

The German Bundeswehr

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THERE WAS one conviction in 1945 common to victors and vanquished alike: Nazism must disappear forever, and there must never again be a German army. Perhaps there was more unanimous agreement on the army than on the party. Even the few Nazis remaining after the collapse of the Hitler regime agreed that the days of German armed forces were over although

their motives were different from those of the majority of the German people.

Accordingly the Allied laws against Nazism always contained clauses against "Militarism," or "Remilitarization." In the Potsdam Agreement of August 1945 demilitarization or what was called the "elimination of Germany's war potential" plays an important role. Under the euphemistic heading "economic principles," the produc-

tion not only of arms, ammunition, and implements of war, but also of all types of air-craft and sea-going ships was prohibited. The same applied to "metals, chemicals, machinery, and other items directly necessary to a war economy." These clauses provided the basis for an almost complete control of Germany's economic life and of its entire industrial production and such control was indeed embodied in the Directive JCS 1076 of April 26, 1945. It contained a paragraph called "De-militarization" in line with the basic tenets of the Potsdam Agreement. A further directive, released on April 1, 1946, enumerated the prohibited industries and those to be eliminated, among them synthetic gasoline and oil, synthetic rubber, ball and taper rolling bearings, heavy machinery tools, heavy tractors, primary aluminum, and so on. The allowable production of steel in Germany was not to exceed 5,800,000 ingot tons, in any future year; the annual consumption of non-ferrous metals was drastically curtailed. Similar limitations applied to the chemical industries and, in short, to all other branches of modern economic and industrial life.

The three "D"s, as General Lucius Clay later on called them, dominated the occupation for a number of years: Denazification, Decartellization, and Demilitarization. They were supplemented by another important "D"—Dismantling. This, too, was carried out under the general policy of eliminating German militarism or its "war potential." Dismantling in fact went on until April 1951, at a time when the Marshall Plan had replaced the Morgenthau Plan and when a German military contribution toward the common defense was being widely discussed.

The "D" program was supplemented by the program of "Re-education." It aimed not only at denazification but most particularly at eliminating any vestiges of "mili-

tarism" in the public mind, most specially among the young.

Even since the days of World War I propaganda there had existed the legend of the German "military clique" and of an inbred desire in the German mind for world conquest. The late Gustav Stolper in his courageous book *German Realities*, published in 1947, has summarized the motives for the post-war treatment of Germany as follows:

Once the nursery fable, bold and preposterous, was generally accepted that the world consists of "peace-loving nations" and two aggressors, Germany and Japan, it was beyond dispute that after victory Germany and Japan had to be so thoroughly disarmed that never again would they conceivably dream of starting another war. We had lived through the story once before, in 1918, but there were a few differences. In 1918 Japan, being one of the "Allied and Associated Powers," was still a "peace-loving nation" and Germany's disarmament was approached with political misgivings and moral inhibitions.

Now in a convenient equation the misdeeds of Nazism were placed at the doorstep of the Army—regardless of certain historic facts.

"The General Staff has opposed re-armament, the occupation of the Rhineland, the occupation of Austria and of Czechoslovakia and finally the war against Poland. The General Staff has tried to dissuade me from taking the offensive against France and to wage war on Russia." These are Hitler's own words after the abortive coup of July 20, 1944, in which many leading officers had been involved.

In line with this general policy the German administration in the Western Zones of Occupation was completely decentralized. In the first few years only local police units were permitted, again, of course, under

strict Allied Military Government Control. Any centralization of the police on the Lnder level was already considered a dangerous step towards the revival of militarism. To this day the German police in the Federal Republic is decentralized to a degree hardly compatible with the needs of an emergency situation should it ever arise. Only the border police—Bundesgrenzschutz—guarding the approaches to the Iron Curtain are under federal control.

In the Soviet Zone of occupation no such pacifist chastity ever existed. Neither had Lenin, his collaborators, or successors ever been pacifists. They understood only too well the importance of armed forces as an instrument of power in the hands of the revolution.

We know today from a book by a certain Max Opitz, State Secretary to the “president” of the so-called German Democratic Republic, published in 1959, that as early as October 31, 1945, the Soviet Military Administration ordered the arming of the East German Volkspolizei. Soon afterwards centralized police units were created under the leadership of loyal Communists. Early in 1946, border and transport police units were formed. By 1948, the militarily trained police in the Zone numbered 15,000 men.

The process of Communist re-militarization, in spite of Potsdam, proceeded rapidly. By 1952 there was an army of 110,000 men. The latest figures show that the Soviet Zone disposes of about 1.1 million fully trained men out of a population of 17 million. 110,000 belong to the so-called National People’s Army. A further 350,000 belong to the Socialist Factory Units. They have the same internal organization as the Armed Forces, with the same training and equipment. There are 200,000 reservists, almost 100,000 members of the Volkspolizei, about 50,000 men in the Communist border police and 400,000 young people organ-

ized in the pre-military “Society for Sport and Technical Education,” following the pattern set by the Nazi pre-military youth organizations.

These formidable forces are in addition to the twenty Soviet Russian divisions posted in the Central Germany, *i.e.*, the Soviet Zone of Occupation, the so-called “German Democratic Republic.” There are 7,000 tanks and artillery units with over 8,000 guns. The ground forces are supported by Red Air Force units numbering close to 1,000 frontline fighter planes and bombers.

The German Communist Navy, closely integrated with the powerful Soviet Baltic Fleet, consists at the present time of seven squadrons, destroyers and escort destroyers, submarine chasers, mine sweepers, speedboats and other craft.

The creation, the development and the tasks of the German Bundeswehr, the armed forces of the Federal Republic, must be viewed against the historic and political background. Like the Japanese post-war Constitution, the Basic Law of the German Federal Republic, promulgated on May 23, 1949, manifests a strong pacifist tendency. One of its first articles states that no one can be forced against his conscience to serve in the armed forces. The first Federal Cabinet had no Minister for Foreign Affairs—the conduct of German foreign affairs was reserved by the Western Powers—nor was there, of course, a Minister of Defense.

The German Basic Law was promulgated directly after the Berlin Blockade had come to an end and five weeks after the United States, Canada and ten Western European countries had signed the Nato Agreement in Washington. The Western Zones of Occupation shortly afterward united into the Federal Republic of Germany, were indirectly protected by the Pact, its Article 5 stating that an attack against the Occupation Forces of any partner in Europe would

bring about the *casus foederis*. This clause is still important for the safety of West Berlin which in a strictly legal sense does not form a part of the Federal Republic and therefore is protected only by the presence of British, French, and American troops.

The Communist attack on South Korea in June, 1950, demonstrated to the free world the urgency of the Soviet threat. The North Atlantic Council, supreme organ of Nato, meeting in New York on September 15, 1950, was confronted by the decisive question of how to defend the Nato area against an attack similar to the one which had taken place in the Far East. The meeting of the Council agreed unanimously on a forward strategy for Europe—aggression had to be resisted as far east as possible. The defense of Europe on German soil—the logical consequence of the forward strategy—could not possibly be carried out without the military and political participation of the Federal Republic. When the Council met again in Brussels on December 18, 1950 it stated that “German participation would strengthen the defense of Europe without altering in any way the purely defensive character of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.” With this step the principle of German participation in the common defense was established and approved. From this day on negotiations between the Western governments and the Federal Republic began to take concrete shape.

However, owing to Allied post-war policy and the national and moral problems posed by the division of the country, many obstacles had to be overcome in the public mind before a German defense contribution could be brought about. The first to attack the old taboo against a military contribution was Chancellor Adenauer himself. In an interview with the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* of December 3, 1949, he

stated flatly that Germany would have to make a contribution toward the defense of Europe. He suggested that it be made within the framework of a European army under a common supreme command. Once the Soviets, he said, stood at the Rhine, the entire continent would be in their power.

The reaction to this clear-sighted statement was violent in Paris, in London, in Germany itself, among the re-educators and the re-educated alike. However, the end of the illusion which had depicted the Soviet Union as a “great democracy,” akin to the United States and as having renounced the Marxist-Leninist program of world conquest through world revolution, had finally come.

Nevertheless, several years were wasted over negotiations on the formation of an integrated European army of EDC (the European Defense Community) which would have provided for German battle-groups not exceeding 6,000 men fully integrated into the European command. This was the so-called “Pleven-Plan” formulated by Henri Pleven, then Prime Minister of France, on October 26, 1950. It would have been an army of interpreters rather than of effective military units. At that time the witticism was current in Europe that “France desires a German Army stronger than the Russian but weaker than the French.” In addition the EDC Army was to be incorporated into the more embracing system of Nato—of which the Federal Republic was not yet a member.

The arguments for and against a German defense contribution rocked the young Federal Republic. The Social-Democratic opposition would have none of it, and only after the new Parliamentary elections of 1953, the government parties having won a two-thirds majority, was it possible to pass the necessary amendment to the Federal Constitution making the draft laws possible.

The end of this post-war chapter was written when on the night of August 30-31, 1954 the French National Assembly did not even bother to turn down EDC and the Pleven-Plan. It merely voted 319 against 164 to remove it from the agenda. It was Sir Anthony Eden, the British Foreign Secretary, who in this dark hour of post-war history found the solution. Owing to his energy and clear-sightedness the Paris Conference convened a few weeks after the downfall of EDC—the United States, France, Great Britain, and the Federal Republic of Germany for the first time as an equal partner. The package of agreements called “The Paris Treaties” ended the Occupation regime in Germany and provided for the Federal Republic’s becoming a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. After the German Bundestag had ratified the treaties on February 27, 1954, they became effective on May 5, 1955. On May 9, precisely six years after its creation, the Federal Republic became a full member of the North Atlantic Defense Community.

Though many obstacles still had to be overcome the build-up of the Bundeswehr could now begin. The first volunteers were accepted in November 1955 and practical work began in January 1956 in a training camp at Andernach on the Rhine. A wire fence around a camp of 1500 square feet enclosed the entire new German Army—1,000 men. Their commander was given four months time to prove that a progressive spirit was compatible with military life in Germany and that in order to train the new soldiers one did not have to fall back on the outmoded patterns of the past. From these humble beginnings the strength of the German Bundeswehr has grown within six years to a present total of about 300,000 men, Army, Air Force, Navy, and Territorial Defense.

The total strength to be reached by the Army by the end of 1961, by the Navy and Air Force in 1963, will be 350,000. 200,000—or twelve divisions—will be Army troops, 100,000 will be Air Force personnel, 30,000 will be in the Navy and 20,000 to 30,000 in the Territorial Defense.

The problems confronting the Bundeswehr were, and still are, very great. For twelve years there had been no training of officers and non-commissioned officers. The adoption of appropriate legislation by the Bundestag despite the large majorities enjoyed by the Government parties by no means eliminated the strong opposition and resentment among broad masses of the people. For the tiny group of Communist sympathizers opposition to the Bundeswehr was a matter of course. They realized that a German defense contribution would make a “European Korea”—a conquest by proxy—impossible. Should the Soviet Union decide on war, it would now be forced to enter the conflict and could no longer leave the job to its satellites. Moscow would have to take the full risk involved in an all-out war—and this might provide the safety margin for the maintenance of peace.

But small numbers of “unreconstructed Nazis” have also been opposed to the Bundeswehr. For them its very existence is the daily proof that Hitlerism failed. These elements have joined hands with the left-wingers, united if not by a common ideology then certainly by a common hatred of Western Christian civilization.

For the overwhelming majority of the German people, however, the Bundeswehr has become more and more acceptable as time has gone by. At first its creation was regarded as an unavoidable necessity. The left wing slogan: “*Ohne mich!*” or “Count me out” had been countered by the obvious answer “‘Without me’ means ‘For Moscow.’”

What has made the Bundeswehr become truly accepted, however, was precisely what makes it unacceptable to the Nationalists of the old school: the fact that in the strictest sense of the word the Bundeswehr units are not national armed forces. The genuine longing for a wider community which led the Federal Republic into the Strassburg Council of Europe, the European Common Market and into other European organizations like Euratom, has now found its expression in Nato, the Atlantic Community, and in the integration of the German Armed Forces into this defense system. All Army divisions, Air Force and Navy units as soon as they are combat-ready are assigned to Nato commands. The Bundeswehr has no national command above corps level, the corps for their part being assigned to Nato. Furthermore no General Staff exists in the traditional sense.

The following German units have been assigned to the Nato command: Army—3 corps headquarters with support troops, 4 armored infantry divisions, 2 armored divisions, 1 mountain division, 1 air borne division. The Army has now been fully regrouped in brigades as is the case with the American Army. The new armored infantry division comprises: division headquarters with divisional support troops, 2 armored infantry brigades, 1 armored brigade. The Navy has 1 Headquarters Commander Naval Forces North Sea, 1 Headquarters Commander Naval Forces Baltic, 5 minesweeper squadrons, 3 motor torpedo boat squadrons, 1 landing craft squadron, 1 destroyer squadron, 1 Fleet Air Arm squadron. The Air Force has 4 fighter bomber wings, 1 fighter wing, 1 transport wing.

Over and beyond the annual budget approximately 16 Billion D Marks (\$3,809,600,000) intended for long-term orders for weapons and equipment have been granted by the Bundestag.

The main bulk of the German Armed Forces is under the Nato command of Europe Center with headquarters in Fontainebleau. The Commander-in-Chief of Europe Center is a French General. The German Sixth Division in Schleswig-Holstein, the territory between the Elbe river and the Danish border, is under the Nato command of Europe North in Kolsas near Oslo; there the Commander-in-Chief is a British General. The commands Europe North and Europe Center in turn are under the over-all command of the Supreme Allied Commander Europe, called SACEUR, at present the American Air Force General Lauris Norstad. Under the Commander-in-Chief of Europe Center in Fontainebleau a British Air Force General commands the Allied Tactical Air Forces Europe ("AIRCENT") which includes the German Air Force, assigned to the Second and the Fourth Allied Tactical Air Forces. A Dutch Admiral commands the Naval Forces in Europe Center, including the German Navy. Other units are assigned to Europe North. The Commander of the Allied Land Forces Europe Center, General Hans Speidel, is in charge of the ground forces in Europe Center, which include American, British, French, Benelux, Canadian and German divisions. This is one of the most astounding developments in post-war European history. That the former Inspector General of the German Armed Forces, General Adolf Heusinger, one of the creators of the Bundeswehr, has just been unanimously elected Chairman of the Nato Military Committee in Washington, thereby becoming the highest ranking officer in the entire North Atlantic Alliance, is another indication of the profound changes in the relationship between victors and vanquished.

The necessity of starting from scratch has had certain advantages. It opened the

way to an entirely new military and social concept, a new philosophy of life with regard to the position of the soldier within the community. The focal point of this new orientation is called "*innere Führung*"—inner leadership. This concept is linked with the name of General Count Wolf von Baudissin who back in the days of the defunct EDC laid the foundation for the new human relationship between officers and men. *Innere Führung* means, he explained, nothing but the leadership of men; leadership, however, in the sense of education, directed primarily towards greater combat readiness. Today, the world is faced by a new kind of enemy who wages a permanent war—on the economic, the political, the social, and the psychological planes. Therefore modern soldiers must be trained and educated in a far wider sense than in the past. The slogan of "citizen-soldiers" is more than an empty postulate. The soldier today must know what he is fighting for. The aims of the state which he has to defend must correspond to his own aims of human dignity and freedom as a moral principle. Furthermore, in view of the danger of an atomic attack with its predictable effect upon communications, the individual soldier must learn to decide for himself in an emergency and must be prepared and willing to assume responsibility. In other words, he must be conscious of the fact that the Bundeswehr is his own army, the instrument of defense of his State, and he must know that the order of liberty which the army is called upon to defend is his own human order.

Special courses have been instituted to convey to the simplest farmer boys in the army a certain amount of knowledge and understanding of the basic values of life outside the purely military field. There are courses in philosophy of government, social science, history, ethics. A special "Council for Questions of the Inner Leader-

ship of the Bundeswehr" made up of leading public figures serves as a consultative organ.

In a state where authority has been shaken because in the past it has been so misused and discredited, the mere fact that a man wears an officer's uniform is no longer enough to maintain discipline. Something else must be added: a respect for his personality, his knowledge and his achievements. Only then does the younger generation accept its superiors not only because they are officers, but because they are men whom one can trust.

Nato has coined the phrase of Sword and Shield forces. The Sword—the strategic nuclear weapons—is held by the United States and by Great Britain. The other forces, army, tactical air forces, and naval units, specially those stationed in Europe, are the Shield.

The German Minister of Defense, Franz-Josef Strauss, has repeatedly pointed out that the Bundeswehr cannot be part of the Sword forces. Its sole mission consists in strengthening the Shield and thereby contributing to the deterrent power exerted by the West.

There have been many discussions on equipping the Shield forces with tactical atomic weapons. The question has been raised by the German opposition as to whether "the German Army" should be armed with such weapons. It is a matter of simple military calculation that all troops, regardless of nationality, deployed before the Iron Curtain—a front of over a thousand miles—must be equally equipped with atomic weapons. If a section of that front, the one held by German units, were not in possession of the most modern arms, the Soviet strategists would be foolish if they did not try to push through that softest part of the front, thereby outflanking the neighboring Allied divisions.

The integration of the German Bundes-

wehr into the Western defense system applies also to logistics and to arms. The mainstay of the German armored division is the American M-48 tank. A lighter tank will soon be produced by a British-French-Italian-German armament pool. The majority of the German Air Force is equipped with American made planes; the F-84, the T-33 trainer jet, and most recently the Starfighter F-104-G. In addition British-, French-, and Italian-made planes are in use. For air-defense the Federal Republic has now installed Nike-batteries, Ajax, and the more modern Hercules. Pilots are American-trained. The official language of the German Air Force is English. The main German Air Force bases, like Fürstenfeldbruck near Munich, have been for years under American control. At some there are still small American liaison teams. Other bases have been taken over from the British.

Perhaps the most startling feature among the armed forces of the North Atlantic Alliance is the new kind of relationship between the nationals of these diverse countries. A supra-national integration has been achieved to an encouraging degree. Thus, for instance, there is the headquarters II Allied Tactical Air Force in Mönchen-Gladbach near Cologne. Its commander, a British General, has under him Benelux, British, and German squadrons just as American, French, Canadian and German units are under the American commander of IV ATAF in Wiesbaden. There is excellent comradeship and understanding between the Germans and their fellow soldiers. They call each other by their first names and the uniforms are no longer signs of national differences. The same applies to the other headquarters, be they in Fontainebleau, or at SHAPE, General Norstad's headquarters. I have noticed precisely the same thing in Europe North where owing to the Nazi occupation of Norway feelings during the first few years were sensitive. Now there

are German officers on the staff and not a trace of resentment apparently remains. The very fact that German units can be trained in the Champagne in France and that now there is talk of training German tank units in Great Britain demonstrates that the Atlantic-European community has gone a long way toward political as well as military integration.

Of course many problems remain, owing to the internal German situation, particularly that of the division of the country. The Communist troops on the other side of the Iron Curtain are German, too, though serving under a Soviet master, and there is nothing more terrible than the prospect of a civil war—which is precisely what any international conflict would mean for Germany. Yet nationalism has been overcome to the extent that the majority of the people feel that more than a common language is required to make a man a compatriot. A soldier fighting under the Soviet's banner, for the subjugation of Germany under the Communist yoke, may talk German, but he would be regarded as a stooge of Sovietism and of Russian imperialism using the German language.

How strong would the German Communist army prove to be in case of war? One indication of its attitude may be found in the fact that in the last two years over 30,000 men belonging to the People's Police or to the armed forces of the Soviet Zone have crossed the line and sought refuge in the Federal Republic. Yet it would be foolish to underestimate the fighting-value of some of these fanatically Communist units. Many are dedicated men with a fervor of belief in their creed which one would like to see paralleled in the West.

Since the abortive Paris Conference of May 1960 and Khrushchev's behavior in New York at the UN meeting the Social-Democratic Opposition has accepted the

Bundeswehr as vital for the defense of German liberty and of the West in general. Its illogical opposition to equipping all Nato units in Europe with modern weapons including the tactical atomic ones has dwindled to a paper protest.

According to reliable figures the Soviets have over 200 divisions under arms. To counter them the minimum requirement in Europe Center, as pointed out repeatedly by General Norstad, is 30 divisions. At the present time there are about 20. Any hope of holding the front rests upon the better equipment of these troops. This means appropriate nuclear defenses to prevent the massing of the numerically superior Soviet forces.

In view of the continued French difficulties in Algiers and the very small number of French troops therefore available in Europe Center, the defense of the West is shifting more and more to the new German armed forces. At the present time they already constitute the largest single ground force in Europe Center.

Just as there are no "German units" stationed along the Iron Curtain but solely Nato units, there is no "American Army" stationed in Germany; there are only American Nato divisions serving in Germany for the protection not only of that country but of the West as well. America and Germany and the other Allies are making common sacrifices for a common cause. The German defense budget amounts to over ten billion Marks. Considering the higher purchasing power of the Mark this corresponds to very nearly the same amount in dollars. In addition, the German Federal Budget has to provide billions of Marks annually for the resettlement of the millions of refugees from the German provinces east

of the Oder-Neisse. Anything which might endanger the social structure of the Federal Republic or its economic stability, would play directly into the hands of Communist subversion. Over one billion Marks annually goes to Berlin to support its budget and its economy.

Though the Bundeswehr does not and cannot take part in party politics, its members have of course the right to vote and they may turn whenever they feel unjustly treated directly to a Defense Commissioner appointed by the Bundestag. Between 350 and 400 complaints monthly come from the troops but they have to do mainly with housing, family, or school problems caused by administrative difficulties during the first years of the build-up of the Bundeswehr. Only a small fraction of the complaints are based upon real or alleged violations of the basic civil rights guaranteed to every soldier. To pass on all applications of officers above the rank of Colonel a special board was appointed in 1955. Its function was to investigate thoroughly the political and personal background of every applicant.

I should like to affirm categorically my belief that the Bundeswehr would unquestionably be loyal to the state as an institution in an hour of danger and to the democratic principles of Germany, and of the Atlantic Community as a whole. And perhaps it is what Hegel has called the "ruse of the idea" that out of the military necessity caused by Soviet aggression the armed forces of the Alliance have laid the groundwork not only for the military but also for a wider political and economic community of the Atlantic-European people, conscious once more of their common heritage and their common destiny.