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Von der Untergrundbewegung.

by Karl, Aloin.

Wenn auch im allgemeinen folgend ein Bild von der Untergrundbewegung Hannovers gegeben wird, so soll doch nicht behauptet werden, dass nicht auch noch ausser den erfassten Gruppen andere bestanden haben. Behauptet werden kann jedoch, dass etwaige in folgender Darstellung nicht erfasste Gruppen eine wahrnehmbare Taaetigkeit nicht entfaltet haben.

Der eigentliche Beginn der U.B. setzte teils schon mit vor 1933 ein. Als 1932 damit zu rechnen war, dass es zu gewaltsamer Auseinandersetzung mit den Nazis kommen koennte, wurde von den Angehoerigen des Reichsbanners "Schwarz-Rot-Gold" (einer zum Schutze des Weimarer Republik gebildeten demokratischen jedoch nicht bewaffneten Schutzorganisation) immer staerker nach Bewaffnung verlangt. Die Regierung liess die Bewaffnung nicht zu. Es war jedoch allgemein bekannt, dass trotz des Verbots die Nazis teils mit Waffen versehen waren. In dieser Situation fanden sich zunaechst einige Gewerkschaften, die zum Schutze der Gewerkschaftshauser illegal Waffen besorgten. Unter Mitwirkung dieser Gewerkschafter wurden dann auch Waffen fuer das Reichsbanner beschafft. Gegen den Schreiber wurde 1935 ein Untersuchungsverfahren wegen Waffenvergehens, das jedoch nicht zu einer Anklage fuehren konnte, durchgefuehrt. 1936/37 wurde diese Angelegenheit nochmals von der Gestapo aufgegriffen. Aber wegen eines inzwischen erlassenen Gesetzes ueber die Gewaehrung von Straffreiheit fuer laengere Zeit zurueckliegende Vergehen wurde das Verfahren nach 11 monatiger Haft (darunter 7 Wochen verschaeerfte Haft) eingestellt.

Am 2. Maerz 1933 wurde eine Delegation von fuehrenden Gewerkschaftern von Hannover mit besonderem Auftrage nach Sueddeutschland delegiert. Zu jener Zeit wurde in Verbindung mit der Wahl zum Reichstag am 3. Maerz ein Naziputsch vermutet. Die Bayerische Regierung unter Fuehrung des Ministerpraesidenten Held (Bayerische Volkspartei) stellte sich bis dahin energisch gegen die Nazis und es wurde daher angenommen, dass ein Naziputsch zwar in Norddeutschland Erfolg haben koennte, aber suedlich der Mainlinie die Demokratie gesichert sei. Fuer einen solchen Fall sollte die Delegation in Sueddeutschland eine gewerkschaftliche Zentrale zur Leitung des Verbandes der Fabrikarbeiter Deutschlands einrichten.

Dieser Plan war auf einen Trugschluss aufgebaut: auch Bayern brach wie das uebrige Sueddeutschland unter dem Druck der Nazis zusammen.

Zugleich mit der "Machtergreifung" durch die Nazis setzte eine Verhaftungswelle ein, die sich insbesondere auf die politisch hervorgetretenen Nazigeegner erstreckte. Diese Verhafteten wurden zu einem grossen Teil nach einiger Zeit wieder freigelassen, dafuer kam aber eine neue Verhaftungswelle, in die mehr die gewerkschaftlich fuehrenden Personen einbezogen waren. Von beiden Verhaftungswellen wurde ein Teil der davon Betroffenen fuer Monate und Jahre in Haft behalten, Einzelne davon sehr lange.

In den ersten Monaten nach der Machtergreifung wurde teils immer noch damit gerechnet, daß es möglich sein, durch illegale Zusammenfassung der noch vorhandenen Abwehrkräfte das Naziregime wieder aus dem Sattel zu heben. Vor allem wurde angenommen, daß durch die Zusammenballung wirtschaftlicher Schwierigkeiten Kreise der Wirtschaft und der Finanz auf eine Änderung hinwirken würden. Weiter hoffte man auf eine in gleicher Richtung gehende Einwirkung anderer Nationen. Die Angehörigen der demokratischen Parteien versuchten untereinander Fühlung zu behalten. Durch die Umstellung der Gewerkschaften in die Deutsche Arbeitsfront wurde zwar der Zusammenschluß der Gewerkschafter gewahrt, das Interesse der Arbeiter und Angestellten wurde aber durch die Leitung der Deutschen Arbeitsfront in nicht politischer Richtung, und zwar auf "Kraft durch Freude", "Nationalsozialistische Volkswohlfahrt" u.a. abgelenkt. Entgegen dieser Ablenkung der Masse in der Deutschen Arbeitsfront bildete sich ein Kern prinzipiell demokratisch eingestellter Personen heraus, der in ständiger Verbindung mit ausgeschalteten ehemaligen Gewerkschaftsführern blieben. Diese Gewerkschaftsführer hielten nicht nur diese Verbindung aufrecht, sondern pflegten auch solche mit Gleichgesinnten in anderen Bezirken und Städten, sowie auch mit internationalen Stellen. Schon nach dem ersten Schock 1933 bildeten sich daneben zunächst kleinere illegale Zirkel sozialistisch demokratischer Richtung. Solche Zirkel kommunistischer Richtung waren damals nicht wahrzunehmen. Der Schock bei den Kommunisten war anhaltender, zumal ein Teil der kommunistischen Mitläufer und sogar auch untere Führer ins Nazilager übergeschwenkt waren. Die sozialistisch demokratischen Zirkel versuchten sich personell zu erweitern und befassten sich auch mit der Herstellung und Verbreitung von Flugblättern. Besonders rührig war dabei eine Gruppe B1. Diese stand in Verbindung mit der geschäftlich getarnten Gruppe K. In Zusammenarbeit dieser beiden Gruppen wurden Nachrichten und Aufklärungsmaterial gesammelt, in Flugblättern zusammengefasst und diese verbreitet. Trotz aller damals gebotenen Vorsichtsmaßnahmen wurde dieses illegale Treiben von der Gestapo entdeckt, und es kam zur Verhaftung von ca. 130 Personen. Das Untersuchungsverfahren dauerte etwa ein Jahr, und es wurden Urteile bis 10 Jahre Zuchthaus verhängt. Ein Teil der Bestraften wurde nach der Verbüßung der Strafe zwar aus dem Zuchthaus entlassen, aber dort gleich von der Gestapo abgeholt und in Konzentrationslager gebracht, wo die Betroffenen bis Kriegsende blieben. Mehrere davon waren in den Zuchthäusern vorzeitig gestorben, andere in den Konzentrationslagern. Der Führer der Gruppe konnte mit einer Helferin vor der Verhaftung ins Ausland flüchten.

Eine andere politische Gruppe L. umfasste in der Hauptsache ehemalige führende Persönlichkeiten aus der Sozialdemokratischen Partei. Diese unterhielt auch Verbindungen mit illegalen Gruppen in der Provinz, sowie auch solche nach Berlin und zu dem emigrierten Vorstand der Sozialdemokratischen Partei. Auch diese Gruppe wurde von der Gestapo entdeckt und ca. 60 Personen verhaftet und schwer verurteilt. Die schwerer Belasteten kamen ebenfalls bei ihrer Entlassung aus den Zuchthäusern sofort in die Konzentrationslager. Einige konnten erst durch den Einmarsch der Alliierten Truppen daraus befreit werden.

Schon 1933 betätigte sich recht eifrig und geschickt die ISK-Gruppe. Sie pflegte eifrig Verbindung mit internationalen Stellen und sorgte für Materialaustausch. Sie war kleiner als die vorher geschilderten Gruppen, konnte aber auch dem Zugriff der Gestapo nicht entgehen. Der führende Mann musste nach einem Prozess, bei dem es ihm gelungen war, einen Freispruch zu erreichen, ins Ausland flüchten.

Eine Gruppe Sch., die sich größtenteils aus jugendlichen Gewerkschaftern zusammensetzte und im allgemeinen in der gleichen Art wie die anderen Gruppen arbeitete, auch internationale Verbindungen hatte, wurde von der Gestapo ebenfalls zerschlagen. Sch. wurde im Gefängnis erhängt aufgefunden.

Die bereits angeführte Gruppe K. unterhält mit den benannten Gruppen Verbindung, versah diese mit Nachrichtenmaterial, das durch internationale Beziehungen und Verbindungen mit anderen Gruppen im Reich, insbesondere auch solchen, das von der illegalen Gewerkschaftszentrale in Berlin kam. Die internationalen Beziehungen wurden teils durch geschäftlich getarnte Post, teils durch Besuche vom und ins Ausland gepflegt. Der Leiter K. war zu internationalen Zusammenkünften in Komotau (Tschechoslowakei) Reichenberg (Tschechoslowakei) und mehrfach in Amsterdam.

Bei einem vorbereiteten Treffen mit Vertretern aus verschiedenen Landesteilen wurde K. mit 5 Komplizen in Berlin von der Gestapo verhaftet und 4 Monate ins Konzentrationslager gebracht. Einer der Beteiligten konnte durch einen Zufall der Verhaftung entgehen und emigrierte. Ein anderer litt während seines Aufenthaltes im Konzentrationslager schweren gesundheitlichen Schaden und starb nach der Entlassung nach fast völliger Erblindung frühzeitig.

Das bisher Geschilderte war der Stand vor dem Kriege. Die Hoffnungen und die agitatorische und taktische Einstellung der Untergrundbewegung war bis dahin von folgenden Gesichtspunkten getragen:  
In den ersten Jahren des Naziregimes wurde auf eine Steigerung der wirtschaftlichen Schwierigkeiten, auf Finanz- und Währungsschwierigkeiten und in Verbindung damit auf eine Abkehr vom Naziregime der führenden Wirtschaftskreise gerechnet. Man hoffte auch auf eine wirtschaftliche und stärkere politische Isolierung des Nazireiches durch das Ausland. All diese Erwartungen schlugen fehl. Bitter wurde die Tatsache empfunden, daß die anderen Nationen nicht, wie erwartet, ihre wirtschaftlichen und politischen Beziehungen zu Deutschland aggressiver gestalteten, sondern vermittelnd und dadurch das Naziregime fördernd. Das Naziregime festigte sich immer stärker. Die Aussicht auf Zusammenbruch oder Umsturz von innen heraus wurde immer geringer und die Erkenntnis, dass ein Umsturz nur durch den unvermeidlich durch das Naziregime heraufbeschworenen Krieg ausgelöst werden konnte, wurde einheitliche Auffassung in der Untergrundbewegung.

Die Einstellung des gesamten Auslandes zu Nazi-Deutschland konnte von den Leuten der Untergrundbewegung nicht verstanden werden. Nur eine unbegreifliche Unkenntnis des Naziwesens konnte zu einer solchen Einstellung führen. Godesberg und München waren die Tiefpunkte dieser Situation: Ein überrüstetes, vom Ausland in seiner Gefährlichkeit nicht wohl erkanntes (oder gefürchtetes) im Innern wirtschaftlich auf Krieg eingestelltes und politisch vollständig von der Gestapo beherrschtes Deutschland; Sehnsucht nach Er-

~~lösung - selbst auch durch Krieg,~~

lösung - selbst auch durch Krieg, der ja sowieso unzweifelhaft von den Nazis angestrebt und früher oder später unabwendbar wurde. Grundsätzlich Kriegsgegner sehnten sich nach dem Krieg, ~~dasxjxaxswiasaxum~~ als nach einem Mittel zur Befreiung vom Nazijoch. Das Naziregime wollte den Krieg zur Beherrschung der Welt - die Anti-Nazi erwarteten von ihm Befreiung der Menschheit von diesem Übel. Der Ausbruch des Krieges war zu gleich Erschrecken und Entspannung!

Bei Ausbruch des Krieges wurde die Untergrundbewegung zunächst stark gestört. Einberufung der vielen Leute zum Heere, Versetzungen in andere Betriebe und auch an andere Orte, stärkere Durchsetzung der Betriebe mit Fremdarbeitern wirkten störend. Dazu wurde die Bespitzelung allgemein noch stärker, ganz besonders stark aber in den Betrieben. Die Untergrundbewegung musste sich auf diese geänderte Lage einstellen. Neue Vertrauensmänner mussten gesucht werden; Kontakt mit den Fremdarbeitern wurde angestrebt. Der anfängliche Verlauf des Krieges brachte in Auswirkung der Erfolge der deutschen Truppen eine überschwengliche nationalsozialistische Begeisterung. Das Denunziantentum stand in Blüte, Verhaftungen auf Verhaftungen. Die bisherigen Konzentrationslager reichten nicht aus. Neue wurden errichtet. "Rundfunkhörer", "Gerüchtemacher", "Landsverräter" kamen wie am laufenden Band in die Gefängnisse, Zuchthäuser und Konzentrationslager. Trotz allem wuchs nach einer kurzen Anlaufzeit in Anpassung an die neue und verschärfte Verhältnisse die Untergrundbewegung. Zu den bisherigen Gruppen kamen neue hinzu. Auch kleinere kommunistische Gruppen machten sich bemerkbar, aber diese wirkten auffallend laut und fanden nicht die Anpassung an die geänderten Verhältnisse und fielen deshalb sehr leicht der Gestapo zum Opfer.

Die ISK-Gruppe formierte sich wieder neu und trat wieder in Verbindung mit der K.-Gruppe; die hauptsächlichste Aufgabe der ISK-Gruppe war nach wie vor die Beschaffung von Material von jenseits der Grenze und Übermittlung desselben an ihre Vertrauensleute.

Die Fr.-Gruppe hatte ihre Vertrauensleute insbesondere in den Grossbetrieben der Rüstungsindustrie.

Die We.-Gruppe bestand aus ehemaligen Führern der christlichen Gewerkschaften und unterhielt auch Verbindung mit katholischen Politikern.

Die L.-Gruppe umfasste die sozialdemokratischen Bezirks-Vertrauensleute.

Die M.-Gruppe hatte Verbindung zur Reichspost und Reichsbahn.

Die Br-Gruppe hatte Fühlung mit führenden Personen aus Wirtschaft und Verwaltung.

Die B.-Gruppe unterhielt Verbindungen zur Polizei und mit führenden Personen, die 1933 aus den Staats- und Gemeinde-Verwaltungen entlassen wurden, auch mit solchen außerhalb Hannovers.

Die H.-Gruppe bestand aus demokratischen Geschäftsleuten und Beamten.

Die De.-Gruppe umfasste in der Hauptsache relegierte Lehrer und unterhielt Verbindung mit noch im Dienst stehenden demokratischen Lehrern.

Die K.-Gruppe unterhielt Verbindungen zu Vertrauensmännern in fast allen Großbetrieben. Dort wurde auch Fühlung mit den Fremdarbeitern und Kriegsgefangenen gesucht. Es wurden auch die Verbindungen mit Berlin, München und mehreren Orten in Thüringen gepflegt. Die Münchener Stelle ~~waxxixk~~ hatte u.a. auch Fühlung mit dortigen Militärs. Von der Berliner Stelle war ein Vertrauensmann in die Vorgänge vom 20. Juni 1944 verwickelt und

wurde mit abgeurteilt. Der Leiter der K.-Gruppe unterhielt Verbindung mit allen vorstehend angeführten Gruppen und hatte auch Verbindung zuerst durch Bo. und dann Lö. zu einer weit rechts stehenden Gruppe, deren Führer ebenfalls in die Begebenheiten des 20. Juni 1944 verwickelt war.

Mit dem durch El Alamein und Stalingrad gekennzeichneten Umschwung des Kriegsverlaufes tauchten neue Erwartungen auf. Es wurde auf eine Ernüchterung der führenden Wirtschaftler und der Hitler noch nicht total verschriebenen Militärs gerechnet. Die Leute der Untergrundbewegung waren zu weitmöglicher Hilfe bei jedem erkennbaren planmässigen Versuch zur Beendigung des Krieges und damit Sturz des Hitlerregimes bereit. Es wurden die Verbindungen weiter ausgebaut. Die Erfahrungen der zurückliegenden Jahre hatten bei den grössten Gruppen folgendes System herausgebildet: Der Leiter der Gruppe hatte Fühlung mit einer Anzahl Vertrauensmänner, die jedoch untereinander keine planmässige Fühlung hatten und auch gegenseitig von ihren Spezialaufgaben nicht unterrichtet waren. Die einzelnen Vertrauensleute hatten wieder in der gleichen Art Verbindung mit einigen Mitarbeitern, so dass sie zwar ihre nächsten Mitarbeiter kannten, diese sich aber untereinander nicht, und diese Mitarbeiter hatten Auftrag, lose Fühlung mit Gesinnungsfreunden zu halten. Dieser Aufbau der Gruppen hatte den Vorteil, daß bei einem Zugriff der Gestapo immer nur wenige Personen gefährdet waren, und es kam deshalb auch nicht mehr zu so weitgehenden Verhaftungen, wie das in den ersten Jahren des Naziregimes möglich war.

Die Erwartung auf einen Umsturz von innen, sei es durch allgemeine Streik allgemeine Unruhe und Revolte oder durch Massnahmen der führenden Wirtschaftskreise oder aber durch eine Revolte führender Militärs, schwand immer mehr. Die Ereignisse des 20. Juni 1944 waren eine verspätete, nicht mehr erwartete Episode. Es gewann die Auffassung Oberhand, der totale Krieg muß auch in Konsequenz zu einer totalen militärischen Niederlage werden, und es darf für die fernere Zukunft gesehen, nicht wieder die Möglichkeit für eine Dolchstosslegende bleiben. Aus diesen Gesichtspunkten heraus stellten sich die Gruppen der Untergrundbewegung immer stärker auf den militärischen Zusammenbruch, die Besetzung des Landes durch die Alliierten Truppen und die durch eine solche Entwicklung zu erwartende Sachlage ein. Ausser der Sammlung und Weiterverbreitung von Nachrichten, die geeignet waren, das Volk psychologisch auf eine solche Entwicklung vorzubereiten, wurden nunmehr folgende Aufgaben befolgt: Überwachung insbesondere der führenden Nazis, der Parteibüros, sowie der Parteigliederungen, Beschaffung von Material betreffend Parteizugehörigkeit. Auch wurden nazi-gegnerisch eingestellte Personen, die für die Übernahme bestimmter führender Funktionen geeignet erschienen, gesucht und diese zum Teil auch mit den ihnen zugewiesenen Aufgaben vertraut gemacht. So wurden u.a. im voraus politisch und fachlich geeignete Personen bestimmt für folgende Funktionen:

Oberbürgermeister, Polizeipräsident, Gesundheitswesen, Schulwesen, Verkehr, Post, Rundfunk, Presse, Wirtschaft. Für die grösseren Betriebe wurden die Vertrauensleute bestimmt, die sofort bei dem militärischen Zusammenbruch die Nazi-Obleute kaltzustellen und die Führung der Arbeiterschaft zu übernehmen hatten. - In einzelnen Stadtteilen wurden in Wohnbezirke abgegrenzte Gruppen gebildet, die Auftrag hatten, die Polizeireviere, die Büros der Naziorganisationen und Baugenossenschaften besonders zu überwachen und gegebenenfalls zu besetzen.

Die schweren Bombenangriffe in den letzten Monaten des Krieges wirkten auf die Untergrundbewegung sehr störend. Diese Angriffe bewirkten den Zusammenbruch des Verkehrs, Betriebe wurden teilweise und total zerstört und ganze Straßenzüge, Wohnblocks und Stadtteile unbewohnbar. Die allgemeine Stimmung wurde durch diese Ereignisse zwar nazifeindlicher, die Sehnsucht nach dem Kriegsende und Frieden stärker, aber die von der Untergrundbewegung geknüpften Verbindungen wurden dadurch auch immer wieder stark gestört. Durch die häufigen und zeitlich ausgedehnten Ansammlungen in den Luftschutzräumen bot sich zwar neue Möglichkeit zur Beeinflussung der Bevölkerung, aber auch das Spitzelwesen hatte damit ein neues Betätigungsfeld gefunden. Häufigere Verhaftungen waren die Auswirkung. Der Untergrundbewegung wurden viele Angehörige durch Bombenschäden nicht nur infolge Tod entrissen, sondern auch durch Umquartierungen zu vielen die Verbindung unterbrochen. Eine Anzahl Vertrauensleute war infolge erhöhter familiärer Sorgen (Verlust von Angehörigen, Zerstörung der Wohnung) zunächst nicht mehr verwendungsfähig. - Hier sei auch auf die Störung verwiesen, die durch die Verhaftungen nach dem 20. Juni 1944 entstand. Von dieser Verhaftungswelle wurde wieder eine größere Anzahl Angehörige auch der hannoverschen Untergrundbewegung erfasst, so u.a. auch der der K.-Gruppe angehörende Vertrauensmann Bo., der Verbindung zu der auf Seite 4 genannten rechtsstehenden Gruppe unterhielt. Bo. ist aus dem Konzentrationslager Neuengamme nicht wieder zurückgekehrt.

Berichte der Verbindungsleute aus den verschiedenen Gruppen über die Versuche zur Beeinflussung von Angehörigen der Wehrmacht ergaben ganz allgemein folgendes Bild:

Mit relativ wenig Ausnahmen waren in den ersten Kriegsjahren die Angehörigen der Wehrmacht (Soldaten, Unteroffiziere und Offiziere) fester Siegeszuversicht, und es war nur selten Neigung festzustellen, an irgendwelchen Unternehmen zur Abkürzung des Krieges mitzuwirken. Wenn auch viele Angehörige der Wehrmacht in ihrem innersten Wesen nicht gerne bei der Wehrmacht waren und sich sehr gerne von der Beteiligung am Kriege und erst recht vom Fronteinsatz zu entziehen versuchten, so ändert diese Tatsache an der vorhergehenden Feststellung nichts. Die Erklärung zu diesem Widerspruch findet sich in den fanatischen Einstellung vieler Soldaten, herbeigeführt durch nationalsozialistische Jugenderziehung und der auch während der militärischen Dienstzeit planmäßig durchgeführten nationalsozialistischen "Schulung". Abschreckend wirkte insbesonders auch die starke Bespitzelung und die schweren Strafen; auch bei verhältnismäßig leichten Fällen wurde auf Todesstrafe erkannt.

Erst mit der offensichtlich werdenden Niederlage trat auch hier eine Wandlung ein, doch da waren die technischen und organisatorischen Möglichkeiten für eine entscheidende Auswertung dieses Umschwunges nicht mehr gegeben. Vermerkt seien jedoch folgende auf Einfluss der Untergrundbewegung zurückzuführende Tatsachen: Kriegsmaterial, das zur Verteidigung Hannovers dienen sollte, wurde in größeren Mengen teils fehlgeleitet, teils absichtlich vernichtet, so daß selbst bei etwaigem Willen der militärischen Führung ein solcher Versuch nur mit ungenügenden Mitteln hätte unternommen werden können.

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Auch das fast totale Versagen des Volkssturms Hannover ist bestimmt weitgehend auf die Tätigkeit der Untergrundbewegung zu buchen. Schon der Vorbereitungsdiens wurde sabotiert. Den Aufforderungen zu den Erfassungs- und Ausbildungsveranstaltungen wurde vielfach nicht Folge geleistet. Die Angehörigen der Untergrundbewegung unterstützten sich dabei gegenseitig, animierten und halfen auch anderen Freunden. Fingierte Entschuldigungsgründe, unentschuldigtes Fernbleiben von den Ausbildungsveranstaltungen und Untergrabung der Disziplin zeitigten offensichtliche Auswirkungen. Dem Einberufungen zum Verteidigungsdienst entzogen sich mit wenig Ausnahmen alle Untergrundleute und auch viele andere Personen, die unter deren Einfluss geraten waren. Viele für den Volkssturm Verpflichtete entzogen sich der zwangsweisen Rekrutierung durch Verschwinden aus ihren Wohnungen. Eine Anzahl konnte erst wieder nach dem Einmarsch der Alliierten Truppen nach Hannover zurückkehren.

Die Leiter der Fr.-Gruppe, We.-Gruppe, L.-Gruppe, M.-Gruppe, B.-Gruppe und der K.-Gruppe hatten sich für den Fall der Besetzung Hannovers auf folgenden Plan verständigt: Baldigst nach dem Einmarsch der Alliierten sollten 3 Beauftragte Fühlung mit dem Kommandanten herstellen und die Untergrundorganisationen zur Verfügung stellen. Beauftragt wurden damit die Leiter der Gruppen B., M., und K. Diese vereinbarten unter sich, sich bereitzuhalten und gleich nach der Besetzung miteinander in Verbindung zu treten. Für den Fall eines Verbotes, die Straßen zu betreten, war der Leiter der B.-Gruppe, weil er die englische Sprache beherrschte, verpflichtet, trotz des Verbotes mit einer weißen Flagge auf die Straße zu gehen, sich verhaften zu lassen und da zu erwirken, dass die beiden anderen Beauftragten herangeholt würden. Doch dieses vorgesehene Verfahren brauchte keine Anwendung zu finden, der Auftrag liess sich in einfacherer Weise durchführen.

Der Leiter der K.-Gruppe liess am Tage der Besetzung (10.4.) durch Angehörige der Untergrundbewegung den Verlauf des Einmarsches feststellen und nach Eingang der Mitteilung, daß das Stadttinnere und das Rathaus besetzt seien (gegen 11 Uhr vorm.) wurde durch Boten der Leiter der B.-Gruppe herangeholt. Von dem verabredeten Treffpunkt aus (K.-Wohnung) suchte die Delegation den nächsten Posten der einmarschierten Truppen, um durch diesen zu erfahren, wo der Kommandant zu finden sei. Gegen 13 Uhr liess sich die Delegation durch die Wache beim Kommandanten im Rathaus melden. Nach entsprechender Legitimation und Besprechung wurde verabredet, am 11. April früh wieder vorzusprechen und dazu auch den als Oberbürgermeister empfohlenen Leiter der Gruppe Br. mitzubringen. Das geschah auch.

Den unterbreiteten Vorschlägen entsprechend wurde der Leiter der Br.-Gruppe als kommissarischer Oberbürgermeister und der Leiter der B.-Gruppe als kommissarischer Polizeipräsident eingesetzt. Die Leiter der K.- und der M.-Gruppe erhielten den Auftrag, mit Einsatz der Leiter der anderen Gruppen der Untergrundbewegung den "Ausschuss für Wiederaufbau" zu bilden. Er wurde ergänzt durch je eine jüdische und kommunistische Delegation. Die Leitung hatte K. Aufgabe des Ausschusses war: Der Alliierten Militärbehörde und den neuen Verwaltungsbehörden durch Beratung und Mitwirkung bei der Durchführung der Pläne und Aufgaben dieser Stellen behilflich zu sein.

Der Ausschuß bezeichnete folgende 12 Punkte als seine nächsten Aufgaben:

1. Sicherung der Feld- und Gartenbestellung.
2. Errichtung einer Arbeitseinsatzbehörde.
3. Ingangsetzung von Betrieben.
4. Betriebliche Arbeitervertretungen.
5. Wiederaufbau von Gewerkschaften.
6. Zeitung und Informationswesen.
7. Wiederaufnahme des Post- und Eisenbahnverkehrs.
8. Personelle Bereinigung aller Verwaltungsstellen (Reichs-Länder-Provinzial- und Kommaldienststellen)
9. Personelle Bereinigung von Handel und Gewerbe. (Beseitigung von Nazis aus allen führenden Stellungen. Entziehung der Konzessionen zur Ausübung von Handel und Gewerbe.)
10. Neuregelung des Schulwesens.
11. Reorganisation der Baugenossenschaften und des Kleinsiedlungswesens.
12. Reorganisation der Sozialversicherungskörper.

Besonders umfangreich war die Tätigkeit des Ausschusses bei der Ermittlung und Ausschaltung der Nazis. Diese Arbeit war befriedigend in Verbindung mit den amerikanischen Polizeistellen, jedoch steigend unbefriedigend seit deren Abgang. Mit Genugtuung kann darauf verwiesen werden, dass auch nach der Verlegung der amerikanischen Polizeistellen, führende Offiziere dieser noch Verbindung mit dem Ausschuss unterhielten und auch den Leiter des Ausschusses beauftragten, auch an anderen Orten (im amerikanisch besetzten Gebiet) solche Ausschüsse zu errichten.

Der "Ausschuss für Wiederaufbau" stellte politisch und fachlich geeignete Kräfte für die personelle Reorganisation bzw. Wiedererrichtung der Fahrbereitschaft (Straßentransport), des Schulwesens und des Gesundheitswesens zur Verfügung. Beauftragte des Ausschusses wirkten bei der personellen Reorganisation und dem Wiederaufbau der Post und Eisenbahn mit. Aus eigener Initiative wurden die Wirtschaftskammer, die Handwerkskammer, die Handwerkerinnungen, die allgemeine Ortskrankenkasse, das Arbeitsamt, die Leitungen der Baugenossenschaften, der Kleingärtner- und Siedlungsgenossenschaften personell reorganisiert.

Besonders sei auf die Reorganisation der betrieblichen Arbeiter- und Angestelltenvertretungen, sowie auf die vorbereitenden Arbeiten zur Errichtung einer allgemeinen Gewerkschaft auf demokratischer Grundlage verwiesen.

Bei der Betreuung der aus den Gefängnissen und Konzentrationslager Befreiten und der zurückgekehrten Juden wurde die Mitwirkung des Ausschusses in Anspruch genommen. Besonders starke Hilfe leistete der Ausschuß durch Einschaltung seiner für die Stadtbezirke errichteten Unterausschüsse bei der Beschaffung des Wohnungsbedarfs für zurückgekehrte Juden, Häftlinge, Evakuierte und Ausgebombte.

Umfangreiche Hilfe leistete der Ausschuss und seine Unterausschüsse bei der politischen Beurteilung von Anwärtern für die Besetzung vakanter Verwaltungsstellen, von Bewerbern freigewordener Geschäfte und den Bewerbern um neue Gewerbe genehmigungen.

Sehr viel Hilfe musste dem Arbeitsamt und der Alliierten Militärbehörde bei der Beschaffung von Arbeitskräften geleistet werden.

Auf die intensive Ermittlung und Überwachung aller Nazis und Wehrwolf-Verdächtigen ist es auch zurückzuführen, dass Wehrwölfe in Hannover nicht in Erscheinung traten.

Bei den Stellen der englischen Militärregierung, vor allem bei der Polizei konnte eine sich steigernde Animosität gegen den Ausschuss für Wiederaufbau wahrgenommen werden. Dem Ausschuss wurde vorgehalten, dass bei den Unterausschüssen Übergriffe bei der Erledigung von Wohnungsangelegenheiten und bei Umbesetzungen in den Kleingärtner-Kolonien vorgekommen seien. Gewiss sind einige solche Fälle vorgekommen, doch gemessen an der Vielzahl der behandelten Fälle sehr wenig. Dabei ist ein Teil dieser Vorkommnisse nicht von Beauftragten des Ausschusses, sondern von Mitgliedern der Kleingärtnervereine und auch von Unberufenen herbeigeführt worden. In Wohnungsangelegenheiten vorgekommene Missgriffe (kurzfristige Kündigungen aus politischen Gründen) erfolgten von und unter Verantwortung der Vereinsleitungen der Wohnungsgenossenschaften. Die Rechtfertigung dieser Fälle mit dem Hinweis auf die Tatsache, dass die Nazis 1933 rücksichtslos ohne jede Kündigung Kleingärtner aus ihren Gärten vertrieben und die Vereinsleitungen der Baugenossenschaften und der Kleingärtnervereine, sowie auch Wohnungen mit Nazis besetzten, die nicht einmal Mitglieder dieser Vereinigungen waren, wurde bei der englischen Militärpolizei nicht voll gewürdigt. Trotzdem solche Fälle auf Verlangen wieder korrigiert wurden, erfolgte am 2. Juni 1945 die Auflösung des Ausschusses für ~~ANZEKREAN~~ Wiederaufbau und seiner Unterausschüsse. Wenn auch bei der Auflösung des Ausschusses für Wiederaufbau (unter Ausschluss der Unterausschüsse) seine korrekte und wertvolle Leistung ausdrücklich bestätigt und dafür Dank ausgesprochen wurde, so hilft das nicht über das Empfinden hinweg, dass noch andere als die angeführten Angelegenheiten Anlass zu dieser Massnahme waren. Einen besonders bitteren Geschmack erhält die Angelegenheit durch die Tatsache, dass schon vor der Auflösung deutsche Beamte in noch nicht politisch-personell reorganisierten Behörden auf die zu erwartende Auflösung verwiesen.

Deck sei dem wie es sein. Bestehen bleibt, dass der Ausschuss für Wiederaufbau Schöpfung und Organ der Untergrundbewegung, unbestreitbar wertvoll und erfolgreiche Arbeit geleistet hat. Er hat massgebend mitgeholfen bei der Beseitigung des durch 12 Jahre Nazi-herrschaft und den militärischen Zusammenbruch verursachten Chaos. Durch seine tatkräftige Mitwirkung wurden erfolversprechende Voraussetzungen für den Wiederaufbau auf allen Gebieten geschaffen. Für die nazigeegnerische Bevölkerung ist es unverstänlich, warum die englische Militärregierung statt den Ausschuss aufzulösen, nicht enger und für weitere Zeit mit ihm zusammengearbeitet hat. Die Kenntnisse und Erfahrungen der vom Ausschuss für Wiederaufbau erfassten und bereitgehaltenen Fachkräfte für Wirtschaft und Verwaltung und das gesammelte Material hätten mit Aussicht auf Erfolg bzw. zur Überwindung vieler Schwierigkeiten herangezogen werden können.

Hannover, den 9. Juli 1945

An die Herren  
Dr. R o b s o n und  
L o m m e s

H a n n o v e r

Sehr geehrte Herren !

Wir beziehen uns auf die Unterhaltung mit Ihnen und gestatten uns noch einmal unsere Sorgen und Wünsche, die sich besonders auf die Gewerkschaftsbewegung und ihre Aufgaben beziehen, vorzutragen.:

Mit dem Wiederaufbau der Wirtschaft in den von der Alliierten Militärregierung besetzten Gebieten ist auch die Notwendigkeit gegeben, die Interessen und Angelegenheiten der Arbeiter, Angestellten und Beamten grundlegend zu regeln.

Für deutsche Verhältnisse ist es notwendig, dass betriebliche Vertretungen der Arbeitenden errichtet und anerkannt werden, darüber besteht einheitliche Auffassung bei Arbeitgebern und Arbeitnehmern. Einheitliche Auffassung besteht auch darüber, dass die Arbeitnehmerschaft für Wahrnehmung ihrer überbetrieblichen Interessen sich einer gewerkschaftlichen Vertretung bedienen müsste und kann, sowie auch die Arbeitgeber die Möglichkeit haben, ihre Interessen geschlossen wahrzunehmen.

Die Notwendigkeit der Interessenvertretung durch eine Gewerkschaft ist jetzt beim Wiederaufbau um so dringlicher, weil damit auch die Neuerrichtung bzw. das Wiederanlaufen der öffentlich-rechtlichen Körperschaften und Sozialeinrichtungen erfolgt.

So werden die Krankenkassen, Invaliden- und Angestelltenversicherung, die Knappschaften, die Arbeitsämter, die Wirtschaftskammer, die Handwerkskammer u.s.w. wieder in Funktion gesetzt. Bei all' diesen Institutionen ist die Wahrnehmung der Interessen der Arbeitnehmerschaft und die gewerkschaftliche Einschaltung in deren Verwaltungskörper notwendig, das ist alte deutsche Rechtsgepflogenheit, die vor dem Naziregime stark verankert war. Die Arbeitnehmerschaft legt größten Wert auf die Herbeiführung dieses früheren Zustandes und kann es nicht verstehen, dass ihre alten sozialen Rechte, die ihnen von den Nazis genommen wurden, heute von der Alliierten Militärregierung noch vorenthalten werden.

Gegenüber der Arbeitnehmerschaft sind die Arbeitgeber bei der jetzigen Situation stark im Vorteil; ihre Interessenvertretung ist sowieso unter dem Naziregime weitgehendst berücksichtigt worden und jetzt noch in den bestehenden Arbeitsgesetzen verankert und wirksam. Dazu sind die Arbeitgeber auch infolge ihrer kleineren Zahl und der ihnen zur Verfügung stehenden technischen Mittel in der Lage, ihre reinen Arbeitgeberinteressen bei dem Wiederaufbau wahrzunehmen. Sie können diese auch in den bereits errichteten Kammern für die Wirtschaft und das Handwerk wahrnehmen. Die Arbeitgeber sind auch in der Lage infolge ihrer

geschäftlichen Verbindungen und ihrer Reismöglichkeiten, eine einheitliche Ausrichtung bei ihrer Interessenwahrnehmung über das gesamte Wirtschaftsgebiet durchzuführen.

Um den erforderlichen Ausgleich auch auf Arbeitnehmerseite zu schaffen, ist es notwendig, die Bildung von betrieblichen Arbeitnehmervertretungen sowie auch die Bildung der Gewerkschaft zuzulassen. Weiter ist es notwendig, den Arbeitern, Angestellten und Beamten die Möglichkeit zu geben, sich mit Gewerkschaftlern anderer Gebiete zu verständigen, um eine einheitliche Ausrichtung ihrer Interessenwahrnehmung anzustreben.

Um all' diese Probleme an zuständiger Stelle im Hauptquartier vortragen und eingehend begründen zu können, wäre es uns sehr erwünscht, eine Audienz zugestanden zu bekommen. Wir bitten Sie demzufolge dringlichst, uns dabei behilflich zu sein.

Mit vorzüglicher Hochachtung

Walter Raul

Institut für Zeitgeschichte

ZS/R-27-14

P. Loomis: Reactions of the  
German Civilians to the  
occupation... (July 1945)

Bl. 12 - 15

Institut für Zeitgeschichte - Archiv

To: Dr. Rensis Lickert, Head Morse Division, Strategic Bombing Survey

From: Chas. P. Loomis

Subject: Reactions of the German Civilians to the occupation as reflected in interviews previous to July 1 written in accordance with your request delivered by Crutchfield.

The following is a general statement based upon my interviews and those of my team. Since the report is off the cuff and not specifically related to strategic bombing, which is our real mission, it is of necessity impressionistic. Except for the description of incidents the conclusions apply to both the English and American occupation in the Hanover, Bremen and Detmold areas. Since I helped with the general sampling the report should be valid for a much larger area.

#### 1. Failure of the Allies to control the displaced persons.

This is a complaint registered in all of our targets especially in the rural villages. It seems particularly serious because it means that those innocent of Nazi activities are harmed. For instance day before yesterday in the village next to our rural village target, Rietze, about 80 Poles who came by night to beat up a farmer who had refused to give them a hog <sup>which</sup> killed a Jew from a concentration camp who happened to be recuperating in the home of this peasant. The Poles thought they were beating up the farmer whose dog had chased 8 of them away a few days before. I had hoped that the British would control these incidents around Rietze because I reported the following incident to the headquarters in Peine two weeks ago: While I was at Rietze arranging for the study about 18 Poles and two English soldiers entered the village and demanded 800 eggs in 80 minutes. The marauders threatened to set the village on fire, a threat which has been carried out quite a number of times on houses in this area. They caught the local policeman who had been appointed by the Americans before the British took over and beat him up for having blown a village assembly siren when the Poles had been there a few days previously. I was told that if I had not appeared the mayor would also have been beaten. The villagers claimed the English soldiers were Polish. They were from another Kreis, the military headquarters of which are in Gifhorn. The English mayor in Peine, who is in command of the Kreis in which Rietze falls, said he would investigate the case.

The ironical fact about the difficulties with these displaced persons in the rural areas is that they almost always harm farmers other than those for whom they worked. They seem to have been well treated because leave taking is a sad event involving stroking the animals, much tear shedding, hand shaking and even kissing of the Germans with whom they have worked and whom their fellow nationals from other villages are now molesting. The British commander of Bissendorf where we worked told Dr. Robson that he never saw a more tearful sight than when the Russians had to leave. He was so moved that he struck off from his list the names of two Russian girls who pleaded to be left with the German peasants saying they had no parents in Russia. As

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would be expected in the villages animals are most frequently stolen. Often only parts are eaten and the rest wasted. In the cities bicycle watches, etc. are sought. Any social scientist knows that this disorder will be met by self-protection organization which may have Nazi orientation. The Americans actually helped the villagers arrange a siren system so that village inhabitants could be called together for mutual aid but the isolated holdings often go up in smoke. Out of a similar situation our Klu Klux Klan in the South developed.

#### II. Failure to open the schools.

The Non-Nazi leaders maintain that this fits the Nazi scheme of things. Keep the people ignorant so you can indoctrinate them as you please. Children are running the streets with nothing to do and youth, the key problem of German rehabilitation, is given the opportunity of seeing that democracies cannot make up their minds in such simple matters as to whether there should be one or several school systems. School people say that the unified system established by the Nazi is cheaper and better than a system in which every sect has its own school. The Nazi sympathizers exploit this situation saying that new books are not needed in the lower grades. Here in Hanover materials and plants are ready in some districts but the officials will not open the schools. With fathers away in prison camps and many mothers dead from bombings the informants say the children should be in school.

#### III. Lack of dependable information.

The complaint that the Allies withhold information and talk only of concentration camp horrors and degeneracy is common. Several Anti-Nazi claimed this situation is being exploited by Nazis. Rumors are rampant. Some examples follow: The Allies want to kill off as many Germans as possible through starvation in the coming winter. They have brought in thousands of paper sacks filled with potato bugs and spread them in the rural areas. (The potato bug menace in the area of Detmold is real and with food shortage ahead people are almost frantic) Germans will not be permitted to marry for the next 10 years. No schools of higher learning will be opened in Germany. Military occupation is to be for 20 years and then may be extended.

The Allies could get this rumor situation under control if they built up a good press and radio program. In our presence the Germans continually switch off the English and American programs about the horrors of concentration camps and the wickedness of Germans to pick up Russian programs from Berlin which carry Beethoven, Mozart, other German music and claims for great progress in the rebuilding of Germany under the Russians. Incidentally these good Russian radio programs plus the fact that German war prisoners released by Russia were well fed and treated are counteracting the looting and raping stories mentioned below.

#### IV. Terror tactics.

In some cases persons who, because of previous experiences or group affiliation, are incapable of rational action, have been allowed to

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to determine policy and direct activities. The following example will illustrate this: In the villages north of Hannover a British company lead by a captain whom the British tell me "Jewish", ordered all Nazi books etc. heaped in the village center. At a specified time all villagers were ordered to appear and gasoline was poured on the books which were burned while the captain gave a speech while tearing out pages from "Mein Kampf". In the village, Mellendorf, a few miles due north of our target Bissendorf, this captain decided to make his ceremony more dramatic through the use of a flame thrower. The flame leaped out, burned five villagers to a crisp and others were so seriously burned that they had to be hospitalized. This British activity came up often in the interviews in Bissendorf but American activity was just as bad. When I asked my first informant in Bissendorf how she was getting along under the occupation she began to cry. I learned that her father, the old mayor of the village, had been taken out and shot by three American soldiers. The villagers said he was an honest and sincere man and maintain that the real Nazis are still free.

In the rural village, Rietze, I have verified attempts at rape by American soldiers and there is the report that 15 American Negro soldiers were shot for raping German women in the neighboring village. However, the Germans do not complain about this on the part of Americans and British because the reports from the Russian areas of occupation are so much more frightful and on the lips of practically all Germans. According to the reports we get from the Germans here few women in the Russian occupied areas have not been raped. There are quite a few people here who have escaped from these Russian areas. We plan to talk with some of them.

#### V. Pampering of Nazis.

Because it is the Allied policy to stamp out Nazism, because high ranking Nazis have been imprisoned and because only a few German soldiers have returned, most of our informants claim to be Anti-Nazi. Many actually are and a large proportion of these complain that the Nazis who were pushing them around before are free and now feigning cooperation with the Allies. Real opposition leaders who carried out sabotage against the Nazi feel that they are not allowed as important a place in the present system as our radio propaganda promised them. Some say they prepared lists of Nazis who should be put under control but that these people are still loose and to be feared.

In this connection I want to report that we see little Anti-Allied activity. The cooperation and assistance we get is actually unbelievable. Whole bureaus and offices set to work to help us at the slightest suggestion. The reports in the US that Germans are sullen and do not want to assist or submit to the Allies are almost totally false. Few are not extremely friendly and most are at least outwardly sympathetic to our efforts. If the United States are ever conquered by a foreign power I am almost certain that we will not cooperate as the Germans are attempting to cooperate with the Allies.

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VI. Failure of Military Government officials to use German professionals.

There is universal impatience concerning the reestablishment of communication and transportation facilities. Evacuated school children and others have been lost track of and months have passed with no mail, telephone or other connections being established. The professional Germans whom we interview feel that much delay is due to the refusal on the part of the Allies to use available German engineers and other professionals and technicians. Many common laborers are used but these informants claim that not enough trained personnel is put to work. Somewhat out of this category but related to it is the complaint we get here on the part of labor organizers. They feel that the British fear of communism, is ruling out many good organizers or making it necessary for others to hide their true allegiance.

Interv.m.[Aloin] Karl u. Beerman,

3.7.45

Bl. 16 - 19

Interv.m.Laasch u.Hanns Lilje,

3.7.45

Bl. 20 - 22

Interv.m.[Aloin] Karl,Schumacher u.

Deike, 5.7.45

Bl. 23 - 27

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Interview with KARL and BEERMAN  
by Loomis and Robson  
July 3, 1945  
During and after supper at 10 Corneliusstr.

1. The general problems arising from the present division of Germany into four zones of occupation.

a.) The fact that the Russian zone contains the section in which a large part of the surplus food is produced will make it very difficult to feed the people in the zones occupied by the English, Americans and French. We fear hunger and even starvation during the coming winter.

Furthermore raw materials needed in industrial regions are produced in the Russian zone. Unless these can be obtained it will be difficult to restore industry.

b.) The revival of labor unions and political parties will be very difficult unless there is free passage from one zone to another.

2. Rumors relative to atrocities in the Russian zone. The raping of women in the Russian zone is carried on principally by the Asiatic troops. They have an attitude toward women different from that of the Europeans.

3. The problems arising from the plundering by the foreign workers in Germany. The foreign workers who were brought into Germany during the war should have been provided with clothes, food and other things they needed as soon as the occupying forces entered Germany. These things could have been obtained from people who had a surplus and from the stores. Instead of supplying them with these things according to a systematic plan they were allowed to plunder. This has resulted in a great waste of goods and unnecessary destruction of crops and livestock on the farms. The farmers have themselves killed more of their livestock than they would have killed otherwise because they feared plundering. The plundering and violence of the foreign workers has tended to divert the hatred of the Nazis development during the last year of the war to a hatred of the foreigners. This has led to a revival of nationalistic sentiment if not to a revival of Nazi sympathy.

4. Nazis and Nazi sympathizers in public office and in influential places in business and professional life. The officials of the military government have been inclined to take the advice of the former officials in the choice of public officials. This has been particularly true in the courts. After the coming of the English an English officer went to Celle to ask the former President of the Landesgericht to recommend men to be used as judges. This man was a Nazi and after long efforts to persuade him to make suggestions he told the English that he had taken an oath to Hitler from which he had not been released and therefore would not help them.

The reason that we mention this is that it is typical that the English went to an official who was a Nazi rather than to the organization formed by the anti-Nazi lawyers after the occupation.

Many Nazis are in the controlling positions in the courts, in the administrative offices and in favorable positions in business. The English are impressed by those persons who can speak English and who make a good appearance. They have granted so many favors to such people, many of whom are Nazis, that the Nazis are saying that a man has to be a Nazi in order to achieve anything under the occupations. Business men are allowed to have passes, to use automobiles and to travel throughout the region whereas the labor leaders are not allowed to go more than the hundred miles allowed to everybody and are not allowed to form any organizations to speak for labor. We had prepared for an organization to speak for labor from the beginning, but they who were the worst Nazis and could have recommended trustworthy people to the military government authorities but we are not asked to do so. Not all former members of the National Socialist Party are Nazis, but many are. It is not only the former members who are Nazis, but also the present members. We will take out of the former National Socialists from the trade unions.

#### 6. Activities of the workers underground movement during the war and effect of air attacks on this.

Our underground movement was a continuation of the labor union movement that existed legally before the Nazis came to power in 1933. Until 1938 we printed and distributed Flugblätter and a newspaper. In that year nearly three hundred of our leaders were sentenced to prison so that our activity was greatly curtailed. During the war we carried on the organization through personal contacts. We tried to promote sabotage and slowing down of work.

The bombing attacks made it more difficult to carry on our activities. People had to concern themselves with the problems of their own families so that they did not have the time nor the energy to engage in preparation for revolution. More over it was difficult to get people together. We also had difficulty in keeping in touch with each other due to the interruptions of traffic and to the changes in addresses of those who were bombed out.

The only advantage that the air attacks brought was that they produced and deepened hatred of war and hatred of the Nazis. This did not promote revolutionary tendencies, however. There is a difference between the awakening of religious feeling and the creation of a revolutionary attitude. Religion provides escape and comfort. On the other hand, revolution calls for activity for which people had neither the time nor the energy during the air raids. The breaking of the spirit in the home front began with the defeat at Stalingrad and the morale continued gradually

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deteriorate. After the breakthrough of the atlantic wall and through the increasing severity of the air attacks the home-front morale deteriorated sharply. Soldiers from the front were surprised to find how low the morale was. When they experienced an attack, however, they said it was worse than a battle at the front.

#### 6. Effectiveness of Nazi control and counter revolutionary measures.

The possibility of something like the Marquis in Germany did not exist. There were no holes in the Gestapo system. Even the Reichswehr had spies (Vertrauensmaenner) in the factories. Many of the leaders in the workers movement were in prison or concentration camp. Those of us who had been released were constantly watched.

The Nazis also took positive measures to maintain their control over the people. The Kraft durch Freude vocations (this was a program taken over from the labor unions) and the Winterhilfe and the NSV made it possible for the Party to appear directly as the benefactor of the people. It also made it possible to reward friends and to punish enemies. This means was also used to attract people into the Party. Furthermore the propaganda was cleverly designed to influence the German people. Both Goebbels and Hitler were clever propagandists.

The Nazis were supported by the shop keepers, the people in clerical positions the peasants and the good-for-nothing workers (Lumpen-Arbeiter) as well as the big capitalist. Only the workers opposed the Nazis through their organizations. That was the reason that the workers organizations were destroyed whereas the organization of the middle class were not destroyed.

The impressive and bombastic forms of propaganda used by the Nazis pleased many of the people. The Nazis could afford this because they received money from the big capitalist. The Nazis had able men who were good organizers. Goebbels, Frick, Ribbentrop and Roehm were all useful to Hitler and he understood how to use them.

#### 7. Need of workers organizations at the present time and difficulties encountered in connection with forming them.

Not only the workers but the business men as well feel the need of reorganizing the labor unions as quickly as possible. As former officials of the labor unions that existed before 1933 and as leaders in the underground movement during the war we receive letters and messages constantly from members of both groups stressing this need. Many questions affecting labor are constantly arising but there is no organization through which the views of workers can be expressed. The employers have their organization in the Wirtschaftskammer which has been set up. Only through labor organizations can a situation be created which will be tolerable. We do not wish to exclude all former National Socialist Party members from the labor unions but we do want labor organizations that are freely organized by the workers. We would cooperate with other unions such as those formed under the auspices of the center Party which also continued some activity during the war.

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The difficulties which we now encounter in carrying out our plans to proceed with the formation of labor unions are very great. We have just received a letter from the officer in charge of labor relations in Hannover, Major Mathers, stating that he must consult higher authorities before he can allow us to proceed with the organization of labor unions. We cannot talk to him except through an interpreter which makes it very difficult to approach him effectively, especially because his interpreter was formerly a member of the Deutsche Nationale Handlungsgesellschaften Verband, one of the most reactionary of German labor organizations, most of whose members later became Nazis. We have no opportunity at all to talk to the principal authorities of the military government although the employers both as individuals and through their organization, the Wirtschaftskammer, can do so.

It is ironical that we have now for our offices only the top floor of the building owned by the Gewerkschaftsverband here in Hannover before the Nazis took it over for the Arbeitsfront in 1933. We may even lose that one floor. It would be a psychological catastrophe to be put out of our own building by the Nazis in 1933 and by the English in 1945.

We have hoped that we would be helped by the Allies when they came in because the workers have suffered more for democratic principles than any other group. The sacrifices of those who fought against the Nazis inside Germany can't be understood by those on the outside. Nevertheless we are deeply hurt when we are charged with being responsible for the crimes of the Nazis. We only want a chance to organize the German workers and to educate them. In this we are very much handicapped because we have no books. We do not even have copies of the labor laws under the Weimarer Republic.

If we could only go ahead with our plans we have the situation well in hand. However, if the pressure of a period of low wages and high prices comes in which there is no opportunity for the workers to speak through their own organization a situation will be created which no one can control. The unions should be formed so as to extend over the entire western Germany, throughout the zones of English, American and French occupation. If this is not done there is danger of penetration from Russia. This would be a catastrophe. Already former members of the Communist Party in Germany are coming through from the Russian zone. They are almost the only people who are allowed to come out but somehow they are able to obtain passes. We wonder why they want to leave a zone which ought to be so much to their taste.

Date: July 3, 1945

Place: Office of Landessuperintendent Leasch, Boedeckerstr. 27  
Hannover

Interrogators: Loomis and Robson.

Interrogated: Dr. Leasch, Landessuperintendent, Hannover,  
Dr. Lilje, Pastor of the Johannes Kirche in Lichterfelde  
West-Berlin, General Secretary of the German  
Students Church Movement.

Discussion before Dr. Lilje came in.

The question of the treatment of women was raised in connection with statement by Dr. Leasch (in interview with Robson) that he had talked with two women from Berlin who had been repeatedly raped by Russians.

Dr. Leasch stated that he was convinced that the Russian mistreatment of women was a planned bestardization of the German people. In the Baltic countries the Russian occupation was not accompanied by such mistreatment of women. He interpreted the policy of the Russians as dictated by Jews influential in the Russian state in retaliation for the evils inflicted upon Jews in Germany on the basis of a theory of racial purity. Dr. Leasch stated that the women of whom he spoke in the earlier interview were only passing through Hannover and therefore no longer available for interviewing here, but that he heard stories of this kind frequently from persons coming from the Russian occupied region and would try to send one of them to us.

Dr. Lilje stated that he had been arrested after the attempted assassination of Hitler because several of the first eight people executed were parishioners of his and one had asked to talk to him before his execution. He had remained in the concentration camp until the end of the war. He talked at length on several topics suggested to him by questions.

#### 1. Underground anti-Nazi movement during the war.

There was very little organization. More or less in formal groups of opposition leaders existed 1. among the officers in the army, 2. among leading persons in the administrative service together with some professors and other intellectuals, 3. among the christian churches, both Evangelical and Catholic and 4. among the workers. The unifying objective which provided a focus for these otherwise divergent groups was that of setting Germany's house in order before others did it for Germany. The movement had begun after the defeat of Germany at Stalingrad. About that time he had had a talk with Dr. E. Schacht who had told him that he had come to the conclusion that Germany would loose the war. There was also opposition to Hitler within the Reichskabinet. The plans of the different groups were not known to Dr. Lilje. His part was merely that of speaking out from the pulpit as he saw the truth. He had not known of the plans to take to take Hitler's life and thought that most of the other groups more or less active in opposition were also without

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knowledge of these particular plans. All of the groups mentioned above however, were represented among the persons imprisoned after the attempted assassination. As indicated several persons who attended his services were actively implicated including Count York von Wartenburg, Count Schalenburg, General von Beck and General von Trott. Count Staufenburg was a devoted Roman Catholic.

## 2. Effect of air raids on morale of people and particularly on religious life.

People in Berlin and throughout the country held out with remarkable bravery during the air raids. Dr. Lilje had opportunity to observe in many places because he travelled a great deal. He was, however, in prison throughout the last eight months of the war. He thought that probably the morale was not as high in that period.

The air raids brought about a proletarianization of the people. They injured the middle class particularly. They had at least one good result in that they taught the people to help each other in the time of great distress. He had noted a marked difference between the people in the cities who had experienced bombing and those in rural sections who had had no such experience. The effect on religious life was that it turned people to the simple basis forms of Christian belief so that Christianity, on the whole the years of the war had been the happiest of his life as a minister. People were prepared for a reception of the gospel because they stood ever before the danger of death. In November, 1943, he had held a Bible Week in Berlin. It was well attended even though the church was half destroyed. The spiritual experience of the people was in pressure.

At this time it was pointed out by the interviewers that Dr. Laasch and other ministers had said that church attendance had fallen off during the air raids due to the fear of air raids and the destruction of the churches. Dr. Lilje agreed that this might have been the case in the last part of the war during which period he was in prison.

Dr. Lilje reported in answer to a question that he had noted little resort to the more emotional forms of religion except that the Russelites had somewhat increased. This sect had gained among the working people especially. On the whole the extremists sects did not find fertile soil in Germany for two reasons:

1. The German people have characteristically a longing for discipline and ordered life. This can have a very bad expression as in the submission to Hitler but is not necessarily bad.

2. The preaching in German churches is along substantial lines. The schism between fundamentalism and modernism known in America does not exist in Germany. German pastors emphasize all theological points where as sects of often result from the might of some point by church, this point being seized upon by the sectarians and overemphasized.

Dr. Lilje was asked if he had noted any tendering on the part of people to argue that no God existed because of the horror of the air raids. He started that he had frequently war such arguments advanced especially in railway train compartments as he travelled through Germany but

added that these arguments spontaneously advanced were as spontaneously answered by those who contended that the attacks came as a punishment upon the people for their sense. He then related an incident of this kind which occurred in a way carriage. In the compartment were two SS men who merely smiled and a high NSV official who finally agreed with the idea that the raids were a punishment for the sense of the people.

### 3. Origin and character of Nazi ideology.

Dr. Lilje thought Nazism was in part result of Germany's love of discipline. Also Nazism was a form of sectarianism for the Germans. It was partly political and partly religious. Robert Ley was, for instance, a real pietist. His methods were those of an evangelist. Another factor in Nazism was a leading nation in the middle ages - the 9th - 15th centuries. In the current period Germans had the feeling that ought to be a great nation like England. Another element of Nazism was the myth of racial superiority stemming from Gobineau and Chamberlain. The whole Nazi ideology was stupid and contradictory.

### 4. The reaction of the German people to the policies of the Military Government authorities.

a) Dr. Lilje expressed very strong by the opinion that the policy of making no distinction between the Nazis and the German people in regard to guilt in the war and in such matters as the horror of the concentration camps was a serious mistake which tended to confuse the German people and might eventually lead to change from the attitudes of and welcome toward the Allies to one of hatred.

b) In the second place Dr. Lilje held it to be a mistake to prevent Germans from going ahead with reconstruction under their own leadership. In many fields restoration of normal activity could be carried forward by Germans that would in no way conflict or endanger the authority of the Military Government.

### 5. Morale of youth and prospects of reeducation.

Both Dr. Lilje and Dr. Laasch reported that they thought the youth had not been deeply impressed with national socialist ideology. Particularly in the last year the youth had become disillusioned with the Party leadership. Dr. Laasch stated that he found among the young people with whom he came in contact an eagerness to learn. The young people felt that they had not had sufficient sound education under the National Socialists and particularly during the war years their training had been interrupted.

Interview with Dr. Schumacher, Karl and Deike  
in Home of Deike.

July 5, 1946 Loomis and Robson.

Loomis asked Schumacher to tell something of the conditions and treatment in Dachau.

Schumacher: In addition to the general concentration camp under SS guards, there were also in Dachau concentration camps for the various states also under the SS and SA guards.

The guards had to be changed again and again and incited to energetic prosecution of their duties as guards as their tendency was to become stale and relax the severe regime.

The severity and cruelty of the treatment varied. In 1933 it was very bad somewhat lighter in 1934 and 1935 and again severe in 1936. During the war it was more severe again.

There were both political prisoners and criminals in Dachau, including a great many persons guilty of homosexual crimes. The type of offense was indicated by a colored patch on the shirt of each prisoner. The effort was made to play the criminals off against the political prisoners. The political prisoners constituted an elite among the prisoners.

Later the members of various nationalities were segregated in different blocks and attempts were made to cause enmity and jealousy among them by granting favors to some that were not granted to others.

The punishments used at Dachau were the following:

25 licks with a leather whip. Many people were severely injured by these whippings. Hanging persons in such a way that the toes barely touched the ground. Chaining in a bent position so that the shoulders were drawn over the knees. This punishment was given up after a short time.

The most suffering was caused by overwork under severe pressure. There was a great deal of individual sadism among the SS guards. Before 1939 a great deal of the torture and murdering of prisoners was individual. After 1939 it became a more general policy.

My personal experience was in the following camp: In 1933 I was arrested in August and taken to Harburg. Orders for my arrest were issued in March but I was able to carry on underground activity until August. In 1934 I was taken to Kuberg bei Ulm and in 1935 was taken to Dachau and remained there until 1943. In 1944 I was again arrested after the attempted assassination of Hitler and held until October. On none of these occasions were there any formal accusations or trials and there were no papers authorizing my imprisonment. The things that have been said about Dachau and Buchenwald have not been exaggerated. They are fundamentally true.

After the beginning of the war those who were brought in for the first time were treated very severely but the guards seemed to think that those of us who had been there a long time had already had enough of

the most severe treatment. However, I was taken to Flossenburg for a half year in 1939 and there it was very bad.

The average SS guard was a stupid person who had been gradually beastialized. When ideas such as brotherly love, justice and truth are laughed at people become dull in their sense of humanity and justice. They become like beasts. There were some soldiers from World War I among the SS guards many of whom were simply called in and assigned to the job. They did not like their work and some of them did what they could to protect the prisoners.

Karl: In 1935 I was in the Columbia KZ in Berlin. Most of the guards there were from Austria. There were many homosexuals there.

Schumacher: The Nazis did not punish homosexuals severely until after Roehm was killed in 1934. The SA was formed around homosexuality. After Roehm was killed the homosexuals opposed the Nazis. (Deike was asked what he thought of the problem of educating the youth. Would it be difficult to eliminate the effects of Nazi ideas.)

Deike: The principal need will be to eliminate the enthusiasm for war that has been instilled by Nazi teaching. I prepared to have a series of lectures by Schumacher and others pointing out the errors in Nazi ideas and the evils of war. These lectures were to be delivered to the teachers who will be used in the schools when they are opened. However, the English officials said that these lectures were too political and could not be delivered.

The other great need is for sound education in the various fields of knowledge trades and professions. The education has not been thorough and often the examinations were ridiculous. On one examination the question "where does Hitler live?" was asked. All that answered "In Bergtesgaden" failed. The correct answer was "In the heart of every German". That is not just a joke. It is a serious matter that Party regularity outweighed sound knowledge as the objective of education.

(Schumacher was asked of he thought that the effects of the bombing attacks could be used by demagogues as a means of stirring up nationalistic feeling or enmity against the Allies)

Schumacher: Yes. The ruin will always be a point of agitation. How they are used with depend upon who has charge of educating the people.

(Question: Were the communist active in opposition to the Nazis during the war?)

Karl: Yes. They maintained some underground organization throughout the war. They had no connections with us, however.

(Question: Were other groups at all active in opposition?)

Karl: There were a few very small cercles some of whom were from the Center Party. Among the middle classes persons entered into political

life mainly to protect or further his interest. There were no opposition movements among them.

(What were your relations to the foreign workers?)

Schumacher: The foreign workers brought into Germany were not revolutionary material. They were dangerous people and even betrayed each other to the Gestapo. They would also betray us. I'd give one of them bread or cigarettes but not trust.

Karl: Often quite good relations existed between the Germans and the foreign workers but these relations were not such as to lead to political cooperation.

(Were the evacuees in any way useful in connection with opposition?)

Karl: The evacuees were mainly old people and women so were not interested in politics. Any evacuees that were interested in politics were afraid to speak to strangers.

Schumacher: As a citizen of a free country you cannot understand the situation in Germany any more than that on Mars. The period of the war was a very difficult one so far as organized opposition was concerned. All the younger and more vigorous young men were in the army. There was no chance of any kind of uprising because the Nazi organization was too strong at home. The main purpose of opposition activity therefore was not that of creating a mass movement looking toward a revolution but rather that of keeping an organization intact through the period. There was great danger that if the organization was too large it would be discovered and blotted out. From the beginning there were objectively two possible ways for the Nazi power to be overthrown:

1. the Nazis might lead Germany into a disastrous war and be overthrown by the defeat, and
2. a collapse of the economy which they constructed on the basis of rearmament.

Subjectively, there existed another possibility, that is that from a small corps of utterly devoted leaders a movement might be developed strong enough to overthrow them.

(Question: Do you think that the Allies were justified in bombing Germany as they did?)

Schumacher: Any means of defeating the Nazis was justified. The bombing we can accept, the hunger we can accept but the use of the refinements of legal and democratic processes in dealing with the Nazis we can't forgive. It is not possible to proceed against the Nazis on the basis of the principles observed in a liberal democratic state which proceeds according to law (Rechtstaat).

Karl: Yes. The Nazis who were not democrats took advantage of democratic procedures to destroy democracy and set up the most unscrupulous dictatorship.

Schumacher: One can and should be tolerant only of the tolerant. At least 5 percent to 10 percent of the German people must be eliminated from political life. This would include the owners of the large estates and the real Nazis. (Would you eliminate the communist too?) No. I have fought against the Communist but I would not eliminate them. They have their legitimization. They too have fought against the Nazis.

The Nazis must be shown that Germany can get along without them. At present they are flourishing. Even those in the prisons are paid and well-fed.

Many Nazis have not been arrested or have been released. They occupy positions in the administration and in business. They profit by the attitude of the Allies that all Germans are equally to blame for the war and the atrocities and that no German can be a judge of other Germans. Those of us who want to oppose them are prevented from organizing and have no means of reaching the people while the Nazis can continue their old contacts and organization without it being noticed by the authorities. If the present policies toward Germans and toward the Nazis are continued there will be an uprising against the authority of the Allies within a year.

(How could the Nazis best be eliminated?)

Schmacher: Commissions should be set up composed of those who have consistently opposed the Nazis to point out the Nazis and turn them out. Not all the Nazis should be imprisoned but they should be eliminated from political life. There should be in German politics four or possibly five parties: The Communists, the Social Democratic, the Center, a Democratic Party and possibly a party representing the point of view of the large business interests.

(How would you eliminate the small parties?)

That could be done in any one of several ways. The military government could simply issue an order to that effect. It might be accomplished by having a high deposit from parties that would be forfeited if their vote fell below a certain point or a party might be eliminated if its vote fell below 10 percent of the votes cast. Proportional representation such as that used in the time of the Weimar Republic would be satisfactory if there were a provision for excluding every party that fell below 10 percent of the total vote cast. A system of single member districts such as used in England or such as was used in France would never work in Germany. There are too many parties and especially the workers would suffer.

For the German a political party is more significant than for people in America or England. It represents his Weltanschauung and receives his support and attention the year round and not just at elections.

There is a need in Germany now for free expression of political views through public meetings and the press. Newspapers expressing different political views must be established. They should also be local newspapers which would carry local news and information. One or more papers should be set up in each city.

(Do you think that there should be elections in Germany any time in the near future?)

Yes. There could be elections in the different states (Laender) or provinces. However, Germany should not be a division in Germany. It should be kept in mind that Germany must continue to exist as a nation even if there must be some reduction in its size. There are some movements for local autonomy such as the Welfish movement in Hannover.

There are entirely anachronistic and reactionary but they receive the support of many unthinking people. If there are no political speeches, papers and regularly organized political parties there is a danger of great confusion among the people which would be of advantage to no one except the Nazis or the Communists. Coupled with the fact that next winter will be one in which there will be hunger and lack of work this political vacuum provides the greatest danger and the greatest opportunity for the Nazis. Some people are going to starve. Should it be those who have fought against the Nazis and suffered under them or should it be the Nazis themselves? Should it be me or Gauleiter Lauterbacher?

(Have the Americans been guilty of looting when they first came to Hannover?)

Schmacher: There was some looting but the Americans were for the most part well behaved. I remember when the first armored division of them came into Hannover. There were very many tanks and other vehicles all looking as if they were new. All the men were dressed in fine uniforms with big heavy leather shoes and every man freshly shaven despite the fact that they had had a battle or at least a small bombardment the night before. Evidently they had been ordered not to look at the Germans but you could see them looking out of the corners of their eyes. An officer, who was marching at the head of one of the columns was approached by an old German woman who asked "What are you anyway? (Was sind Sie fuer welche?)" He answered very politely "We are American soldiers." A German officer would never have done that. The Americans answered all questions. I found the young American soldiers very good natured and even naive, a contrast to the European.

ZS/17-27-32

Schr. v. 6.10.45 o. Vf.

Bl. 28 - 29

Institut für Zeitgeschichte – Archiv

Dear Mr. W.:

I just came back from a 5 day visit in Vienna. I enjoyed the trip very much. It was the first time that I had a chance to see and talk with Russian soldiers. I saw a performance of "Rosca" which was given by the Staatsoper in the Volksopernhaus. I also saw "Candida" presented by the Akademie Theater. The rest of my time I spent wandering around the city and striking up conversations. Since I talked mostly with middle class shop keepers, the impressions that I gained might be rather one-sided and unrepresentative; but I believe that they are fairly representative. - The danger of communism that I wrote off some months ago is now at least temporary a thing of the past. All admiration for Soviet Russia and her brilliant victories is now very much diminished because of the filthy and undisciplined Red Army of Occupation and because of the Russian practice of living off the land and of looting. Contrary to Munich, the people here hope that the occupation will soon cease because they feel that recovery is impossible under the present zone system in general and under Russian rule in particular. Vienna is a lot poorer than Munich because the Germans apparently favored the Altreich in their distribution and because the Russians seem to have done a very complete job of looting and destruction. Items like combs, glasses etc which one can obtain in any store in Munich are a thing of the past in Vienna. In practical, everything Vienna is on its last lap. Recovery is very difficult because of the occupation policies. For example, at first when the copper wires were strung to get the street cars in operation again, the Russians cut the wires down and shipped them to Russia- now that seems solved and the transportation system is functioning, but very much overworked. When an optical plant recently opened it was right away confiscated by the Russians and works for them exclusively- the people are unable to replace glasses. The Viennese has realized that the Russians in spite of his posters claiming to come as a liberator comes as conqueror and that the Americans in spite of their claim to come as liberators come as conquerors. Since the western powers came to Vienna the looting has stopped and it is safe again to walk on the street at night. The town is full of rumors that shipments of this and that will shortly come from America. Opticians talk about a supposed contract already made with Bush and Lomb for importation of optical equipment; book shops tell you of deliveries from America in the very near future etc.- There is nothing of anything left in Vienna and there is no hope that anything will be produced in Austria, but there is great confidence that all the things so much needed from Childrens books to combs will soon arrive from abroad. Without help from abroad nobody believed reconstruction to be possible. - Politically the Social Democrats are probably the strongest and are rebuilding their old organization. The communists are the most active and seem (one line illegible) - about their questionable attitude in the imperialist war days etc. - People certainly are less resigned and hopeless than they are in Munich. Most of them are cynically but not bitter. They see nazi small fry punished and others getting public positions in spite of pre 1938 days, by rejoining the Communist party or, if they had been members in as "our liberators" smiling while saying it. Vienna is pretty heavily damaged and nobody seems to be working too hard to rebuild it; but still people have confidence in the future. Everywhere are posters about the "Sofort-Program" of the Communist party and about everybody giving a hand in getting the rubbish cleaned away, but a lot of people do nothing and live on what they have saved up rather than do the dirty job of cleaning up. One day I went to a "Grosskundgebung fuer Suedtirol"; Renner and high representatives of the other parties spoke with full oratory and selfrighteous conviction. Most people assume that Suedtirol will be returned to Austria.

The Russian soldiers are now relatively clean looking because they just got their winter clothing; but in the last months of summer clothing they did not wash their uniforms and were a horrible and stinking sight. It is very striking to see some staff officers in their shined boots and pressed uniforms and then again see some major so filthy that no American private would touch him. They are much more primitive and eastish than I had imagined. Having suffered so tremendously under the Germans they are of the opinion that no German should have anything that some Russian does not have; and since Russia is so vast and backward that means that everything that is left in Central Europe after 6 years of war and bombings is not enough to bring up the Russian standard of living.

If it is really intended to reduce Germany and Austria to a standard of living not greater than that of any of her victims including Russia, the suffering involved in this process will be so much that it will be hard to stomach for anybody not of the SS concentration camp- (two words illegible)

I am including the only printed matter of recent origin that one can buy in all Viennese bookstores. It is tragic that paper is only available for these political pamphlets of this one view while children have no books to read, no Grimms Maerchen, No Struvelpeter or any other books for the generation that is growing up without knowing what chocolate tastes like. I send the pamphlets not because they contain much of interest but only because I thought it might be nice to have the first books printed in liberated Vienna in the Pierson Library.

Sincerely yours, EH

25/19-27-35

Ber. v. 10.10.45 o. Vf.  
(vor allem üb. Hamburg)  
Bl. 30 - 42

Institut für Zeitgeschichte - Archiv

R. H. H. H.

Who is the author?  
Who said the title?

10-19-45

25/7-27-36

30

I have recently been to Hamburg and other parts of Germany. Many of my friends in England and abroad will no doubt be interested in what I have seen.

I set out by troop train from Ghent on Sept. 24, the first time I set foot into Germany since 1936. The journey from Ghent took about 26 hours. The train crawls along slowly over the worn-out permanent way, going at a snail's pace over the many military emergency bridges. The corner of Holland at Tilburg, which we crossed before reaching the German frontier gave us the first introduction to the misery we got used to later on. Rows of poor pale children lined up in the rails holding up their hands or their pinafores and begging for bread or cigarettes for Papa.

When the train rumbled over the Rhine I was all prepared for some good old-fashioned sentimentality. It did not come until much later, when I saw in the light of next morning the steeples of Hamburg.

The battle scarred country behind the Rhine was soon covered in darkness and only when we slowly rolled through Muenster and Hannover we saw dimly the phantastic shapes of endless wreckage. I slept in the carriage for some hours and I remember dreaming of German S.S. men in their black caps asking for my papers, just as I had always imagined it in the years after I had left Germany and could not dare to set foot into the country again when it seemed rash even to cross the country by plane for fear of a possible forced landing. "Kommen sie mit!" said a sharp voice out of a pale pinched face when I woke up from the sound of a loudspeaker. An English voice calling out the name of a German station in an atrocious accent and asking us to get out and have some hot tea. So, here I was, a free man in the garments of a private in the British army having nothing worse to expect at this halt than a cup of this drink which the army calls tea.

The Lueneburger Heide in the light of the early sun looked most beautiful and peaceful and when finally the towers of Hamburg came into view, I could not take my eyes off them. St. Catharine and St. Jacobi were missing. But the high coppergreen cone of St. Petri was still there and the proud old Michael. Both the Rathaus tower and the bombed victims, greeted me as old friends and I was glad they were there, after all. We rolled over the clumsy old Elbbruecken, intact, through the South West basis of the city right through to Altona. There was a tremendous lot of damage but in the Innenstadt and seen across the Binnen- and Aussenalster from the Lombardsbruecke the face of Hamburg is still recognizable.

The purpose of my visit was to make inquiries into the circumstances of my mother's deportation. During the war, in October 1941, she had been taken to Lodz Ghetto and according to information I had via Stockholm she died there on July 1, 1942. I saw all sorts of committees and also private people I could still get hold of who had seen my mother before she went. But I could not find out much more than I knew. It is still impossible to get any information from the Eastern zones, where Czechs, Poles and Russians are just as disinterested in individual life as the Nazis. The British, French, and Americans have set up Search Offices in their zones, and teams are travelling about the place searching for missing people. But so far there does not seem to be much encouragement for such teams to penetrate the "iron curtain". Witnesses are not welcome. Nor have these people set up any machinery of their own.

I saw a man in Hamburg who had been to Lodz and remembered my mother's name though he did not know her personally. He had survived several other K.Z.'s afterwards, inclusive Auschwitz. Being strong and a heavy worker he was spared again and again until he was saved. In Lodz he had been a grave-digger. He told me that most of the elderly people who were incapable of work were taken out about May, 1942, to a place called Kollow near Kalish, without any baggage at all. This place soon after became known as one of the gas centres. Some hope that my

mother might have died a natural death, however, still lies in the date supplied from Stockholm and in the fact that another lady who shared her room is said to have died of typhus.

All this was nothing new to my expectations but it has not been easy to stir up this frightful and putrid mess, to set eyes once more upon the details of this unspeakable tragedy. I had to do it though, and I am content I did. I leave the case now with the Central British Search Office in case any information from the East should come to hand in the future.

An interesting spotlight of these deportations is that the Nazis first tried to create the impression that the victims were just transferred to another place into well prepared working camps or townships and had, apart from the transplantation, nothing to fear. They wanted to withhold knowledge or suspicion of the truth from their own people and from the deportees - the latter in the interest of smooth working at assembly and entrainment. For this reason of keeping up appearances some friends and relatives were allowed to accompany the deportees to the assembly centre in Bornstrasse. Thus attention of passersby was aroused and it came to angry protests and demonstrations of pity from the spectators. As a consequence this privilege was soon withdrawn. For the purpose of my inquiries I had been attached to the Hamburg office of British Military Government. An arrangement due entirely to the kindness and understanding of my superior officers. I had only my own case to deal with and thus had time in 2 weeks to see a great number of people in excess of those from whom I could hope to get some information. First I was afraid of ringing up anybody but then I found that many more of my old friends had survived than I had dared to hope. I saw Dr. Paul and Esmi Wohlwill, quite their grand old selves, Dr. Mattersdorff and his wife, he has been reinstated on the Board of Hamburg Underground, (mixed couples, as you probably know, had a chance of survival), Erwin Munssen and family, his charming old mother just returned from 1½ years in Theresienstadt where she had been a lavatory attendant

for some time, Werner Bockelmann, now Burgomaster of Lueneburg, Herbert Coutinho, Friedrich and Johannes Sieveking, Oswald Schroeder and his mother, Egmont Hagedorn, Dr. Stumme, at my time partner of Dehn and Labowski, and many others.

I found even my mother's old governess, Anna Graeff, whom we regarded as our aunt and who had lived in the family all her life, now 82 years of age. She had fought phosphorus bombs to save her little "Stiftswohnung" successfully and carried water for long distances when the main was broken and has come through the whole calamity alive.

The raids must have been awful and terrible stories are told of the characteristics of the phosphorus bombs. All the same the people talk about the big raids - especially those few nights in June or July, 1943 - as of the "catastrophe" as if it had been an act of God or nature. The casualties have never been counted, whole districts were just sealed off. Estimates for the July raids alone vary from 50,000 to 250,000.

I have seen one of the many enormous concrete bunkers in which the bulk of the population, as far as it was not evacuated, sheltered from the storm. Enormous concrete affairs of the size and height of a large block of flats without any windows, just small openings for the air-shafts. Walls, ceilings, and roofs of vast thickness which would have been penetrated only by the big 10 ton block busters used against U-boat pens. In the one I saw electric light was laid and central heating, Air-conditioning was only partially ready, big air pumps and filters alternatively to be worked by hand or electric current. In such concrete beehives many thousands used to crowd together.

Experiments were made to find out the limit of endurance of a given number of people in a given space and air condition. As usual K.Z.-inmates were used for guinea-pigs. In this connection Hannes Sieveking told me a story how a works manager of the Schindler Oelwerke (where S. is syndicus) went into the experimental chamber together with K.Z. people, both as an encouragement to them and a silent protest. S.S. guards and doctors watched from outside. All came out unhurt but a deed like this deserves to be mentioned.

Practically all Hamburg east of the Alster, from North-Barmbeck with its fine Schumacher-plant modern blocks down to the slums of Billbrook and Rothenburgsort has gone completely. There is literally no one house left. An endless ghastly desert for miles and miles with nothing but jagged fragments of walls and old chimney stacks. The Innenstadt is pretty bad though parts have escaped. Chile house and surroundings stand though minus most of their window panes, of course. All the stations stand, less their glass. In Moenckebergstrasse most of the heavy facades are still up but blackened, and the offices behind them completely gutted. The "Atlantic" is damaged but in use as an officers mess. Rathaus is intact except for the lantern of the tower which is burnt out. The Musikhalle is untouched. The University is burnt out. The Staatsoper partly burnt out but facade intact and apparently the Bienehaus also. St. Michaelis Church is burnt out though the steeple has survived. St. Petri is badly damaged. The old Johanneum with its library has gone up in flames. St. Nicolai so much in ruins that even the steeple, still upright, and looking more noble in ruinous state than it ever did, will have to be blown up. Down to the dock area the damage becomes more and more severe, comparable to the district round St. Paul's in London.

Seen from Landungsbruecken the docks seem less bad than they probably are. The high steel framework of Blohm & Voss, Stuelcken and Reiherstieg seen more or less still there. But damage on the slipways and amongst the warehouses is no doubt very great. The British anyway were content with the results. The giant crane is down. There is an enormous floating crane that was new to me.

Down the Elbe at Othmarschen everything looks more normal. The Deutsche Werft is still there. The Oelhafen has had considerable damage but the refineries work again on their reduced capacity. Blankenese is untouched. The Elbe is, of course, almost without life but the view across into the Alte Land is as beautiful as ever. The smell of water and air was familiar and I was surprised how strong and tonic the air of Hamburg seems to be after the relaxing atmosphere of southern England and the Belgian lowlands.

St. Pauli is a complete shambles. Old Bismarck still stands there, growling. Round the Binnenalster the Jungfernstieg looks a bit untidy, the Vier Jahreszeiten is quite intact and has a new coat of paint, having to be smart as a large officers mess. The Hapag building is badly damaged though repairable, Kunsthalle seems largely all right. Shell house and Standard house intact.

There is much damage on both sides of the Aussenalster though the Faehrhaus is all right and looks out of place and time. Many of the houses of Harvestehuder Weg have gone, the rest are mostly requisitioned by the military. Here much of the damage is concealed to the view from afar by the green trees and therefore from the Fernsicht and Krugkoppelbruecke and from Lombardsbruecke Hamburg looks most its old self. And here of course is where we loved it most.

Harvestehude on the whole is not too badly damaged, Eppendorf largely intact, Winterhude 50:50 or perhaps a little better. A good third of the Blumenstrasse houses are burnt out though my grandparents' house is still there, having been successively center of the Stahlhelm, the Hitler Youth, and now, respectable but shabby, and "Ernaehrungsamt". Claerchenstrasse 16 where I had my "sturm'reie Bude" when it was otherwise unoccupied, is nothing but a burnt out shell. The Johanneum is badly damaged on its wings but repairable and in the main intact. It is now used by the uncouth barbarians of a REME as barracks, offices, and parking place. The slim and rather ephebic bronze youth in the Binnenhof, sanctum of Obersecunda and Prima, tries to ignore the new scholars.

Hamburg with about 70 per cent of its houses gone, was a long time the worst hit city of the Reich. Now it seems a better place than most others. Kassel and Koeln, which I have also seen, are incomparably worse. They are altogether like that eastern half of Hamburg, wiped out completely, Kauffmann, always relatively the best of the Gauleiters, had the sense of capitulating instead of defending the city to the last like Bremen, Breslau, Berlin, and so

many other unfortunate towns. Thus the bridges are intact, a good part of communications are working - no busses but reduced train service, underground from Barmbeck to St. Pauli from Kellinghusenstrasse to Jungfernstieg and Ohlsdorf, from Barmbeck to Wohldorf. There is vorortsbahn, now very smart and modernized from Blankenese to Poppenbuettel and reduced railway traffic in the surroundings. This traffic net is, of course, frightfully overloaded and travelling must be a trial for the people. The telephone is working, there is electric current though very erratic, there will be, people hope, gas again. And the people don't live like cave men in dugouts and basements. They are - most of them - under a roof though terribly overcrowded. Every house, every flat has many times its normal number of inhabitants. The streets are cleared of rubble.

Rations are very low. Montgomery has lately declared his endeavor and hope to keep through this winter at the level of 1500 calories. (2400 is generally accepted as a minimum to keep normal people, not engaged in heavy work, and in otherwise normal circumstances, in health. The civil wartime ration in Britain was about 2800 calories, and not all food was rationed. The Jews in Poland got 600 calories.) So far ration cards, little as they can procure, have been honored without fail in Hamburg. Some wheat is already being imported and some stocks of tinned vegetables are laid up for the winter. The quality of the black rye bread is good.

All the same this winter will be a fearful test, especially as lack of food and fuel come together. There will be no coal whatever, and already the citizens are starting out to cut down trees in the streets, gardens, and outskirts of the town. So far this is organized self help. But I wonder how long it can be kept organized once the cold sets in, and if after the winter Hamburg may still be called "Stadt im Gruenen".

Except for the foodshops which sell the meager ration and some grim looking Ersatz powder and apart from some tobacconists offering cigars or cigarettes of homegrown leaf or rhubarb, which stinks like hell, the shops are

empty. There are no stocks left of anything at all. The windows display some homemade useless articles like tin ashtrays, and most of the space is usually taken by more or less beautiful watercolors painted by all sorts of mushroom artists who think that "art" is the only stable value in this world of decay. And everywhere in showwindows, on notice boards, walls, papers, etc. there are adverts of offers or demands for barter like a silverfox, a gallon of turpentine, or something equally absurd. Even old books are bartered, booksellers requiring for 1 old book 2 others, one for re-exchange, the other for sale. Anyway what I have seen of second-hand books was nothing but rubbish. New books are not to be had at all. In all the bookshops in Hamburg I have seen the shelves empty except for two books of which every shop had a hundred copies. Gorch Fock's "Seefahrt ist tot" and "Unsre letzte Wohnung" dealing with graveyards. The irony of it! These two editions had just lately been reprinted and escaped the fire. All else is either sold out or gone up in flames.

Theatricals and concerts seem to come up again in a small way hopefully. I have seen quite a number of notices especially of church music. Unfortunately I had not the time to hear any.

I was favorably impressed by the general attitude of the people in Hamburg. I had heard from many - though in particular about Hamburg - that in the beginning of the occupation troops were surprised and sometimes disgusted by the way many Germans licked their conquerors' boots or, after 6 years of a deadly fight, wanted to shake hands and be friends as after a tennis tournament.

Many Germans will quite seriously have felt just as much liberated as any other people and must have been bitterly disappointed that this was not the "herrschende Meinung". The strict non-fraternization which even in the case of the lamb-like Tommies favored rather brusque behaviour soon disillusioned the German people good or bad ones. Many well-meaning people in England think this was a mistake. I am not sure it was. Troops in general are not qualified to make distinctions. The good people in Germany must realize that and the bad ones

should not be allowed to take advantage of it (still too many do anyway).

Rules now are relaxed and the only remaining restrictions for the forces are: no inter-marriage and no private billeting. It may turn out better in the long run to clamp down heavily first and then gradually relax than to be very liberal first, let the people everything for granted and then see the relation suffer from all subsequent disappointments which are bound to arise. It seems anyway that the Hamburgers have taken the hint and if there is not much fraternizing going on even now it is as much due to them as to the soldiers. The majority are very reserved and many take no notice of the occupying troops at all. Occasionally you meet even a hostile stare. Most of them, however, are friendly and forthcoming when you ask for anything. But I have met no servility. "Fratting" with girls goes on, of course, for all sorts of reasons: general "Allzumenschliches", lack of young men, and perhaps even more, of carefree men, and lack of chocolate. But it is not too much in evidence.. Very little indeed for somebody who is used to the general promiscuity of the liberated countries.

Outwardly people still manage to look clean and respectable. How they do it, I don't know. Usually they look a bit shabby, but not more so than the people in London. But people in Germany will soon have little more than the things they stand up in. Clothing collections, started by Hitler for his troops in the first Russian winter, are still going on, now for displaced persons and German refugees from the East. And nothing can be replaced. I have given away shoe laces, my nailbrush, a new toothbrush even, just taken into use (the old one was not yet thrown away), not to speak of soap, toothpaste, etc. All these things cannot be had any more. The trouble is that all the modern people have lost the habits and the constitution which alone make primitive life endurable. I have tried their soap. It does not give much lather, cleans even less and even smells faintly of sick. Many people have already an unhealthy color, you see the strain, the hunger and worry in nearly every face. - Travelling conditions, as

far as there is any travelling, are fantastic. I have seen cattle trucks, crowded with people, passengers perched precariously on the buffers. One thinks of the well-known tales of the Russian revolution. Irmgard Munssen with her two sweet little children spent 8 days on the way from Baden-Baden where she had been evacuated, to Hamburg in a cattle truck. Provisions had to be taken.

What do the Germans think now and what are they like? How many are still Nazis? This is of course the most difficult to answer, and my time had not been long enough. Most of the people I met belong to a small exceptionally good class of Germans (Jewish and Aryan) which, alas, is not typical. For me personally it was a wonderful experience to find the old friends what they have always been and to see judgment and affection confirmed after this long and frightful time. My impressions from contacts with the man in the street are scrappy and give no coherent picture at all.

First of all: Hitler has seen to it that there was no rival. With the collapse of his regime everything was gone, there was and still is no organized body of opinion of any description. The German mind seems a field of ruins just as much as his cities. There are a few good people struggling against the apathy of the rest. The majority still seems to be dazed and incapable of any interest or initiative beyond the problem of how to obtain a sack of potatoes or some firewood.

Most people blame the Nazis at least for having carried on the war against all reason until the whole country was in ruins. But even this I have occasionally heard people excuse by his belief in getting his last secret weapon out yet in time.

In spite of occasional bitterness about the phosphorus bombs, tales of strafing of civilians by low flying aircraft, etc., there is no hatred against the former enemies. The reason for this very striking phenomenon is probably that consciously or subconsciously every German admits that Germany has started it all and having sown the wind has now reaped the whirlwind. There is no hatred for anything that happened during this war. Hatred may grow up for what

happens and is going to happen after the war is ended. One can hardly call it peace yet.

Personal guilt for the Nazi atrocities in particular, is denied by all. They had no or no full knowledge, and as far as they knew they could not alter it. Those who tried just paid the penalty. (This - for the great majority of the people - is probably true. Let everybody who says differently be quite sure that they would have made a better show in the same circumstances.)

As regards the general responsibility for the rising of the Nazis and the support of their regime, denials, admissions, excuses, explanation vary in all shades. The mean, of which there are many, pretend of course that it was quite superimposed and they had nothing to do with it. The weak, of which there are even more, still refuse to look things in the face. The thinking people, and especially those who really opposed the regime, are the first to admit that in this general way the responsibility does fall on the majority of Germans. (The trouble is - as it must in fairness be stated - that it does not attach to them alone. It is shared by many in other countries who had perhaps less excuse to be thus swept off their feet.)

There is widespread quite genuine willingness to collaborate with the western powers. Fear of Russia on the other hand is universal not only in the upper and middle classes. The British military government enjoys respect and credit for showing good will and taking the job seriously. All agree that without them there would be complete chaos. It is realized that they must make mistakes, especially in the personal field, and criticism is heard for too little or too much denazification. The behaviour of the British troops is regarded on the whole as very good. Regrettable incidents of racketeering and looting, sometimes called liberating, have happened - it seems that no army can keep itself free from that if it comes to the point. But with the Tommy these things have kept within relatively narrow limits compared with all others. They are generally liked for their quiet good humor and no fuss. I have also heard it mentioned, quite rightly, that so far the British had always held more

than they promised.

Wohlwills, whom I saw several times out in their little cottage on the Oberalster, took me along one evening to a meeting of the "Committee for communal Selfgovernment" for the Gemeinde Lehmsahl-Mellingstedt. An anti-fascist but otherwise non-party body comprising people of all classes, trades, and ways of thinking. There were farmers, artisans, a retired judge, an orientalist and friend of the king of Yemen, etc. They had a most interesting lecture by a leading representative of the building trade in Hamburg on the building situation and afterwards discussed communal matters as the woodcutting drive etc. The president was a gardener who had been a communist till 1927 when he resigned his party membership. He had been to Russia. He is now a social-democrat in thought but without party ties. A most excellent man, sensible, humorous, and with a lot of drive. The spirit of the whole thing was all right, and I was impressed with the soundness of the British idea to let the democratic idea take roots first in small local circles of communal interest - it will be a slow growth anyway. It was regrettable only that most of the people were elderly, none between 18 and 30. The reason is, of course, that not too many young people are back yet, and if they are, they either are still Nazis or at least have been in the Nazi organization so that for a start they would not be admitted to this kind of circle. In the end, obviously, it is they who count and who will cause success or failure.

Rudolf Petersen, the merchant, has succeeded the Nazi Krogmann in Hamburg as burgomaster. Landahl of the Lichtwarckschule has education, Biermann-Rathjen looks after Kultur. Kiesselback, now about 76, is again president of the Hanseatisches Oberlandesgericht. Wohlwill has been asked to join again but has declined. He is 75 now. I cannot judge the administrative record of these people. One gets the impression, however, that younger and fresher blood would be needed. Only there may be no source from where to take it.

Some contacts I had showed me that Nazism, though it has lost ground enormously, is by no means dead. In two cases where I talked to people, an old Spiesbuerger

and a young bath attendant, I was subjected to a whole battery of old slogans that England had no business to intervene in the East, and of "Volk ohne Raum" etc.

ZS/7-27-49

Bf. v. 19.5. [~~15~~ 14.56?] <sup>x</sup> an  
R. Heberle  
Bl. 43

x Alfred Vogts

Institut für Zeitgeschichte - Archiv

*Keep!*

Sherman, Conn., May 19, 1956

*23. May*

Dear Heberle:

A first reaction from the Loui.U.Press did come, but only following your intercession. I shall await some further reactions of theirs, now.

Is the Europeise an appurtenance of the new professorship? If so, it's a nice one. I have a few contacts left among SPD people. We might begin with Charlotte Lütken, she continues to live in Bonn after her husband's death and knows, of course, the parliamentary situation awfully well. In West Berlin there are old Paul Hertz, a Party veteran from amodazumal and Hans Hirschfeld, both in the administration of the City, Hertz is Kämmerer. An old survival of the Soz. Jugend would be Alma de l'Aigle in Hamburg, quite articulate. Katz is at the Karlsruhe Court one of the judges. In Hamburg there's Landahl, who was Senator for Schulwesen in the days of Brauer, all of the getting ready for a comeback against the CUD. Should you come to Zürich, you might look up Joseph Halperin, who was Berlin correspondent of the Neu Zür.Ztg. until 1933 or 4 and is now with the Swiss labor unions. He would have a sharp outsider's onlook.

The Inst. für Zeitgeschichte in Munich is really an Inst. for hist. research of Hitlerism. I understand they have a very <sup>good</sup> fundus for that purpose--I let them have all my files of emigré magazines and other publications, they publish the Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte of which I can let you have a spare as sample. They have also published a book on the politics and ~~ixix~~ ideology of the SPD in the Diaspora, something perhaps falling under your topic. I have a copy here and you could borrow it if your libraries don't have it.

Let us know when you son takes up his labors at Yale U., of which we form part of the Hinterland.

Cordially

*W. M. M. M.*

✓ Erich Matthias, Soz. demokratie und Nation. Zur Ideengeschichte der soz. dem. Emigration. Stuttgart 1952, 303 pp.

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