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GERMAN REARMAMENT AND THE
OLD MILITARY ELITE

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I.

From the viewpoint of military affairs American policy toward postwar Germany has gone through two major phases. Until 1950 the U. S. government kept Germany disarmed; since 1950 the United States has pursued the rearmament of Western Germany.

The disarmament policy was elaborately justified as part of the general endeavor to re-educate the Germans. Since the defeat of the country was an incontrovertible fact, it was perhaps unnecessary to add the pleasures of pedagogy to the glory of victory. Rearmament, however, must be justified persuasively in order to succeed fully. Unlike the demands for disarmament, those for rearmament cannot be imposed. The Germans have the reputation of being good soldiers. It is possible that, as forced soldiers, they would not live up to their reputation. They must have confidence in their comrades and leaders. They must be convinced that resisting aggression is more advantageous or more honorable, or both, than collaborating with a conqueror in case of war. Finally, they must believe that the alliance which they are to enter will be a militarily efficient one, and will provide for a fair distribution of risks and burdens among the participants. Their interests in Europe cannot be expected to absorb all rational and self-centered doubts. The European Defense Community is less a community than a contractual arrangement shaped in large part by conflicting national interests. Characteristically, this arrangement includes the provision that the soldiers of the six nations concerned shall swear no common oath of allegiance.

The effort to persuade the people of Western Germany that it is necessary to rearm has had to be made against a background of disarmament and re-education

in the immediate past, with reference to perils which, strictly speaking, lie in the future, and despite the difficulty of explaining plausibly how rearmament would enhance the prospects of unifying the divided country.

The Germans did not have to be persuaded that freedom and democracy were preferable to the communist way of life; the socialist opponents to Adenauer's policy of rearmament were anticommunist long before the U.S. policy of containment was adopted. Public information was needed rather for the purpose of gaining acceptance of the premises of American policy, its estimates of Soviet military capabilities and intentions, its views of the relation between negotiation and military power, and of the role which national values and interests could be permitted to play in global planning for security.

Public information of this scope and nature was necessary not only in the interest of a viable rearmament effort, but also in order to safeguard the frail democratic institutions of Western Germany. Assent, not compliance, was needed.

Rearmament and the public debate about it in Germany involved the former German military elite in two ways: as social representatives of Germany's military tradition, and as persons potentially competent to discuss the military implications of EDC.

II.

Of the 450,000 men that Germany would contribute to the European Defense Community, 27,000 would be officers; many of them, of course, of junior grade. The German authorities seem inclined to regard as the main problems of German rearmament (1) the recruitment of junior officers and (2) the political orientation of the 320,000 draftees and 130,000 volunteers.¹

Junior officers will have to come from age groups that are depleted and lack the required military experience. The enlisted men are likely to include many persons with objections to German rearmament and to the old forms of military drill. Today's German youth has been described as "politically unemployed,"² unwilling to make political commitments, opposed to military service, and without confidence in the old military elite. On the basis of intimate knowledge acquired in many lectures throughout Western Germany, two former German officers have recently written about this subject:

Among many elements of our people, especially in the generation that will be called upon for future military service, the soldier has become a dubious social type 3.

This statement is probably a rhetorical exaggeration, but the fact must not be overlooked that despite Adenauer's sweeping political victory in the September 1953 elections West German postwar society lacks the cohesion and political self-respect which result from national independence and unbroken traditions. German postwar society still is, by and large, a synthetic

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1. According to statements by the Bonn government 130,000 applications for volunteer service have been received.
 2. Gernot Gather, Die Stunde der Jugend, Stuttgart, 1953, p. 21.
 3. Erich Dethleffsen and Karl Heinrich Helfer, Soldatische Existenz Morgen, Bonn, 1953, p. 20.

structure erected upon the debris of national socialism, defeat and disillusionment, accommodation to foreign powers, and feelings of guilt or defiance. Germany's new institutions command little popular respect. The new military establishment will be as good or as bad as its leaders. For this reason, the selection of senior officers for Germany's new military contingents presents a politically important problem.

A large pool of experienced older officers exists, so that it should be possible to find men who combine military competence with a sense of political responsibility. Very few former officers who now are over 55 years of age will be taken, which means that few persons who occupied a rank higher than that of colonel at the end of the second World War will have a chance of serving again. However, the few former German generals that will be needed could determine the political complexion of the German armed forces by default or by design.

Western Germany will once again suffer the consequences of Hitler's purge after July 20, 1944, in which many of the morally strongest and politically most valuable men of the old military elite were executed or committed suicide.⁴ The leaders who participated in and survived the conspiracy will now compete for positions in the new armed forces with other German officers who were competent in their profession and whose past political record is not distinguished by conspicuous political actions. The danger that the new military elite will include men who once were convinced Nazis is probably smaller than that of infiltration by experts who do not see any need for

4. Twenty generals and one admiral were executed and five other generals committed suicide after the unsuccessful attempt to assassinate Hitler. No Luftwaffe generals were murdered, but a few of them and a larger number of generals in the army took their own lives because of conflicts with Hitler earlier in the war. The number of younger officers who participated in the conspiracy and were killed thereafter is, of course, many times larger than that of the generals. See Josef Polttmann, Opfergang der Generale, Berlin, 1952.

departing from old traditions. Military expertness is no guarantee of firm political loyalty and may, in fact, be combined conveniently with politically opportunistic behavior. In the long run it is this combination, rather than a resurrection of German militarism, which presents the political hazard of German rearmament.

The influence of the old German military elite will not be exercised solely by those few who will return to top positions in the new German contingents. Former German general officers who now are too old to serve again can make their influence felt either through advice they may be called upon to give, through veterans' organizations in which they have power, and through their publications; or, less conspicuously, by way of their informal contacts with the political, economic, and military leaders of the country.

III.

In losing the war the German generals lost also the power and status of the subsidiary elite which they constituted as Hitler's military functionaries. Some of their best known leaders were tried for war crimes. Others had difficulties finding a new place in society after 1945. It is impossible to obtain reliable data on the present economic status of the old military elite, but it seems that many of them now have higher incomes than they had when they wore uniforms. This fact is sometimes mentioned by former officers who point out, with satisfaction, that the most capable men might not return to military positions and cannot be expected to renounce part of their incomes for an honor which so recently was denied them. From 1945 to 1950, both American information specialists and German journalists licensed by the occupation authorities engaged in propaganda against the German military class. These facts are well remembered and much resented by former German officers; they speak of the unprecedented "defamation" which they have suffered.

At present, German officers as a class are no longer subjected to social criticism. Even the deputies to the Bundestag find it expedient once more to mention their military careers when they edit their biographies for the Handbook of the Bundestag. Since 1950, many things have happened to restore the prestige of the German officers.

Fortunately, since 1950, no special propaganda effort has been made by the United States to assure the German soldier and the old German military elite that their political and military virtues were respected once again. The U.S. policy of German rearmament carried this message by implication and obliterated more tellingly than mere words could have done the earlier theme of guilt by association and collaboration with the Nazis.

Of great importance, however, was General Eisenhower's report to Congress after his flying trip to the capitals of Western Europe as newly appointed commander of the NATO forces early in 1951. In this speech General Eisenhower mentioned that Germany deserved equality and that the revision of Western policy toward Germany had to precede the discussions of incorporating German contingents into a European army. Even more important perhaps was Eisenhower's admission to former German generals in Bad Homburg that he no longer held the derogatory opinions about the German nation and its Wehrmacht which he had entertained in 1945 and expressed in his book.⁵

Other measures of presumably great relevance for changing the image of the old military elite in the minds of the Germans were the release of various high-ranking generals from prison camps, and the agreement on new procedures for the future treatment of the war crimes issue. On July 20, 1953, the Allied High Commissioners announced that in each of the three Western zones consultative boards would be set up to make recommendations for clemency or parole of prisoners to the appropriate authorities in that zone, and that Germans nominated by the Federal Government would be members of those boards.⁶

As the negotiations about EDC proceeded, official and social contacts between Allied officials and former German officers appointed to the Blank office inevitably became closer. Finally, many veterans' organizations have been formed and some military journals have reappeared. All these developments have contributed to a change in the popular image of the old military elite and to a partial restoration of its prestige.

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5. See Heinz Guderian's *So geht es nicht*, Heidelberg, 1951, p. 36. General Eisenhower's previous opinion was, of course, widely resented, as is evident in many German postwar publications.
 6. "The purpose of the three-power decision was to relieve the pressure being exerted by West German veterans' associations on Dr. Adenauer to obtain the release of military war criminals and in so doing help the Chancellor win the forthcoming general elections." (New York Times, July 21, 1953.)

IV.

Some of the former senior officers who have no direct connection with the Blank office have participated in the German debate on rearmament. Most of them, but not all, have favored Adenauer's policy. Those who have not, and who have expressed their views in public have thereby reduced or renounced their chance of being called upon to perform governmental or military functions in the foreseeable future. Many members of the old elite have not broadcast their opinions.

Among the military opponents to Adenauer's policy one must distinguish between Nazi diehards, like General Remer, and the more intelligent military critics. The former have been given a refurbished ideology by a university professor writing under the pseudonym Backhaus. Among the latter, Heinz Guderian is no doubt the outstanding figure.

At the beginning of the debate, in November, 1950, when it was not yet clear that equality would be the price of German participation in Western Defense, Guderian rushed into print pointing at the bankruptcy of "Yalta and Potsdam", and insisting on freedom and equality for Germany. He advocated a Western European Union to include Great Britain and the Scandinavian countries, and the expansion of the Western European "base of operations" by "the integration of the African space into European defense." He reminded his readers that despite terrible mistakes and errors Hitler, too, had fought for Europe against communism. Guderian ridiculed the military posture of the West, which in his opinion did not even merit the designation "defense."

In his next pamphlet, published in 1951, Guderian attacked Adenauer and the licensed political parties as revivals from the Weimar Republic, and insisted that the re-establishment of a free, unified, neutralized Germany

was more urgent than the formation of West German contingents for European defense.⁷ Many of Guderian's political arguments have been repeated by the German opposition to EDC ever since, while his military criticisms have found less attention than they deserve.

The book by Hugo Backhaus⁸ is a wild, resentful attack on the Western occupation powers and the new political leaders in the Federal Republic. It is at the same time a plea for resolution of the former conflict between the Nazi party and the military leaders by a common front against liberalism, socialism, catholicism ("the fifth occupation power"), the evangelical academies and the torturers of Germany, i.e., the occupation powers and their "stooges", the members of the German resistance, returned emigres, and the new licensed politicians.

Backhaus, too, favors the defense of Europe. But in his opinion—which happens to be shared by most Germans—the defense of Europe is not possible under French tutelage; nor, he thinks, can Europe be defended as long as Germany is being abused by the victors as an instrument of their power policy. Backhaus presents the Western powers as morally inferior to the Germans: today, he says, the vanquished are the conscience of law and justice that has been lost by the victors.

Backhaus says that national socialism advanced a revolutionary principle in German history, while the armed forces represented a conservative tradition. Unfortunately, the two leading groups, the party functionaries and the military

7. Heinz Guderian, Kann Westeuropa verteidigt werden?, Göttingen 1950; see also Heinz Guderian, So geht es nicht, Heidelberg, 1951.

8. Wehrkraft im Zwiespalt, Göttingen, 1952.

leaders, did not co-operate harmoniously, but developed a fatal rivalry which led to defeat and foreign domination. The military leaders maintained aloofness from national socialism despite the proof given by national socialism in 1934 (by murdering Röhm, the leader of the SA) that it was resolved to silence its own radical elements in order to gain the support of the Wehrmacht. Harmony between the army and party leaders existed only during the period of German successes in 1939 and 1940.

There is also what may be called a small group of reformers among former German officers. They support EDC but distinguish themselves from the bulk of its military supporters by candid criticisms of the past military tradition in Germany. Nor do they shrink from condemning the conduct of the old military elite under the rule of the Nazis. They criticize the undemocratic traits of German militarism before Hitler, its hostility to labor, its bureaucratization, the social conceit of its leaders, their faith in "drill," their narrow outlook on world affairs, and their land-bound strategic thinking.

These critics have acknowledged that the moral collapse of the German military elite began in the last decades of the nineteenth century and merely reached its climax with Hitler's rule. They have declared that German generals were responsible for Hitler's success in corrupting and dominating the Wehrmacht. These reformers are not organized, but they share the conviction that past mistakes must be avoided lest German rearmament lead to a revival of military efficiency without regard for German democracy and the political enlightenment of its European soldiers and officers.⁹

9. As at the time of the great military reform after the Napoleonic victories over Prussia, Southern Germany again seems to be a better vantage point than Prussia from which to recognize clearly the faults of the old military tradition and advocate a new beginning. The most important and most radical recent reformist writings are Leo Freiherr Geyr von Schweppenburg, Gebrochenes Schwert, Berlin, 1952; Frido von Senger und Etterlin, "Von Schlieffen zur Europa Armee," in Aussenpolitik, March, 1952; and Robert Knauss, "Von Geist eines deutschen Kontingents," in Europäische Sicherheit, March, 1951.

While efforts toward a reformed army have been supported by younger officers and be civilians,¹⁰ some of whom criticize French and American manifestations of "militaristic" ritual, the majority of the former military elite is not inclined toward self-criticism. The sizable library of German military memoirs published in recent years consists mainly of self-righteous books and pamphlets. In them the German military tradition has been accepted as good and sound, and no need for reform is conceded.

Political and military errors which Hitler committed are mentioned, but his immorality usually comes into view only as unfairness to generals who deserved no demotion. In this literature, many instances are related in which Hitler's military advisors realized the hazards of his foreign policy, but caution and warnings of the hazard are now treated as though they were tantamount to moral rejection of aggression. Military co-operation with Hitler is either presented as a matter of course, or the moral and political issues that could be discovered in such co-operation have vanished in accounts of the circumstances that surrounded the issues. One searches in vain for cases of conversion with which the contemporary political scene is so replete in the communist and anticommunist camps. Presumably, there are many explanations of this stability of moral opinions, including the fear of injuring the present

10. A poor slogan for such a reformed army, Armee ohne Pathos, was provided by the title of a book by Adelbert Weinstein, Frankfurt, 1951. The response of the more conservative elements of the old military elite may be gauged from the critical discussion of that book by George von Sodenstern, "Bürgersoldaten," in Wehrwissenschaftliche Rundschau, June, 1952. See also Bürger und Landesverteidigung, Frankfurt am Main, 1952, and the preliminary reports (mimeographed) on the conferences in Andernach, March 19-20, 1952, on military structure, and in Wiesbaden, June 18-19, 1952, on problems of education, organized by the Institut zur Förderung Öffentlicher Angelegenheiten, Frankfurt am Main.

self by criticism of one's past conduct and defiance of early Allied postwar propaganda. But it is difficult to escape the conclusion that many members of the old military elite who now have written about the past have spent their time since Hitler's downfall reminiscing rather than reflecting. From these memoirs the old military elite emerges as a group of experts with a great but long-since-faded humanistic tradition—experts in the orderly administration of violence who permit its abuse provided their expertness is respected or at least rewarded, and who, like many other experts in modern civilization, do not care about the political function of their skills.

There are also accounts which are more openly critical of Hitler, though not of his military functionaries, and search more deeply into the reasons for Hitler's success and the generals' failure. They help us understand more fully the relations between the Nazi elite and the subsidiary elite, but in the end it is Hitler and what these experts like to call "fate" that are blamed for all the misfortunes that overtook the world, the Germans, and their military leaders.¹¹ With the downfall of Nazi rule and the change in American policy, the way is thus open for the return to military traditions and institutions without major reforms.

In relating this sketch of various political-ideological groupings among the former military elite in Germany to U.S. policy, it is important to note that some of the basic values of that policy are shared by a large number of former German officers including many on the extreme right. "Anticommunism," "Europe," "Defense of the West," "German Rearmament," "German Equality"—all these are slogans subscribed to not only by the supporters of EDC and the

11. The more searching books include Adolph Heusinger, Befehl im Widerstreit, Tübingen and Stuttgart, 1950, and Siegfried Westphal, Heer in Fesseln, Bonn, 1950. For contrast compare the memoirs of Kesselring and Rendulic.

reformist military critics of German militarism, but also, unfortunately, by those who express disdain for German democracy; by many of those who in the summer of 1952, it was said, passed the word that induction orders should be torn up upon receipt. Thus, these symbols or slogans are not very useful as means of discriminating between different political groupings.

By contrast, those military supporters of rearmament who are critics of German militarism and proponents of military reform go beyond the concern of U.S. policy proper. In fact, the interests of German and American experts in efficient and quick organization of German contingents may come into conflict with reformist views, since such views are shared neither by all the German political parties that support EDC nor by all those members of the old military elite who are likely to be regarded as suitable for military re-employment. It is understandable that on the "left wing" of the old military elite the possible domestic repercussions of German rearmament are viewed with apprehension, although rearmament and EDC are supported for reasons of foreign policy. The true democrats among the old German military elite fear that the United States has put its interest in German rearmament above its concern for the future of German democracy.

V.

One might ask what particular contribution the former generals were able to make to furthering Adenauer's policy in the German debate on rearmament. To begin with, the very fact that some of them demonstrated by their public support of EDC that they had decided to let bygones be bygones and forget about the earlier "defamation" of the military elite presumably lowered the level of resentment against the United States in Western Germany. This is likely to have been true in groups having strong bonds with their former military leaders. The support of EDC by former SS generals¹² may have been especially important in swaying the opinion of potential right-wing opposition and in arresting the influence of men like Backhaus. It may be doubted, however, that German rearmament will continue to be supported by the members of the former Waffen SS if they should be discriminated against as volunteers or draftees.

Presumably, former German generals supporting EDC in public—and especially those whose anti-Nazi record is unimpressive—have not been successful in making converts among the social democratic and neutralist opposition to Adenauer's policy. Military officers were, of course, especially competent to point out the military risks of a neutralized Germany and her need for powerful allies. Quite a few former officers have written on these subjects.¹³ Neutralist sentiment is likely, to be rather impervious to rational and, most of all,

12. For example, Felix M. Steiner, Die Wehrdee des Abendlandes and the booklets published by Gesellschaft für Wehrkunde in which Steiner played a leading role, especially Ja oder Nein zum Verteidigungsbeitrag, Munich, 1952.

13. For example, Erich Dethleffsen, Das Wagnis der Freiheit, Stuttgart, 1952; Günther Blumentritt, Deutsches Soldatentum im Europäischen Rahmen, Giessen, 1952; H. Müller-Granderburg, Neutralität?, Berlin, 1952.

to military arguments, since it is nourished by religious feelings and fear of war.

The question may be raised as to whether American specialists in communication should have encouraged, in appropriate ways, stronger participation of former German officers in polemics against the socialist opposition. The answer to this question is no. A series of interviews with former German generals in the summer of 1952 gave me the impression that members of the old military elite were especially impatient with, and indignant about, the delay in obtaining international agreement on German rearmament and the ratifications of the EDC treaty. These attitudes did not seem to be inspired by a sense of urgency with regard to the danger of Soviet aggression. War with the Soviet Union did not appear imminent to any of the generals I talked to. I am inclined to believe that their impatience over the slow progress of Western defense was indicative of broader negative attitudes toward the democratic procedure of discussing issues prior to reaching a decision on them.

Similarly, the German generals who favor European integration might easily become reconciled to progress of German rearmament at the expense of France if the the United States were to make use of its imposing power to get things done despite the procrastinations of the French. For, whatever resentment the German generals may still harbor about the early postwar policies of the United States, their respect for power is great. Many of them complain that the West has no great Idea to oppose to the pernicious message of communism. While it indeed can be argued on some grounds that this complaint is justified, the old German military elite has contributed its share to the ideological and moral impasse which it now deplores.

The attitude of the German military elite toward the Social Democrats is influenced by old prejudices which the elite shares with other top groups in the social hierarchy.¹⁴

If one disregards the early, impetuous, and absurd proposals by Schumacher for a strong American defense of Germany at the Elbe and the Vistula, the Social Democrats have failed to put forth any constructive proposals for a foreign military policy as an alternative to Adenauer's policy. Nor have they shown much appreciation of the international balance of power and of Germany's role in it. But they are oriented toward the West; they are anticommunist, and their current policy is influenced by their past struggles against German reaction after the first World War. It is these latter views which many German generals are apt to overlook when they criticize the socialists for their opposition to EDC. Former German generals are readily inclined to regard this opposition rather as rooted merely in a drive for power in Germany and to intimate communist infiltration. Some of them compared indulgently the practices of the socialists with those of the Nazis as if to suggest that fundamentally all political parties are alike. Thus, in their impatience about the slow progress of German rearmament, as in their opinions on other matters, the generals appeared invariably to reduce domestic disagreements to matters of power pure and simple. Little would have been gained, therefore, for the better communication of U.S. policy, had the old German military elite been more active as public polemicists against the Social Democratic Party; in fact, doubtful gains would probably have been made at the certain cost of subtly injuring democratic values in the process.

14. The members of the reformist military opposition differ, of course, in their attitudes toward labor and socialism.

German generals certainly recognize the danger of Soviet aggression, which they are inclined to attribute to traditional Russian expansionism rather than to communist plans: they prefer geopolitical to "ideological" arguments. But in 1952 they were not alarmed about imminent danger, holding weaknesses of the Soviet Union and the deterrent power of the American war potential (rather than the U.S. Strategic Air Force) primarily responsible for the prevalence of peace. This diagnosis was influenced possibly by the fact that many weaknesses of the Soviet Union are chinks in the Soviet armor produced by the German Wehrmacht.

On the controversial issue of reunification and EDC as a means of achieving unification by peaceful means, the members of the old military elite could not have functioned as persuasive proponents and interpreters of official U.S. policy. They were inclined to think that the hope of attaining reunification by means of diplomatic negotiations with the Soviet Union was very small indeed. Given this view it was difficult to sustain the hope for reunification by anything save predictions that the Soviet empire will peacefully disintegrate, or that a war of liberation would be initiated. None of the generals to whom I talked in the summer of 1952 spoke of such a war, and if they entertained secret thoughts on this subject they were realists enough to know that EDC could not wage a war to liberate the Soviet satellites or Eastern Germany. Thus the military value of the European Defense Community was viewed by them as a defensive achievement: once in being, i.e., about two years after ratification by all powers concerned, it would increase the security of Western Germany and Western Europe against military incidents leading to war.

German generals have not made many public contributions to the defense of EDC by military analysis. Only a few strategic comments on the defense of

Europe have appeared in print. They all center around the idea that the EDC would be strong enough to force the Soviet Union, in case it embarked upon war, to conquer the deep flanks of Central and Western Europe, i.e., the Scandinavian peninsula and the Mediterranean, simultaneously with, or prior to, a deep advance to the Atlantic through Germany and France; and further, that in view of other commitments of the Soviet ground forces to possible theaters of war outside of Europe, the risks of failure would be great enough to deter a Soviet attack upon Germany.

It is to be doubted that this discussion reached more than a small number of persons interested in the military aspects of rearmament. The same is true, unfortunately, of the few sane statements that have been made on the subject of German participation in determining the strategy of Western defense. On this subject the generals realized, of course, that in the event of a global coalition war, the national interest in its own protection of an exposed ally could not be expected to determine the plan of war, and that neither popular anxieties or notions of national "equality" in a particular country could be permitted to do so. Rather, the strategy for the defense and victory must be determined in the interests of the coalition as a whole. For example, Blumentritt assured his readers that the supreme commander of the Western forces would try his best to avoid an evacuation of West Germany if he possibly could, simply because any unnecessary withdrawal would be in violation of the interests of the West. But Blumentritt added with characteristic sang froid that in case of withdrawal according to a plan, not only German territory but "also other areas" would be lost.¹⁵ Similarly realistic views were expressed

15. Op. cit., pp. 37nff.

by Georg von Sodenstern.¹⁶ In my opinion, it would have been desirable to utilize the superior insight which the old military elite has in these matters in order to silence some of the less intelligent comments that have been made in Germany as well as in other European countries.¹⁷

16. "Strategische Gedanken zur Gegenwart," Wehrwissenschaftliche Rundschau, May, 1951.

17. For example, the CDU Deputy Strauss said in the July, 1952, debate, "What we must demand, if we are willing to say 'yes' to the treaty on the European Defense Community, is a clear European strategy with especial regard for the conditions in Germany as the last partner." Again, "We expect of the Federal Government that it will press successfully for a strategic conception in which Germany cannot become the theater of a conflict." (Deutscher Bundestag Record, p. 9858.) Similar views on the strategy of European defense have been expressed occasionally in public by spokesmen of smaller NATO powers which fear being the first victims of a Soviet attack.

VI.

On the whole, former German generals have not played a conspicuous role in enlightening the German public about the military implications of EDC, the requirements of Western defense, and especially the possible strategies of a war in Europe. This failure has three reasons.

(1) The old military elite is aware of the fact that public discussions of the strategy of a war in Europe may create the impression that the establishment of EDC increases the probability of war, and that the generals are not alarmed by such a trend. It was, of course, politically not desirable for the success of the Adenauer government that such impressions gain currency. Prior to the ratification of the EDC treaty by the Bundestag, the socialist opposition attempted to create precisely this impression. Had their arguments been supported by the authority of German generals, the latter would in fact have reduced the chances of ratification and invited political attacks upon themselves. In the Bundestag some supporters of Adenauer's policy went so far as to belittle the SPD argument that rearmament may lead to war by the disarming counter-argument that EDC would be too cumbersome an organization ever to be used for aggressive purposes. The politically interested generals hoping for German rearmament were reticent on the strategic issues for military and personal reasons.

(2) The German military elite believes in the need for secrecy. Repeatedly it was pointed out to me by German generals that their notions of military security were superior to ours, since they were more fully aware of the intelligence value to the Soviets of public discussions of military issues in the West. It is readily seen that this attitude also serves the injured self-respect of the old military elite since it implies the claim of superior understanding

and discretion on their part. This attitude is nourished further by the traditional aloofness of the professional officers from the civilian sector of society, and especially from those elements in it that are professional talkers or writers on political issues. As a group, the German military elite has never felt an urge to enlighten civilians on military affairs. These have always been regarded as matters of command rather than discussion. Needless to say, the "reformers" in the elite do not advocate secrecy; they criticize it. These dissenters regard unnecessary secretiveness as a traditional trait of the old military elite and as another proof of its undemocratic orientation.

(3) The third reason for the failure of the old German military elite to discuss more fully and competently in public the strategic significance of U.S. foreign policy and German rearmament is the halting American effort to help them do so. The U.S. information program has not equipped German military writers with background information so that they could function as expert opinion leaders in Germany on certain important aspects of military affairs. No attempt has been made to utilize their services similar to the use of German licensees in the first phase of the occupation. Public support of the policy of German rearmament has been regarded primarily as a political issue within a range of considerations indicated by the words "Soviet threat—deterrence—German equality—reunification." The need for a fuller understanding on the part of the German people of the strategic significance of EDC in case of war has not been met fully. The issue of German rearmament has been dealt with by diplomats and military experts in the first place; and apparently it has been felt that the public support of Adenauer's policy would hinge primarily on anticommunistic sentiment and on an appreciation of the progress Germany would be permitted to make toward political equality and independence.

Perhaps, it has appeared more important to secure the support of the veterans' organizations and of potentially anti-American groups for the idea of "European integration" than to risk stimulating latent anxieties by more enlightened discussions of strategy.

It may have been difficult to encourage the German mass media to devote more attention to the military premises and implications of U.S. foreign policy, but despite the indirect methods such encouragement would have had to employ, a more enlightened discussion would have been the consequence. Certainly, the distance between the decision-makers and those who must carry out the decisions would have been shortened. This distance exists, of course, in modern political society in general, and is especially great wherever momentous military issues are at stake.

The U.S. library program in Germany might have been utilized more effectively for providing German military writers with more basic information. The library catalog of the U.S. Information Centers in Germany lists very few books in any language on military affairs. The subject index does not even include the category "military affairs." While some of the memoirs of the U.S. generals have been translated into German and are available in the information centers, there are no studies listed in the catalog on subjects like atomic warfare, strategy, civil defense, military organization, and psychology. Nor do the libraries include any publications put out by the U.S. Government Printing Office. The debates on the B-36, the MacArthur hearings, the testimony by General Gruenther on European defense, to mention but a few items, are not on the shelves of the Amerika Houses.

The most important German historian of the second World War, a former general who lives on his pension, told me that he is giving French lessons in

order to be able to subscribe to LeMonde, which in his opinion contains more current military information than any German newspaper. Former General Hans Rumpf, the chief historian of the effects of the air war upon Germany, writes in the preface to his book (1952) that he was unable to obtain the U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey.¹⁸ A similar remark is to be found in the most important German psychiatric monograph on the psychological effects of the air war.¹⁹ Nor is it possible to read any of the standard military periodicals in the information centers.

The American failure to make available to German students of military affairs some of the more important recent publications in this field contrasts with the familiarity of the former German generals with the writings of British authors, especially J.F.C. Fuller and Liddell Hart. Both of them publish articles frequently in German periodicals, and Liddell Hart, who interviewed many of Germany's most prominent generals while they were in prison camps after the war, has maintained personal contact with them and provided for many of them a literary outlet for their professional writings in the magazine Cosentoir.

What might be called the popularity of J.F.C. Fuller and Liddell Hart in Germany is not only due to their own efforts, but is also a consequence of their views on tank warfare and, conversely, their sharp moral and military criticism of strategic bombing. When former German generals come upon the subject of the bombing of German cities, they never fail to cite British opinion on its cruel

18. Hans Rump, Der hochrote Hahn, 1952.

19. Friedrich Panse, Angst und Schreck, Stuttgart, 1952, p. 189.

wastefulness, particularly the very strong condemnations to be found in the writings of two Englishmen.²⁰ They may be said to be the most important foreign authorities on this subject in Germany today.

Furthermore, the views of these British writers are such that they can be reconciled easily with the tradition of land-bound strategy cultivated in the General Staff of the German Army. Both Ludendorff's advocacy of total war and Douhet's doctrines of strategic bombing were unpopular among German General Staff officers between the two World Wars. In addition, service rivalry between the German Army and the Luftwaffe was intense, partly because the German air force became less and less effective after the Battle of Britain and the first campaign in Soviet Russia. When Hitler began to build up his air force he had to draw upon officers of the ground forces for staff and command positions. Later, special Luftwaffe divisions were formed for ground warfare in the Soviet Union! Despite this fact, however, the Luftwaffe was more nazified in its top positions than was true of the Army, a fact which Hitler recognized and held against the leaders of the army.

Thus, in a rather interesting way, military conservatism among former German generals is tied up with political animosities dating back to the expansion of the German Wehrmacht and with popular feelings among large elements of the population that the bombing of cities is an atrocity. This view was publicly expressed with much applauded resentment by General Ramcke in a famous incident in 1952.

With inadequate sources of information, and traditional conceptions of strategy, it is small wonder that former German generals are particularly

20. Similarly, critical British writings by Paget and others on the issues of war crimes and unconditional surrender are popular in Germany. Paget's book on Manstein was serialized in a German newspaper.

naive and misinformed when they venture to express in public their opinion on atomic warfare. The few comments on atomic weapons to be found in the writings of high-ranking German generals or in German military periodicals betray a degree of ignorance which is truly astonishing.²¹ By contrast, the development of long-range rockets is followed much more keenly. This, of course, is an area in which Germany excelled during the war; and it is appreciated among Germans that many of their experts are now working for the Soviet Union.²²

It should perhaps be noted also that the lack of concern with atomic weapons which the German generals betray not only fits in with their traditional thinking on airpower as a tactical weapon for the support of ground

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21. For example, General Halder is of the opinion that A- and H- bombs cannot be used in areas one wants to occupy (Peter Bor, Gespräche mit Halder, Wiesbaden, 1950, p. 248); General Steiner suggests that the effectiveness of atomic bombing of Soviet targets has been rendered negligible by the vastness of the area to be attacked and by dispersion (op. cit., p. 46); General Guderian states that A-bombs are not usable in the vicinity of one's own troops because of radioactivity (So geht es nicht, p. 23). The best discussions that appeared on the subject in Germany have not come from generals: Günter Bertrand, "Die H-bombe," Frankfurter Hefte, January, 1953; Bericht über die Erste Wissenschaftlich-Technische Tagung der Total Kon. Ges. Foerstner Co. (August 10-11, 1951), Ladenburg-Mannheim. The Christmas issue, 1952, of the Deutsche Soldatenzeitung contained an article by J.F.C. Fuller arguing that possession of the A-bomb by both sides was likely to lead to its use by neither side in a future war and might render war impossible. The November, 1953 issue of Aussenpolitik contained a German translation of the Foreign Affairs (July, 1953) article by J. Robert Oppenheimer under the title "Atomwaffen und die Politik Amerikas," and an essay by Paul Scheffer, "Das Thema der Atombomben," in which "Operation Candor" and recent American statements on the development of atomic weapons were discussed. Der Flieger, September, 1953, published a report on a lecture by General B.G. Nordenskjoeld, Commander-in-Chief of the Swedish Air Force, on changes in land warfare to be expected in consequence of the tactical employment of atomic bombs.
22. For a good survey see Volursus, "Die Geheimwaffen der Soviet-Union," Flugwelt, November, 1953.

forces and for purposes of interdiction, but also supports their opinion that the German contribution to EDC in ground forces and tactical air units is of even greater importance than it actually is.

The strategic significance of atomic and thermonuclear weapons seems to be lost on the old German military elite, and the possibility of the "tactical" use of these weapons in repelling aggression discussed in public by General Alfred M. Gruenther²³ and General Sir Richard Gale²⁴ had caused no stir among them in 1952²⁵

In short, the strategic issues related to German rearmament on which the old German military elite could presumably have functioned best as a group of sober opinion leaders have been dealt with most inadequately in the public debate. The members of that elite have been silent on these issues or dealt with them primarily as political writers, revealing in the process that modern experts on violence can lose their competence quickly; but they showed no mean propagandistic skills on those aspects of the past which in the somewhat synthetic society of West Germany today still dominate political thinking.

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23. Testimony of General Alfred M. Gruenther, Hearing before the Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate, April 1, 1953.
24. See New York Times, February 25, 1953.
25. The first test of a "tactical" A-bomb at Yucca Flats, Nevada, April 22, 1952, was widely reported in the United States. In more than thirty of the most widely read West German newspapers that reported the news briefly, only one (Süddeutsche Zeitung) carried an editorial—only because it wished to show the fact that the test had been televised!