.⁴⁴ Towards the end of 1946, the British Information Centres published the German language weekly 'Die Brücke', which was a round-up of stories from the British and international press. Apart from disseminating literary culture through the library, the information centres hosted film screenings (mostly documentaries), poetry readings and talks on various aspects of British culture, politics and history, as well as discussions, exhibitions and musical recitals by British artists. The purpose of the information centres was, according to Robert Birley, the Educational Advisor to the Control Commission in the British Zone, to 'attract those Germans likely to influence other Germans', thus recalling the desired multiplier effect aimed for with the exchange programmes and Wilton Park. Though British culture was, unsurprisingly, more dominantly projected, to suggest that the information centres offered *only* the news and culture of Britain is inaccurate.

The Amerika Häuser, which aimed to end Germany's cultural and political isolation, and to 'establish for [the Germans] a stable peaceful and acceptable government', also sought to transform Germany through

the dissemination of culture.⁴⁵ One of the first of these establishments was in Bad Homburg and consisted of a library containing about 700 volumes of army surplus books, which provided the Germans with non-National Socialist reading materials.⁴⁶ As well as providing 'American books, newspapers and periodicals and other material in German translation', mirroring the British information centres, lecture, film and culture programmes were also developed. In 1946 it was noted that the centres were used as meeting places for youths to discuss 'current issues', hear lectures, visit exhibitions and watch films directly concerning their future and welfare'.⁴⁷ The stated intention of the activities of the Amerika Häuser was to help the German population in understanding their relationship to the Occupation authorities, the community and the rest of the world, and to supervise the re-awakening of German cultural life through giving the Germans information on events in the outside world and within Germany itself.⁴⁸ In a policy document from September 1947 this was reiterated with specific reference to the information centres, which were also to 'foster the assimilation of the German people into the society of peaceful nations through the revival of international cultural relations'.⁴⁹ Rather than constituting propaganda in the negative sense of attempting to intentionally deceive through an 'illicit dialectical shift', the names of these establishments (Amerika Häuser and British Information Centres) indicate clearly the position of the proponent culture. In exposing the German population to predominantly Anglophone and Western culture as they attempted to re-integrate Germany into the Western world, the occupiers certainly engaged in a kind of biased advocacy 'specifically designed to be persuasive to get action'.⁵⁰

The aims of the Anglo-American information centres chime somewhat with UNESCO's more general stated intentions, and with those specific to Germany. UNESCO also sought to promote peace and international understanding through the dissemination of books representative of different foreign cultures, though not necessarily just Western culture. In 1947, before it secured a mandate to operate in Germany, UNESCO planned to circulate exhibitions of recommended books which its members thought represented their individual cultures.⁵¹ Through its clearing house, and in collaboration with American and British Book Centres, UNESCO assisted in the allocation and distribution of books and periodicals. Reminiscent of the Anglo-American occupiers' efforts, it also sought to compile lists of available publications which matched its objectives and distributed them to interested parties. By September 1948 1,876 such lists had been distributed. Another cultural means

employed in working for peace was through encouraging translations (also resembling the occupiers' activities) and through disseminating literary articles through an international literary pool.⁵² Furthermore, UNESCO's plan for Germany in 1948 was to distribute to interested groups the documents, publications and other materials of UNESCO, and to develop the exchange of publications between Germany and other countries.⁵³

Mirroring the Amerika Häuser and the British Information Centres, in 1948 UNESCO aimed to open its own offices in each of the three Western zones. These were to contain reference libraries for UNESCO literature and serve as centres for the dissemination of information on the activities and aims of the organization. According to the Director General's Report: 'In this way it is hoped to foster and increase the interest which has been aroused among the German people by the announcement of the extension of UNESCO's programme in Germany, and to promote a habit of international thinking in the fields of education, science and culture.'⁵⁴

UNESCO, like the Allied occupiers, saw the benefits which media and technology offered, and sought to compile lists of films to be disseminated to member states. In 1947 UNESCO planned to develop a 'World University of the Air' which the Director General's Report introduced as

a series of twelve 9 minute radio talks by distinguished artists, men of letters and scientists on the bearing of their work on the everyday lives of the people. This was recorded in English and French and was intended to be broadcast by a number of European radio organisations. Another series of ten fifteen minute talks by internationally-known personalities on the relation of the arts, sciences and mass communication to the promotion of peace was to be recorded for wide international use.⁵⁵

It was hoped that 100 films serving UNESCO's purposes would be produced by the end of 1947 and a larger number in 1948, including a full-length film on fundamental education.⁵⁶ In a document intended for the Allied authorities, UNESCO underlined its objective of 'opening up ex-enemy countries to the educational and cultural influence of democratic countries'. To this end, it sought to promote a series of films, broadcasts and articles which presented the characteristic features of individual nations and examples of successful cooperation between nations, again recalling the Allies' presentation of their own countries to the German populace. UNESCO also organized a public lecture series which included contributions from Anna Freud on the subject of the

child in wartime, and from J. B. Priestley.⁵⁷ Conferences for teachers and librarians with a view to exchanging ideas also featured, and are comparable to the activities of the information centres and also some of the exchange programmes.⁵⁸ In terms of advocating the aims, interests and policies of UNESCO, as in the case of the occupiers, a kind of propaganda which sought to get the respondents to act in compliance with these aims and interests is identifiable. However, the occupiers and UNESCO both made clear what they were advocating, not least through calling their premises British Information Centres, Amerika Häuser and UNESCO offices.

CODA: UNESCO'S OFFICIAL AND UNOFFICIAL EFFORTS TO TRANSFORM GERMANY – A MISSED OPPORTUNITY?

While much of UNESCO's work in its early years was concerned with the reconstruction of the war-torn countries of the world (and there are significant overlaps in the organization's methodology and that of the Anglo-American occupiers), Germany is conspicuous by its absence from the list of countries to which the organization attended from 1945 to 1947.⁵⁹ One possible explanation for this is the fact that West Germany was occupied by the Allied Forces and not an official member of UNESCO until 1951. UNESCO, nevertheless, wished to play a role in the reconstruction, reeducation and general rehabilitation of Germany, and this wish was expressed in documents and correspondence with the Allied authorities in Germany. A draft memo from 1947, 'Memorandum to Allied Authority on Resources and Terms of Expenditure that might be of aid in Re-orientation of Germany'⁶⁰, saw the organization suggest that its activities for other war-devastated countries could be extended to Germany in order to facilitate the German 're-entry into the intellectual life of the democratic world'.⁶¹ This transformation, it suggests, could be achieved with cultural products like film, broadcasts and articles. Promoting 'equality of access to the resources of [education, science and] culture', 'the free flow of ideas and of the materials of [education, science and] culture', and the 'interchange of culture' were the means proffered by UNESCO for transforming Germany for the better.⁶²

While UNESCO had to wait until 1948 to secure a mandate to officially commence extending its activities to Germany, the organization did operate unofficially in Germany before 1948, thus giving rise to a discord between official policy and what was happening on the ground. UNESCO's unofficial activities consisted of commissioning the

compilation of reports in 1946 and 1947. One, entitled 'Erfahrungen mit der deutschen Jugend 1946–47' ('Experiences with German Youths 1946–47') by Dr Liselotte Richter, focused on 'der geistige Hunger' ('the spiritual/intellectual hunger') and the need for 'Erziehung zu kosmopolitischem Denken' ('education for cosmopolitan thinking').⁶³ Furthermore, Len Kenworthy of UNESCO's Education section was invited in early 1947 by Major Hamblen Jr, of the Information and Education Office of the US Army to 'speak to groups in Frankfurt and the vicinity' and to address the 'Thinkers' Forum' which consisted of Americans and carefully selected Germans.⁶⁴ Indeed, he was so well received that several other conferences and lectures were arranged. During his stay Kenworthy dispensed information to the US Army's Information and Education Office on sourcing books and films, and delivered a series of lectures on UNESCO to the US community, to certain 'key German individuals', and to German students at Frankfurt University. During this trip he was also requested by the Information and Education Service of the Allied Military Government in Frankfurt to undertake a radio interview on the subject of UNESCO for the American Forces Network. In effect the interview was an opportunity to publicize the work of UNESCO in Germany.⁶⁵ Also operating unofficially in occupied Germany was John Thompson, a Canadian psychiatrist, who served in the Canadian Airforce and who worked in Germany from 1947. The Director General of UNESCO, the British zoologist Julian Huxley, saw Thompson as 'an unofficial channel between us [UNESCO] and the United States, British and French Occupation authorities working in the education field'.⁶⁶ Thompson sent reports on Germany to Huxley and cleared the way for UNESCO to begin its operations. He unofficially 'prepared the ground for activities in Germany through informal contacts with the trizonal education authorities, pending approval from UNESCO's General Conference in November 1947'.⁶⁷ Thompson also decided that he needed support among the German population for UNESCO, and he worked to build up his contacts and support, opting to lodge with pre-war friends in Wilmersdorf rather than live in a military compound, and thus setting himself apart from the occupiers.

Despite these unofficial efforts on the part of UNESCO and individual Occupation personnel to collaborate in Germany, officially the Allied authorities were suspicious of UNESCO. Regarding Director General Huxley (1946–1948), one of a galaxy of intellectuals involved with international organization in this period, US diplomats distrusted his 'mercurial temperament' and his intellectualism, and condemned his lack

of familiarity with government procedures.⁶⁸ As the Cold War heated up, it became more problematic that the US was wary of Huxley as 'soft on communism' and that General Clay regarded 'everyone associated with that organization as "long-haired bastards"' and any UNESCO initiative as outside interference'.⁶⁹ This was despite the fact that the main financial backers of the Occupation, the UK and US, were also funding, and thus sanctioning, UNESCO's activities. The Cold War atmosphere of suspicion seems for a time to have thwarted cooperation between these would-be allies in their shared hope of transforming for the better German public opinion towards the outside world.

Nevertheless, as Huxley's short term of office drew to a close, UNESCO was eventually sanctioned to operate in Germany. By early 1948 Thompson travelled to Berlin, still on behalf of Huxley and the chair of the Executive Board to 'further explore just what was meant by proposals received by them orally from the British and French Zones'.⁷⁰ While the Control Commission had said that it could not agree on relations with UNESCO, more success was forthcoming with the zonal commanders: in an apparent volte face, Clay gave written suggestions on how UNESCO could help the ACA. In April 1948, Thompson set up the meetings for Walter Laves (an American who was Deputy Director General of UNESCO) with General Sir Brian Robertson (since 1947 the military governor in the British Zone) and Clay. The French commander General Koenig was not in Berlin, but Laves met his representative, General Roger Noiret, instead. No meeting was secured by UNESCO with a representative of the Soviet Zone.⁷¹ In February 1948, Clay had authorized Thompson's programme to include 'exchange of persons and publications, international study centres and youth activities'.⁷² A draft UNESCO resolution dated 4 April 1948 instructed the Director General, in co-operation with the Allied authorities in Germany, to distribute UNESCO documents and publications in Germany and make known the aims of the organization, to facilitate exchange of publications on educational, scientific and cultural matters between Germany and other nations, to study textbooks and set out criteria to guide the preparation and publication of textbooks in Germany, as well as to survey problems and opportunities for the exchange of persons between Germany and other countries'.⁷³ In a planning document dated 5 April 1948, the materials to be prepared and disseminated in Germany were UNESCO's *Courier* and bulletins which were to be sent to universities, to the control authorities, to youth groups and to other groups recommended by the ACA. It was proposed that information be gathered concerning

the possible establishment of book centres or collaboration between the International Clearing House for Publications and the Allied Control Authorities' own facilities. By 1949 UNESCO had a division for the occupied territories headed up by John Thompson, whose function was to carry out the four objectives cited. This was the first real opportunity that UNESCO had to implement its programme for the transformation of Germany – by which point the Occupation was coming to an end with the founding of the Federal Republic. The Anglo-American efforts to transform Germany might have been more successful had they involved UNESCO sooner, as the organization would not have been perceived as merely representing their former enemies.

Both UNESCO and the Anglo-American occupiers set out to be drivers of intercultural engagement, as this was seen in 1945 as the royal road to the transformation of public opinion in Germany and to the shared quest for a lasting peace. Anglo-American activities regarding culture have been explained in terms of fighting the Cold War. However, seeing the Anglo-American effort regarding culture in this context as propaganda merely in the negative sense of the term may be overly coloured by the East-West split, as Trommler cautions.⁷⁴ The East and West were allies in 1945. That the US sold its military supplies and equipment in order to pay for the exchange programme between the US and Germany after 1945 captures another way that international relations were conducted after the war, the shift from hard to soft power. This view is supported by the comparison between Anglo-American stated intentions regarding culture in Germany with UNESCO's aims, and the comparison is furthermore validated by the fact that Britain and the US funded both UNESCO, and of course their occupation of Germany. Public opinion in Germany towards other cultures was transformed in this period. Rather than seeing the other culture (American culture, for example) as inferior, a greater understanding and respect was fostered.⁷⁵

Studies of culture during the Anglo-American Occupation of Germany hitherto focus on culture functioning as a means to shore up the image of Britain as an influential country on the international stage at a time when its global power was in decline.⁷⁶ Work has thus far tended to over-simplify this complex context to the extent of completely omitting the role played by the global organization, UNESCO, or writing off the cultural policy of the period as propaganda, without specifying how this term might be understood. Using the example of the Anglophone occupiers' policies and intentions vis-à-vis books, exchange of persons

and the phenomenon of the information centres, it emerges that the belief in the transformative power of culture – cross-cultural engagement as a means to the elusive peace – was one shared by each of the major actors of the time. Furthermore, they each acted on this belief in remarkably similar ways – by disseminating books and information and by physically moving people into different cultural contexts – even if in relative isolation of one another. Admittedly the apparent distrust on the part of the occupiers ironically seems to undermine the idealism of their parallel efforts. Nevertheless, rather than *simply* advertising Britain and America, the comparison with UNESCO's aims and objectives suggests an idealism lay behind their admittedly imperfect efforts at this time. And rather than merely inflicting further propaganda (in the negative sense of the term) on the by then propaganda-weary German citizens, a more diplomatic method was employed, though this was rendered more complicated as it evolved in response to the shifting political climate.

NOTES

- 1 UNESCO Constitution: < http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=15244&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html > [accessed 2 May 2016].
- 2 Lucius D. Clay, *Decision in Germany* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company Inc., 1950), pp. 281–282. Clay notes in the introduction to his memoir that he started to dictate it from 1948 onwards (p. xii).
- 3 Frank Trommler, 'A New Start and Old Prejudices: The Cold War and German-American Cultural Relations 1945–1968', in *The United States and Germany in the Era of the Cold War 1945–1968: A Handbook Volume 1*, edited by Detlef Junker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 371–387 (p. 374). Trommler argues that not all the American personnel believed in the instrumentalization of culture in this context.
- 4 UNESCO Constitution.
- 5 Rebecca Boehling, 'US Cultural Policy and German Culture During the American Occupation', in *The United States and Germany in the Era of the Cold War 1945–1968: A Handbook Volume 1*, edited by Detlef Junker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 388–393 (p. 389).
- 6 Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (London: Christopher Helm, 2013), p. 90.
- 7 See Gabriele Clemens, *Britische Kulturpolitik in Deutschland 1945–1949* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1997), Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945* (London: Pimlico, 2007), Detlef Junker, *The United States and Germany in the Era of the Cold War, 1945–1968* (Cambridge and Washington, DC: Cambridge University

- Press/ German Historical Institute, 2004) and Giles MacDonogh, *After the Reich: From the Liberation of Vienna to the Berlin Airlift* (London: John Murray, 2007), none of whom mention UNESCO.
- 8 *General Conference of UNESCO; Second Session, Mexico 1947, Committees and Commissions* (UNESCO: Paris, 1949).
 - 9 Douglas Walton, 'What is Propaganda, and What Exactly is Wrong with it?' *Public Affairs Quarterly*, 4.11(1997), 383–413 (p. 384 and 394).
 - 10 Jessica C. E. Gienow-Hecht, 'What are We Searching for? Culture, Diplomacy, Agents, and the State', in *Searching for a Cultural Diplomacy*, edited by Jessica C. E. Gienow-Hecht and Mark C. Donfried (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2010), pp. 3–12 (p. 5).
 - 11 Gienow-Hecht, 'What are We Searching for?', p. 9.
 - 12 Walton, 'What is Propaganda', pp. 411 and 408.
 - 13 Clemens, *Britische Kulturpolitik*, pp. 28–29.
 - 14 Clemens, *Britische Kulturpolitik*, p. 59.
 - 15 Clemens, *Britische Kulturpolitik*, p. 64.
 - 16 Clemens, *Britische Kulturpolitik*, p. 65.
 - 17 Clemens, quoting 'SHAEF: Manual for the Control of German Information Services' (*Britische Kulturpolitik*, p. 67). Clemens argues that this position was a projection of the view of culture held by British civil servants and did not reflect the reality in Germany. See Clemens for more on the occupiers' view that Germans responded well to culture. She finds that the British view of Germany as the 'Land der Dichter und Denker' ('the land of thinkers and poets') remained in spite of the NS period and that the Nazis influenced 'Unterhaltungsliteratur' ('entertaining literature') rather than poetic literature. According to the 'German Basic Handbook', which gave the occupying forces their information on Germany, poetic literature offered the German people a kind of spiritual refuge during the Third Reich. From 1933 few books of value appeared in Germany and the German book market was flooded by a wave of Nazi literature. The German Sub-Committee thought that apart from a few authors, most of the books published in Germany between 1933 and 1945 were undesirable in that they promoted Nazi views and anti-Semitism, and misrepresented German relations with other countries (Clemens, *Britische Kulturpolitik*, pp. 68–69).
 - 18 Clemens, *Britische Kulturpolitik*, p. 74.
 - 19 Clemens, *Britische Kulturpolitik*, p. 147. Clemens notes that these problems also hindered the execution of the British book programme which sought to have German publishers translate and publish selected English books, and to disseminate English and foreign books and books by Germans in exile translated into German.
 - 20 Clemens, *Britische Kulturpolitik*, pp. 161–162.
 - 21 Martin Meyer, 'American Literature in Germany and its Reception in the Political Context of the Postwar Years', in *The United States and Germany in the Era of the Cold War 1945–1968: A Handbook Volume 1*, edited by Detlef Junker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 425–431 (p. 426)
 - 22 Meyer, 'American Literature in Germany', p. 163.
 - 23 *Ibid.*

- 24 *Ibid.* Clemens, though identifying the British aim of sourcing international literature, nevertheless concludes that the main aim was propagandistic and about projecting Britain.
- 25 Trommler, 'A New Start and Old Prejudices', p. 375. As Trommler reminds us, American literature which suggested criticism of America disabused Germans of their prejudice of American culture as an 'Unkultur'.
- 26 Trommler, 'A New Start and Old Prejudices', p. 149. Clemens writes about the newspaper editor, literary critic and author 'Michael Food', which I presume is a typing error.
- 27 Trommler, 'A New Start and Old Prejudices', p. 150.
- 28 Meyer, 'American Literature in Germany', p. 427.
- 29 *Ibid.* See also Boehling, 'US Cultural Policy and German Culture', p. 392.
- 30 UNESCO: 'Probable Aims of Re-education in Germany'. XO7.7 (43)
- 31 *Ibid.*
- 32 David Welch, 'Citizenship and Politics: The Legacy of Wilton Park for Post-war Reconstruction', *Contemporary European History*, 6.2 (1997), 209–218 (p. 210).
- 33 Welch, 'Citizenship and Politics', p. 213.
- 34 *Ibid.*
- 35 Welch, 'Citizenship and Politics', p. 214.
- 36 Welch, 'Citizenship and Politics', p. 217.
- 37 *Ibid.*
- 38 'Memorandum to Allied Authority on Resources and Terms of Expenditure that might be of aid in Re-orientation of Germany'. XO7.7 (43).
- 39 *Ibid.*
- 40 Welch, 'Citizenship and Politics', p. 214.
- 41 Welch, 'Citizenship and Politics', p. 217. See also Karl-Heinz Fuessl, 'Between Elitism and Educational Reform: German-American Exchange Programs 1945–1970', in *The United States and Germany in the Era of the Cold War 1945–1968: A Handbook Volume 1*, edited by Detlef Junker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 409–416. The multiplier effect of exchanges which involved Germans going to the US was also noted. Furthermore, on arrival most exchangees stated the purpose of their travels was to foster greater international understanding (p. 413).
- 42 Clemens, *Britische Kulturpolitik*, pp. 204–205.
- 43 Clemens, *Britische Kulturpolitik*, p. 206. There were three categories of information centre. The best comprised all of the above, the other two types did not have the library, exhibition room and film studio.
- 44 Boehling, 'US Cultural Policy and German Culture During the American Occupation', p. 390.
- 45 Karl-Ernst Bungenstab, 'Entstehung, Bedeutungs- und Funktionswandel der Amerika-Häuser: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der amerikanischen Auslandsinformation nach dem 2. Weltkrieg', *Jahrbuch für Amerikastudien*, 16 (1971), 189–203 (p. 194). With Directive JCS 1779 on 11 July 1947 the aim of the Amerika Häuser was again stated as part of the measures to help establish a 'democratic form of government'.
- 46 Bungenstab, 'Entstehung, Bedeutungs- und Funktionswandel der Amerika-Häuser', p. 191. The American Information Centres were under the control of Information Control Division, not OMGUS.

- 47 Bungenstab, 'Entstehung, Bedeutungs- und Funktionswandel der Amerika-Häuser', pp. 196–197
- 48 Bungenstab, 'Entstehung, Bedeutungs- und Funktionswandel der Amerika-Häuser', p. 192; quoting the aim as set out in the 'Manual for the Control of German Information Services'.
- 49 Bungenstab, 'Entstehung, Bedeutungs- und Funktionswandel der Amerika-Häuser', p. 195; quoting *Military Government Regulations*.
- 50 Walton, 'What is Propaganda', p. 411.
- 51 *UNESCO Director General's Report 1947*, p. 50.
- 52 *UNESCO Director General's Report 1947*, p. 62.
- 53 *UNESCO Director General's Report 1948*, p. 100.
- 54 *UNESCO Director General's Report 1948*, p. 101.
- 55 *UNESCO Director General's Report 1948*, pp. 65–66.
- 56 *UNESCO Director General's Report 1948*, p. 66.
- 57 John Sutherland, *Stephen Spender: The Authorized Biography* (London: Penguin, 2005), p. 315.
- 58 Fuessl, 'Between Elitism and Educational Reform:', p. 411.
- 59 Fernando Valderama, *A History of UNESCO* (Paris: UNESCO Publishing, 1995), p. 40. Reconstruction comprised one sixth of the UNESCO programme. In reality, however, the other areas of 'science' and 'cultural and artistic exchanges' were also concerned with reconstruction – with supplying scientific equipment to war-devastated countries, and with supplying war-torn countries with materials for cultural activity. Huxley notes in his report in 1947: 'The first of our comprehensive or "UNESCO-wide" projects is *Reconstruction and Rehabilitation*, the vitally urgent but short-term task which is, in the war-devastated countries, the pre-condition of all other UNESCO activities' (p. 6).
- 60 'Memorandum to Allied Authority on Resources and Terms of Expenditure that might be of aid in Re-orientation of Germany'. UNESCO: XO7.7 (43).
- 61 Cf. Boehling, 'US Cultural Policy and German Culture During the American Occupation', p. 389.
- 62 *Ibid.*
- 63 Unless otherwise stated, all translations are my own. UNESCO: 'Erfahrungen mit der deutschen Jugend 1946–47'. UNESCO: XO7.7 (43).
- 64 As stated in a memo to Huxley dated 3 March 1947. UNESCO: XO7.7 (43).
- 65 UNESCO: XO7.7 (43).
- 66 Huxley quoted in Paul Weindling, *John W. Thompson: Psychiatrist in the Shadow of the Holocaust* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2010), p. 179.
- 67 Weindling, quoting C. M. Berkeley (UNESCO Executive Assistant) to Prof. Richard Alexander (OMGUS) on 5 August 1947 (Weindling, *John W. Thompson: Psychiatrist in the Shadow of the Holocaust*, p. 180).
- 68 Weindling, *John W. Thompson: Psychiatrist in the Shadow of the Holocaust*, p. 178.
- 69 Weindling, *John W. Thompson: Psychiatrist in the Shadow of the Holocaust*, p. 185.
- 70 Walter Laves (Deputy Director General of UNESCO) in a report to the Executive Board of UNESCO in respect to UNESCO programme in Germany dated 5 April 1948. UNESCO: XO7.7 (43).
- 71 *Ibid.*
- 72 Weindling, *John W. Thompson: Psychiatrist in the Shadow of the Holocaust*, p. 186.

- 73 'Programme of UNESCO in Germany' (Draft Resolution). 1/1/49–31/7/49 REF: XO7.7(43).
- 74 Trommler, 'A New Start and Old Prejudices', p. 370.
- 75 Trommler, 'A New Start and Old Prejudices', p. 375.
- 76 See in particular Clemens, *Britische Kulturpolitik in Deutschland 1945–1949* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1997).

Hearing Democracy in the Ruins of Hitler's Reich: American Musicians in Postwar Germany

ABBY ANDERTON

Abstract:

During his 1947 visit to Berlin, American pianist Webster Aitken was shocked to find the Kroll Opera reduced to 'tangles of twisted girders, resembling empty bird cages. Beyond the Brandenburger Tor, the blocks seem to be made of brown sugar that has gone hard in lumps and streaks'.¹ Aitken was one of dozens of artists invited by the American Military Government to concertize throughout postwar Germany to demonstrate the strength of American musical achievement. Between 1945 and 1949, American musicians visited the ruins of the Third Reich to perform for German audiences, and this article explores the efficacy their postwar concerts had for the reeducation programme. American cultural officers believed music could play a redemptive role in the service of Democracy to promote racial and religious tolerance among German audiences.

In late July 1945, Rudolph Dunbar, a 37-year-old Guyanese American conductor and former war correspondent, visited Leo Borchard to discuss music. Borchard, recently appointed by the Soviets to lead the Berlin Philharmonic, welcomed the chance to meet a fellow musician. Chatting over coffee in Borchard's Charlottenburg apartment, they shared stories of the persecution they had experienced in establishing their careers. Borchard's German citizenship meant that, to the Allied occupiers, he was indelibly linked with the Nazi regime, while Dunbar encountered scepticism about his conducting abilities because of his skin colour. Ruth Andreas-Friedrich, a writer and Borchard's partner, recorded the encounter in her diary, and while sympathetic to Dunbar's plight, she also exoticized him: 'Is it a victor, who is standing in front of us? In his elegantly styled American uniform, beautiful like a panther and passionately interested in Bach and Beethoven?'² As a parting gift

Borchard gave Dunbar a volume of Bach cantatas and invited him to conduct the Philharmonic some time that autumn.

In May 1945, the United States military believed that traces of National Socialism could be eradicated by extensive control of German mass media. Consequently, officials created the Information Control Division, or ICD, an organization to monitor radio, music, literature, film and theatre in occupied Germany. American authorities wanted to 'establish sound psychological and cultural weapons with which to destroy the Nazi philosophy and promote a genuine desire for a democratic Germany through theatre and music'.³ The Military Government made special provisions for the treatment of music precisely because the Nazis had mobilized Germany's classical musicians for propaganda purposes during the Third Reich.⁴

A vital part of postwar German reeducation came in the form of American cultural officers who were stationed in the defeated country. Specially selected by the ICD for their artistic expertise, these officers ensured that culture was not being used to resurrect fascist ideology. Aside from occupying a defensive role, they also created programmes to display the strength of American culture to a sceptical German public, and cultural officers imported American movies and plays that represented the country in a favourable light. Military authorities believed that culture had the power to reeducate Hitler's former Reich as long as it was American rather than German culture.⁵

The ICD's long-term objectives were to 'expand [the] repertoire, especially the performance of works by composers and authors of other nations, to bring home to the Germans the realization of the fact that music and theatre are international arts'.⁶ The occupiers believed the transformative power of culture would eradicate any lingering fascist tendencies in German musical circles. As part of this effort, American musicians were invited to postwar Germany in order to prove the strength of their country's musical achievements. Military authorities promoted America's musical culture as more inclusive than Germany's, by sponsoring performances given by musicians who for racial, religious or stylistic reasons would not have been tolerated in Nazi Germany. In so doing, the Americans hoped to show the more 'democratic' nature of American classical music.

Yet the Americans' own insensitivities to cultural differences often infringed upon the success of the reeducation programme. Furthermore, the idea that music could encourage certain political sensibilities was reminiscent of a National Socialist conception of culture. As the visits of

artists like Rudolph Dunbar, Leonard Bernstein, Yehudi Menuhin, and Paul Hindemith would reveal, music not only had the power to unite, but also to divide.

DUNBAR IN BERLIN

Rudolph Dunbar got his chance to lead the Berlin Philharmonic sooner than he expected. Only a month after his meeting with Dunbar, Borchard was mistakenly shot by an American soldier. Philharmonic musicians and American cultural officers scrambled to find suitable guest conductors, and the ICD now viewed Dunbar's proximity as an asset. It was a symbolic victory for the occupiers that Dunbar would now conduct the former *Reichsorchester* ('Chosen Orchestra of the Third Reich') while wearing his American military uniform.

On 2 September 1945 Dunbar performed with the Philharmonic in front of 2,000 Berliners and 500 Allied servicemen. The concert featured Weber's *Oberon Overture*, Tchaikovsky's Sixth Symphony, and the German premiere of William Grant Still's *Afro-American Symphony*. (Dunbar and Still had played with the Harlem Symphony Orchestra during the 1920s.) The Berlin audience applauded so vigorously that Dunbar returned to the stage five times for bows. As a goodwill gesture, he presented the Philharmonic with a Parisian contrabassoon, an instrument the ensemble lacked entirely as all of theirs had burned in Allied bombing raids.⁷

Philharmonic musicians were uncertain what to make of Dunbar's performance. After playing the Still Symphony one flautist confessed to a reporter, 'Now at last I understand your American jazz',⁸ reinforcing the pervading stereotype that all music made by African American composers had to be considered strictly jazz. Still's genre-defying symphony was a hybrid of blues and classical influences, resisting easy categorization. Similarly, an oboist in the orchestra could only register his shock by writing in his daily planner, 'A Negro Officer Dünbar [*sic*] conducts!'⁹

As the first Guyanese American, as well as the first member of the military, to lead the Berlin Philharmonic, Dunbar sought the professional recognition that would come with conducting the ensemble. Yet his status as a second-class citizen within the very organization he represented was a poignant irony. Although *Time* concluded that military authorities pushed Dunbar to conduct because 'their interest was more in teaching the Germans a lesson in racial tolerance than in Dunbar's



Figure 1. Rudolf Dunbar conducts the Berlin Philharmonic, September 1945 (Reproduced with Permission from Corbis Images).

musicianship', it was the American occupiers who needed this lesson most of all.¹⁰ Germans civilians were well aware of the plight of African Americans; early Soviet propaganda emphasized the cruelty of the Jim Crow laws, and furthermore, segregation was on display in postwar Germany as black and white GIs still had separate regiments, barracks, and clubs. Military Governor Lucius Clay maintained throughout the postwar period that African American and black soldiers should be limited to marching in parades.¹¹

Yet the Allied Control Council, the governing body in Berlin comprised of representatives from the Soviet Union, United States and United Kingdom, perceived Dunbar's appearance as 'a valuable step in wiping out racial prejudice'.¹² Similarly, *The New York Times* reported: 'Members of the orchestra, which has been known to ignore the conductor and play music its own way, agreed that Dunbar was a musical topnotcher.'¹³ Through Dunbar's performance, the American Military Government hoped to create the illusion that American views on racial equality were much more progressive than those in Germany.¹⁴ One French newspaper even went so far as to note that Dunbar was

‘a conductor of the Berlin Philharmonic that Hitler certainly hadn’t expected’.¹⁵

Despite generally poor treatment by the military, many black GIs came to view their service in postwar Germany, surrounded by a defeated people, as a period of respite from the racial prejudice they experienced in the United States.¹⁶ In a scathing report for *The Herald Tribune*, American composer Virgil Thomson argued that white American occupiers treated German civilians like ‘Negroes in the United States. We expect them to work hard and to be very grateful to us. But we refer to them as “Krauts” and do not eat with them in public’.¹⁷ Segregation of black soldiers sent a clearer message to the German people than one concert with Dunbar ever could. Separate and unequal, the contributions of white soldiers were valued more than those of their black counterparts.

Though many black Americans may have experienced greater racial tolerance, postwar Germany was still far from a utopia of acceptance. As Dunbar’s performance revealed, his appearance elicited a range of responses from the public, not all of which were positive. Perhaps even spurred on by Dunbar’s performance, ICD Chief Robert McClure approached the Military Government in 1947 to host singer Marian Anderson. The Nazis had famously banned Anderson from singing in Germany and Austria during her 1935/1936 concert tour. Despite McClure’s request, his superiors rejected his idea on the grounds that American taxpayers would not want to sponsor artists to appear in a former enemy country.¹⁸

JEWISH-AMERICAN MUSICIANS IN POSTWAR GERMANY

Of all the American musicians to visit occupied Germany, however, few wrestled with the question of allegiances more intensely than Jewish artists. Coming to Germany meant encountering the horrific reality of the recent Nazi genocide: concentration camps, mass graves and destroyed Jewish communities. Living reminders abounded as persecuted and perpetrator resided nearly side-by-side. Many survivors still lived in Displaced Persons (DP) camps, centres that housed those forcibly uprooted by the Nazi regime. DP camps sprung up across Germany, small microcosms of lost worlds, as many of the inhabitants were unwilling or unable to return home. For Jewish visitors to Germany, musical performance was a site for conflict and reconciliation. But was it too soon to visit what many considered to be a pariah nation, or to appear

onstage with musicians celebrated during Hitler's rule? How visiting artists navigated these questions revealed the politicized framework in which music still operated despite the collapse of the Third Reich.

The first Jewish-American visitor to give concerts in postwar Germany was violinist Yehudi Menuhin. Menuhin was not only concerned with technical perfection and flawless musicality, but also with playing the role of a musical ambassador. During World War II he performed over 500 concerts for Allied troops, and was the first to play Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto in liberated Paris.¹⁹ During six days at the end of July 1945, Menuhin and composer Benjamin Britten visited former concentration camps across Germany, now functioning as DP camps, to give performances for Jewish survivors still living in SS barracks. With Britten at the piano, the pair's most remarkable performance took place at Bergen-Belsen, now under the supervision of the British Army. On the same stage that had once provided entertainment for German officers, Britten and Menuhin performed Beethoven's Kreutzer Sonata, a Kreisler transcription of a Bach Prelude and Fugue, a piano reduction of Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto, and Debussy's *The Girl with the Flaxen Hair*. Anita Lasker, a cellist in the audience, recalled that the performance was 'a beautiful evening' where Menuhin played with technical perfection, and Britten appeared 'transfixed' at the piano.²⁰

Despite Britten and Menuhin's intentions, their goodwill tour was not always perceived as such. After the pair performed for eight hundred Polish Jewish refugees in Bardowick, some audience members criticized Menuhin for his choice of repertoire. In an anonymous report published in *The Jewish Chronicle* a witness contended that the survivors 'resented and rejected' Menuhin's Bach, wanting instead 'to listen to such melodies as *Eili*, *Eili* and *Kol nidrei* and popular tunes of their native Poland'.²¹ The DPs found Menuhin's decision to play German music insensitive to their traumatic experiences. Instead of uniting survivors, the violinist's music reawakened hostilities. Although Menuhin hoped his music would be a bridge between peoples, he had not anticipated the negative reaction of many survivors.

In 1947 the American Military Government invited Menuhin to appear under their auspices with the Berlin Philharmonic. He hoped that, as the first Jewish-American performer to concertize with German musicians, he would be received in the spirit of reconciliation. Before he agreed, however, Menuhin wanted written confirmation from the Americans that he could play with the recently denazified

Wilhelm Furtwängler, the Philharmonic's conductor from 1922 until his blacklisting by the Americans in 1945. American cultural officers refused Menuhin's request.²²

During September and October 1947, the violinist gave a total of four concerts in Berlin: two for German civilians, one for American soldiers and one for Jewish Displaced Persons from Schlachtensee DP camp. Yet despite Menuhin's desire to aid survivors, Jewish DPs perceived his efforts as cursory and self-serving. The free charity performance for Jewish refugees appeared in bitter contrast to the full-length evening performances for paying Germans. Jewish DPs, as Tina Frühauf has noted, were upset that Menuhin would appear with German musicians and donate concert proceeds to Berlin institutions.²³ Although the DP community was greatly angered, from the American Military's perspective, Menuhin's performances had been an overwhelming success. One American officer boasted in his report that the violinist's appearance in the city's Russian sector was the most successful performance since the war's end, and his claim that '[i]t can be said that Mr. Menuhin represents the best U.S. ambassador as an artist and as a human being',²⁴ eerily echoes an entry in Goebbels's diary in which he wrote of Furtwängler: 'He once again has done us excellent service abroad'.²⁵ Culture was once again mobilized in the service of soft diplomacy, even if the reigning powers had changed.

In May 1948, Georg Solti, the music director of Munich's Staatsoper, invited conductor Leonard Bernstein to appear with the Munich Philharmonic. Although Bernstein was not yet thirty, he was already one of the most exciting, vibrant figures in American music, and as the first Jewish-American conductor to conduct a German ensemble after the collapse of the Third Reich, expectations for Bernstein's performances were high. Despite aerial bombing, which transformed the city into 'a construction in pink sugar that has been rained on',²⁶ the city's beloved Prinzregententheater, home to the Philharmonic, survived the war relatively intact.²⁷

Bernstein arrived on 4 May 1948 and was quickly 'dazed and horror struck' by the condition of the country and its people.²⁸ 'Nazism is in every corner', he wrote to Helen Coates, his trusted confidante and assistant.²⁹ When Bernstein rehearsed with the Philharmonic (speaking in German, nonetheless), music officer Carlos Moseley admitted, 'I was as tense as an E String with Menuhin doing a double stop on it'.³⁰ But he need not have worried; the sceptical orchestra was soon won over by Bernstein's charm. The following day's concert was an undeniable

triumph as he led the ensemble in a performance of Schumann's Second Symphony, Roy Harris's Third Symphony, and Ravel's Piano Concerto in G Major, which Bernstein conducted from the piano. Aside from his appearance with the Munich Philharmonic, Bernstein also visited two DP camps outside of Munich, Feldafing and Landsberg, where he appeared with the Representative Concert Orchestra of the *She'erit Hapletah*, an ensemble comprised of seventeen Eastern European Jewish survivors. The audiences at the camps embraced Bernstein's performances, cheering wildly.

The experience of Jewish-American musicians in postwar Germany reveals the complicated politics of survivor experience under occupation. Goodwill visits made in the name of reconciliation could also be poorly received if musicians were not sensitive to the experiences of survivors. Of the week he spent in Bavaria, Bernstein could only conclude, 'It's all amazing and horrible and ugly and messy and inspiring'.³¹

THE VISITING ARTIST PROGRAM: 'CARNEGIE HALL TYPES' FOR REEDUCATION

Shortly before the visits of Menuhin and Bernstein, ICD planners began to develop a coordinated effort to bring American musicians to Germany, rather than relying on private invitations or the good grace of high-profile artists. Recognizing that, given the lack of food and lodging in Germany, it would not be an easy undertaking, the ICD nonetheless felt it was essential to organize a concert series that would prove the superiority of American musical life.³² The entire programme was nearly abandoned, however, after an ICD survey conducted among the American government revealed a strong prejudice against such a programme. These objections would not be so damning had they not come from Robert Murphy, the acting American Ambassador to Germany and the State Department's political advisor to the American Military Governor of West Germany. Ambassador Murphy cited as grave concerns possible objections from United States taxpayers and projected difficulties in recruiting 'first-class' talent, and was especially worried that 'the entertainment as such of German nationals' could provoke American outcry.³³

The ambassador's qualms were shared by many in the administration who could not conceive of music as anything more than a tool for mindless enjoyment. Military Governor Lucius Clay was also hesitant to support the programme, as he did not want scarce material resources

within Germany to be squandered.³⁴ A fundamental incomprehension of music's power to reeducate lay at the crux of both Murphy's and Clay's objections. ICD Officers Eric Clarke of Berlin's Film, Music, and Theatre branch, and Nicolas Nabokov of Berlin's Intelligence Section, were incensed at Murphy's letter of objection, and retorted that 'entertainment as such' would not be the aim of the Visiting Artist Program; rather, it would only further reorientation efforts by positively representing American culture abroad, complementing other cultural exchange efforts. In a letter of response to Murphy, Nabokov and Clark offered the Ambassador a not-so-veiled jab in their conclusion: 'It would be a pity to lay the matter before the State Department while he [Murphy] does not concur'.³⁵ Rather than risking professional consequences, Murphy ultimately gave his blessing.

It was not until March of 1948 that the Military Government approved plans for visiting American artists with the condition that it would involve no more than twenty-five musicians within a six-month period. The programme would be jointly organized by the ICD and EUCOM (European Command), and while the ICD selected the artists, scheduled the tours, and organized publicity, EUCOM arranged tour transportation and accommodation within Germany. The ICD sought 'Carnegie Hall Types' for the most ambitious reeducation programme to date; the Visiting Artist Program was meant to pave the way for State Department sponsored music tours throughout the 1950s.³⁶

Rather than being funded by the American taxpayers, the initiative was supposedly supported through donations of \$10,000 from private sources in the United States.³⁷ Nowhere in the documents are the sponsors named, leading one to believe the donor was simply the American government. Anticipating negative responses to the Visiting Artist Program, the ICD even prepared a mock script that was to be distributed among cultural officers in Germany to answer any questions concerning the initiative, and to emphasize that neither American taxpayers nor German civilians would foot the bill for the concerts.³⁸

Still, the initial investment would cover only travel expenses, even with the artists donating their time and waiving payment. In theory, American soldiers would replenish the Visiting Artist Fund by buying their tickets in dollars. Yet the plan was sorely compromised once servicemen began buying their tickets in marks, for as one cultural officer complained, 'U.S. personnel in Berlin are not anxious to part with their dollars for concerts'.³⁹ Instead, soldiers would frequently mail dollars

home to family members, preferring to use the local currency for its favourable exchange rate.

Harrison Kerr, Chief of the Music and Art Reorientation Branch, based in the New York ICD office, quickly put together a season of visiting artists for postwar Germany. Kerr was a composer and former student of Nadia Boulanger. During the Great Depression he had worked as an orchestrator for the National Broadcasting Company's General Motors Show, and after the war he was named Chief of the Music and Art Unit for reorientation programmes in occupied countries. Kerr staunchly believed his purpose was to further the standing of American classical music in formerly totalitarian countries, and as a result, he carefully selected musicians to present a polished image of musical America.⁴⁰

Given that the funding came through only in January 1948 for the spring season, however, Kerr was at the mercy of artists' schedules. Instead of a line-up of first-rate artists, the military unfortunately had to settle for who was available and willing to concertize in Germany. The recruited musicians included a twenty-one-year-old violin prodigy named Patricia Travers, American folk singer Tom Scott, harpsichordist Ralph Kirkpatrick, the Walden String Quartet and the Yale Glee Club.⁴¹ Travers, a New Jersey native and one of the most widely publicized visiting artists, gave a series of concerts in Augsburg, Berlin, Frankfurt, Munich and Nuremberg in May and June of 1948. She performed violin concertos by Brahms and the American composer Roger Sessions, and sonatas by Ives and Bach. The repertoire selection, undoubtedly chosen by the ICD, was meant to emphasize the connection between German and American composers.

Travers's concert reviews from her tour generally criticize either her playing or her repertoire. One critic for the *Münchener Merkur* wrote that the Ives Sonata 'is rooted in the somewhat cluttered sound-world of the turn of the century', revealing an utter lack of interest in American modernism.⁴² After Travers' concert with the Munich Philharmonic on 1 June, which featured the music of Brahms and Sessions, a reviewer for the American-supervised *Münchener Tagebuch* wrote:

For the style of Roger Session it is difficult to find an analogy... And the thing is long, horribly long! Above the maze of this painfully disrupted harmony, the beautiful sound of Patricia Travers's violin – in which so much compressed, delicate sweetness becomes audible – blooms like a single flower on a dump.⁴³

Although Walter Panofsky of the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* did not have a problem with her repertoire, he did find Travers' interpretation of

Brahms 'Alarmingly Unbrahms-ish'.⁴⁴ In Stuttgart, one music officer had to bribe the orchestra to play with her after they simply refused to perform. Travers reached Bremen to be told there was still not a concert venue secured for her, as US Special Services had failed to petition local organizers for their help. In Munich, cultural officer Carlos Moseley could not find a concert agent willing to sponsor her, and was left to run around the city frantically hanging up posters by himself.⁴⁵

As Travers's reviews and reception in postwar Germany indicate, her appearances did little for the advancement of the reeducation effort. Her tour of Germany was to be among her last engagements, and she gave up the violin by the early 1950s never to play in public again.⁴⁶ Similarly, harpsichordist Ralph Kirkpatrick's West German appearances were plagued with difficulties, and although he already had an international reputation, his tour produced 'virtually no income', according to Carlos Moseley.⁴⁷ Furthermore, Travers's and Kirkpatrick's tours occurred during the currency reform of the Western Allies, a response to rapid inflation. German civilians were unwilling to part with their money for concerts featuring unfamiliar artists, and many German cultural institutions were in dire straits. The Nuremberg Opera house never paid the Military Government the 1,000 Marks it owed as a fee to present Travers and Kirkpatrick.⁴⁸ The ICD's final report, written by cultural officer John Bitter, greatly exaggerated the success of the 1948 season. Bitter boasted of the artists' reception, 'The public, which was more or less prepared for Hollywood personalities and flashy appearances because of many years of Goebbels-Propaganda, was most pleasantly surprised', and he concluded that artists like Travers and Kirkpatrick had, in fact, appeared 'as among the world's best in the eyes of public and press'.⁴⁹

The ICD was unwilling to surrender the programme after one season, and the 1949 budget for the Visiting Artist Program was substantial: \$168,240 for all invited American guests, some \$60,000 of which was reserved for the Education and Cultural Relations Branch to bring musicians, artists and educators to Germany.⁵⁰ An increase in funds, however, did not attract new talent to the Visiting Artist Program. When pianist Webster Aitken, a student of Artur Schnabel, performed with the Munich Philharmonic in April 1949, the concerts ended disastrously. With the worst ticket sales of any performance in the Munich Philharmonic's history, Moseley despaired that Aitken's appearances had confirmed the German prejudice that American musicians were simply technicians, and that 'great interpretation of great music lies outside their grasp'.⁵¹ In a blatant display of anti-Americanism, Moseley even heard

one audience member complaining that Aitken ‘plays Beethoven like an Indian’.⁵²

Ultimately, the Visiting Artist Program fell far short of what American cultural officers had envisioned. Few leading artists had the time and the desire to come to postwar Germany, a nation still stigmatized by the very recent memory of National Socialist atrocities and the stain of German collaboration. The most successful tours of American musicians were ironically those that occurred outside the boundaries of the Visiting Artist Program, given by those musicians whose international reputation preceded them, and organized through friendships that had little to do with military efforts. Ironically, German audiences generally perceived the Visiting Artist Program as propaganda, thereby sealing its fate as a soft diplomacy failure.

Frustrated by the haphazard planning of the ICD, Carlos Moseley, now Chief of Bavaria’s Music Control Section, pushed for more elite American artists to concertize in Germany. He petitioned the Education and Cultural Resources Branch to invite Vladimir Horowitz, Arthur Rubinstein, Rudolph Serkin, Isaac Stern and Igor Stravinsky, all of whom were citizens of the United States. Unfortunately, Harrison Kerr denied Moseley’s requests on the grounds that his list of musicians had all been born outside the United States. Kerr felt only American-born musicians could promote American culture in postwar Germany.⁵³

Even Arnold Schoenberg, who had lived in Los Angeles since 1935 and was awarded US citizenship in 1941, was not actively courted by the ICD to make an appearance in postwar Germany. Despite Kerr’s refusal to ask Schoenberg, music officer John Evarts invited the composer to Darmstadt in 1949. The city’s summer institute had morphed into a hotbed of experimental music, funded in part by the American Military Government, and Evarts was eager that Schoenberg should attend. Despite Evart’s earnest invitation, Schoenberg declined, unsure he was well enough to pass the physical required to fly on a military plane.⁵⁴ The Visiting Artists Program stalled after only two seasons.

HINDEMITH RETURNS TO GERMANY

The Visiting Experts Program, a partner initiative of the Visiting Artist Program, sponsored a tour by Paul Hindemith during the winter of 1949. Although cultural officers asked for permission to invite Hindemith to Germany as early as 1945, Kerr denied their requests on the grounds that Hindemith was not an American musician. (The composer would take

American citizenship in 1946.)⁵⁵ Consequently, the Visiting Experts Program, not under Kerr's purview, agreed to sponsor Hindemith in 1949.

Hindemith was ostensibly the perfect representative of the new German American partnership, yet, during the early 1930s, the composer had attempted to win the favour of the Nazi regime. As he wrote to Ernst Toch in 1933, 'I have been asked to cooperate, and have not declined'.⁵⁶ Despite Hindemith's hopes, his public shaming by the National Socialists over the 1934 Staatsoper premiere of his opera *Mathis der Maler* sealed his fate in Nazi Germany. Due to the opera's poor reception and ensuing scandal, Hindemith took a leave of absence from his professorship at Berlin's Musikhochschule, emigrating to Switzerland and eventually to the United States.⁵⁷

Although Hindemith returned to Germany in the summer of 1947 to visit friends and relatives in Frankfurt, the Military Government neglected to contract him for any lectures.⁵⁸ Hindemith finally appeared in Germany under military auspices from 25 January to 28 February 1949, performing mostly in Bavaria, though he did visit Berlin between 13 and 19 February to conduct the Philharmonic and to lecture at the Freie Universität and Musikhochschule.⁵⁹

The Berlin Philharmonic's 17 February performance featured Hindemith's *The Four Temperaments* and Symphony in E-flat, along with Mozart's Symphony no. 39 and Cherubini's *Medea Overture*. The following evening the orchestra and Hindemith repeated the performance, this time substituting his *Nobilissima Visione* for *The Four Temperaments*. Though his performances were well received, during one of his Berlin lectures Hindemith provoked great controversy by calling the twelve-tone method and its reliance on technique 'shallow', a reaction to what he considered a rigidly formulaic system.⁶⁰ (He later contended of twelve-tone music, 'The technique as such does not create any works of art'.)⁶¹ As he had since the disastrous premiere of *Mathis der Maler*, Hindemith called for European art music to become more autonomous from political and religious spheres. Berlin audiences were scandalized, and thus the tour was considered successful.

In a sense, Hindemith was German enough for the Germans, and just American enough for most in the Military Government. The composer represented the musical link to Weimar, and, as such, his return was both reassuring and triumphant to the German audiences that he delighted and offended in equal measure. As one of the few German musicians who returned to concertize in the immediate postwar period, Hindemith's visit reinforced comforting postwar tropes, namely that not

all German musicians had collaborated with the Nazi regime, and that the new world had welcomed artists seeking better working conditions. Hindemith returned home as a resistor and émigré, and appealed to German audiences as few American-born musicians could have.

CONCLUSIONS

Despite the difficulties posed by transportation issues and the limited success of certain ICD policies and programmes, theatre and music officers nevertheless played a vital role in the reconstruction of classical music culture. Between 1947 and 1949, American authorities learned how to wage cultural warfare within the confines of western Germany, an endeavour that would be augmented by the more successful programmes of the State Department and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) during the 1950s. Through the licensing of ensembles, artists and venues, and denazification proceedings, American authorities wanted to use music in Germany as a means to espouse a democratic political ideology, and yet the ICD was unable to entice more high profile artists to concertize postwar Germany. (Even Hindemith's 1949 visit was coupled with his desire to visit family in southern Germany.)

While Dunbar, Menuhin, Bernstein and Hindemith were well received by German audiences for a variety of reasons, the performances of American musicians reveal the polyphony of ways in which civilians, survivors and Allies engaged with one another against a postwar landscape. Whether these musicians identified as Jewish, American, a victor or some combination thereof, their reception in Germany was shaped by the complicated cultural politics between occupier and occupied. As postwar strategy changed from combating Nazism to containing Communism, the State Department realized that the cultural front was the new battleground, and by the early 1950s America had much grander designs. As American forces occupied not only West Germany but also the country's vibrant cultural life, the shifting political agenda became a palimpsest on which the new German-American cultural partnership was etched.

NOTES

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‘The Sermons in the Stones of Germany Preach Nihilism’: ‘Outsider Rubble Literature’ and the Reconstruction of Germany, 1945–1949

LARA FEIGEL

Abstract:

This article explores the literature and film produced by the writers and filmmakers sent by the British and Americans to occupied Germany in the four years after the war. Although these figures were intended to help transform the mentality of the Germans, it is argued here that they had less effect on Germany than Germany had on them, and that the crucial (albeit unwitting) result of their visits to Germany was the creation of a genre of art here named ‘outsider rubble literature’ or *Fremdentrümmerliteratur*. This is a genre that asked, ultimately, what right the Allies had to judge Germany from outside when they were guilty too. It comprises a series of fundamentally ambivalent works of art that often manifest their ambivalence by juxtaposing the two forms of destruction experienced in Germany: the destruction of the bombed cities and the destruction wrought in the concentration camps. The article suggests that this genre of ‘outsider rubble literature’ includes Thomas Mann’s great postwar novel *Doktor Faustus*, arguing that our understanding of this novel is increased if we read it alongside the postwar writing of Stephen Spender, Martha Gellhorn and Klaus Mann, and the postwar filmmaking of Billy Wilder.

In July 1945 the British poet Stephen Spender arrived in Germany, tasked with assessing the intellectual climate of the universities and hoping to help enable the spiritual reconstruction of the country he had loved in his youth. Although he was well informed about the bombing of the German cities, he was astonished to encounter mile after mile of rubble. Spender was sure that the devastation was too great ever to be healed. Where in London the surrounding life of the people filled up the gaps and wounds left by the bombing, in Hamburg and Cologne the inhabitants became parasites sucking at a dead carcass as they dug among the rubbish for food.

For Spender, the rubble spoke eloquently about mid-twentieth-century civilization. In his published account of a visit to Cologne, he reflected that the destruction was serious in several senses:

It is a climax of deliberate effort, an achievement of our civilization, the most striking result of co-operation between nations in the twentieth century. It is the shape created by our century as the Gothic cathedral is the shape created by the Middle Ages [...] The sermons in the stones of Germany preach nihilism.¹

Here Spender performed the dexterous feat of locating meaning specifically in meaninglessness. This nonsensical rubble was fitting as the architectural achievement of his times. Effectively, Spender was identifying the German ruins as the physical manifestation of a collective European fall from grace. Crucially, he implicated all the nations involved in the war in this fall, taking on a portion of the guilt himself.

In this respect, Spender's interpretation of the German destruction was very different from his government's. Officially, Britain and Germany were still at war, and the British military occupiers insisted that the nation had brought this wreckage on itself. But Spender could not observe Germany as a detached outsider. He looked back on his years in Germany, in his early twenties, as his real education. Having failed to take his degree at Oxford, he had been educated in the beer halls of Bonn by the German critic Ernst Robert Curtius. It was impossible for him to encounter the destruction neutrally; impossible to look back on summer evenings dancing in the half-light without seeing that he too had been seduced by a vision of physical strength and youth that was inseparable from Nazism.²

Spender was one of many writers and filmmakers with torn loyalties brought back to Germany as journalists reporting on the war or the Nuremberg trials, or sent in by the British and American occupiers to help govern their zones of occupation. Initially, the Occupation authorities were simply looking for German speakers, and these were likely to be writers or artists. As the Occupation was established, both governments were also looking for people who would be able to revive culture in Germany, and to revive it specifically in order to showcase the culture of the democratic world. At its simplest, the hope was that by presenting the Germans with British and American books and films, the occupiers could demonstrate the virtues of a peaceful and democratic way of life. They also became increasingly concerned to create a flourishing cultural scene in order to compete with the Russians, who had revived culture in their zone of Germany with startling alacrity. As a result

they sent in not only German-speaking Brits and Americans, but also the Germans themselves: anti-Nazi exiles now naturalized as British or American citizens and wearing the uniform of the occupiers.

It is not surprising that these writers and filmmakers should have experienced the destruction ambivalently. Almost all the British and American occupiers found that the sight of starving people scavenging in the debris of their bombed homes moved them to pity, even if this was accompanied by a vision of the destruction wrought by the Germans in the concentration camps. Indeed, for many of the writers and filmmakers who were sent to Germany from Britain and America, it was precisely the tension between these two visions that came to characterize the complexity of the German situation. The sight both of the rubble cities and the concentration camps is present as a shocking, visceral experience in most of the poetry, novels, films and reportage created by outsiders encountering Germany in this period, whether those outsiders were British and Americans by birth or were German exiles now naturalized as British or American citizens.

Here I will argue that, collectively, these ambivalent portraits of Germany in the immediate postwar years constitute a genre of ‘outsider rubble literature’, related to but also separate from the *Trümmerliteratur* (rubble literature) produced by the Germans themselves, which dominated the artistic landscape of Germany in the 1940s. This is a genre that explores questions of guilt, atonement and redemption against a background of apocalyptic ruin, and that includes works as diverse as Spender’s meditative reportage in *European Witness*, W.H. Auden’s allegorical poem ‘Memorial for the City’, Martha Gellhorn’s novel *Point of No Return*, Klaus Mann’s unfinished novel *The Last Day*, Billy Wilder’s triumphantly comic film *A Foreign Affair* and Humphrey Jennings’s documentary *A Defeated People*.³ All of these works used the concrete landscape of the bombed cities, the concentration camps or the fallen pomp of the Third Reich to explore more metaphysical questions of guilt. Surveying Germany from the perspective of an outsider, these artists saw in Germany’s tragedy the larger tragedy of the human condition.

I am suggesting here that this genre of art is an incidental achievement of the Occupation. In sending in writers and filmmakers, the British and Americans hoped in part to transform the mentality of the Germans. In fact, the artists sent to Germany had very little effect on Germany. They did not succeed in turning the majority of Germans into peace-loving people who renounced their own past. A survey conducted in

West Germany in 1951 revealed that only 5 per cent of the participating Germans admitted feeling any guilt towards the Jews, while 21 per cent believed that 'the Jews themselves were partly responsible for what happened to them during the Third Reich'.⁴ But if these cultural ambassadors had little effect on Germany, then Germany nonetheless had considerable effect on them. And the result of their experiences was this genre that we might call *Fremdentrümmerliteratur*.

This was a genre that asked, ultimately, what right the Allies had to judge Germany from outside when they were guilty too. Surely they shared the responsibility for Germany's crimes because they had allowed them to happen? The Allies had condoned Hitler's initial aggression and then, during the war, had fought to win rather than to prevent inhumanity, failing to free Jews in the territories they liberated or to exploit their knowledge of what was happening to the Jews to influence world opinion about the Nazis. 'The victors who seat us on the defendants' bench must sit next to us. There is room', the German writer Erich Kästner observed in his diary on 8 May 1945.⁵

I would like to suggest that this genre of 'outsider rubble literature' includes Thomas Mann's great postwar novel *Doktor Faustus*, which was the only one of the works explored here to have a significant impact in Germany. This is a book written by a man who had not seen the ruins he described, but who had heard about them from his children Klaus, Erika and Golo (all sent into Germany in American military uniform) and had been called to make pronouncements to Germany as an American throughout the war. He now imaginatively recreated the German ruins from California in frightening detail. It is a novel that takes on new resonance and becomes more movingly confessional when read alongside *Point of No Return* or *A Foreign Affair*, because Mann's troubled distance from the scenes he describes becomes the central emotion of his book.

Mann, like many of the writers and filmmakers considered here, tried, and failed, in the years after the war to mediate between the occupiers and the Germans, attempting to transform postwar German culture. But he, like Spender and Gellhorn, created a work of art that performed such an act of mediation by investigating the symbolism of the rubble, and of the hungry figures who populated it, from the perspective of an outsider who was nonetheless intimately and uncomfortably connected to it; unable to disassociate himself from its implications and conscious of the many directions in which guilt could be apportioned.

The genre of outsider rubble literature and film that I am proposing here is vast. It merits detailed study, especially as I am suggesting that

all these works look different when considered in relation to each other. It also merits comparison with indigenous rubble literature. Here there is space only for a brief examination of a handful of outsider texts and films. Specifically, I am exploring the ambivalence manifested in a series of works of art that oscillate between intimacy and distance, pity and blame, identification and alienation. This enables me to bring the postwar works of the German and Austrian exiles Thomas and Klaus Mann and Billy Wilder into the same frame as those of the British and American writers Stephen Spender and Martha Gellhorn. Though all these figures were in Germany for very different reasons, taken together they engaged in a collective exploration of what possible response there could be to the tragic spectacle of absolute destruction in a nation that must take some of the responsibility for that destruction on itself.

OUTSIDERS LOOKING IN

For Spender and Gellhorn there were two kinds of destruction, and consequently two kinds of guilt, in Germany. Early on in *European Witness* Spender interviews an interpreter who tells him that 'some Jews' had to be 'put away, locked up, because they sought to destroy the unity of the German *Glaubensbewegung*' (p. 44). Spender then goes straight on to recount a conversation with a concentration camp inmate who describes being left in a cellar that is constantly filled with water he has to pump out with a handle in order to save himself from being drowned (p. 48).

Spender struggles to reconcile the ruins in the bombed cities with the destruction brought about inside the camps. His horror at the total devastation he has witnessed in Cologne is such that he cannot bear some form of salvation not to be possible in Germany. If the rubble in the bombed cities is Europe's tragedy, then Europe can only be redeemed if Germany itself proves capable of redemption.

For Spender, the possibility of German renewal was doubly important because his own youth had burned alongside the buildings in Berlin, Hamburg and Bonn. Before leaving for Germany he had authoritatively told the British authorities that he wished to seek out the 'good' Germans who might be able to start a new artistic movement in Germany after the war. Once there he was frightened to find that people like his mentor E. R. Curtius had been unexpectedly passive in resisting Nazism. Spender blamed Curtius for not resisting partly because if Germany as a whole had proved culpable in its lack of resistance to Hitler then it

rendered Spender's own youth in Germany a lie, and potentially made Spender himself complicit through his wartime loyalty to his mentor.

It seems to be this anxiety that prompts a period of depression recounted in a chapter of *European Witness* entitled 'Nausea'. Here he describes a feeling of 'violent homesickness accompanied by a sensation of panic that I would never get out of Germany' (p. 61). He believes that the Germans have 'deprived first themselves and then Europe of freedom', and that as a result Germany has become a ruined prison in which the occupiers are the gaolers (p. 62). This leaves him frightened that the ruins of Germany could become the ruins of the whole of Europe.

Spender is able to offer an alternative to this nausea. He suggests, hopefully, that the Occupation authorities need find only ten responsible Germans to initiate a new, democratic German regime. He also advocates that reconstructed Germany should become part of a new mode of pan-European alliance that will eliminate nationalism and enable Europe to think both collectively and culturally, preventing the kind of ruin he fears. However his book ends not with this sensible vision of reconstruction but with a vision of despair. He describes how the Nazis have preoccupied not only his waking thoughts but his dreams for many years:

And in my dreams, I did not simply hate them and put them from me. I argued with them, I wrestled with their spirits, and the scene in which I knew them was one in which my own blood and tears flowed. The cities and soil of Germany where they were sacrificed were not just places of material destruction. They were altars on which a solemn sacrifice had been performed according to a ritual in which inevitably all the nations took part. The whole world had seemed to be darkened with their darkness. (p. 241)

For Spender, despite his hope for a new Europe, the darkness remained. The nightmare waited to engulf the Germans and their occupiers alike. The battle against darkness that he describes is an existential battle in which he is as implicated as the Germans. Neither he nor the reader is easily convinced when he adds a final sentence in a lighter, more practical tone, suggesting that it in fact might be possible to overcome this darkness: 'And at the same time, there could not be the least doubt that the only answer to this past and this present is a conscious, deliberate and wholly responsible determination to make our society walk in paths of light' (p. 241).

Spender was not alone in responding to Germany with nausea and despair. And, unlike Spender, Martha Gellhorn could not envisage an alternative to the darkness. Gellhorn had arrived in Germany a few

months earlier than Spender, reporting on bomb damage in Cologne and on the liberation of Dachau in the spring of 1945. She remained there for several months and then returned a year later to witness the end of the Nuremberg tribunal, which had put 21 of the National Socialist leaders in the dock. During this period Gellhorn came to feel fury towards the Germans, antagonized by the apparently guilt-free sycophancy she had witnessed in the bombed cities and then goaded to rage by all that she saw in Dachau. Yet she remained ambivalent because, like Spender, she partly blamed both herself and her country for the destruction she saw around her. In an article written just after the Nuremberg trial had finished, Gellhorn reminded her readers that guilt could not be laid at the door of the Nazi leaders alone. Describing the tribunal’s charge of ‘crimes against peace’, she asserted that war itself was the ultimate crime:

War is the silver bombers, with the young men in them, who never wanted to kill anyone, flying in the morning sun over Germany and not coming back [...] And its heritage is what we have now, this maimed and tormented world which we must somehow restore.⁶

There is little hope here that the maimed and tormented world will prove capable of restoration. And there is even less hope in the novel that she was writing at the time.

Point of No Return juxtaposes the destruction of the German cities and the destruction wrought by the Germans in the camps more explicitly than Spender’s book does. It also both tempers the need to pity the Germans and makes any pity the characters do display more surprising by viewing Germany through the eyes of two war-hardened American soldiers, Lieutenant Colonel John Dawson Smithers and his Jewish driver Jacob Levy, who arrive in Germany in early April 1945. They are greeted by a country ‘coming apart before their eyes’.⁷ But any pity for its scrawny inhabitants is almost immediately prevented by the sight of a stretch of verdant farms, bursting with chickens and geese. Smithers wonders why the Germans felt the need to start a war. ‘You could have understood the war better if Germany had been a lousy starving ugly country, as imagined’ (p. 231).

The regiment then rides into an imaginary bombed medieval town called Hildenwald. When traversed by jeep, Hildenwald provides an experience that is likened to a rollercoaster: ‘you climbed up and down over mountains of rubble’ (p. 231). This is a city where ordinary life has become impossible. There are rows of housefronts with nothing behind

them but holes. However, any perplexed sympathy Jacob Levy feels for the Germans in the bombed cities is eliminated when he visits Dachau. Before he visits the camp, Levy does not understand why the US is in the war in the first place, or why the Jews did not 'clear out of this stinking Europe long ago?' (p. 104). At Dachau, he observes 'the krauts all leaning over their front gates and gossiping together in the sun', and assumes that the place cannot be that bad (p. 269). But entering the gates, he is confronted immediately with the stench of decay. He sees the bald, lice-covered inmates walking aimlessly, their eyes looking ahead, 'too big, black and empty', and is paralysed with fear (p. 206).

Leaving the camp, Levy feels he has no other life and no other knowledge: 'he knew that he could not live anywhere now because in his mind, slyly, there was nothing but horror' (p. 213). He is struck most of all by the scale of his own wilful ignorance. 'I never knew; I thought those goddam krauts had to fight like we did' (p. 219). He is angry with himself for denying his own Jewishness; for fighting in the war without identifying himself with Hitler's victims. And he is furious with the Germans who have looked on while thousands of their countrymen died.

Returning to his jeep, Levy drives back up the cheerful street that leads to the camp. Two men tip their hats at each other; a woman calls to her child who arrives with pig-tails bouncing. They do not seem to notice the American soldier driving his jeep erratically along the street (p. 291). Levy approaches a group of people and honks his horn to encourage them to move. They fail to do so and the sight of their proud, strong bodies and 'grinning pink faces' moves him to fury. 'They didn't have to move for anyone. They'd gotten away with it.' Hate explodes in Levy's brain and he can feel himself sliding and slipping. It is hard to breathe and he presses his foot to the floor. 'At sixty miles an hour, Jacob Levy drove his jeep on to the laughing Germans' (p. 292).

Here Levy kills the Germans and dooms himself in a single act. This is simultaneously an act of murder and suicide, and as such is a response to two forms of guilt. He is punishing the Germans for perpetrating the crimes in the camps and punishing himself for standing by as a Jew. After visiting Dachau, Gellhorn, who was considerably better informed than Levy, expressed disbelief at her own ignorance. 'I did not know, realize, find out, care, understand what was happening', she wrote in a letter.⁸ By making Levy a Jew she makes his ignorance more culpable. He has less chance than Spender to escape nihilism.

INSIDERS OBSERVING FROM OUTSIDE

In the spring of 1945, the novelist Klaus Mann and filmmaker Billy Wilder returned to Germany. Of Austrian origin, Billy Wilder had made his name in 1920s Berlin, before the National Socialists drove him to America. Now he was tasked with reconstructing the film industry in the American zone of Germany. He was determined to resist sympathizing with the Germans and was interested chiefly in attempting to locate his mother and grandmother who, as Jews, had been put in concentration camps. Klaus Mann had joined the American army a couple of years earlier, wishing to do all he could to aid his new nation in defeating Nazism. He was in Germany reporting for the US forces newspaper, and carefully maintained an American accent, wishing, like Wilder, to make his distance from his former compatriots explicit.

At the same time, Klaus Mann’s father Thomas was broadcasting to Germany from California. He lamented that as the bells of victory boomed, he and his compatriots had to lower their heads in shame. Two weeks later he elaborated on this in a lecture at the US Library of Congress on ‘Germany and the Germans’ where he both emphasized his American citizenship and insisted that he remained a German. It would be dishonest to commend himself as ‘the good Germany’ in contrast to the wicked, guilty Germany over there. He had been nurtured in the provincial cosmopolitanism of the old German world; he had felt in himself the potential for fanaticism that this entailed.⁹

Over the next four years, both Klaus and Thomas Mann would write novels responding to the destruction in Germany with torn feelings, dramatizing their uneasy status as neither outsiders nor insiders in their former homeland that was brought about by the Occupation. Wilder would meanwhile make his great postwar film, *A Foreign Affair*, in which he learnt to laugh at the tragic situation in Germany.

Mann’s *Doktor Faustus* was published in German (in Switzerland) in 1947 and in English (in America) the following year. It is the great novel to come out of Germany in the years immediately after the war, but at the same time, written by an American citizen with no first-hand experience of the ruins he portrayed, it is also arguably the greatest example of ‘outsider rubble literature’. From California, Mann revealed himself to be at once a German and an outsider, able to diagnose the Germans’ guilt and despair with a clarity possible for few in Germany, but unable to separate himself from the tragedy. The book takes as its starting point a suggestion made in the ‘Germany and the Germans’ lecture that both

Germany and its inhabitants have made a pact with the Devil, and that, as a great German artist seduced by German Romanticism, Mann himself was fully implicated in Germany's guilt.

Doktor Faustus relates the simultaneous and intertwined downfalls of its tragic artist hero and his tragic nation. Though he was now an outsider to Germany himself, Mann chose to write from the perspective of an insider. The narrator Serenus Zeitblom is a so-called 'inner emigrant' teacher who now tells the story of the life and times of the avant-garde composer Adrian Leverkühn.¹⁰ Zeitblom has loved Leverkühn loyally since they played together as children, even after finding that as a young man Leverkühn made a strange pact with the Devil, sacrificing personal happiness for artistic inspiration. In Goethe's version of the story, Faust sacrifices happiness for knowledge, promising Mephistopheles, 'If ever I shall tell the moment: Bide here you are so beautiful!' that he can damn him instantly.¹¹ Mann's hero makes a similar pact, acquiescing to the Devil's demand that he live without love. Both Faust and Leverkühn make the pledge willingly because they are already unhappy. 'Is not coldness a precedence with you', the Devil says to Leverkühn. The tragedy is that there will now be no possibility of happy escape.¹²

Leverkühn's damnation comes in the form of syphilis. Like Nietzsche, one of Mann's many models for his character, Leverkühn experiences the disease as creatively fertile, but then loses his mind.¹³ He engages in a dialogue with the Devil who claims the illness as his own, and warns Leverkühn that he will be unable to love: 'your life shall be cold' (p. 264).¹⁴ This prediction proves painfully true. And what the Devil has not made explicit is that should Leverkühn try to thwart the curse, he will doom those he loves to a hasty death. 'I have discovered that it ought not be', Leverkühn tells Zeitblom after his beloved nephew's death, 'what people call human [...] It will be taken back' (p. 501).¹⁵ Instead he channels all his energy into his final masterpiece. For years Leverkühn has been pushing music towards abstraction, going beyond tonality in an attempt to emancipate dissonance from resolution. Now his late great symphonic cantata *The Lamentation of Doctor Faustus* uses a mournful dissonant echo to create an ode to sorrow as a counterpart to Beethoven's ode to joy.

In 1930 Leverkühn assembles his friends to confess his pact with the Devil (which most of them see as an allegorical joke) and to play his new piece. He collapses at the piano, falling into a coma from which he recovers physically but not mentally. Zeitblom cannot be sure if Leverkühn is actually in league with Satan. But he is aware that the

question is irrelevant. Mann presents it as inevitable that Leverkühn should succumb to the Devil because the composer has been seduced by the demonic for years. The Devil has always been present in Leverkühn's satanic, 'mildly orgiastic' laughter, which Zeitblom found disconcerting in their youth (p. 94).¹⁶ Leverkühn is a genius and Zeitblom observes that there is always a 'faint, sinister connection' between genius and the nether world (p. 6).¹⁷ He is a musician and music is inherently devilish, belonging to 'a world of spirits' (p. 11).¹⁸

So too Leverkühn is caught up on the same demonic tide as Nazism. He sees Zeitblom's humanism as outmoded, committing instead to a mixture of nihilism and barbaric primitivism. 'You will break through the age itself. . . and dare a barbarism,' the Devil says to him (p. 259).¹⁹ The phrase 'break through' is telling. Later in the novel Germany has a *Durchbruch* ('breakthrough') to world power under Hitler, while Nazi supporters see war as the way Germany will 'break through (*durchbrechen*) to a new form of life in which state and culture would be one' (p. 317).²⁰ The Nazis may ban Leverkühn's works for their experimental dissonance, but Leverkühn is a kindred spirit. More explicitly than Stephen Spender, Mann is suggesting here, as he had in his lecture, that German culture was fundamentally receptive to Nazism. And like Spender, Mann saw Germany as half deserving the destruction that he now lyrically mourned.

As in Mann's 1945 lecture, the Germany of *Doktor Faustus* has made a pact with the Devil, and it is now paying the price as its cities are destroyed from the air. This devilish act, Zeitblom says, 'would scream to the heavens were not we who suffer it ourselves laden with guilt' (p. 184).²¹ Zeitblom is convinced that the Germans deserve this apocalyptic justice even as he laments the passing of a world he once loved.

Since starting the book in 1943, Mann had followed news of the war obsessively, imagining day by day the destruction of the cities he had once loved. His diary from the war years charts the raids over Germany alongside his progress with his book: 'Berlin's agony, no coal, no electricity'; 'Heavy bombing of Germany [. . .] The cities fall like ripe plums'; 'the failure of the novel is beyond doubt now.'²²

It is therefore not surprising that Zeitblom's sorrow at the destruction of Germany echoes Mann's. Zeitblom begins the book on 23 May 1943 (the day that Mann himself began to write) from a hideaway in Freising on the Isar, just outside Munich. On 14 March 1945 Mann recorded receiving news from his son Klaus about the destruction of their Munich

house, noting a 'strange impression' in his diary. That day he was engaged in writing Chapter Twenty-Six, where Zeitblom reports that 'the terror of the almost daily air raids on our nicely encircled Fortress Europe increases to dimensions beyond conceiving [...] more and more of our cities collapse in ruin' (p. 267).²³

In his hermit's cell on the Isar, Zeitblom recoils from 'our hideously battered Munich', with its toppled statues, its facades 'that gaze from vacant eye sockets to disguise the yawning void beyond' (p. 474).²⁴ This was a landscape that Mann had not seen, and had no intention of seeing in the near future. But he had read about it in the newspapers and in the anguished reports from his children, who had returned as occupiers; it haunted his dreams and his diary, and now became eerily tangible in his novel.

In California, Mann had hoped publicly and to a large extent privately that Germany would lose the war. Like Spender in *European Witness* he saw the destruction of the German cities both as tragically necessary and as the supreme achievement of his age. He reminded his readers of America's superior military prowess in his novel, voicing Zeitblom's ironic surprise that 'enfeebled democracies do indeed know how to use these dreadful tools', and that war is not after all 'a German prerogative' (p. 268).²⁵ But the prospect of another shameful German defeat had also filled Mann with secret horror that he expressed through Zeitblom, who admits that he 'cannot help fearing it more than anything else in the world' (p. 33).²⁶ Zeitblom never quite allows himself to hope for either defeat or victory. He is pleased when the Germans invent a new kind of torpedo, feeling 'a certain satisfaction at our ever resourceful spirit of invention', even if it is used in the service of a regime that has led them into a war aimed at creating a terrifying 'and as the world sees it, so it would seem, quite intolerable reality of a German Europe' (p. 183).²⁷

Through Zeitblom, Mann turns the Germans into a nation of tragic heroes; good people grappling with impossible paradoxes whose current mental state 'weighs more heavily upon them than it would upon any other, hopelessly estranging them from themselves' (p. 34).²⁸ If Zeitblom's sons knew that he secretly possessed Leverkühn's private papers, they would denounce him, but they would be horrified by their own act. Mann once described Zeitblom as 'a parody of myself'.²⁹ Through Zeitblom he was ironizing the German tendency to see their conflicts of conscience as unusually noble and profound. Zeitblom does not always perceive how much he displays the vices of his nation. He

shares his intellectual compatriots’ cultural elitism and fear of the masses; like his creator he participated in the ‘popular elation’ at the start of the First World War (p. 317). He is too foolish not to be mocked for asserting that the German ‘soul is powerfully tragic’, that ‘our love belongs to fate [...] even a doom that sets the heavens afire with the red twilight of the gods’ (p. 185).³⁰ But even as he mocked his own tale, Mann allowed it to take on full tragic force and implicated himself in the tragedy; like Zeitblom, he ultimately shared Leverkühn’s belief in the redemptive power of art, believing too both that art mattered more than life and that art had the power to transform the life it represented. ‘How much *Faustus* contains of the atmosphere of my life!’ Mann wrote in January 1946, ‘A radical confession, at bottom. From the very beginning that has been the shattering thing about the book’.³¹

At the time that *Faustus* was published there was another commentary on Germany in the making and, like *Faustus*, it was being created amid the sunny palm trees and bougainvillea of California. But this response was more comic. When he was first stationed in Germany in 1945, Wilder had been expecting to make a documentary about the concentration camps. He sat through hour after hour of footage of piled up corpses and emaciated survivors, and waited anxiously to see if he would recognize his mother or grandmother in any of the shots. At this stage he was determined to play his part in convincing the Germans of their guilt. However, as his months in Germany went on it became clear that the American authorities were not in any hurry to use this renowned filmmaker to make films. He was given a series of menial tasks that left him determined to break free of the bureaucracy and make a film on his own. This became *A Foreign Affair* and was framed from the start as an entertainment film rather than a didactic documentary. As he put it in a memorandum, it was to be ‘a very special love story, cleverly devised to help us sell a few ideological items’.³²

The film portrays a romance between an American soldier, Johnny, and a German singer, Erika (played by Wilder’s old friend the anti-Nazi German actress Marlene Dietrich), who turns out to have been the lover of a Gestapo chief before the German defeat ushered in a new group of powerful men and she conveniently fell for Johnny. After Congress sends a group of spies to observe the behaviour of the American army abroad, Johnny seduces Phoebe, a goody-goody American Congresswoman, in an effort to distract her from trailing Erika. The film is fundamentally ambivalent because it portrays both the Germans and the Americans

as simultaneously likeable and corrupt, and portrays both regimes as impossibly flawed.

Wilder had not forgiven the Germans, who emerge as opportunistic Nazis. But he could not see the American occupiers as much better. At the start of the film one of the visiting Congressmen objects controversially to the blatant propaganda being put forward by the Occupation: 'If you give a hungry man a loaf of bread, that's democracy. If you leave the wrapper on, it's imperialism'. In the summer of 1947, when the film was set, this was just what the Americans, as much as the Russians, were doing. And Wilder's GIs are no less corrupt than the Germans they are there to reeducate. They sell their morals and their possessions for sex with German women for whom they often have very little respect.

Johnny is attracted to Erika because she has been a Nazi, not in spite of it; their chemistry lends Nazism an erotic charge. 'How about a kiss now, you beast of Belsen', he says to her in the original draft of the script, after he has brought her a tatty mattress as a present and she has spat a mouthful of toothpaste half-playfully in his face.³³ By the time the film had been completed, this had been replaced with the milder 'you gorgeous boob trap', but there was still no mistaking the strange allure of her Nazi past. 'For fifteen years we haven't slept in Germany', Erika grumbles, refusing to be grateful. 'No mattress will help you sleep. What you Germans need is a good conscience', Johnny replies, taking on the line of his government. 'I have a good conscience, I have a new Führer now, you. *Heil Johnny*', Erika says, raising her arm in a Nazi salute. 'You *heil* me once more and I'll knock your teeth in', he warns, obviously aroused by her depravity. 'You'd bruise your lips,' she replies, and Johnny places his hands around her neck as he tells her that he ought to choke her a little and break her in two. 'Build a fire under you, you blonde witch.'

As Wilder and Dietrich both knew, war makes monsters of men. Johnny is to be forgiven his flirtation with Nazism. He informs his saccharine Congresswoman paramour that he has raced at a hundred miles an hour through burning towns for five years and is unable to jam on the brakes and stop. And luckily Phoebe proves forgiving of Johnny. But, despite Phoebe's redemptive powers, Erika remains the film's pulsating star. 'That's the kind of pastry makes you drool on your bib', one GI says of her, and it is a view Wilder encourages. Dietrich is lovingly followed by the camera as she wends her way lazily around the Lorelei nightclub, casually drawing on the cigarettes of her male

onlookers. What is more, Dietrich was allowed to wear the same dresses that she had worn as a USO singer, identifying herself to Americans as one of them. The film may end with Johnny going obediently home to the US with his efficient Iowan Congresswoman, but there is no doubt that he will be considerably less interesting away from Erika. And her scenes took Wilder and his audiences back to his own cinematic past.³⁴

Holländer's songs, performed by Erika in the Lorelei nightclub, bring the spirit of 1920s Berlin to occupied postwar Germany, further complicating the viewer's relationship with the Germans. They imbue the ruins of Berlin with the tragedy, nonchalance and sultry eroticism of its Weimar roots, especially as Dietrich sings 'Falling in Love Again', the English version of the Holländer song ('Ich bin von Kopf bis Fuss auf Liebe eingestellt') that had become her theme tune in *Der blaue Engel* (*The Blue Angel*), the 1930 film that had made her name. What is more, Holländer himself plays the piano at the Lorelei; at one stage Dietrich removes a cigarette from Johnny's mouth to place it in his. It is as though he has been sitting at the piano in a seedy Berlin basement since the time of *Der blaue Engel*, when he played an almost identical part. Like Spender and like Mann, Wilder was nostalgic for the lost Germany of his own youth: for a German culture that all three saw as containing the seeds of Nazism, but that they could not revoke because they remained aware that it had shaped them.

If Wilder allied himself with the Germans through his nostalgia for Weimar culture, he also provided the Americans with the most vivid depiction most of them would have seen of the wreckage of Berlin. How could they not feel sorry for the Germans after seeing aerial footage of street after street of hollowed out facades? Wry asides like 'that pile of stone over there was the Adlon hotel just after the 8th air force checked in for the weekend' serve to remind us of the casualness with which these buildings were destroyed. Johnny asks Phoebe if she really wants the Americans 'to stand there on the blackened rubble of what used to be a corner of what used to be a street with an open sample case of assorted freedoms waving the flag and giving out the bill of rights'. How could he not accept Erika's defence of her own will to survive? She has been bombed out a dozen times; everything has caved in and been pulled out from under her – 'my country, my possessions, my beliefs'; she has spent months in air-raid shelters crammed in with hundreds of other people; she has endured the arrival of the Red Army. Surely it is not the place of the Americans to come in now and tell her that she has been wrong

to keep going. The rubble she inhabits makes this point more eloquently than either she or Johnny can.

By dwelling so luxuriantly on these ruins, Wilder showed that part of his heart had remained in Germany. The destruction might be necessary, but it was devastating nonetheless. However distant they felt from the Germans who remained in Germany, neither Wilder nor Mann could represent Germany without moments of revelatory intimacy. And though they could not forgive the Germans for their crimes, neither could they forgive their new compatriots for the ruin they had wrought in the cities of their youth. Whether they intended it or not, Wilder and Dietrich had used their outsider perspective to create a form of rubble art that enabled audiences to sympathize with the Germans they still despised, mobilizing culture to create tolerance.³⁵

DESPAIR

Torn between lamenting the destruction of Germany and blaming the Germans for their ruin, Mann turned to tragedy and Wilder to comedy, while Spender found himself engulfed in nausea and nightmare, and Gellhorn sent Levy's jeep speeding to destruction, reeling in helplessness before a maimed and tormented world. Werner Sollors has suggested that for those who witnessed the ruins in postwar Germany, these years were characterized by the 'temptation of despair'. Certainly this was the case for Klaus Mann.

If completed, Klaus Mann's unfinished 1949 novel *The Last Day* would have joined *Doktor Faustus* as another ambitious, ambivalent and ultimately tragic novel in the genre of 'outsider rubble literature', though the rubble depicted is more mental than physical, despite the partial German setting. It is essentially an investigation into whether German despair is inevitably world despair; whether German guilt is a universal human condition and whether suicide is the only possible response. In its simplest form, the novel contrasts the experiences of an 'inner' and an 'outer' emigrant, alternating the point of view of two German writers in East Berlin and New York who resent the domineering intellectual control imposed by the Soviet Union and the US respectively. Albert is a cultural official in East Germany who is too idealistic for the new Soviet-controlled Germany. Julian is a German exile living in New York who can never forget that he shares the guilt of his race and who feels disillusioned by Truman's America. An American official plays a fateful part in the lives of both men, turning Albert into an outsider even

as he remains an insider in Germany and derailing Julian’s position as an insider in America by drawing attention to his more European convictions. In Berlin, he offers Albert the chance to defect to West Germany ‘without any obligations’; in New York, he writes to Julian, denouncing him as a communist.³⁶

Julian wonders about publishing a manifesto in a communist newspaper, but he is aware that he is no more comfortable with communism than he is with American capitalism. He becomes convinced that despair itself can be a form of protest and decides to commit suicide. The novel ends with the deaths of both men. Albert, about to escape to the West, is betrayed by his wife and arrested by Russian officers who shoot him when he tries to escape (‘dirt and blood. A messy agony’) while Julian kills himself, attempting to slash his wrists in the bathtub and then jumping naked from the window (Chapter 18).

The scenes Klaus Mann sketched in the most detail are those depicting Julian’s decline. Julian is enthused by the ‘sudden certainty’ that he wants to die. Absolute despair seems to him to have tremendous power—‘a dynamic impact’; it can be made into ‘an argument of irresistible persuasiveness’ because ‘a man who has given up hope becomes invincible’. He thinks about founding a ‘League of the Desperate Ones’, a ‘Suicide Club’. Other members already include ‘the Austrian humanist who took his life in Brazil’ (Stefan Zweig) and ‘the English novelist and *femme de lettres* who drowned herself’ (Virginia Woolf). His death will be a form of protest motivating the intellectual elite all over the world to join his organization. Immediately, Julian worries that these ‘political’ motives for suicide may be an artificial ‘rationalization’ when in fact the will to death is ‘primary, elementary’. But then he decides that it is reasonable to ‘turn one’s delusions into something constructive’; to sublimate the death instinct. ‘I die in an exemplary manner: my death is a signal, a challenge, an appeal’ (Chapter 15).

In Julian’s death, Klaus Mann relived in gruesome, almost comical detail the horrors of a suicide attempt he himself had made the previous year. Julian drinks whiskey and clambers naked into the bath. He starts cutting his wrists with the razor blade and finds that ‘the taste of death is bitter [...] my purple bath, my blood bath’. The water reddens as he tries his right wrist and then, more successfully, his left. But the vein contracts and the blood stops. He climbs out of the bathtub and rushes through the room, dripping with blood and water as he fumbles to open the window (Chapter 19).

Klaus Mann told a friend that he was confronting 'the issue of suicide' in his novel because it was 'more tedious and more painful but somehow more honourable than actually doing it'.³⁷ In May 1949 he actually did it, killing himself in Cannes. Curtailed by its author's death, *The Last Day* stands in brilliant but uneasy counterpoint to the other works considered here. Klaus Mann did not have time to seek the moments of redemption sought by Spender, nor to turn the situation in Germany into the rich tragedy wrought by Thomas Mann.

The mood of Klaus Mann's novel is more akin to the hopelessness of *Point of No Return* than to the mood of *European Witness* or *Doctor Faustus*. Julian's act resembles Jacob Levy's dual act of murder and suicide in its impotence, even if he has the time and the intellect to imbue it with larger philosophical implications. Both acts are a response to a hopelessness that seems to make the very notion of reconstruction impossible; that makes a mockery of the regimes which brought Gellhorn and Mann to Germany.

Both Gellhorn and Klaus Mann subscribed to Spender's pessimistic view that the sermons in the stones of the German ruins preached nihilism. In the landscape of these novels, the notion that culture might transform this would seem absurd. However, whatever his doubts about the Occupation, Spender could still believe in the transformative power of culture, as could Billy Wilder and Thomas Mann. Though it seemed unlikely that such a transformation was going to occur under the auspices of the Allies, and though they made the inclusion of culture in the reconstruction programme seem absurd, they nonetheless collectively created a genre that began to show how the rubble scattered through Germany might be capable of redemption, and how art might play its part in this process. *European Witness* pledges its faith in a pan-European cultural revival to ensure peace, while *A Foreign Affair* places its hopes in the ability of film to induce laughter that will enable tolerance. *Doktor Faustus* evinces a troubled but sustained belief in the redemptive power of great art.

NOTES

- 1 Stephen Spender, *European Witness: Impressions of Germany in 1945* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1946), pp. 23–24. Subsequent references to this work will be given in the main body of the article.

- 2 For this and other reminiscences about Germany in the late 1920s, see Stephen Spender, ‘September Journal’, *Horizon*, 1.2 (February 1940), 102–121; 1.3 (March 1940), 211–224; 1.5 (May 1940), 356–363.
- 3 Other works that could be included here are W. H. Auden’s allegorical poem ‘Memorial for the City’, Hans Habe’s novels *Walk in Darkness* and *Off Limits*, Lee Miller’s obliquely surrealist German photographs, Zelda Popkin’s novel *Small Victory*, Alan Ross’s poetry collection *The Derelict Day*, William Gardner Smith’s novel *Last of the Conquerors* and Rebecca West’s strangely personal account of her time in Nuremberg, ‘Greenhouse with Cyclamens’.
- 4 Poll cited in Tony Judt, *Postwar, A History of Europe since 1945* (London: Vintage, 2010), p. 272.
- 5 ‘The victors who’: Erich Kästner, Diary (rewritten for publication), 8 May 1945, cited in Werner Sollors, *The Temptation of Despair* (Cambridge: MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), p. 32.
- 6 Martha Gellhorn, ‘The Paths of Glory’, *Collier’s*, 9 November 1946, p. 74.
- 7 Martha Gellhorn, *Point of No Return* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), p. 228. Subsequent references to this work will be given in the main body of the article.
- 8 Martha Gellhorn to Hortense Flexner, cited in Caroline Moorehead, *Martha Gellhorn: A Life* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2003), p. 283.
- 9 Thomas Mann, ‘Germany and the Germans’, *Thomas Mann’s Addresses Delivered at the Library of Congress 1942–1949* (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 1963), pp. 47–66.
- 10 For ‘inner emigrants’, see Stephen Brockmann, *German Literary Culture at the Zero Hour* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2004), pp. 95–100.
- 11 Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust: The First Part of the Tragedy*, translated by David Constantine (London: Penguin, 2005), p. 57. ‘Werd ich zum Augenblicke sagen: Verweile doch! Du bist so schön!’ Johann Wolfgang Goethe, ‘Faust, eine Tragödié’, *Faust* (Basel: Birkhäuser 1944), p. 184. Goethe’s Faust does continue to experience pleasure (notably sexual pleasure with Gretchen and other women) but this is transient; he has made a bargain with Mephistopheles that if he ever experiences the kind of transcendent happiness that makes him long for a particular moment to continue, the Devil will be in possession of his soul.
- 12 Thomas Mann, *Doctor Faustus: The Life of the German Composer Adrian Leverkühn as Told by a Friend*, translated by John E. Woods (London: Vintage International, 1999), p. 265. Subsequent references to these works will be given in the main body of the article. ‘Ist etwa die Kälte bei dir nicht vorgebildet’, Thomas Mann, *Doktor Faustus: Das Leben des deutschen Tonsetzers Adrian Leverkühn erzählt von einem Freunde* (Frankfurt a. M.: S. Fischer Verlag, 1965), p. 332.
- 13 Other obvious models for Leverkühn are Adorno and Schoenberg. See Ehrhard Bahr, *Weimar on the Pacific: German Exile Culture in Los Angeles and the Crisis of Modernism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007) for a discussion of Mann’s influences.
- 14 ‘Dein Leben soll kalt sein’, p. 332.
- 15 ‘Ich habe gefunden [...] es soll nicht sein’, ‘was man das Menschliche nennt [...] Es wird zurückgenommen’, p. 634.
- 16 ‘leicht orgiastische’, p. 115.

- 17 'eine leises Grauen erweckende Verbindung', p. 11.
- 18 'Geisterwelt', p. 16.
- 19 'die Zeit selber [...] wirst du durchbrechen und dich der Barbarei erdreisten', p. 324.
- 20 'in einem großen Volkskrieg [...] das Mittel sehen zum Durchbruch in eine Lebensform, in der Staat und Kultur eines sein würden', p. 400.
- 21 'die Zerstörung [...], die zum Himmel schreien würde, wenn nicht wir Schuldbeladenen es wären, die sie erleiden', p. 231.
- 22 Thomas Mann, 9 February 1945, 25 February 1945, 3 April 1945, 4 April 1945, *Tagebücher*, edited by Peter de Mendelssohn and Inge Jens (Berlin: S. Fischer, 1977) (my translation): 'Schauerlich die Agonie von Berlin. Keine Kohle, keine Elektrizität', 'schweres Bombardement Deutschlands', 'Die Städte fallen wie reife Pflaumen', 'Das Mißraten des Romans kann wohl keinem Zweifel mehr unterliegen.'
- 23 'Unterdessen wächst der Schrecken der fast täglichen Luftangriffe auf unsere wohlumgürtete Festung Europa ins Überdimensionale [...] immer weitere unserer Städte sinken in Trümmer', p. 335.
- 24 'und meide den Anblick unseres gräßlich zugerichteten München [...] der aus leeren Augenhöhlen blickenden Fassaden, die das hinter ihnen gähnende Nichts verstellen', p. 600.
- 25 'die entnervten Demokratien diese furchtbaren Mittel sogar zu benutzen wissen', 'ein deutsches Prärogativ', p. 336.
- 26 'so daß wir gar nicht umhinkönnen, sie mehr zu fürchten als alles auf der Welt', p. 45.
- 27 'eine gewisse Genugtuung [...] über unseren immer regen Erfindungsgeist', 'und, wie es scheint, der Welt unerträgliche Wirklichkeit eines deutschen Europas', p. 229.
- 28 'eine seelische Lage [...], die ihm meiner Überzeugung nach schwerer fällt als jedem anderen, und es sich selber heillos entfremdet', p. 46.
- 29 Thomas Mann to Paul Amann, cited in Mark W. Clark, *Beyond Catastrophe: German Intellectuals and Cultural Renewal after World War II, 1945–1955* (Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2006), p. 101. Clark notes that through Zeitblom Mann was ironizing the German tendency to see their conflicts of conscience as unusually noble and profound. For a discussion of the novel's self-reflexivity and Zeitblom's unreliability as a narrator see Martin Swales, 'The Over-Representations of History? Reflections on Thomas Mann's *Doktor Faustus*' in Mary Fulbrook and Martin Swales, eds, *Representing the German Nation* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 77–90.
- 30 'von mächtig tragischer Seele', 'unsere Liebe gehört dem Schicksal... sei es auch der den Himmel mit Götterdämmerungsroße entzündende Untergang', p. 232.
- 31 Thomas Mann, 1 January 1946, *Tagebücher*: 'Wieviel enthält der 'Faustus' von meiner Lebensstimmung. Es war von Anfang an das Aufregende an dem Buch. Im Grunde ein radikales Bekenntnis.'
- 32 Memorandum for the United States Information Control Division on the subject of 'Propaganda through Entertainment', 16 Aug 1945, in Ralph Willett, *The Americanization of Germany, 1945–1949* (London: Routledge, 1988), p. 42.
- 33 For a detailed dating of Wilder's scenario, see Sollors, *The Temptation of Despair*, p. 249.
- 34 For Wilder's nostalgia for Weimar cinema, see Gerd Gemünden, 'In the Ruins of Berlin: *A Foreign Affair*', in *German Post-war Films: Life and Love in the Ruins*, edited

by Wilfried Wilms and William Rasch (Basingstoke; Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp. 109–124.

- 35 See Sollors, *The Temptation of Despair* for a discussion of Wilder’s sympathy towards postwar Germany. By analysing several of Wilder’s drafts of the screenplay, Sollors argues that the changes in the script parallel the change in American attitudes towards Germany from a punitive posture to a collaborative one (p. 253).
- 36 Klaus Mann, *The Last Day*, manuscript, Chapter 10, Klaus Mann Archive, Monacensia Literaturarchiv. Subsequent chapter references to this work will be given in the main body of the article.
- 37 Cited in Andrea Weiss, *In the Shadow of the Magic Mountain: The Erika and Klaus Mann Story* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), p. 236.

War by Other Means: British Information Control and Wolfgang Borchert's *Draußen vor der Tür*

ERWIN J. WARKENTIN

Abstract:

This article focuses on the stage and radio play *Draußen vor der Tür* (*The Man Outside*) by Wolfgang Borchert, broadcast in the British zone of occupation for the first time on 13 February 1947. A careful comparison of the stage and radio versions allows us to ascertain the degree to which the changes made by the British radio control officers Hugh Carleton Greene and David Porter were political in nature. The article opens by outlining both the history of the creation of the radio version and Borchert's attitude towards the Public Relations/ Information Services Division of the Control Commission for Germany (PR/ISC) (through the analysis of Borchert's correspondence). The original NWDR (Nordwestdeutscher Rundfunk/ Northwest German Broadcasting) typescript of the radio broadcast, complete with handwritten emendations, is then compared with the published version, confirming how the radio play was edited to conform to British broadcast standards for a German audience, as well as the Anglo-American reeducation programme for Germany. Greene and Porter systematically edited out mention of postwar German suicides, overt German suffering, attacks on the German institutions the British considered important in the reconstruction of Germany, and any suggestion that the Allies had engaged in morally dubious acts during or after the war.

It is often assumed that the German authors writing in the immediate postwar period (1945–1948), at least those in the zones controlled by the Western Allies, were free to express and publish thoughts that were of their own choosing.¹ However, Wolfgang Borchert's response to the question of freedom of expression in occupied Germany suggests that the authors of the period realized that this did not mean that what they wrote would also be published. When asked to comment on democracy in Germany, Borchert was unequivocal:

As long as there are the cigarette butts of foreign powers lying in the streets (with this I don't want to say anything bad about the cigarettes) and as long as I must fill

out 16-page questionnaires just to get a story published in a magazine, as long as that's the case, it's pointless to discuss democracy and personal freedom.²

Clearly, this is a reference to the activities of not just the British Military Government in general, but specifically the Public Relations/Information Services Division of the Control Commission for Germany (PR/ISD), since they controlled the media with which Borchert would have had direct contact.

Given the fact that the four primary Allied occupation forces each instituted some form of media control in their zones, it is reasonable to assume that they would have left some observable traces in the works produced during this period. It is the purpose of this article to identify markers left behind by the PR/ISD in the most significant play written in the initial years following the end of the Second World War in British-controlled Germany, as a way to illuminate the extent to which the Allies sought to control culture in their zones.

Wolfgang Borchert's radio and stage play, *Draußen vor der Tür* (*The Man Outside*),³ is distinctive in that we know that British control officers edited the play prior to broadcast. However, it has never been analysed from this perspective, save for a few lines in Gordon Burgess' biography of Borchert, where he concludes that 'it would be idle to speculate on the thinking behind the cuts'.⁴ Burgess does not touch on the question of why the 13 February 1947 broadcast was permitted in the first place, other than to intimate that it was simply judged a great play that needed to be staged or broadcast. In fact, even if the German executive producer of radio dramas for NWDR, Ernst Schnabel, had thought this to be the case, without the support of the PR/ISD officers Hugh Carleton Greene and David Porter, the play would never have been put before a broad audience. It could not have become, as Axel Eggebrecht, one of the founders of NWDR, stated in a 1986 interview, one of the few great accomplishments of German radio.⁵

What is known about *Draußen vor der Tür* is that it went through at least two iterations before it was performed on stage and published. The stage play first came to the attention of Ruth Malchow-Hut, an editor for NWDR, when she was given a typescript of the play by Borchert to read and offer a critical opinion of shortly before Christmas 1946. She passed it on to Günter Schnabel, then a NWDR dramaturge, in January 1947. By pure chance his brother, Ernst Schnabel, then Chief Dramaturge with NWDR, picked it up from his brother's desk and read it. He was so taken by the script that he immediately asked if Borchert could rewrite the

drama as a radio play.⁶ Borchert complied and the play was broadcast on 13 February 1947. While this might not raise any eyebrows, and might appear to be a perfectly normal way for a play to move from the hands of the playwright to its presentation on the radio, there was another phase in the development of the play that is seldom mentioned and, when it is noted, granted little significance.

The intermediate step in German postwar radio, especially when it came to radio dramas, was the responsibility of control officers, who needed to approve what was aired. This was due to the immediacy of radio broadcasts and the fact that, once broadcast, it did not allow for retroactive censorship. In this particular case, the officers were Hugh Carleton Greene, who would go on to become director of the BBC, and David Porter.

Prior to the war Greene had worked as the Chief Correspondent for *The Daily Telegraph* in Berlin. During the war he served as a liaison between the BBC and the Political Warfare Executive (PWE), ensuring that the competing goals of the two organizations were coordinated. What this entailed is not entirely clear, but it did mean that he was well-versed in the policies of both organizations. Moreover, he was familiar with how propaganda needed to be structured, which is evidenced by his work in 1947 for the British Army in Malaysia.⁷ For his part, David Porter had worked for the BBC since 1935 as a writer and producer of radio plays and light entertainment. During the war he continued with these responsibilities and also produced Grimm's fairy tales for the BBC Home Service. It is here that he most likely had his first contact with the PWE and Greene, due to the sensitive nature of producing material of German origin for British consumption. Porter took up his responsibilities with the PR/ISD unit in Hamburg during the first months of 1946. Upon returning to London and the BBC in 1948 the first broadcast he produced was *Draußen vor der Tür*, which he had also translated into English, thus introducing Borchert and *The Man Outside* to the English-speaking world.⁸

There is no indication that Borchert had any personal animus towards Greene and Porter, or that he even knew them personally, though he would have known of them. Despite this there are passages in Borchert's correspondence, as well as testimony from those who knew him, which suggest that he held a negative attitude towards what he labelled British cultural politics (*Kulturpolitik*). For instance, in a letter to his lawyer, Carl Hager, Borchert intimates that, even though the current political situation seemed to favour him, he was not comfortable

with being judged according to his political past, and went so far as to suggest that, should the opportunity present itself, he would erase that political past.⁹ In a later letter to Hugo Sieker, most likely in the midst of creating the radio version of *Draußen vor der Tür*, Borchert writes that he would be most happy to help Sieker in his difficulties with the 'Committee'. While one might assume this to be the denazification tribunal ('Spruchkammer'), it was actually a British committee overseeing the licensing of newspaper staff. Sieker was being called to account for his continued work with the *Hamburger Anzeiger* (*Hamburg Gazette*) until 1944, amid apparent accusations of complicity with the Nazis. Borchert, in his letter, even went so far as to accuse the British of wanting to repay 'gas chamber with gas chamber' ('Gaskammer mit Gaskammer').¹⁰

The possible cause of Borchert's cynicism in regard to the British PR/ISD may have been growing for some time. Nine months earlier, in a note from Hugo Sieker dated 6 April 1946, Borchert had learned that the British occupiers were no longer interested in his writings.¹¹ It seems that 'Die Hundebblume' ('The Dandelion') had been with them for a while until it was finally rejected.

All of this shows that Borchert harboured at least some resentment towards the British occupiers; it shows too that the comments ascribed to him by Rühmkorf are by and large in keeping with his general attitude towards the Occupation. However, it appears that the British control officers were more than just a nuisance that an aspiring German writer might have to tolerate. In a letter to Heinz Schwitzke, written by Helmut Gumtau while conducting research for his monograph on Borchert in the late 1960s, Gumtau reveals that *Draußen vor der Tür* may have been shortened for more than just technical reasons.¹² Gumtau states he had had a conversation with Hertha Borchert, Wolfgang Borchert's mother, which revealed that

[the radio play] was said to have been somewhat more restrained than the original version due to political considerations (occupation forces) [...] in the radio version the political changes went further, to the point of the Kramer scene's meaning being fundamentally changed.

(Sie soll sich wegen politischer Rücksichten (Besatzungsmacht) etwas mehr zurückgehalten haben als die Urfassung, [...] daß in der Radiofassung die politischen Änderungen viel weitergingen, bis zur grundlegenden Umdeutung der Kramer-Szene).¹³

Although Gumtau does not say what those changes might have been, we are able to re-establish the changes made by comparing the radio

play with the published version of the stage play. The differences are remarkable and telling as regards the PR/ISC's policies towards Germany's ideological reorientation.

The radio version of *Draußen vor der Tür* is 32.6% shorter than the published version.¹⁴ There is a handwritten comment by Borchert on the back of a telegram from Julius Flack inquiring about the differences between the two versions for Swiss radio, where Borchert states: 'Radio version & stage version identical. Radio version in Hamburg shortened only due to technical reasons' ('Hörspielfassung u Bühnenfassung identisch. Hörspielfassung in Hamburg lediglich aus programmtech. Gründen gekürzt').¹⁵ However, this is not entirely the case. Many of the passages removed are clearly of a political nature and cannot simply have been elided merely for the sake of removing repetition, as suggested by Burgess, and, to a degree, even Borchert himself.¹⁶

The foreword was left untouched for the most part, with just three words added. The prologue, on the other hand, was cut by 11.9%. This represents the first instance, albeit a minor one, in which one can feel Greene and Porter at work. The standard policy was that the Germans were not to be allowed to wallow in their own misery; accordingly, such sentiments are removed.¹⁷ In fact, throughout the radio version, references to Germans who commit suicide are excised, an issue that already concerned the British organizations preparing for the eventual occupation of Germany before the end of hostilities.¹⁸ In preparation for the occupation and reeducation of Germany, it was emphasized in reports prepared for the PWE that the Germans were not to be allowed to focus on their own suffering, which should be contextualized by the suffering they had brought on the countries they had occupied. They were to focus on rebuilding their country. From the British perspective, if mention of suicide on a massive scale had been allowed, it might have been tantamount to admitting that the Germans were suffering more than any of those they had conquered and occupied.

In this context, one might ask why Greene and Porter allowed Beckmann's suicide, which forms the fundamental premise of the play. However, Beckmann's suicide is different from all the others, in that it is clearly marked as only an attempted suicide, with the character of *The Other One* (*Der Andere*) providing implicit reasoning for continuing to live. When viewed in this way, the attempted suicide refocuses attention on Beckmann's reasons for living.

The third of the initial sequences is *The Dream* (*Der Traum*). It is noteworthy that this section in the radio play is, at 577 words, longer than

the stage play's corresponding section and the dialogue is little changed. Since the additions are hardly vital to the narrative, one might ask why they wanted to add extra words if the goal was simply to shorten the play due to technical time constraints, as was claimed. This is one of the few places where one might argue that a change was made in order to improve the play, in that the inclusions reflected on what Beckmann hoped for in death: 'To sleep. To hear nothing. To feel nothing.' ('Pennen, Nichts hören. Nichts fühlen.').¹⁹ However, Beckmann is disabused of this notion through another addition, when he is bluntly told by the Goddess of the Elbe that in death he would not be allowed to simply laze about.²⁰

The first scene of the play proper is slightly shorter in the radio version (5.5%), with the segment involving the Girl and Beckmann being untouched during editing. The initial section consists of a conversation between Beckmann and The Other One, in which Beckmann is encouraged to continue living. Notably, The Other One's explanation of himself as the optimist, the one who sees the positive in the negative and the one who laughs and loves, is removed from the radio version. Of greater significance is the fact that Beckmann's reasons for his attempted suicide are also removed from the radio version.

Here Beckmann also gives the rationale for his injured knee, which causes him to limp throughout the play, preventing him from forgetting the war. A passage such as this, hinting that the war could indeed be forgotten, might have come too close to implying that one might easily sweep the entire matter under the carpet and continue as if nothing had happened. Such a suggestion would simply not have been acceptable to the British occupiers. While some of the other characters in the play do indeed attempt to do so, Beckmann functions as their figurative kneecap, an ever-present reminder of the war.

At the end of the scene Beckmann is once more confronted by The Other One, who seems amused that despite his own best efforts to reawaken Beckmann's desire for life, it is the possibility of Beckmann developing a connection with a woman that triggers a longing to live. Though the radio version maintains the sentiment of Beckmann's attraction to the woman, the erotic undertones are removed from the monologue, suggesting that the censors were prudish as well as politically cautious.²¹

In the second scene the editing has become more pronounced, in that 12.8% of the scene has been cut from the radio version. The Girl's lines are cut by almost 18% and Beckmann's lines are reduced by approximately 11%, with the other characters' lines remaining the

same. Some changes hint at political considerations rather than technical or artistic concerns. When Beckmann, despite his desire for the Girl, has doubts about the future and is depressed by the fact that society has closed its doors to him, these lines are struck.²² Once again at the end of the scene, when Beckmann counters The Other One's urgings to live on, the lines referring to Beckmann's physical discomfort and his exclusion from society are removed from the radio play.²³

The editing of the radio version becomes more aggressive in Scene Three, with a reduction in the dialogue of about 22%. It is also notable that this scene presents a contrast in the living conditions for the ordinary soldier and those who had been part of Germany's military institution. While Beckmann cannot escape his uniform, since it is the only clothing he has, the Colonel has already changed into civilian apparel and is enjoying the benefits of peace, namely food, warmth and the company of his family. While Beckmann, as the main character of the play, carries the bulk of the dialogue throughout the play, 53.4% in the radio play and 58.8% in the stage version, he is especially prominent in this scene, accounting for 71.4% of the dialogue in the radio play and 72% in the stage version.

Once more, as in previous scenes, complaints of physical discomfort and hunger are excised from the radio version. Moreover, as the censors remove any reminder of German suffering in the bombed out cities of this time, these lines serve another purpose. The contrast between the life enjoyed by the Colonel and Beckmann's homelessness focuses the listener's attention on the crass treatment the returning soldier endured at the hands of those who once led him. It emphasizes the meaningless clichés used to drive men into the service of what the Nazis defined as truth, which turns out to be nothing but an empty phrase extolling the virtues of 'good German truth' ('unsere gute deutsche Wahrheit').²⁴

COLONEL: My dear young friend, you're thoroughly distorting the whole thing, you know. We're Germans, after all. Let's please stick to good German truth. He who prizes truth makes the best trooper, says Clausewitz.

BECKMANN: Right sir. That's fine, sir. In a question of truth I'll play. We eat till we're full, sir, really full, sir. We put on a new shirt and a suit with buttons, with no holes in it. And then we light the stove, sir: yes, we've got a stove, sir. And we put the kettle on to make a nice hot rum. Then we pull down the blinds and drop into an armchair, for we've an armchair too, you know. We can smell our wife's fine perfume, and no blood, ch, sir, no blood, and we think about the white bed we've got, the two of us, sir, the bed that's waiting for us upstairs, white, warm and welcoming. And then we prize truth, sir, our good German truth.²⁵

In fact, when Beckmann's lines are removed, it concentrates criticism of German militarism on the officer class, and not the willingness of the ordinary soldier to follow the orders of those officers. This would have been in keeping with British policy, which preferred to dismantle Germany's military institutions and make an example of its upper echelons, rather than attack the common soldier for his complicity in following orders.²⁶

If the point of the excisions by Greene and Porter, working with Schnabel and Borchert, was simply to abridge the original version, it would be surprising, as noted earlier, if they added to the radio version. Earlier additions tended to be negligible. However, in at least one case 102 words, or approximately a minute of running time, is added to the radio version:

COLONEL: (laughs irrepressibly so that he almost bursts) (quietly, as if choking)... But—my dear Mr. ah—Beckmann! Why so dark?—Why so destructive?—No, really, my ah—my ah—dearest best Mr.—ah—Beckmann—you should really sleep it off. You've maybe—ah been—affected a bit—ah—by the campaign! Perhaps you should take a trip to the south and really relax! After all, you do look a little—ah—gloomy. Tell me, you are not perhaps secretly a pacifist, are you? Honestly, Beckmann! Or—hehe (laughs)—are you in the end a bit of a trickster, my dear man?! There was—ah—some dark humour in the thing you've performed for us, really, I must say, capital humour. This dream—(laughs ever louder) precious—no really, quite precious.²⁷

This segment is as notable for what it adds as for what it removes from the dialogue. For example, the reference in the directions to 'his healthy Prussianness' ('sein gesundes Preußentum') is removed. The reason for this might be that it is a stage direction and not intended to be read. However, in the printed version it needed to be removed as well, because it was a reminder of what Germany had lost.

The editing of the radio version ensured that the suffering of the individual did not become too personal. It kept the anguish on a conceptual level. For example, when Beckmann recounts his nightmares to the Colonel and his family, the details that would make his misery palpable and realistic are excised.

BECKMANN: [...] The dead don't answer. God — doesn't answer. ~~But the living ask. They ask every night, sir. When I lie awake, they come and ask. Women, sir, sad, sorrowing women. Old women with grey hair and coarse wrinkled hands— young women with lonely longing eyes. Children, sir, children, a thousand little children. And out of the darkness they whisper: Corporal Beckmann, where is my father, Corporal Beckmann? Corporal Beckmann, what have you done with my husband?~~

~~Corporal Beckmann, where is my son, where is my brother? Corporal Beckmann, where is my fiancé, Corporal Beckmann? Where, Corporal Beckmann, where? Where? Where? So they whisper, till it gets light. There are only eleven women.~~²⁸

It appears that one of the criteria used during the editing process for the radio play involved assessing how detailed and personal the nightmare became. As long as the description remains within the bounds of numbers alone it seems to have been acceptable. However, as soon as the hair and hands of the old women are described, and the spectres become brothers, fathers or fiancés, the lines are removed. While this might have intensified the guilty feeling of the listeners, as already noted above, the British were also sensitive to allowing the Germans to feel sorry for themselves. Their standard response was to point out to the Germans that the suffering they had caused in other countries was just as bad and in many cases even worse.²⁹

Scene Four in the radio play is abbreviated by almost 35%, with the reduction in dialogue being shared equally between Beckmann, the Producer and The Other One. It is in this portion of *Draußen vor der Tür* that Borchert tackles Germany's postwar cultural institutions. More than that, it may have implied a veiled criticism of British control of those institutions. While the Producer is clearly a German, he reflects the attitudes of the Anglo-American information control organizations and its contradictions. As shown earlier, Borchert harboured more than a little resentment towards the way German artists were treated under this new regime.

The manner in which the fourth scene is edited for broadcast echoes the suspicions the British and Americans had of Germany's literary past. This can be seen most directly when the Producer suggests what might be contained in Germany's emerging literature:

PRODUCER: (With great conviction) You see, the field of Art is just where youth's needed again, a youth that takes its stand in all problems. A courageous, sober—

BECKMANN: (To himself) Sober, yes, it must be sober.

PRODUCER: ... revolutionary youth. We need the spirit of Schiller, who wrote *The Robbers* at twenty. We need a Grabbe, a Heine! A spirit of aggressive genius, that's what we need! An unromantic, realistic, sturdy youth, which steadfastly faces up to the dark side of life, unsentimentally, objectively, with detachment. We need young people, a generation that sees and loves the world as it is. Which prizes truth, has plans, ideas—they needn't be profound truths. Nothing finished, mature and serene, for heaven's sake! It should be a cry, a cry from their heart. A question, a hope, a hunger!

BECKMANN: (To himself) Hunger, yes, we have that.

~~PRODUCER: But this youth must be young, passionate, courageous. Particularly in Art. Look at me. At seventeen I stood on the cabaret stage and showed the bourgeois my teeth and spoiled the taste of his cigar. What we lack is the *avant-garde* to present the living grey suffering face of our times!~~³⁰

References to the past are removed in the radio version and the emphasis is placed on the future, and the discovery of new talent. However, this is later contradicted when the Producer refuses to allow Beckmann an opportunity to perform, because he has no experience. Notable as well is the removal in the radio play of references to the Russian authors Dostoevsky and Gorky.³¹ This is not a surprising change, made for political reasons, given that tensions were beginning to rise between the erstwhile Allies since the Berlin elections of 22 October 1946. It might have given Borchert the appearance of a Communist.

Interestingly, the fourth scene includes another telling addition to the radio version not found in the stage play. The line ‘Art is no refuge for failed existences’ (*‘Die Kunst ist kein Asyl für gescheiterte Existenzen’*) sums up what the Allied control officers were trying to promote in Germany’s entertainment media.³² The Germans could not simply turn to meaningless art as a way of escaping the failure of Germany as a nation. Art needed to have something to say, and be relevant beyond simply being a balm to soothe the anguish over having failed.

As noted earlier, Borchert also included subtle criticism of Germany’s cultural industry under the Occupation. However, his assessment of what could be presented to German audiences went further than this. *Trümmerliteratur* (rubble literature), a designation not yet in use at this time referring to literature that reflected the physical state of Germany’s cities, is known for its straightforward and direct language. This was often interpreted as unrefined and simplistic, lacking in intellectual depth. Borchert broaches this issue in the scene with the Producer, when he has him deliver his assessment of Beckmann’s song:

~~PRODUCER: (With cowardice) Not so bad really, not so bad at all. Quite a good effort actually. For a beginner, very good. But of course, my dear young man, the whole thing still lacks spirit. It doesn’t sparkle enough. It lacks a certain polish. Of course it’s hardly a lyric. It still lacks timbre and the discreet but piquant erotic quality which the infidelity theme demands. The public wants to be tickled, not pinched. Otherwise, however, it’s a very good effort considering your youth. The moral—and the deeper wisdom are still lacking, but as I say: not at all bad for a beginner! It’s still far too declamatory, too obvious,—~~³³

Here the contradictory policy of the Producer comes to the fore. Though he had initially said ‘they needn’t be profound truths. Nothing finished,

mature and serene, for heaven's sake! It should be a cry, a cry from the heart. A question, a hope, a hunger!'('Das brauchen keine tiefgründigen Weisheiten zu sein. Um Gottes willen nichts Vollendetes, Reifes und Abgeklärtes. Das soll ein Schrei sein, ein Aufschrei ihrer Herzen. Frage, Hoffnung, Hunger!'), he now criticizes Beckmann's song for being exactly that for which he had initially asked.³⁴

This is not the only place where the audience's role in the creation of art is brought to the fore. A little further into the dialogue the Producer restates what audiences will accept from a writer, again emphasizing how this new literary form does not conform to the needs of the audience, and that it is ultimately an unprofitable venture. Again, in the radio play these lines are removed because, though the critique is almost imperceptible, it puts into doubt everything that was then being put before German audiences:

PRODUCER: Yes, but Art must mature. Your delivery has as yet no elegance, no experience. It's all too grey, too naked. ~~You'll infuriate my public. No, we can't feed people on black bread—~~

BECKMANN: ~~(Slowly, to himself) Black bread.~~

PRODUCER: ~~—when they demand cake. Have a little patience. Work on yourself, round off the corners, let yourself mature. It's already quite a stout effort, as I say, but it's still not Art.~~³⁵

While it may have been understood as a criticism of the German audience, it is in fact also a criticism of those who acted as gatekeepers of artistic endeavour, who underestimated the intelligence of the audience and their ability to discern that which had artistic merit from that which did not.

Scene Five is a recapitulation of the first four scenes. It underwent the most aggressive editing with just over 50% of the dialogue removed from the radio version. Many of these edits deal with a third German institution, the church, and with the complicity of the German people in the Holocaust.

One of the most significant changes found in the radio version is the reason given for the suicide of Beckmann's parents. The motive given for their suicide in the stage version is their support of National Socialism. This would have been too sensitive a topic at the time of broadcast in early 1947. The main defendants at Nuremberg had just been executed four months previously, and there were still other ongoing trials. Greene and Porter could not have allowed it to air because it could potentially have caused unrest among Germans. Moreover, it was during this time that Borchert was expressing his own doubts about how some of his

associates were being treated in the denazification process, and these lines could have been seen as a direct criticism of the Occupation's approach to denazification.

The Frau Kramer scene and its revelations often overshadow what follows. However, there are two further significant variances that demonstrate Greene and Porter's political editing of the radio version. The first is the manner in which the church is treated. While they allow Beckmann to argue with God, they do not permit Beckmann to directly criticize the Church or its leadership. Whenever the topic arises in the stage play, it is removed from the radio version, as for example in: *'Have you completely walled yourself in in your fine old churches? Can't you hear our cries through the shattered windows, God? Where are you? (Hast du dich ganz in deine schönen alten Kirchen eingemauert, Gott? Hörst du unser Geschrei nicht durch die zerklüfteten Fenster, Gott? Wo bist du?)'*,³⁶ and

'Who's turned away from whom? You from me? We from you? You are dead, God. Live. Live with us, at night, when it's cold, and lonely, and the stomach hungers in the silence—live with us then, God. Oh, go away, you ink-blooded theologian, go away. You pitiful old man' (*'Wer hat sich von wem gewandt? Ihr von mir? Wir von dir? Du bist tot, Gott. Sei lebendig, sei mit uns lebendig, nachts, wenn es kalt ist, einsam und wenn der Magen knurrt in der Stille—dann sei mit uns lebendig, Gott. Ach, geh weg, du bist ein tintenblütiger Theologe, geh weg, du bist weinerlich, alter alter Mann!'*).³⁷

In both instances it is the Church, which was working closely with the British Occupation forces, that was spared Beckmann's ire.³⁸

In the final part of the last scene, Beckmann rages at God for all of the horrors that He has allowed. For the most part, the changes are not overtly political, except for one small change that can only be the result of British censorship. The British have always been very sensitive about their role in the night-time area bombing of German cities. In fact, only very recently have veterans of Bomber Command been awarded the Bomber Command clasp that acknowledges their service during the war.³⁹ This discomfort reveals itself in the censoring of the radio play. Greene and Porter allowed the description of Beckmann's infant son being torn apart by bombs during an air raid in the radio play; it would have been difficult to deny the physical evidence that surrounded them. However, they drew the line at having it called murder:

BECKMANN: When exactly are you dear, dear God? Were you dear when you let my little son, my little son, who was just a year old, be torn to pieces by a screaming bomb? Were you dear, dear God, when you had him murdered?

GOD: I didn't have him murdered.⁴⁰

Allowing the bombing of civilians to be called murder would have denied the British Occupation the moral high ground. It was a point on which the British policies were very clear in dealing with the Germans, who were simply not allowed to question the morality of the victorious Allies.

While the impact of Allied cultural politics in postwar Germany can most often be seen in what was censored, as demonstrated above, the initial act in making *Draußen vor der Tür* perhaps the most significant literary work of the immediate postwar period in Germany is an act of permission. Though the professional judgement of the German radio staff was taken into consideration, it was not a foregone conclusion that Borchert's play would be broadcast over German airwaves. For this to happen, NWDR in Hamburg needed the permission of the PR/ISC's radio division. Moreover, once permission was granted, the play could only be produced after it had been edited by Greene and Porter to conform to the policies and overarching aims of the British occupation forces. It was this censored version of *Draußen vor der Tür* that created the initial popularity of the play that has now become a staple of German theatre, with it becoming the most produced postwar play in German theatre.

NOTES

- 1 Volker Wehdeking and Günter Blamberger, *Erzählliteratur der frühen Nachkriegszeit (1945–1952)* (Munich: Verlag C.H. Beck, 1990), p. 201.
- 2 Wolfgang Borchert in a 1947 interview in Basel quoted in Peter Rühmkorf's *Wolfgang Borchert in Selbstzeugnissen und Bilddokumenten* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1962), p. 162. Unless otherwise stated, all translations are my own: 'So lange die Zigarettensammel fremder Militärmächte auf der Straße liegen (damit will ich nichts gegen die Zigarettensammel gesagt haben) und so lange ich 16-seitige Fragebogen ausfüllen muß, um in einer Zeitschrift gedruckt zu werden, so lange ist es sinnlos, über Demokratie und persönliche Freiheit zu diskutieren.'
- 3 Wolfgang Borchert, *Draußen vor der Tür*, in *Das Gesamtwerk*, first edition (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1949), pp. 127–200. References to the German edition hereafter will be indicated as DvdT. Wolfgang Borchert, *The Man Outside*, translated by David Porter (New York: New Directions Publishing, 1971), pp. 77–135. References to the English translation hereafter will be referred to as TMO.
- 4 Gordon Burgess, *The Life and Works of Wolfgang Borchert*, (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2003), p. 165.
- 5 "Unglaublich Verdichtet. Wer entdeckte den Nachkriegsdichter Wolfgang Borchert?" (Unbelievably Condensed. Who Discovered the Postwar Writer

Wolfgang Borchert) *Der Spiegel*, 22 September 1986, p. 228. The title of the article is a play on the German word *dichten* which means to write poetry or poetically.

6 Ruth Malchow-Hut, Letter to Helmut Gumtau, 9 July 1968. MS. Gumtau Letters, Wolfgang Borchert Archiv, Hamburg.

7 Adam Piette, *The Literary Cold War, 1945-Vietnam* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), p. 151.

8 The BBC Genome Project < <http://genome.ch.bbc.co.uk> > [accessed 2 May 2016]. *The Man Outside* was broadcast by BBC's Third Programme on 29 November, 3 December and 21 December 1948.

9 Wolfgang Borchert, Letter to Dr Carl Hager, 1 July 1946. MS. Carl Hager Letters. Wolfgang Borchert Archiv, Hamburg.

10 Wolfgang Borchert, Letter to Hugo Sieker, 16 January 1947. TS. Sieker Letters, Wolfgang Borchert Archiv, Hamburg.

11 Hugo Sieker, Letter to Wolfgang Borchert, 6 April 1946. TS. Sieker Letters, Wolfgang Borchert Archiv, Hamburg.

12 Untitled Telegram, Julius Flack to Wolfgang Borchert, 3 September 1947. Wolfgang Borchert Archiv, Hamburg. On the back of this telegram it appears that Borchert wrote 'Hörspielfassung u Bühnenfassung identisch. Hörspielfassung in Hamburg lediglich aus programmtech. Gründen gekürzt'.

13 Helmut Gumtau, Letter to Heinz Schwitzke, 6 March 1969. TS. Gumtau Letters, Wolfgang Borchert Archiv, Hamburg.

14 Wolfgang Borchert, 'Draußen vor der Tür', Typescript, 13 February 1947. Author's Personal Collection.

Comparative Statistics of the Published and the Radio Versions of <i>The Man Outside</i>								
	Radio Version Word Count	Variance	Percentage Variance	Percentage of the Play	Published Version Word Count	Variance	Percentage Variance	Percentage of the Play
Forward	246	3	1.2%	2.1%	243	-3	-1.2%	1.4%
Prologue	674	-91	-11.9%	5.7%	765	91	13.5%	4.4%
The Dream	577	22	4.0%	4.9%	555	-22	-3.8%	3.2%
Scene I	1260	-73	-5.5%	10.7%	1333	73	5.8%	7.6%
Scene II	1409	-207	-12.8%	11.9%	1616	207	14.7%	9.2%
Scene III	2413	-683	-22.1%	20.4%	3096	683	28.3%	17.7%
Scene IV	1297	-685	-34.6%	11.0%	1982	685	52.8%	11.3%
Scene V	3949	-3994	-50.3%	33.4%	7943	3994	101.1%	45.3%
Total	11825	-5708	-32.6%		17533	5708	48.3%	

15 Untitled Telegram, Julius Flack to Wolfgang Borchert, 3 September 1947. Wolfgang Borchert Archiv, Hamburg.

16 Burgess, *The Life and Works of Wolfgang Borchert*, pp. 163-164.

17 In official reports created for British Military Intelligence and the Political Warfare Executive, Lt. Col. Henry V. Dicks emphasized not accepting 'hard-luck' stories from the occupied Germans: 'Psychological Reactions to Defeat', May 1945 (WO 208/3136, National Archives, Kew) and 'Germany After the War', February 1945 (FO 1049/72, National Archives, Kew). This echoed the Foreign Office publication entitled *Instructions for British Servicemen in Germany 1944*, where reference is also made to not falling for German 'hard-luck stories' (FO 898/480, National Archives, Kew). Dicks was the London District Command Psychiatrist from 1941 to 1946. From 1942 to 1944 he advised Military Intelligence on German morale. Subsequently, he advised SHAEF on psychological warfare; and from 1945 to 1946 he advised on German personnel and 'de-Nazification', Intelligence Branch, Control Commission for Germany.

- 18 Dicks, 'Psychological Reactions to Defeat', p. 8.
 19 Wolfgang Borchert, *Draußen vor der Tür*, typescript of the original radio broadcast, p. 6.
 20 *Ibid.*
 21 TMO, p. 91, DvdT, pp. 142–143.
 22 TMO, p. 94, DvdT, p. 146.
 23 TMO, p. 96, DvdT, p. 149.
 24 TMO, p. 98, DvdT, p. 151.
 25 TMO, pp. 98–99, DvdT, pp. 151–152.

OBERST: Lieber junger Freund, Sie stellen die ganze Sache doch wohl reichlich verzerrt dar. Wir sind doch Deutsche. Wir wollen doch lieber bei unserer guten deutschen Wahrheit bleiben. Wer die Wahrheit hochhält, der marschiert immer noch am besten, sagt Clausewitz.

BECKMANN: Jawohl, Herr Oberst. Schön ist das, Herr Oberst. Ich mache mit, mit der Wahrheit. Wir essen uns schön satt, Herr Oberst, richtig satt, Herr Oberst. Wir ziehen uns ein neues Hemd an und einen Anzug mit Knöpfen und ohne Löcher. Und dann machen wir den Ofen an, Herr Oberst, denn wir haben ja einen Ofen, Herr Oberst, und setzen den Teekessel auf für einen kleinen Grog. Und dann ziehen wir die Jalousien runter und lassen uns in einen Sessel fallen, denn einen Sessel haben wir ja. Wir riechen das feine Parfüm unserer Gattin und kein Blut, nicht wahr, Herr Oberst, kein Blut, und wir freuen uns auf das saubere Bett, das wir ja haben, wir beide, Herr Oberst, das im Schlafzimmer schon auf uns wartet, weich, weiß und warm. Und dann halten wir die Wahrheit hoch, Herr Oberst, unsere gute deutsche Wahrheit.[...]

- 26 Dicks, 'Germany After the War', p. 5.
 27 Wolfgang Borchert, *Draußen vor der Tür*, typescript of the original radio broadcast, 31–32.

OBERST: (unbändig lachend, daß er fast daran zerplatzt.) (leise, wie erstickt). . . . Aber – mein lieber Herr äh – Beckmann! Warum so düster? – Warum so destruktiv? – Nein, wirklich, mein ä – bester Herr – ä – Beckmann – Sie sollten tatsächlich mal ausschlafen. Sie sind vielleicht ä – ein bißchen – ä – angegriffen von dem – ä – Feldzug! Vielleicht fahren Sie mal in den Süden, mal gründlich ausspannen! Sie sehen doch wohl alles ein bißchen – ä – schwarz. Sagen sie mal, Sie sind doch wohl nicht so ein heimlicher Pazifist, wie? Mal ehrlich, Beckmann! Oder – hehe (lacht) – sind Sie am Ende ein kleiner Schelm, mein Lieber?! War doch – ä – ein ganz abgründiger Humor in dem Ding, was Sie uns da vorgemacht haben, wirklich, ein ganz toller Humor, muß ich schon sagen. Dieser Traum – (lacht immer lauter) köstlich – nein wirklich, ganz köstlich!

- 28 TMO, p. 103, DvdT, p. 158.

BECKMANN: [...] Die Toten – antworten nicht. Gott – antwortet nicht. Aber die Lebenden, die fragen. Die fragen jede Nacht, Herr Oberst. Wenn ich dann wach liege, dann kommen sie und fragen. Frauen, Herr Oberst, traurige, trauernde Frauen. Alte Frauen mit grauem Haar und harten rissigen Händen junge Frauen mit einsamen-sehnsüchtigen Augen. Kinder, Herr Oberst, Kinder, viele kleine Kinder. Und die flüstern dann aus der Dunkelheit: Unteroffizier Beckmann, wo ist mein Vater, Unteroffizier Beckmann? Unteroffizier Beckmann, wo haben Sie meinen Mann? Unteroffizier Beckmann, wo ist mein Sohn, wo ist mein Bruder, Unteroffizier Beckmann, wo ist mein Verlobter, Unteroffizier Beckmann? Unteroffizier Beckmann, wo? wo? wo? So flüstern sie, bis es hell wird. Es sind nur elf Frauen.

29 'German War Guilt: German arguments – British answers', undated (FO 1056/22, National Archives, Kew) pp. 94–95.

30 TMO, p. 106, DvdT, p. 162. Underlining represents an addition to the radio play not found in the stage version.

DIREKTOR (sehr überzeugt): Sehen Sie, gerade in der Kunst brauchen wir wieder eine Jugend, die zu allen Problemen aktiv Stellung nimmt. Eine mutige, nüchterne –

Beckmann (vor sich hin): Nüchtern, ja ganz nüchtern muß sie sein.

DIREKTOR: – revolutionäre Jugend. Wir brauchen einen Geist wie Schiller, der mit zwanzig seine Räuber machte. Wir brauchen einen Grabbe, einen Heinrich Heine! So einen genialen angreifenden Geist haben wir nötig! Eine unromantische, wirklichkeitsnahe und handfeste Jugend, die den dunklen Seiten des Lebens gefaßt ins Auge sieht, unsentimental, objektiv, überlegen. Junge Menschen brauchen wir, eine Generation, die die Welt sieht und liebt, wie sie ist. Eine Jugend, die die Wahrheit hochhält, Pläne hat, Ideen hat. Das brauchen keine tiefgründigen Weisheiten zu sein. Um Gottes willen nichts Vollendetes, Reifes und Abgeklärtes. Das soll ein Schrei sein, ein Aufschrei ihrer Herzen. Frage, Hoffnung, Hunger!

Beckmann (für sich): Hunger, ja, den haben wir.

DIREKTOR: Aber jung muß diese Jugend sein, leidenschaftlich und mutig. Gerade in der Kunst! Sehen Sie mich an: Ich stand schon als Siebzehnjähriger auf den Brettern des Kabarets und habe dem Spießier die Zähne gezeigt und ihm die Zigarre verdorben. Was uns fehlt, das sind die Avantgardisten, die das graue lebendige leidvolle Gesicht unserer Zeit präsentieren!

31 TMO, p. 119, DvdT, pp. 178–179

32 TMO, p. 109. The radio version has the Producer speak this line just after 'No, no, that's just a bit too simple.' DvdT, p. 165. ('Nein, das denken Sie sich doch wohl ein bißchen einfach').

33 TMO, p. 110, DvdT, p. 167.

DIREKTOR (feige): So übel nicht, nein, wirklich nicht so übel. Ganz brav schon. Für einen Anfänger sehr brav. Aber das Ganze hat natürlich noch zu wenig Esprit, mein lieber junger Mann. Das schillert nicht genug. Der gewisse Glanz fehlt. Das ist natürlich noch keine Dichtung. Es fehlt noch das Timbre und die diskrete pikante Erotik, die gerade das Thema Ehebruch verlangt. Das Publikum will gekitzelt werden und nicht gekniffen. Sonst ist es aber sehr brav für Ihre Jugend. Die Ethik – und die tiefere Weisheit fehlt noch – aber wie gesagt: für einen Anfänger doch nicht so übel! Es ist noch zu sehr Plakat, zu deutlich, –

34 TMO, p. 106, DvdT, p. 162.

35 TMO, p. 111, DvdT, p. 168.

DIREKTOR: Ja, aber Kunst muß reifen. Ihr Vortrag ist noch ohne Eleganz und Erfahrung. Das ist alles zu grau, zu nackt. Sie machen mir ja das Publikum böse. Nein, wir können die Leute nicht mit Schwarzbrot –

BECKMANN (stur vor sich hin): Schwarzbrot.

DIREKTOR: – füttern, wenn sie Biskuit verlangen. Gedulden Sie sich noch. Arbeiten Sie an sich, feilen Sie, reifen Sie. Dies ist schon ganz brav, wie gesagt, aber es ist noch keine Kunst.

36 TMO, p. 122, DvdT, p. 182.

37 *Ibid.*

38 The National Archives at Kew holds a vast number of files outlining the relationship between the Church in Germany, which includes the Lutheran, Roman Catholic and Reformed as well as many other minor denominations. The most significant of these is FO 1050/1681 'Religious Affairs Policy', which outlines how closely the British Control Commission was to work with the churches in Germany. Moreover, FO 898/99 the PWE 'Training School Lectures', which prepared control officers for service in Germany, outlined how the Church and religious faith could be used to control postwar Germany.

39 Jasper Copping, 'Bomber Command Veterans Boycotting Insulting Award', *The Telegraph* (London), 17 May 2013, < <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/history/britain-at-war/10064299/Bomber-Command-veterans-boycotting-insulting-award.html> > [accessed 11 November 2015].

40 TMO, p. 121, DvdT, p. 181.

BECKMANN: Wann bist du eigentlich lieb, lieber Gott? Warst du lieb, als du meinen Jungen, der gerade ein Jahr alt war, als du meinen kleinen Jungen von einer brüllenden Bombe zerreißen ließt? Warst du da lieb, als du ihn ermorden ließt, lieber Gott, ja?

GOTT: Ich hab ihn nicht ermorden lassen.

Book Review

William J. O’Keeffe, *A Literary Occupation: Responses of German Writers in Service in Occupied Europe* (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2013). 240 pp., ISBN 9789042037700, € 64.

The recent accumulation of anniversaries marking key events in the final years of World War II has also been registered in scholarly research on the various occupations of that period. The current special issue of *Comparative Critical Studies* presents the fruits of some of this research, focusing on the Anglo-American occupation of Germany after the war. The book under review here focuses on selected published and unpublished texts written while their German authors were stationed in Greece and France during the Nazi occupation. Felix Hartlaub’s ‘Kriegsaufzeichnungen aus Paris’ which were written in secret and remained unpublished in the author’s lifetime and Erhart Kästner’s *Griechenland* (1943), *Kreta* (1946) written in 1944 and *Griechische Inseln* (1975) begun in 1943 take centre stage. Referred to to a lesser extent are Erhard Göpel’s *Die Bretagne* and *Die Normandie*, the diary-styled publications of Walter Bauer and Kurt Lothar Tank from France, the essay collection *Frankreich* (1942) and to some extent Ernst Jünger’s wartime diaries and *Gärten und Straßen*. The main texts under discussion are contemporary accounts which are accessible without postwar edits or revisions. O’Keeffe terms these writings ‘literature of occupation’ and, in view of their immediacy in relation to their subject matter (the occupied culture), sees them as distinct from later retrospective literary portrayals and meditations on these occupations. It is the view of the author that these texts are unique in their ‘contemporary authenticity’, their ‘unsentimental aesthetic within the pervasiveness of war’ and in their innovation in literary form.

Many of these works were commissioned as *Gebrauchsliteratur* or functional writing with the purpose of improving the morale and ideological outlook of the troops, while also serving as a propagandist’s tool in helping to affirm Nazi occupation policy. Officially this material was to be informative and diversionary for expatriate readers, but the

focus of the texts (on France and Greece) also afforded the writer an indirect freedom of expression, with the military imprimatur for such writings providing a cover for aesthetic allusiveness. The writings of the main literary conscripts under examination here are composed of timeless sensory impressions of occupied Paris (Felix Hartlaub) and of occupied Greece (Erhart Kästner). Previous critics argue that rather than offering an antithesis to war, these writings provided a war-accompanying, comforting sound at best, but *A Literary Occupation* reconsiders this point of view by looking at other writings from the period of occupation. It argues that Felix Hartlaub's Paris sketches, in their guise as *Großstadtbilder*, conceal a subliminal text of resistance or at least rejection of the pan-German pan-European project which is registered more explicitly in Hartlaub's letters. O'Keeffe thus offers a more detailed analysis and makes broader claims for the Paris sketches. Kästner's *Griechenland* expresses a philhellenism typical of the German aesthetic tradition which was a continuation of late Wilhelmine *Kulturpolitik*, and the survival of the curricular content of Wilhelmine education into the years of the Weimar Republic. Unlike the occupation of Eastern territories, French education and culture was accorded a position of supremacy for these German occupiers who were enthusiastic about the culture of the countries in which they found themselves. This was further encouraged through Francophilic writings in the newspapers and magazines of the time. Similarly in Greece, troop welfare involved acquaintance with the culture of ancient Greece through tours, lectures, brochures and radio broadcasts. In both countries the military established a *Kunstschutz* department which operated with German experts who encouraged the military to protect the culture of these countries on the pretext of it making propagandistic sense. Broadly speaking, France was patronized and fêted as an old rival and Greece was celebrated for its classical past and it was in these contexts that occupier writers could write sympathetically about what had been the pre-eminent unified cultural society on mainland Europe in the centuries preceding World War II. Peace is thus a shared theme in these writings, although it is a *Pax Germanica*.

The propaganda subtext to Kästner's *Griechenland* was an implied association with the greatness of ancient Greece, which perpetuated nineteenth century German philhellenism. Critics like Schnell posit that Kästner's focus on antiquity is a deliberate effort to escape the wartime reality in Greece, but O'Keeffe argues that Kästner invokes Aeschylus to ponder how it 'behoves victors to have a sympathetic

understanding of the plight of a temporarily defeated enemy lest the daemonic forces visit the same fate on them in turn' and that *Griechenland* is an account of his unfolding love story with the eponymous country. On the contrary, the intense aestheticization in Kästner's and Hartlaub's writings serves 'to underline and undermine the abnormal reality' in which they were written. The literature of occupation took different forms (art-historical guides, cultural cartography, writings of the flâneur) and engaged different discourses: Kästner used Greek architectural and landscape studies with occasional metaphysical reflections on the culture of antiquity, and Hartlaub presented occupied Paris through the anonymous, mildly sardonic flâneur. Though there are parallels with the travel writing in vogue in the 1930s and through the war, O'Keeffe argues that Kästner, more specifically, wrote guides to the sites and culture of ancient Greece stressing their determining and inherited influence on Western culture.

While some German writings of occupation did, as their publishers prescribed, presume a German pre-eminence in European cultural determination, Kästner and Hartlaub managed to concede very little to the appropriative propaganda of the time and instead championed humanism, viewing the war as a continuation of European history. The author argues for a literature of occupation in German because the literature the book discusses is 'aesthetically accomplished and original', and though 'unprepossessed', it is not dispassionate in its humanism. Furthermore, the authors were obliquely able to retain intellectual integrity under censorship. From surveying the writings of this period, O'Keeffe finds that bourgeois literary forms were used to good effect for critical commentary on the war as war. Essays from the period were perceptive and sympathetic, though at times tainted by patronising. As commissioned works to encourage cultural appreciation, many of these writings were implicitly political in intent, but without *manifest* political intent. The writings on France and Greece are instructive or densely informative or leisurely feuilletonistic or intensely impressionistic. Kästner, drawing on the German philhellenic tradition, found a cloak in allusion and metaphor. Hartlaub, though writing covertly, like Kästner, used style to deflect attention from content in case of discovery. Kästner is situated in the intellectual traditions in which he was schooled, and this contextualization affords O'Keeffe fresh interpretations as he holds that the literarily innovative construction of an alternative world view at this time through images of light 'outshone the then overtly prevailing presumptions of the official view'.

Hartlaub's writing anticipates the experimental work of Arno Schmidt and Walter Kempowski for whom language operates on two levels: through conscious direct communication and through neologisms which emerge from a reservoir of language fragments in the subconscious. Writing for Kästner became a psychotherapeutic survival strategy during which he fathomed himself as a carrier of images ('ein Träger von Bildern'). Language is a system of communicated associative images through which traumatic impressions could be transmitted for these writers.

By foregrounding the literary occupation of France and Greece, O'Keeffe's meticulous and original study suggests that the metaphysical conjuring of Greek literature and a variation on a metropolitan flâneur literature in German occupation literature tried to capture a *pax in bello* – a peace through writing a civil literature in the absence of civil and social order. *A Literary Occupation* thus represents an important and timely contribution to the developing conversation about culture and the various occupations of the 1940s.

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