

**FORGING THE IDEALOGICAL ATLANTIC: WEST GERMAN-
AMERICAN FÊTE DIPLOMACY, 1945-1953**

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines a series of West German-American transatlantic fêtes from 1948 to 1952 and places them within the context of Cold War diplomatic history, West German-American rapprochement, and the westernization of the Federal Republic of Germany. In the earliest years of the Cold War, American, West German and European officials and non-state actors gathered to commemorate the centennial of the Revolution of 1848 in Frankfurt (1948), the bicentennial of the birth of German poet Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1949), the 900th anniversary of the city of Nuremberg (1950), cultural festivals in Berlin (1951) and Passau (1952), and the centennial of the year that Carl Schurz arrived in the United States (1952). In each of these fêtes, participants – including organizers, historians, journalists, attendees, and cultural organizations such as the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation - engaged with carefully-selected symbols and axioms that disseminated politically- and ideologically- important narratives that were as informed by contemporary, Cold War ideological needs as they were informed by the historical past.

When viewed as a whole, these celebrations honoring German, American, German-American, and European history and culture formed a kind of fête diplomacy, whereby state and non-state actors sought to achieve a number of postwar national and international goals: West Germans hoped to use pre-Hitler history and culture as a means of demonstrating their cultural compatibility with Europeans and Americans and emerging from the long shadow of the Third Reich, and Americans sought to create an

ideologically-friendly bulwark against the socialist world and embed German nationalism within a European and Atlantic framework.

Fête diplomacy also became a vehicle for the normalization of German-American and German-European cultural relations and for reifying “the ideological Atlantic,” a transnational community based on the ideology and shared heritage associated with Western civilization, and claiming a place for West Germans within that community. Fêtes were held simultaneously with and in support of international attempts to construct the Atlantic world politically, economically, culturally, and even militarily. As Western nations forged this community at the international level, they used the highly-visible nature of fêtes and festivals to undergird these efforts and give the emerging Atlantic community an ideology and purpose.

The Soviet Union and East Germany were not passive in this ideological battle, and they helped to sustain the conflict with fêtes of their own. Fêtes behind the Iron Curtain, often direct counterparts to West German-American fêtes, were a means of forging an international socialist community and embedding Germans within that community. As a result, fêtes were anchored in contemporary and competing ideological frameworks related to strict Marxist-Leninist and liberal democratic orthodoxies. These fêtes helped to foster a Cold War mindset among the superpowers while priming their respective German audiences for an ideological bifurcation at a time where emerging East and West German governments were consolidating their own authority and searching for international legitimacy.

To my friends, family, and the five dogs (but I repeat myself)
who were always around my writing desk.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

On 18 May 1948, the streets of Frankfurt am Main came alive in the first major public celebration in West Germany since the end of the Second World War. The tolling of the bells in the historic St. Paul's Church, or the *Paulskirche*, inaugurated a week-long festival, and as many as 30,000 people filled up the square around the church. The international crowd commemorated the hundredth anniversary of the Revolution of 1848 in Frankfurt, when, in May 1848, a group of liberal-minded revolutionaries gathered at the *Paulskirche* hoping to declare a German republic to replace the loose collection of small kingdoms in central Europe known as the German Confederation. Though the revolution in Frankfurt (as well as concurrent movements elsewhere in Europe) ultimately failed, attendees in 1948 convened at the recently-rebuilt church to publicly remember the Germans who aspired to replace absolutist regimes with a liberal democracy. The centenary's organizers, public officials, and international journalists who helped to shape the public image and commentary around the celebrations went to great lengths to draw direct parallels to the contemporary efforts of West Germans to install liberal governance atop the ashes of the Nazi regime.¹

Many throughout West Germany wholeheartedly welcomed the commemoration. They were hopeful that the bells that inaugurated the festival might also be signaling a new

¹ This dissertation will use the term West Germans to describe the citizens of what will become the Federal Republic of Germany, both during the occupation phase as well as after the foundation of the Federal Republic.

beginning for postwar Germans, though all acknowledged that there was still considerable physical and spiritual reconstruction left to address. One journalist believed that it was fitting that such a celebration should take place in Frankfurt, which had always been, in their words, “the guardian of the democratic, national, and cosmopolitan spirit.”² The use of the word “cosmopolitan” to describe the national commemoration was no accident, nor was this journalist the only one to use it. With hundreds of non-Germans in attendance and numerous exhibitions that framed the Frankfurt Revolution as intertwined with the history of Europe and the United States, this journalist captured how the anniversary of the 1848 National Assembly in Frankfurt was not simply a German nationalist celebration but a Western celebration as well.

The celebration garnered significant attention in the United States and much of the Western world. The American occupation government gave its official endorsement for the celebration, took care of much of the logistical side of the preparations, and declared 18 May a half-holiday to maximize the participation of Germans and American servicemembers. In addition to official American participation, representatives of the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation (CSMF), a private American organization in Philadelphia with members of German ancestry, were on hand to demonstrate the promise of West German-American cultural reconciliation after the Second World War.

This cooperative effort was not a one-off occurrence. The opening celebration in the *Paulskirche* previewed a number of transatlantic fêtes held in cooperation between

² “Schwarz-Rot-Gold über Frankfurts Jahrhunderfeier,” *Hamburger Freie Presse*, 19 May 1948.

West Germans and Americans in the first few years of the Cold War. This dissertation examines these transatlantic celebrations from 1948-1952 and places them within the context of Cold War diplomatic history, West German-American rapprochement, and the westernization of the Federal Republic of Germany. Taken as a whole, these joint commemorations formed a kind of *fête* diplomacy, where state and non-state participants publicly celebrated German, American, German-American, and European history and culture with the purpose of normalizing American and West German relations, furthering their respective national foreign policy goals, and solidifying the Atlantic world at the cultural and ideological level - with a place for Germans within that community.³

Fête diplomacy leveraged transnational celebrations, cultural festivals, and public commemorations in order to promote shared cultural values and disseminate specific historical narratives that highlighted the common historical struggles and contemporary purpose of Western nations in the Cold War. By relying on the cultural and symbolic significance of carefully-chosen events, objects, groups, and individuals, *fête* diplomacy was meant to engage the public and create a sense of shared community and experience – even across national boundaries. The benefit of *fête* diplomacy (and of public diplomacy generally), unlike traditional methods of diplomacy between government officials, was its ability to communicate this value-laden commentary to its audiences without it being perceived as a didactic message.

³ Throughout the dissertation, the term “participants” will be used to refer not only to attendees of the *fêtes* but also to the officials, organizers, historians, international journalists, and cultural organizations who, in their own ways, contributed to the public image and commentary around the celebrations.

American-West German fête diplomacy began first with collaboration between state and non-state actors, all of whom had their own motivations for participating and their own desired outcomes. Officials and non-state participants attempted to set the terms of the discourse through the careful selection and staging of objects, exhibits, visual imagery, speeches, and other spectacles that they believed would be symbolically meaningful to their chosen audience. These displays and referents, while being rooted in history, were meant to propagate parables for those living in the Cold War and emphasize the shared cultural values and ideology of its participants – most often by extoling the virtues liberal democracy and guiding the audience to reject tyranny and totalitarianism. As members of the general public took part in these celebrations, perhaps by attentively taking in a theater production, cheering on a public address, or pondering on artifacts of immense historical and cultural gravity, they were (often unintentionally) partaking in a diplomatic effort that used collective memory to reinforce transatlantic commonalities.

Yet, the workings of fête diplomacy did not end when the crowds dispersed. It was highly dependent on the dissemination of a cohesive narrative to as broad and international an audience as possible. As such, written and unwritten media were crucial components for those looking to make fête diplomacy a success. Radio could dramatize the events or play particularly meaningful portions of public addresses. Newspaper accounts could print attention-grabbing headlines, include photographs of elated onlookers, reprint the most colorful lines of a passionate speech, boast about the successful execution of the performances, and give publicity to conferences and meetings that were otherwise inaccessible to the general public. Through the aggregate efforts of officials, organizers,

historians, journalists, attendees, and cultural organizations on both sides of the Atlantic, fête diplomacy developed and transmitted a coherent narrative that was informed by current ideological needs as much as it was informed by the past.

Historians have noted that Americans and Europeans alike worked to construct a cohesive Atlantic community during the early Cold War through a number of implements, including the Marshall Plan, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and cultural institutions such as the Congress for Cultural Freedom.⁴ By the early 1950s, the United States and its allies in western Europe laid the groundwork to integrate West Germany into this community through economic reconstruction using Marshall Plan aid, by merging the three zones of western Germany into a single unit that eventually became a semi-sovereign West German state, by conceptualizing a potential military alliance (though West Germans were not fully rearmed until 1955), and by establishing the foundations of a common market community within Europe.⁵

⁴ Giles Scott-Smith, *The Politics of Apolitical Culture: The Congress for Cultural Freedom and the Political Economy of American Hegemony 1945-1955* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 58; Michael Hochgeschwender, *Freiheit in der Offensive?: Der Kongreß für kulturelle Freiheit und die Deutschen* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1998), 204-5; William I. Hitchcock, "The Marshall Plan and the Creation of the West," in *The Cambridge History of the Cold War, Volume 1: Origins*, eds. Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 154; Valérie Aubourg and Scott-Smith, "The Transatlantic Imaginary: Constructing the Atlantic Community During the Early Cold War," in *European Community, Atlantic Community?*, eds. Aubourg, Gérard Bossuat, and Scott-Smith (Paris: Soleb, 2008), 9-22; David W. Ellwood, "From the Marshall Plan to Atlanticism: Communication Strategies and Geopolitical Narratives," in *European Community*, 39-56.

⁵ Thomas Alan Schwartz, *America's Germany: John J. McCloy and the Federal Republic of Germany* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 29-33; Dennis L. Bark and David R. Gress, *A History of West Germany: From Shadow to Substance, 1945-1963* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1993), 186-230, 272-291; David Clay Large,

The staging of fête diplomacy represented a key effort through which the United States and West Germany attempted to forge what this dissertation calls “the ideological Atlantic,” a community based on the ideology, shared heritage, and common values associated with Western civilization. The purpose of these fêtes was to shape a cultural environment in which the rehabilitation of West German people was possible and to make German inclusion in the Western world more palatable to an international audience. Fête diplomacy was complementary to other efforts at the international level. As officials used the Marshall Plan and North Atlantic Treaty Alliance to forge an international community economically and militarily, they also used the highly-visible nature of fête diplomacy to undergird these efforts at the grassroots level ideologically and culturally.⁶

It is no surprise that the development of postwar fête diplomacy occurred at the advent of the Cold War in late 1947. Without a common enemy and cognizant of their ideological incompatibility with one another, the wartime alliance between the Soviet Union and United States broke down. The meeting point of the ideological struggle, and the fault line between the liberal-democratic and socialist worlds, ran through the heart of

Germans to the Front: West German Rearmament in the Adenauer Era (University of North Carolina Press: 1996), 31-107; Helga Haftendorn, *Coming of Age: German Foreign Policy Since 1945* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2006), 74-6, 83-5.

⁶ For the attempts by American officials to reintegrate West Germany into the Western world politically, economically, and militarily, as well as the contemporary debates over the wisdom and methods of such integration, see Bark and Gress, *A History of West Germany*, 186-230, 272-291, Large, *Germans to the Front*, Ronald Granieri, *The Ambivalent Alliance: Konrad Adenauer, the CDU/CSU, and the West, 1949-1966* (New York: Berghahn: 2003), and Schwartz, *America's Germany*.

Germany.⁷ The situation was only made more serious with the development of atomic weapons, which seemed to transform the struggle for ideological supremacy into a battle for the fate of mankind.⁸

Beginning in early 1947, within the context of this developing ideological conflict, American officials significantly changed their strategic thinking with regards to Germany. Initially, in the immediate postwar period, U.S. officials in the Office of the Military Government (OMGUS) pursued a punitive occupation and top-down “re-education” through strict controls on German political, social, and economic life. With the Soviet Union emerging as the more immediate threat, American officials gradually pivoted towards thinking about West Germans as a strategic part of the Western community. They progressively replaced their re-education policies with the more benign-sounding “reorientation” program, which consisted of a broad program of public and cultural diplomacy which promoted cooperation with the West Germans rather than top-down imposition.⁹ The first instance of fête diplomacy in 1948 presaged the conceptual shift from

⁷ This dissertation avoids the descriptors “communist” and “capitalist” to describe the bipolar dichotomy of Cold War ideologies, except in areas where the actors themselves use these expressions. Rather, it uses descriptors such as “Marxist,” “socialist,” and “liberal-democratic,” which the author feels are more illustrative of the economic and political institutional arrangements of the Soviet Union, the United States, and their respective allies.

⁸ For a narrative history of the postwar period, see Mark Gilbert, *Cold War Europe: The Politics of a Contested Continent* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015), 11-58 and Westad, *The Cold War: A World History* (New York: Basic Books, 2017), 19-98.

⁹ Konrad Jarausch, *After Hitler: Recivilizing Germans, 1945-1995* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 130-139; James F. Tent, *Mission on the Rhine: Reeducation and Denazification in American-Occupied Germany* (Chicago: University of

re-education to reorientation before it became a matter of policy after the State Department and the High Commissioner for Germany (HICOG) took over the occupation from OMGUS in mid-1949.

Fête diplomacy helped to address two major pressures for U.S. officials after 1947. The first of these pressures was the emergence of the Soviet Union as a major geopolitical and ideological rival. Moscow had entrenched its influence in eastern and central Europe, while the United States had done the same in western Europe, putting occupied Germany at the fault line between the Soviet and American spheres of influence. The second pressure was the need to recast the German people in a more positive light. U.S. officials had gone to great lengths during the Second World War to paint an image of Germans as “insidious,” barbaric Huns, around whom occupation forces should be wary.¹⁰ In addition, following the war, critics at home and abroad lambasted the Allied denazification effort as superficial and insufficient for purging the nation of the ideology that had led it into war and genocide.¹¹ With the government having pushed such a negative image of Germans and

Chicago Press, 1982), 2, 12, 254-5, 311; Manuela Aguilar, *Cultural Diplomacy and Foreign Policy: German-American Relations, 1955-1968* (New York: Peter Lang, 1996), 69-70.

¹⁰ Occupation, United States Forces European Theater, c. 1946, Folder: Occupation, Box 384, Records Relating to Allied Control Authority, 1945-1949, Record Group 260, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD (hereafter cited as NARA).

¹¹ Perry Biddiscombe, *The Denazification of Germany: A History 1945-1950* (Stroud, England: Tempus: 2007), 81-2; Brian Etheridge, *Enemies to Allies: Cold War Germany and American Memory* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2016), 98; Thomas W. Maulucci, *Adenauer's Foreign Office: West German Diplomacy in the Shadow of the Third Reich* (Ithica: Cornell University Press, 2012), 66-76.

many casting doubts over the effectiveness of denazification, how could the United States now advocate for the gradual reintegration of the Germans less than three full years after the fall of Adolf Hitler's fascist regime?

Fête diplomacy helped to address these pressures and was compatible with the developing policy of "dual containment" (or "double containment") under HICOG, which posited that, by integrating West Germany into the Atlantic world, it would "contain" both the Soviet Union and West Germany.¹² First, it would check Soviet expansionism by creating an ideologically-reliable bulwark in the heart of Cold War Europe. Second, by framing Western civilization and German culture as historically symbiotic and mutually reinforcing, these fêtes would help restrain the excesses of German nationalism that had led to Nazi militarism. German nationalism was a delicate question in the postwar period, and U.S. officials hoped that the celebration and fostering of German culture within the framework of Western and European culture would contribute to the transformation and democratization of West Germany. If West Germany's economic, political, and cultural institutions were harmonized with those of the Western world, officials believed, it would not menace the Atlantic world in the future.

East German and Soviet officials were not passive in this ideological battle, and they heavily contested the memory of German history and culture with fêtes of their own as part of their larger efforts to consolidate the socialist world as an "ideological

¹² Frank A. Ninkovich, *Germany and the United States: The Transformation of the German Question since 1945* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1988), 82; Schwartz, *America's Germany*, 156.

community.”¹³ The end results were competing narratives over the German past that were anchored in contemporary and competing ideological frameworks related to Marxist-Leninism and liberal democracy. By adhering to a strict orthodoxy in public demonstrations at the dawn of the Cold War, these fêtes primed their respective German audiences for an ideological divergence at a time where emerging East and West German governments were consolidating their own authority and searching for international legitimacy. The competing fêtes reinforced and magnified divisions between a previously united German people and contributed to their ideological bifurcation.

In order to successfully implement fête diplomacy, officials knew that their involvement could not be explicit, because cultural and democratic institutions required indigenous support in order to ensure that they were deeply-rooted and stable.¹⁴ In the words of one U.S. official, cultural rehabilitation could not be a top-down affair imposed by a foreign power, but it had to “in large measure be the work of the Germans themselves.”¹⁵ Each superpower strove to prove their authentic historical connections to the German people in order to make their fêtes and contemporary relationship more genuine. For the United States, this meant drawing on a centuries-long cultural connection through their assimilated German-American immigrant population and extoling the

¹³ Akira Iriye and Petra Goedde, *International History: A Cultural Approach* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022), 55.

¹⁴ Peter J. Boettke, Christopher J. Coyne, and Peter T. Leeson, “Institutional Stickiness and the New Development Economics,” *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 67, no. 2 (April 2008), 336-345.

¹⁵ Henry J. Kellermann, *Cultural Relations as an Instrument of U.S. Foreign Policy* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1978), 20.

common Western roots of the Germans, Americans, and Europeans in general. On the other hand, without a similar kind of immigrant culture, the Soviets often appealed to the common “Old World” cultural roots between Germans and Russians, framing Americans and their “New World” culture as decadent and alien.¹⁶

U.S. officials encouraged and were reliant on partnerships between American organizations such as the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation and actors in West Germany in order to make these cultural commemorations more authentic. As a private organization made up chiefly of Americans of German descent, the Foundation had already garnered a well-respected reputation in German circles and made deep transatlantic connections on a personal level before the outbreak of the Second World War. Following the war, the CSMF embodied an organization that was sympathetic to the German people and eager to rebuild cultural bridges, uniquely situating them to meet the demands of American officials in need of an authentic voice for joint West German-American cultural projects.¹⁷

¹⁶ Jessica C.E. Gienow-Hecht, “Culture and the Cold War in Europe,” in *Cambridge History, Volume 1*, 402-4. Notably, there was a large community of ethnic Germans, the Volga Germans, in Imperial Russia. Many migrated West in the face of the empire’s “Russification” policies in the late 19th century, and many more were forcibly repressed and expelled under Josef Stalin before and during the Second World War. For more information on the Volga Germans, see Fred C. Koch, *The Volga Germans: in Russia and America, from 1763 to the Present* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1977).

¹⁷ Fête diplomacy was one piece of a larger cooperative relationship between the CSMF and U.S. government officials. For example, the Foundation also helped to fund the nascent Free University of Berlin, advised on civil education matters, and supported official and unofficial exchange-of-persons projects. See Gregory J. Kupsky, “‘The True Spirit of the German People’: German-Americans and National Socialism, 1919-1955,” PhD Diss. (Ohio State University, 2010).

The Foundation's very namesake, Carl Schurz, suggested a historical connection between the United States and Germany and held significant cultural currency on both sides of the Atlantic. As a German-born liberal, Schurz had been part of the Frankfurt Revolution in 1848 before fleeing to the United States after the revolution's failure. In the United States, Schurz went onto a memorable public life which included fighting in the Civil War on the side of the Union and working toward abolition, civil service reform, and anti-imperialism in the public sphere.¹⁸ In the postwar period, Schurz became an oft-invoked referent for the ongoing transatlantic reconciliation, because he emblemized a German people that had made deep cultural contributions to the United States and thus were compatible with an American-led international order.

Members of the CSMF viewed the fêtes as an earnest celebration of the historical connections between the two peoples and a public celebration of the German-American heritage that many in the United States believed had to be hidden away during the Second World War. Still, even among those motivated primarily by heritage, it was impossible to

¹⁸ For a biographical sketch of Carl Schurz, including his participation in the Revolution of 1848, his exile and arrival in America, and his participation in the Civil War and Reconstruction, see Hans Louis Trefousse, *Carl Schurz: A Biography* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1998). More recently, the historical legacy of Carl Schurz has been challenged, owing largely to his time as the Secretary of the Interior from 1877 to 1881. Historians and journalists have argued that Schurz's policies towards Native Americans, especially with regards to schooling, was brutal and assimilationist and that his support of withdrawing federal troops from the South in 1877 contributed to the subsequent restrictions on the rights of free blacks. Trefousse, "Carl Schurz and the Indians," *Great Plains Quarterly* 4, no. 2 (Spring 1984), 115; Simon Moya-Smith, "Deb Haaland becoming interior secretary is a chance to fix an agency that acts with contempt," *NBC News*, 18 December 2020; Julius Wilm, "Jenseits der Legende vom guten Deutschen: Carl Schurz in den USA," *Geschichte der Gegenwart*, 24 April 2022; Dirk Kurbjuweit, "Kein Held ist Perfekt," *Der Spiegel*, 15 May 2022.

ignore the Cold War conditions in which they held these celebrations. As they worked to repair cultural bridges between the two nations, the Foundation's members also knowingly and intentionally contributed to the policy goals of American and West German officials, which included West German democratization and the cultural construction of the Atlantic world.

West Germans had their own motivations for cooperating with U.S. officials and private citizens. The public displays of German culture and history became a means of trying to move out from the long shadow of the Third Reich. West German officials hoped to use fêtes as an instrument to staking their claim as the legitimate representatives of the German people, because the celebrations would furnish a potential West German state with suitable traditions rooted in Western civilization and liberal-democracy.

The celebrations also became a perfect training ground for nascent West German cultural organizations to engage in cultural diplomacy with Americans over a number of years as they grew and matured. Because U.S. officials wanted to avoid the unilateral, top-down approach that characterized much of the American occupation, the fêtes were among the first mediums through which West Germans could meet the Americans "on equal footing" in the postwar period.¹⁹ In effect, these fêtes not only strengthened the transatlantic ties between civil societies in West Germany and the United States but also gave West German organizations an opportunity to gradually shoulder a larger share of the burden on matters of informal cultural diplomacy.

¹⁹ Howard Elkinton to R.A. Uihlein, 4 November 1948, Folder 8, Box 4, Series 1A, Group 1, National Carl Schurz Association Records, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA (hereafter cited as NCSA Records, HSP).

By bringing in the diplomatic efforts of non-state actors on both sides of the Atlantic, the story of West German-American fête diplomacy is a transnational story.²⁰ The story of American cultural diplomacy traditionally takes place primarily on European soil and depicts how Europeans accepted, contested, or modified U.S. attempts at “Americanization,” but the kind of memory and fête diplomacy practiced by West German and American organizations expands and reframes the story.²¹ Consequently, this research

²⁰ Transnational history is the study of movements, forces, networks, organizations, and peoples that cut across national boundaries. It purposefully moves past the historical category of the nation (without displacing it entirely) and recognizes that historical actors themselves are thinking beyond their national borders. It is differentiated from international history, which is the story of two or more nation-states in interaction with one another, particularly in an official capacity and often through formal diplomacy. For more information on transnational history, see C.A. Bayly, Sven Beckert, Matthew Connelly, Isabel Hofmeyr, Wendy Kozol, and Patricia Seed, “AHR Conversation: On Transnational History,” *The American Historical Review* 111, no. 5 (2006), 1441-1464, Iriye and Jürgen Osterhammel, eds., *Global Interdependence: The World After 1945* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), and Ian Tyrrell, *Reforming the World: The Creation of America’s Moral Empire* (Princeton University Press, 2010). A few historians have examined transnational connections between West Germany and the United States through organizations, for better and for worse. Jeremy Varon chronicles the rise and fall of the militant Weather Underground (United States) and Red Army Faction (West Germany). Martin Klimke, on the other hand, traces the transnational connections made between the U.S. and West German student groups and the construction of a shared anti-war protest culture. See Jeremy Varon, *Bringing the War Home: The Weather Underground, the Red Army Faction, and Revolutionary Violence in the Sixties and Seventies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004) and Martin Klimke, *The Other Alliance: Student Protests in West Germany and the United States in the Global Sixties* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010). For the state-private partnership in the Cold War, see Scott Lucas, *Freedom’s War: The American Crusade Against the Soviet Union* (New York: New York University Press, 1999) and Helen Laville and Hugh Wilford, eds., *The U.S. Government, Citizen Groups, and the Cold War* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

²¹ For examples, see Mary Nolan, *The Transatlantic Century: Europe and America, 1890-2010* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), Richard Kuisel, *Seducing the French: The Dilemma of Americanization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), Richard Wagnleitner, *Coca-Colonization and the Cold War: The*

brings in German civil society organizations that are often left out of the narrative. Cultural rapprochement along this axis captures a relationship that was a reciprocal and bilateral endeavor that took place on both sides of the Atlantic, even if the financial burdens of the relationship were not completely symmetrical at all times.²²

Historiography and Methodology

In examining of fête diplomacy in the early years of the Cold War, this dissertation contributes to the field of cultural diplomacy generally and West German-American postwar rapprochement more specifically. It highlights four interrelated themes, each of which is reflected throughout each chapter. The first theme is the importance of memory. Historians have noted how collective memory and cultural representations of the past contributed to the rise of an ideological conflict between East and West and helped to foster a “Cold War mentality.” As they vied for the support of national and international audiences, both superpowers disseminated rhetoric and discourses on the past laden with parables, symbols, referents, and axioms to support their contemporary ideological framework, garner international support, and bolster their position in the Cold War

Cultural Mission of the United States in Austria after the Second World War (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), and Richard Pells, *Not Like Us: How Europeans Have Loved, Hated, and Transformed American Culture Since World War II* (New York: Basic Books, 1997).

²² “Bilateralism” is a term the historical actors used in terms of the West German-American cultural relationship to denote the movement from a unilateral approach to the American presence in West Germany to a cooperative one. However, German-Atlantic integration involved numerous countries in the Western world and occurred along a multilateral front.

conflict.²³ Alongside such cultural productions as literature, film, art, and memorial sites, festivals and celebrations were a particularly potent means of how nations remember and distort the past to meet their geopolitical needs, communicate cultural values, and consolidate national identities and a “sense of community.”²⁴ But these identities could also transcend national borders, and the twentieth century was replete with “ideological communities” that were built around diverse causes such as humanitarianism and art.²⁵ Fête diplomacy similarly demonstrates how actors utilized memory in the construction of transnational identities.

Memory was an important medium through which U.S. officials attempted to foster American-West German reconciliation. Historian Brian Etheridge noted that journalists, officials, and other “memory activists” in the United States and West Germany employed what he called “memory diplomacy,” utilizing works of history, monuments, and more to present favorable narratives of the German people. The ultimate goal of these activists was to mobilize American and international public opinion in favor of integrating West

²³ Jaraus, Christian Ostermann, and Andreas Etges, “Rethinking, Representing, and Remembering the Cold War: Some Cultural Perspectives,” in *The Cold War: Historiography, Memory, Representation*, ed. Jaraus, Ostermann, and Etges (Berlin: De Gruyter GmbH, 2017), 11-7. See also: Robert D. Schulzinger, “Memory and Understanding U.S. Foreign Relations,” in *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations*, eds. Michael J. Hogan and Thomas G. Paterson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

²⁴ Wulf Kansteiner, “Finding Meaning in Memory: A Methodological Critique of Collective Memory Studies,” *History and Theory* 41 (May 2002), 180; Liana Giorgi and Monica Sassatelli, “Introduction,” in *Festivals and the Cultural Public Sphere*, eds. Gerard Delanty, Giorgi, and Sassatelli (New York: Routledge, 2011), 1.

²⁵ Iriye and Goedde, *International History*, 55.

Germany in the struggle against Soviet totalitarianism.²⁶ The concept of fête diplomacy builds on this concept of memory diplomacy and demonstrates how actors like the members of the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation contributed to this broad project. In their collaboration with U.S. officials and West German actors, the CSMF offered a long view of German-American transatlantic history, from which Hitler's regime was a temporary deviation, and used the memory of German history and culture to argue in favor of West Germany's compatibility with the United States during the Cold War.

Memory was useful for more than just highlighting the West German-American connection. It became an important medium for conceptualizing and reifying the West as an ideological community inclusive of the German people. The notion of "the West," "the Occident," and "Europe" as a social construct preceded the Cold War, of course, but these constructs became especially important in the demarcated worldview of the superpowers after 1947.²⁷ Fêtes represented German culture and "the West" as mutually constitutive, and they conceptualized and reified "the Western world" with the German people in a prominent place in that community.

²⁶ Etheridge, *Enemies to Allies*, 2-6. For other attempts by American occupation authorities and German officials and institutions to act as "agents of Westernization," see Anselm Doering-Manteuffel, "Perceptions of the West in Twentieth-Century Germany," in *Germany and 'The West': The History of a Modern Concept*, eds. Riccardo Bavaj and Martina Steber (New York: Berghahn Books, 2015), 88-9.

²⁷ The terms "the West," "Western civilization," "Western world," and even "Europe" are, of course, strongly-contested concepts. Historians argue over, among other things, the boundaries of "the Western world," whether Russia is a Western or non-Western country, the centrality of Christianity, and whether "the West" can be thought of as a cohesive geopolitical and cultural entity at all. Jonathan Daly, *The Rise of Western Power: A Comparative History of Western Civilization* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014), xix-xx.

But reifying “the West” and the ideological Atlantic also meant juxtaposing it against an Other. The fêtes did not simply chronicle the historical ties between the German people and the United States and the West, but they were an additional means by which Western actors used rhetorical and discursive devices to warn of the present danger facing the West and “construct” the Soviet Union as an ideological menace.²⁸ In the narratives that participants disseminated, Nazism and Marxism were not opposing ideologies but were conflated with one another as the “twin children of totalitarianism.”²⁹ If it was ideology that had led Germans into their totalitarian state (rather than innate qualities of German blood, as some argued during the war), then ideology derived from the United States might be the remedy to inoculate the West Germans from the threat of Soviet totalitarian ideology. The ultimate hope was that the collective memory, carefully selected and presented through these fêtes, would forge both an ideological community as well as an ideological enemy and provide a sense of purpose for both the United States and West Germany in the Cold War struggle against totalitarianism.

The second theme of this dissertation, and the medium through which these actors exhibited German and German-American memory, was the use of festivals and public celebrations as a diplomatic tool. This research is indebted to an extensive,

²⁸ Kenneth Osgood, “The American Construction of the Communist Threat,” in *The Cambridge History of America and the World, Vol. IV: 1945 to the Present*, eds. David C. Engerman, Max Paul Friedman, and Melani McAlister (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 125-130.

²⁹ Walter J. Donnelly, “The Legacy of Carl Schurz,” *Information Bulletin* (October 1952), 7-8, 12; Paterson, *Meeting the Communist Threat: Truman to Reagan* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 3-7.

multidisciplinary literature on the role of festivals in shaping and reinforcing national and cultural identities and the complex interplay between the public representation and the participants who were engaged in producing, reproducing, and reworking these identities.³⁰ Historians such as David Waldstreicher have written how public festivals, even those that appear neutral, are often imbued with “allegorical battles” and political meanings which help launder symbols and ideology to their audiences in a manner that makes these abstractions real. The audience and “printed discourse” are vital in making these festivals successful: identities could not be imposed by a single individual or social group but had to appear to spontaneously “emerge” with the help of the audience. In the Cold War, newspaper and radio coverage helped to give “extralocal” meanings to these public events.³¹

Celebrations could also transcend national borders, as had happened between the First and Second World War, when Germans and Americans used public performances of friendship to strengthen cultural ties between their countries. For instance, participants

³⁰ Mona Ozouf, *Festivals and the French Revolution*, trans. Alan Sheridan (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 3, 8-9. Cara Aitison and Annette Pritchard, “Introduction,” in *Festivals and Events: Culture and Identity in Leisure, Sport, and Tourism*, eds. Aitison and Pritchard (Eastborne: Leisure Studies Association, 2007), v; David Jarman, “Mirror of the Nation: The Edinburgh Festivals and Scottish National Identity,” in *Festivals and Events*, 7.

³¹ David Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes: The Making of American Nationalism, 1776-1820* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 2. See also Geneviève Fabre, Jürgen Heideking, and Kai Dreisbach, eds., *Celebrating Ethnicity and Nation: American Festive Culture from the Revolution to the Early Twentieth Century* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2001). For the importance of the press in legitimating authority, see Jeremy Popkin, *Revolutionary News: The Press in France, 1789-1799* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1990), 4-5.

from both nations commemorated the 100th birthday of Carl Schurz in 1929 and the 200th birthdays of Friedrich Wilhelm von Steuben and George Washington in the early 1930s.³² Still, the topic of fêtes and celebrations is an understudied topic in the history of American foreign relations, particularly during the Cold War, though the Olympic games is a prominent exception.³³

While fêtes are often overlooked in U.S. diplomatic history, several historians have analyzed how the Soviet Union used international celebrations as cultural diplomacy. Through its “celebration discourse,” in the words of one historian, the Kremlin attempted to foster a common, Soviet identity in a multinational empire made up of a multitude of cultural, religious, and ethnic identities. In addition, the Soviets often held international festivals aimed at bolstering their national image abroad and consolidating friendship within the Eastern bloc.³⁴

West German-American postwar fêtes were highly dependent on the political uses of cultural symbolism, and the events, performances, symbols, and meanings attached to these celebrations were strongly couched in a vocabulary and parables that reflected a

³² Elisabeth Piller, *Selling Weimar: German Public Diplomacy and the United States, 1918-1933* (New York: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2020), 336.

³³ For example, see Toby C. Rider, *Cold War Games: Propaganda, the Olympics, and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2016).

³⁴ Karen Petrone, *Life Has Become More Joyous, Comrades: Celebrations in the Time of Stalin* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2000), 3-20; Pia Koivunen, *Performing Peace and Friendship: The World Youth Festivals and Soviet Cultural Diplomacy* (Munich: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2022), 1-15; Rachel Appelbaum, *Empire of Friends: Soviet Power and Socialist Internationalism in Cold War Czechoslovakia* (London: Cornell University Press, 2019), 84-5; Rider, *Cold War Games*, 29-48.

bipolar Cold War world. As Eric Hobsbawm wrote, cultures (including transnational cultures) engage in an “elaborate language of symbolic practice” that is meaningful to and resonates with its intended audience. Traditions that lay claim to history and culture, such as centennials, bicentennials, and cultural festivals, can signal social cohesion, legitimize institutions and relations of authority, or they can be used as a tool of socialization and the “inculcation of beliefs, value systems, and conventions of behavior.”³⁵ As a result, this story of fête diplomacy utilizes sources related to orators, exhibitions, visual and musical performances, and a range of published discourses from the United States, East and West Germany, and the Soviet Union in order to uncover what participants hoped would become the common, dominant narrative of the events.³⁶

This is, in part, what made the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation so indispensable at the outset of fête diplomacy and for West German-American cultural rapprochement overall. Many of its members had a foot in both the German and American cultural world. As a result, they had a genuine, grassroots understanding of the symbols and rhetorical

³⁵ Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 4-9. Put another way, cultural productions, such as fêtes give meaning to communities, even transatlantic ones. T.J. Jackson Lears, “The Concept of Cultural Hegemony: Problems and Possibilities,” *The American-Historical Review* 90, no. 3 (June 1985), 568; Scott-Smith, *Politics of Apolitical Culture*, 5. As Lynn Hunt also notes, allegorical battles, metaphors, and rituals were essential to providing “psycho-political continuity” for an audience. Lynn Hunt, *Politics, Culture, and Class in the French Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 10-12, 53-55.

³⁶ For a theoretical interpretation of cultural symbols, see also Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 17. For the “cultural dimensions of international history” and the creation of transnational “ideological communities,” see Iriye and Goedde, *International History*, 2-6, 55-9.

devices that resonated with both national communities, and they were perfectly positioned to act as authentic cultural mediators, a much needed “friend” to occupied Germans, and a conduit that could blend two national cultures into a single, transnational one.³⁷

As its third theme, this dissertation emphasizes that fête diplomacy was inextricably bound up in the larger American campaigns in public diplomacy, cultural diplomacy, and Cold War propaganda.³⁸ Historians have long acknowledged how public diplomacy, propaganda, and “psychological warfare” were central to how Americans and Soviets alike waged and “sustained” the Cold War.³⁹ Fête diplomacy further reveals the importance and centrality of ideology, or the set of beliefs and values that explain how the world works and prescribes how societies should function. Both superpowers used cultural and public diplomacy to disseminate propaganda rooted in these ideologically-driven frameworks, reducing the world’s complex events to more easily understood frameworks that could be packaged and presented to international audiences in a persuasive way.⁴⁰

³⁷ John Elliott to Elkinton, 8 September 1948, Folder 1, Box 2, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP, 2.

³⁸ Due to the unique blend of culture and public diplomacy necessary for fête diplomacy, the terms “cultural diplomacy” and “public diplomacy” are largely used interchangeably, though the author recognizes the debates over how these terms are defined and whether they are different phenomenon. For these debates, see Patricia M. Goff, “Cultural Diplomacy,” in *Routledge Handbook of Public Diplomacy*, eds. Nancy Snow and Nicholas J. Cull (New York: Routledge, 2020) and Osgood and Etheridge, “The New International History Meets the New Cultural History: Public Diplomacy and U.S. Foreign Relations,” in *The United States and Public Diplomacy: New Directions in Cultural and International History*, eds. Osgood and Etheridge (Boston: Brill, 2010).

³⁹ Gary D. Rawnsley, “Introduction,” in *Cold-War Propaganda in the 1950s*, ed. Rawnsley (Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1999), 1-3.

The fêtes under examination promoted liberal democracy and anti-authoritarianism as the organizing element of this Atlantic ideology. These values were rooted in the Enlightenment tradition that emphasized freedom of the individual against despotic governmental power. The particular choices and symbols selected for fêtes in the early Cold War helped to conceptualize this ideology as transnational in scope rather than nationalist or solely American, though Americans had a disproportionate role in attempting to shape this ideology. As such, the German revolutionaries of 1848 (especially) Carl Schurz, were worthy referents for this Atlantic ideology due to their commitment to liberal-democratic reform and their struggle against the kind of tyranny and militarism now associated with the Soviet Union. In addition, Western cultural festivals and the commemoration of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe detailed the cultural and intellectual

⁴⁰ See Michael H. Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987). More broadly during the Cold War, the ideology of the United States, which saw itself as an “empire of liberty,” rhetoric and metaphors often revolved around the themes of openness, progress, and the strength to protect these values from the totalitarian. Under Soviet ideology, this often meant framing themselves as stewards of equality, justice, and anti-imperialism. The competing narratives between East and West also reveal diverging understandings behind concepts such as “democracy,” “peace,” “human rights,” and “freedom,” which both superpowers and their allies used liberally in their public campaigns. Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 1, 10, 49; Goedde, *The Politics of Peace: A Global Cold War History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 27. For differing ideological interpretations over the concept of human rights, another concept that is often thought of as universal, see Rosemary Foot, “The Cold War and Human Rights,” in *The Cambridge History of the Cold War, Volume 3: Endings*, eds. Leffler and Westad (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010) and Lora Wildenthal, *The Language of Human Rights in West Germany* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013).

achievements that could be realized in a liberal atmosphere, free of the dictates of a central authority.⁴¹

In its pursuit to make the second half of the twentieth century the “American Century,” where the world would open itself to American political, cultural, and economic influence as a means of accessing the promise of comfort and plenty, U.S. officials turned to private Americans to promote a positive image to the international community.⁴² In recent years, cultural and diplomatic historians have greatly expanded the boundaries of diplomatic action to include tourists, businessmen, labor leaders, the family members of servicemembers, and other non-governmental actors who acted as “unofficial ambassadors” by traveling abroad and becoming contact points between Europeans and American culture.⁴³ This brought large swaths of the American population under the auspices of public and cultural diplomacy in what Kenneth Osgood called “total Cold

⁴¹ One component that is largely absent from the ideology that these fêtes put forward is religion. While religious faith was an important vehicle through which Americans attempted to wage ideological war against the Soviet Union, it only appears as a minor component in the discourse surrounding these celebrations and is most prevalent in the Goethe-Year celebrations. Jonathan Herzog, *The Spiritual-Industrial Complex: America’s Religious Battle Against Communism in the Early Cold War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 5-6.

⁴² Henry R. Luce, “The American Century” *Life*, 17 February 1941, 61-5. Of course, the agency of local actors and states limited the ability of each superpower to influence political, cultural, and economic systems among their own allies, let alone among Third World or unaligned countries. For examples, see Alexander Stephen, *The Americanization of Europe: Culture, Democracy, and Anti-Americanism After 1945* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006), 23-86.

⁴³ Christopher Endy, *Cold War Holidays: American Tourism in France* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 1-2; Donna Alvah, *Unofficial Ambassadors: American Military Families Overseas and the Cold War, 1946-1965* (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 38-40.

War,” utilizing anything from Hollywood films, radio, music, letter-writing campaigns, humanitarian action, sporting events, soft drinks, fashion, and more in order to promote American values and ideology.⁴⁴

Fête diplomacy similarly relied on the work of non-state actors like the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation to make cultural rapprochement – or at least the appearance of it - a success. Festivals and celebrations not only included a substantial logistical effort from private groups and individuals behind the scenes but, by their very nature, attempted to make attendees and the general public instruments of foreign policy goals. Few efforts were more publicly-oriented than large commemorations involving thousands of people, and the emerging narratives from media and other commentators were reliant on willing participation of crowds to celebrate and sustain these ideological values.

Since the turn of the twenty-first century, there has been a proliferation of research on questions of legitimacy in postwar Germany, the fourth and final theme of this story of fête diplomacy. Two distinct governments emerged out of divided Germany under ideologically-opposed patrons, ushering in an intra-German competition over which

⁴⁴ Osgood, *Total Cold War: Eisenhower’s Secret Propaganda Battle at Home and Abroad* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas), 5. For the myriad of ways U.S. officials attempted to harness private Americans to a positive image of the United States, see Rider, *Cold War Games*, 2-4, Kuisel, *Seducing the French*, 231-232, Pells, *Not Like Us*, 205-234, Nolan, *The Transatlantic Century*, 41-42, 231-4, Lisa E. Davenport, *Jazz Diplomacy: Promoting America in the Cold War Era* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2009), 6-7, Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency: American Propaganda and Public Diplomacy, 1945-1989* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 37-43, and Laura A. Belmonte, *Selling the American Way: U.S. Propaganda and the Cold War* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 4-6.

government was the legitimate heir to the pre-Hitler nation.⁴⁵ The proper memorialization of German national identity and history was a means through which each emerging German government attempted to stake its claim as the proper representatives of the German nation and its people.⁴⁶ Yet, while celebrations related to the Revolution of 1848 and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe were ostensibly nationalist fêtes for Germans, the manner in which they were commemorated included elements that were decidedly transnational and often ideologically associated with the Cold War camp of their respective superpower patron.

The tension between nationalism and transnationalism in these celebrations revealed a dilemma for the German people, who were trapped between two worlds. On the one hand, reunification and the rehabilitation of German nationalism remained a core aim of much of the German population on both sides of the Iron Curtain for decades after the war. On the other hand, due to geopolitical realities, the quest for legitimacy, international

⁴⁵ Margarete Myers Feinstein, *State Symbols: The Quest for Legitimacy in the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic, 1949-1959* (Boston: Brill Academic Publishers, 2001), 1-5. For additional discussions on the East-West competition and political legitimacy in postwar Germany, see William Glenn Gray, *Germany's Cold War: The Global Campaign to Isolate East Germany, 1949-1969* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 3-4, Ostermann, *Between Containment and Rollback: The United States and the Cold War in Germany* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2021), 114-6, Braunthal Gerard, *Parties and Politics in Modern Germany* (London: Routledge, 2019), 37, and Jeffrey K. Olick, *The Sins of the Fathers: Germany, Memory, Method* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2016), 46.

⁴⁶ For theories on constructed national communities and the theoretical underpinnings of civil legitimacy, see Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006) and Benjamin H. Irvin, *Clothed in Robes of Sovereignty: The Continental Congress and the People Out of Doors* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 4-5. For the importance of festivals to fostering social cohesion and civil legitimacy, see Ozouf, *Festivals*, 9.

uneasiness on the topic of German nationalism, and involvement from their respective American and Soviet allies, Germans developed their fêtes around narratives that largely fit the ideological orthodoxy of their respective Cold War camp. As the two competing governments championed German national identity and history as a means of legitimating their claim, they contributed to the ideological distance between them.

As themes three and four demonstrate, West Germans and Americans did not necessarily have the same direct strategic interests when they first broached the use of transatlantic fêtes as a means of foreign relations. West Germans hoped that celebrating their prewar history and cultural relations with the United States and Europe might serve as a means of gaining international legitimacy and emerging from the shadow of the Third Reich. Americans believed that the cultural and public diplomacy represented through the fêtes would contribute to an ideological bulwark in central Europe and contain the German nation by integrating it within a European and Atlantic framework. Yet, in pursuit of their own national interests, officials in both countries converged around these fêtes, promoting a normalized German-American relationship and German cultural belonging in the Atlantic world.

Dissertation Organization

Before the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation could participate in the reconstruction of cultural bridges between West Germany and the United States, it first had to face its own challenges during the war as a German-American organization that had transatlantic connections. Chapter 2 chronicles the trials and tribulations of the Foundation during the war. Amidst an atmosphere of hostility, the organization had to confront pressures from

the State Department as well as the Department of the Interior, who accused the CSMF of disloyalty and threatened its financial viability even as they asked for the organization's cooperation on domestic, cultural matters.

Yet the wartime experience of the Foundation prepared the organization for its role during the Cold War, when the dissolution of the Grand Alliance necessitated a closer West German-American relationship. After 1941, the Department of State impressed upon the organization the importance of preserving pre-Hitler German culture and possibly even establishing an institute that might be a central repository if the United States was ever to reestablish cultural relations with "a free Germany" in the postwar period. In effect, the role that the Foundation was relegated to during the war prepared it for becoming an effective partner in *fête* diplomacy, because it was exactly this classic German culture that U.S. and West German officials wanted to highlight as a vehicle for West German-American cultural rapprochement and evidence of West Germany's compatibility with the West.

Chapter 3 describes the conceptualization and implementation of two separate centennials in American-occupied Frankfurt, first in May and again in September 1948. The planning of the centenaries took place within the context of the deterioration of the wartime Soviet-American relationship and as the United States pushed for the gradual integration of Germany into the Atlantic world. Both Germans and Americans who were organizing the centennial saw it as an opportunity to Germany's common heritage with Europeans and Americans and to furnish the West German people with a democratic tradition rooted in their past.

Participants celebrated 1848 as a moment of democratic possibilities in German history, and the narrative that developed around the centennials emphasized Germany as a cohesive part of the Western world. Speakers, exhibits, and more drew comparisons between the situations in 1848 and 1948 during the May centennial, with the Soviet Union cast in the role of the tyrants who would overturn the democratic revolution of the “1948ers.” The second observation had a much more distinctly-American character, as American military government officials pushed for the historical Carl Schurz to be a central figure of the events. The September celebration also inaugurated a concerted effort on the part of West Germans to participate in the rebuilding of cultural politics with the founding of the Carl-Schurz-Gesellschaft by prominent citizens and officials in Frankfurt. In the years that followed, West Germans banded together to found a number of private organizations dedicated to pursuing closer cultural relations with the United States, even if they were too small in their earliest years to make a significant impact.

Just months after the 1948 celebrations were well-received among American military officials, OMGUS pursued its next opportunity. Chapter 4 chronicles the joint effort to celebrate the bicentennial of the birth of German poet Johann Wolfgang von Goethe in 1949, the year that the Federal Republic of Germany was founded and the year that U.S. authorities began their transition from the military government to the civilian-oriented HICOG. While private American organizations had been considering the possibility of the Goethe bicentennial since at least 1946, U.S. officials came to believe that the Year of Goethe (the *Goethejahr*) would be an advantageous propaganda opportunity for the Cold War West. Just as the Revolution of 1848 had furnished OMGUS

officials with an example of the German capacity for democratic political culture, the *Goethejahr* provided a substantial Western intellectual tradition for the German past. Those involved in the year's festivities framed the poet not just as a great German and the quintessential example of West Germany's capacity for democratic political thought but also as the prototypical figure for all of Western culture.

For both the 1848 and *Goethejahr* celebrations, the stakes of the Cold War were only heightened by simultaneous celebrations held in the Soviet zone of Germany. In March of 1948, East zone and Soviet officials collaborated to celebrate the March Revolution of 1848, which they framed as part of a larger Marxist revolution occurring in Europe the same year that Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels completed *The Communist Manifesto*. In the East German narrative, the Revolution of 1848 failed because capitalists and reactionaries had collaborated with their feudal overlords to betray the workers' revolution, and it was up to the East Germans of 1948 to complete this revolution. The following year, Weimar celebrated its own *Goethejahr* that similarly reflected the ideological confrontation with the West. The Weimar celebration promoted Goethe as a progressive and anti-imperialist figure that encapsulated German (re)unification just as U.S. and West German officials pushed for the Westernization of the burgeoning Federal Republic.

The Cold War intensified after the founding of East and West Germany in 1949, and the United States increasingly pushed for the economic, political, cultural, and military consolidation of the Atlantic community that would act as a bulwark against the Soviet Union. At the same time, the Soviet Union took steps to try and subvert this community,

and in the wake of the North Korean invasion of South Korea in 1950, the Kremlin accelerated its propaganda offensives aimed at diminishing the United States on the international stage. Through their “peace offensive” and “cultural offensive” campaigns, the Soviets framed the United States as a belligerent imperialist power and a barbaric cultural backwater that was alien to European culture and a threat to international stability and peace. One objective of these campaigns was to undermine West German and European commitments to the Atlantic community by promoting neutralism among American allies.

In part as a response to this Soviet subversion, HICOG oversaw several festivals in West Germany in the early 1950s which promoted European integration and Germany’s cultural connections with both Europe and the Atlantic world. Chapter 5 explores these fêtes, held in areas of strategic and cultural significance in the Cold War both with and without the assistance of the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation. The first, in 1950, observed the 900th anniversary of the city of Nuremberg, where participants publicly extolled Nuremberg both as a cultural beacon in Europe’s past and as a potential engine of economic recovery in Europe’s present and future. The second celebration, a cultural festival in Berlin in September 1951, allowed the United States to show off its artistic culture alongside European culture while demonstrating the West’s commitments to the beleaguered city behind the Iron Curtain. The third celebration, a “European Weeks” festival held in Passau in 1952, promoted inter-European interactions and the common cultural heritage of Europeans in a city that lay just miles away from the Iron Curtain.

Chapter 6 examines the collaboration between the State Department, Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation, and West German organizations to celebrate the one-hundredth anniversary of the arrival of Carl Schurz in the United States. For officials, Schurz could be the ultimate projection of positive qualities they wanted associated with both the United States and Germany at a time when the Soviet Union was lobbing charges of racism, imperialism, and war-mongering against Washington on the international stage. The Schurz centennial year was a momentous occasion for West German cultural organizations as well, as they largely took the lead in celebrating the centennial year without significant funding or direction from the State Department or the Foundation. These organizations hoped to demonstrate that they were ready to shoulder at least part of the transatlantic cultural partnership.

In a major step at normalizing their relationship, the United States and the Federal Republic of Germany began to negotiate a bilateral cultural agreement in late 1950 and ultimately exchanged notes on the convention in April 1953. In theory, the convention formally agreed upon a “reciprocal character” for U.S.-West German cultural cooperation and emphasized the importance of private organizations and individuals for this relationship. In practice, the cultural convention did not change matters on the ground but instead merely recognized what had been happening in practice between the American and West German civil society organizations since at least 1948, when the introduction of *fête* diplomacy presaged a shift from unilateral and top-down “re-education” to cooperation and bilateralism.

Fête diplomacy, carried out with the help of the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation and other organizations on both sides of the Atlantic, was one of the earliest instances in which the United States attempted to forge an ideological Atlantic inclusive of postwar Germans, but it was never a discrete or self-contained project. Rather, fête diplomacy is inseparable from the larger story of the German postwar transformation and the consolidation of the Atlantic world in the first decade of the Cold War. While Germans, western Europeans, and Americans constructed an Atlantic community (with German membership) through economic, political, and eventually military means at an international scale, these celebrations acted as the sinews that reinforced these efforts at the grassroots level. The Western powers may have been building the structure of the Atlantic community internationally, but transnational fêtes and cultural celebrations helped to give this community spirit, ideology, and a soul.

CHAPTER 2
THE CARL SCHURZ MEMORIAL FOUNDATION
AND GERMAN CULTURE-IN-EXILE

In the summer of 1941, Wilbur K. Thomas confided to a friend that he feared for Americans of German descent living in the United States. Writing less than a month after the Nazi war machine conquered France, Thomas lamented that German-Americans were facing undue suspicions and pressures from their fellow Americans and their government, even as the United States remained ostensibly neutral in the conflict. As executive director of the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation (CSMF), a private American organization made up primarily of members of German ancestry, Thomas remembered the persecution of German-Americans during the last world war, and he worried that the same might happen again soon.¹ Societal pressures had been mounting on the German-American organization since Adolf Hitler consolidated Nazi power in 1933, and the Nazi conquest of Europe only exacerbated these tensions.

This chapter examines how the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation navigated an atmosphere of hostility and suspicion in the United States from 1933 to 1947 and, through careful maneuvering, situated itself as an ideal partner for the United States military government in occupied Germany after the war. After the consolidation of Nazi power in 1933, the German-American organization initially tried to avoid taking a definite stance on

¹ Wilbur K. Thomas to Henry H. Kleinpell, 3 July 1941, Folder 7, Box 3, Series 1A, Group 1, National Carl Schurz Association Records Series, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA (hereafter cited as NCSA Records, HSP).

the Nazi regime, but this proved unwise and untenable. In order to avoid courting any public controversy, Thomas significantly curbed much of his organization's foreign activities and instead pivoted to more muted ventures: preserving German culture and German-Americana. It collected and translated classics and books on German culture, displayed a bust of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe in its headquarters as part of an exhibition, loaned out books on German-Americans to local schools and universities, accumulated historical materials for its archives on Carl Schurz and the German Revolution of 1848, and sought out German art. While the redirection of its efforts to collecting and maintaining cultural elements was a necessity, given the tense circumstances, this pivot towards preserving prewar German culture made the organization a unique asset when it came to the postwar reorientation of the German people.

Through these wartime adjustments, the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation framed itself as the keepers of a vibrant German culture-in-exile that could be kept safely away from the corrupting effects of Nazism until it could be returned to its homeland after the regime had passed into history. In this way, the organization could have a part in "the clean-up" of German-American relations in the postwar world by acting as authentic and grassroots cultural mediators between the conquered and the conquerors.² Though it could not have known of the eventual plans to celebrate German and German-American history on a transatlantic scale, the Foundation's focus on materials related to the German Revolution of 1848 (including its own namesake, Carl Schurz) and Johann Wolfgang von

² Thomas to Louis Adamic, 26 November 1941, Folder 7, Box 3, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

Goethe made them the chief partner in the earliest instances of fête diplomacy after 1947. Due to the steps the Foundation took before and during the war – in no small part out of self-preservation or to avoid the hostile public eye – the organization was prepared when members of the federal government approached it about a position as a cultural broker during postwar reorientation efforts.

The postwar relationship between the government and the Foundation was never a sure thing, and the wartime relationship was at times uneven. Yet, even as officials in the Department of State and Department of Interior expressed their suspicion and even threatened the organization's very existence, individuals in these same departments gave their affirmation that the Foundation's plan to be the keepers of "old German life" and give German culture "asylum" in the United States was potentially "the best service" the Foundation could provide.³ But before they could collaborate with the federal government in this fête diplomacy, the organization first had to survive the war intact.

German-American Organizations and Two World Wars

The history of the first half of the twentieth century provided little cause for optimism that German ethnicity in the United States after 1939 would ever be an asset. With the world careening towards war in the late 1930s, many German-Americans recalled with apprehension the experiences of ethnic Germans during World War I. As an ethnic bloc, German-America appeared to be solid entering the century, given the robust defense of its ethnic heritage and culture, but even before 1914 it was subjected to the pressures of

³ Harold L. Ickes to George M. McAneny, 15 August 1940, Folder 7, Box 35, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP, 3-4.

assimilation and Americanization. During the war, President Woodrow Wilson called for “100% Americanism,” which coerced patriotism and constrained the actions and thoughts of a number of Americans, such as pacifists. War hysteria led to strong anti-German sentiment and violent vigilantism. The speaking or teaching of German invited accusations of disloyalty. Towns, people, and even food items with German-sounding names were often renamed to avoid suspicion. Many Germans were coerced into acts of patriotism such as kneeling and kissing the American flag.⁴ By the end of the war, due to these immense societal pressures, many German-Americans had assimilated more thoroughly into American society, leading to the loss of the hyphen in “German-Americanism” that had withstood so much, leading to what one historian in 1940 called the “tragedy of German-America.”⁵

Anti-German sentiments resurfaced after the rise of Adolf Hitler’s regime and intensified after the United States joined the war against Nazi Germany in December 1941. The viciousness of the war, the totalitarian nature of the regime, and the depths of Nazi atrocities (much of which was yet to be uncovered) had brought out hostility in many

⁴ David M. Kennedy, *Over Here: The First World War and American Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 67-68; Richard N. Juliani, *Philadelphia’s Germans: From Colonial Settlers to Enemy Aliens* (New York: Lexington Books, 2021), 198-201; Matthew D. Tippens, *Turning Germans into Texans: World War I and the Assimilation and Survival of German Culture in Texas, 1900-1930* (Kleingarten Press, 2010), 90-99, 127-138. See also Frederick C. Luebke, *Bonds of Loyalty: German-Americans and World War I* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1974).

⁵ John A. Hawgood, *The Tragedy of German-America: The Germans in the United States during the Nineteenth Century – and After* (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1940).

Americans.⁶ The specter of two world wars in the span of half a century led many to believe that there was something inherently different about ethnic Germans, whether it was by dint of their blood or their culture. Propaganda and literature reminiscent of “the Hun” in World War I propaganda included animalistic depictions of German people along with arguments that they “must perish” as a racial people. One author predicted in early 1941 that occupation would not be enough to tame the German people. Hitler was only a “mirror reflecting centuries-old inbred lust of the German nation,” and the author’s shocking proposal included achieving world peace through using eugenic sterilization to cull the German people and “immunize humanity *forever* against the virus of Germanism.”⁷ The antagonism towards ethnic Germans was not just confined to cultural critics but also included important posts in government. This sentiment was expressed most transparently through Secretary of Treasury Henry Morgenthau’s plan to deindustrialize and pastoralize Germany and an American military handbook preparing soldiers for their occupation duties

⁶ For the intellectual debates in the United States over Nazism, see Michaela Hoenicke Moore, *Know Your Enemy: The American Debate on Nazism, 1933-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

⁷ Theodore N. Kaufman, *Germany Must Perish!* (Newark, NJ: Argyle Press, 1941), 94. For other attacks on German ethnicity during the Second World War, see The So-Called German Mind, c. 1946, Folder: The So-Called German Mind, Box 243, Records Relating to Local Governments, 1945-1949, Record Group 260, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD (hereafter cited as NARA), 4, T.H. Tetens, *Know Your Enemy* (New York: Spett Printing, 1944), 30, Louis Nizer, *What to Do With Germany* (New York: Ziff-Davis, 1944), and *The German People: Testimony of Mr. Emil Ludwig Before the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Friday, March 26, 1943*, (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Offices, 1943).

which warned that militarism and aggressive beliefs were “simply German” rather than the result of “Nazism.”⁸

In actuality, much of this anti-German propaganda failed to penetrate American society to as large a degree as it had during the First World War for a variety of reasons. The positive history of “the German element” in the United States, the historical contributions of Germans to American culture and society, the hindsight of the violence during World War I, and the lengths to which German-Americans went to conceal their heritage were all contributing factors. A Gallup poll in late 1942 reported that nearly three-quarters of Americans believed that the United States was at war with the Nazi government rather than the German people, and several prominent publications rejected the notion that the war was the result of inherent problems in “the German character.”⁹ Yet this did not stop members of the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation and other German-American organizations from feeling as though they were under considerable pressure from American society and government.

While German ethnicity was much less evident on an individual level, the various organizations, which were by definition groups that highlighted their German roots, were highly visible. Even before American involvement in the war, the radioactivity of their

⁸ Benn Steil, *The Marshall Plan and the Dawn of the Cold War* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2018), 89-90; Occupation, c. 1946, Folder: Occupation, Box 384, Records Related to the Allied Control Authority, 1945-1949, Record Group 260, NARA, 43.

⁹ Brian Etheridge, *Enemies to Allies: Cold War Germany and American Memory* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2016), 49-50; Petra Goedde, *GIs and Germans: Culture, Gender, and Foreign Relations, 1945-1949* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 15-24. See also Hoenicke Moore, *Know Your Enemy*.

German heritage could result in a loss of moral and financial support, the loss of membership, and even official harassment from various departments of the federal government. This period was devastating for many of these groups, who had to limit or adjust their activities and make public statements professing their loyalty. Several were targeted by the Internal Revenue Service regarding their tax-exemption status, seriously threatening their already-limited financial capacity while casting a public pall of doubt over them. Societal pressures, along with official scrutiny from the Department of State and the Treasury Department, forced many of these groups into an “unavoidable state of semi-retirement,” where they engaged in a self-imposed silence as they waited “for the storm to blow by.”¹⁰

There was a wide constellation of groups with different organizational objectives, financial capabilities, and levels of sympathy for the Nazi regime. Two such organizations, older than the United States Constitution, were the German Society of Pennsylvania (1764) and German Society of Maryland (1783), which were founded to help German immigrants acclimate to the United States and became benevolent societies in the twentieth century. Like other organizations, each society faced constraints during the Second World War, including a loss of membership and financial support, though neither were explicitly pro-

¹⁰ Herman Witte to Members of the German Society of Philadelphia, 26 April 1950, Folder 16, Box 6, Series: Herman Witte, 1949-1968, German Society of Pennsylvania Institutional Records, German Society of Pennsylvania Horner Library, Philadelphia, PA (hereafter cited as GSP); John Haynes Holmes to Thomas, 31 May 1940, Folder 6, Box 3, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

Nazi organizations. The membership of the German Society of Maryland, for instance, dwindled down to around one hundred members by 1945.¹¹

The Steuben Society of America, founded in New York in 1919 to help promote German culture in the aftermath of the First World War, similarly came under scrutiny through the 1930s. As a political group dedicated to endorsing ethnic German heritage, its membership initially appeared enthusiastic with the ethnic nationalism of New Germany, and in December 1933 members at a rally inside Madison Square Garden cheered at the mention of Hitler's name.¹² The Steuben Society courted controversy when it became a prominent voice in pushing back against anti-German commentary, and in 1935, sixty of its members took a pilgrimage to Germany as a means of legitimizing the society's place as transatlantic mediators. After accusations mounted that its members were "Nazi agents," the Steuben Society moderated its position, declaring that it was not a pro-Nazi organization, sending messages of support to the Jewish communities facing persecution in Germany, and becoming openly hostile towards the German-American Bund, an overtly pro-Nazi organization in the United States. The Society remained "suspect," however, as it used its significant political capital to lobby against the Lend-Lease Act, pushed for American neutrality, and requested investigations into British and French propaganda against Germany. The Society publicly maintained its support for the United States, and

¹¹ Klaus G. Wust, *Pioneers in Service: The German Society of Maryland, 1783-1958* (Baltimore: German Society of Maryland, 1958), 34-5.

¹² Gregory J. Kupsky, "'The True Spirit of the German People': German-Americans and National Socialism, 1919-1955," PhD Diss. (Ohio State University, 2010), 95; Bradley W. Hart, *Hitler's American Friends: The Third Reich's Supporters in the United States* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2018), 26-7.

following the American declaration of war in December 1941, pledged its loyalty. Regardless, the Society saw its membership and financial support decline sharply.¹³

The German-American Bund was by far the “most high-profile” of the pro-Nazi groups in the United States, though it was not the only one. The Bund was founded in 1936 as a successor organization to the Friends of New Germany, which was established in 1933 to support the new Nazi regime. Made up of both German-Americans as well as German nationals, the Bund boasted support of around two hundred thousand people at its height, and its militant activities included brawls across the country, weapons training at youth camps, goose-stepping parades, and even a “near riot” in New York City in 1939. The Bund garnered considerable condemnations from all corners of American society, including other German-American groups like the Steuben Society.¹⁴

Of the many German-American organizations, the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation emerged from the war the strongest, and it was uniquely situated to cooperate with the U.S. government in the postwar period. The Foundation was established on 12 June 1930 for the purposes of deepening the relationship between the people of the United States and German-speaking peoples and promoting cultural exchanges between them. Compared to other German-American organizations, the experiences of the Foundation

¹³ Kupsky, “True Spirit,” 103-119.

¹⁴ Hart, *Hitler’s American Friends*, 18. Pro-Nazi sympathies in the United States in the 1930s, while a minority, ranged from groups such as the Silver Legion of America, individual members of German-American groups, and reactionary individuals such as Charles “Father” Coughlin.

from 1933-1945 were not atypical: they experienced suspicion from elements of American society and government and suffered from a lack of support.

Yet their experiences were not representative either. While the more high-profile Steuben Society and German-American Bund boldly waded into the public eye, the Foundation attempted to remain apolitical through the 1930s, though this was an untenable position to take given the intertwining nature of Nazi politics and culture. In addition, the Foundation's financial backing and leadership helped stabilize the organization. In 1931, the Foundation received a grant in the form of a \$1,000,000 trust, known as the Oberlaender Trust, which not only enabled it to carry out a number of cultural activities throughout the 1930s but also helped it to make it to the end of the war with finances that few other organizations could match. Its first executive director, Wilbur K. Thomas, navigated the organization with a steady hand as he led the Foundation from its inception in 1930s until just before his death in 1946. His foresight ensured that, even when the organization had to limit its affairs, the Foundation would "not be caught napping" and would be internally prepared for its role as a cultural institution that preserved the German culture that preceded Adolf Hitler.¹⁵

The Nazi Regime and the Foundation's Public Problems

A core tenet of the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation, and what it considered its most important cultural activity, was its promotion of cultural exchanges between the United States and German-speaking countries. But after Adolf Hitler and the National Socialist Party consolidated their power in 1933, the Foundation came under considerable

¹⁵ Thomas to Adamic, 26 November 1941, HSP.

pressure from within and without to sever its connections with German society now under the Nazi state. The sinews of exchange and cultural diplomacy that seemed so promising in 1930 were now a liability and threatened to strangle the nascent organization less than three years after it was founded. Within the Foundation, a sharp rift developed between those who were overtly anti-Nazi (which were disproportionately the organization's Jewish members) and those who wanted to continue pursuing an intellectual and cultural relationship with Germany for a variety of reasons. By the end of the 1930s, the Foundation reported that "practically all of our Jewish friends" had resigned from the organization in protest.¹⁶

The majority of the Foundation's board, unwisely, remained wedded to the fantasy that a cultural German-American relationship could be separated from the politics of the Nazi regime, and they initially resolved to maintain their commitment to cultural exchange and private diplomacy after 1933. Most argued that, now more than ever, the tempering, liberal influence of Americans abroad was necessary. Wilbur Thomas, especially, saw continued cultural relations and exchanges as an imperative for peaceful coexistence rather than an endorsement of the Nazi state, but this ignored the changing realities of American and international politics.¹⁷ To the more realistic members and detractors, it became

¹⁶ Kupsky, "True Spirit," 198, 203-7; Frank Trommler, "The Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation, Nazi Germany, and German Americans," *Yearbook of German-American Studies* 54 (2019), 170-1; Confidential Report on the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation, 24 June 1940, Folder 6, Box 28, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP, 2.

¹⁷ Trommler, "Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation," 161; Memorandum Re: Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation, 1 July 1947, Folder: From Germany Embassy Re: Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation, Box 73, Subject Files, 1939-1955, Record Group 59,

increasingly clear that, as the Third Reich strangled all independence out of German civil society, the Foundation's connections did little more than legitimize the Nazi regime.

A major point of contention was the perceived connection with a German organization in Berlin, the Carl-Schurz-Vereinigung (CSV). The Vereinigung had been founded by liberal-minded Germans in 1926 to encourage cultural and political understanding between the United States and Germany, and numerous figures on both sides of the Atlantic welcomed the CSV as pragmatic step towards encouraging American visitors and projecting a favorable image of German culture to the rest of the world.¹⁸ Its first executive director, Anton Erkelenz, was a promising face for these ends.

However, in the late 1920s, the Vereinigung's orientation became increasingly dedicated to assailing the punitive peace of the Treaty of Versailles and the "war guilt" burden it placed on Germany after the First World War. Erkelenz struggled to moderate the organization's loudest anti-treaty voices, which only became more difficult when the international Great Depression knocked Weimar Germany off of its already-precarious economic position. By 1930, the CSV's "revisionist" members distributed publications that

NARA, 7. Student exchanges also went outside of Germany, such as those to Holland. Quakerschool Eerde to Thomas, 27 November 1934, Series 1A, Folder 11, Box 2, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

¹⁸ Trommler, "Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation," 171; Kupsky, "True Spirit," 208-9. Private firms, particularly those that would benefit from an improved relationship between Germany and the United States, eagerly contributed to its funding and hoped to direct its early actions by seating individuals on its executive board. Bankers, some of whom were instrumental in helping to negotiate American loans associated with the Dawes Plan, firms such as I.G. Farben and General Electric, and those in transportation hubs were crucial in helping CSV find stability and direction early on.

focused on denouncing the Versailles Treaty's "war guilt clause" in lieu of more substantive German-American cultural issues.¹⁹

After Adolf Hitler and the National Socialist party cemented their power in 1933, to the delight of its more radical members, the CSV soon became thoroughly nazified. Many of its moderate members, including Erkelenz, were forced to resign as "politically and racially unreliable," and the Vereinigung soon became subordinated to Nazi demands. Nazi officials encouraged increasingly overt propaganda campaigns, sent dignitaries to CSV events, and even saw to it that the Vereinigung's namesake, Carl Schurz, had his historical legacy of tolerance and opposition to antisemitism and militarism forgotten.

Despite the similarities in name, even before the beginning of Hitler's reign, a deep relationship between the Vereinigung and Foundation did not exist, save for cooperation on a limited number of projects such as student exchanges and small grants from the Foundation.²⁰ Erkelenz had tried to bring about a merger with the American organization, in part to boost his own profile against his organization and in part to gain access to the Foundation's robust financial endowment, but Wilbur Thomas and the Foundation never seriously considered this proposition. After Erkelenz and the moderates were displaced, the Vereinigung made renewed overtures to the American organization. Thomas expressed hope that the Schurz organizations would continue to work toward world peace (though at this point, CSV was functionally an organ of Nazi foreign policy), but he remained

¹⁹ Rennie W. Brantz, "German-American Friendship: The Carl Schurz Vereinigung, 1926-1942," *The International History Review* 11, no. 2 (May 1989), 233-7.

²⁰ Brantz, "German-American Friendship," 237-8, 242-3.

steadfast that the Foundation was “strictly an American organization.”²¹ The lack of official connections between the two organizations did not allay the criticisms surrounding the CSMF. Some of the Foundation’s less-attentive critics confused the two organizations entirely because of the similar names, believing that they were a single organization and fearing that Nazi operatives already had a foothold in Philadelphia.²²

Among others, the criticism was more substantive. In 1934, Oswald Garrison Villard, a source of considerable funding for the Foundation and a man who knew Carl Schurz personally, resigned from the CSMF. Villard feared the influence that Nazi Germany was having on the organization and was ashamed that the Foundation continued to entertain intellectual and cultural connections with Hitler’s Germany. With his resignation, Villard privately pressed the Foundation in vain to change the name of the organization if it would continue to pursue a cultural relationship with Nazi society.²³

The following year, Villard and several of the surviving family and friends of Carl Schurz went public with a press release outlining their protest against the “grotesque” use of Schurz’s by the Vereinigung and the “Hitler State.” The signatories did not spare the Foundation, whom they excoriated for “continu[ing] to deal with despotism.” To use the name of “one of our greatest democrats” for the ends of totalitarianism was an insult to the

²¹ To Dr. Ilgner, Members of the Vereinigung Carl Schurz, and Distinguished Guests, nd, Folder 11, Box 2, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

²² Trommler, “Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation,” 160.

²³ Trommler, “Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation,” 170; Oswald Garrison Villard to Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation, 11 July 1934, Folder 1, Box 2, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

man who referred to the United States as “the great colony of free humanity.” The release went on to contrast Schurz, who was an “ardent champion of freedom for the Negro, justice and freedom for the Indian, and tolerance and freedom of liberty,” with every facet of the militaristic and imperialistic Nazi “tyrants who have again enslaved Germany.”²⁴ But Villard did not sever all connections with the Foundation. He remained on good terms with its members, especially the next executive director, Howard Elkinton, and sought to lend his name in support of the Foundation until he died in 1949.

The Foundation Withdraws from Germany

The Foundation’s public relations issues forced it to adjust its activities after 1935. Thomas thought it prudent to try and avoid the political fray as best as it could and begin to pull back on its ties with the civil society of New Germany.²⁵ Regardless of curbing its overseas activities, the Foundation’s executive committee wanted to maintain its course of being “strictly non-political, strictly American,” which meant avoiding public denunciations of Nazi Germany. For Thomas and others, continuing its domestic work in silence seemed preferable to drawing attention to the organization. This course was most evident in the articles published in the organization’s publication, *The American-German Review*, which first appeared in 1934. The periodical’s earliest articles almost entirely avoided current events and political topics, choosing instead to focus on the German

²⁴ Villard to Thomas, 18 January 1935, Folder 1, Box 2, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP; For Release in Morning Papers of Monday, January 21st, Folder 1, Box 2, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP; Brantz, 246-7; “Schurz Relatives Fight Nazi Link,” *The New York Times*, 21 January 1935.

²⁵ Trommler, “Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation,” 163.

element in American history as it related to Americanization, Americana, and the influence of German immigrants on American society.²⁶ It was a delicate tightrope to walk: members wanted to keep “clear of all political questions and discussions” while also encouraging Americans of German descent to be proud of their German heritage and recognize “the achievements and contributions of their own ancestors.”²⁷ But avoiding a definite stance of Hitler’s regime did not satisfy the Foundation’s critics.

After the Foundation curbed its overseas cultural activities with Germany, its funding was quietly put to use in less controversial avenues. Between 1936-1946, the Oberlaender Trust disbursed over \$316,000 in grants to help support displaced “intellectual refugees” in the United States, which included finding them positions in American universities.²⁸ By 1940, the Foundation and its Trust were committing nearly three-quarters

²⁶ For example of articles that emphasized the historical contributions of German immigrants, German culture, and the importance of cultural diversity to the American “melting pot,” see Carl Wittke, “National Unity and Cultural Diversity,” *The American-German Review* 11, no. 3 (February 1945), 31-2, Albert Daehler, “The Kind of Stuff that Made America What It Is Today,” *The American-German Review* 11, no. 1 (October 1944), 26-9 and Dieter Dunz, “Civil War Letters of a German Immigrant,” *The American-German Review* 11, no. 1 (October 1944), 30-2.

²⁷ Kupsky, “True Spirit,” 222; Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation, NARA, 10-9. The contrast between articles printed from 1935-1945 and those printed after the end of the war was stark. After the war, the pages of *American-German Review* increasingly gave way to items on “current events” and the state of postwar Germany: articles on currency reform, the development of the Free University of Berlin, and the importance of relief packages in the Allied sectors of West Germany. For examples, see Howard Elkinton, “The Tri-Partite Currency Reform, Germany, June – 1948,” *The American-German Review* 15, no. 2 (December 1948), 23-5, Ames Johnston, “A Free University for Berlin,” *The American-German Review* 15, no. 4 (April 1949), 3-6, and Alice H. Finckh, “Bricks Without Straw: Quaker Work in Germany,” *The American-German Review* 16, no. 1 (October 1949), 12-4.

of their annual expenses for the assistance of German immigrants. The overwhelming majority of immigrants and refugees supported by the Trust, including Albert Einstein in 1932, were Jewish.²⁹

The Foundation also began planning create a cultural institution dedicated to German and German-American culture that would “carry on research and publish materials relating to the contributions of Americans of German descent to the development of the United States... and to draw upon the experience of the Germanic peoples in cultural fields insofar as they will promote the welfare of the American people.” It was a bold – if ill-advised - step back into the public eye which was spurred on by the Foundation’s desires to address any questions of their loyalty. The members hoped to create a German-American cultural center which would serve as a “living monument to the German immigrant and his appreciation of a free America.” The campaign’s first chairman, Theodore H. Thiesing, believed that the project would promote the patriotism of his fellow German-Americans and serve as “evidence that [his] inheritance from his homeland was cultural and not political.”³⁰ From its inception, the cultural center was held up as a project that was

²⁸ The Oberlaender Trust, Grants Paid from 1931 to 6-30-51, nd, Folder 2, Box 43, Series 1A, Group 2, NCSA Records, HSP; Thomas to Harold B. Hoskins, 19 December 1941, Folder 8, Box 3, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP; For Immediate Release, 5 May 1952, Folder 1, Box 7, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

²⁹ Trommler, “Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation,” 166-173, 180-1; Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation, NARA, 15-9; Ronald Clark, *Einstein: The Life and Times* (Hodder and Stoughton, 1973), 262; Hanns Gramm, *The Oberlaender Trust, 1931-1953* (Philadelphia: The Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation, 1956), 64.

³⁰ Memorandum Re: Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation, NARA, 8.

quintessentially American: it would not only study the contributions of Germans to the United States but also provide a narrative of the “continued integration of the German element with the American people.”³¹

On 19 March 1940, less than two months before Nazi Germany launched its invasion of France, the members of the Foundation inaugurated a campaign to raise \$2,000,000 for the renovation of the Old Custom House in Philadelphia and the construction of a German-American cultural institute within it.³² The Foundation leased the building from the government (signed by Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes) in December 1939 and subsequently made its headquarters. It seemed the perfect potential site for this German-American institute.

In addition, the Foundation established of a National Endorsement Committee that would help to procure donations. By the committee’s establishment, it already had at least eight prominent Americans agreeing to serve the noble cause. Within weeks, the endorsement committee boasted a number of additional high-profile members: Felix Morley (editor of *Washington Post*), former President Herbert Hoover (who called Carl Schurz “a great building force in American life”), and Thomas S. Gates (President of the University of Pennsylvania).³³

³¹ “German Shrine in City Indorsed,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 20 March 1940; Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation, NARA, 8.

³² The Custom House was to be restored as a project of the Works Project Administration with a combination of WPA and Foundation funds.

³³ Memorandum Re: Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation, NARA, 8; Herbert Hoover to Thomas, 20 April 1940, Folder 6, Box 3, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records

The public campaign, particularly the positive commentary of the American media surrounding it, angered and worried the German consul in the United States. Certain Nazi officials increasingly saw the Foundation less as a potential foothold for the influence of the “new Germany” and more of an organization that was, at best, succumbing to the pressures of its fellow Americans citizens and, at worst, an organization that was actually Americanized. Particularly troublesome was the pamphlet that accompanied the fundraising campaign: *A Fifth of a Nation*. The literature, whose title was a reminder that about one-fifth of Americans could trace their heritage back to Germany, emphasized that the heritage of German-Americans was “cultural-not-political.”³⁴

Less than twenty-five pages in length, the literature purported to “symboliz[e] a people’s appreciation for liberty” and framed the United States as “the epitome of modern civilization.” The contents were clearly aimed at removing all doubts of the loyalties of America’s ethnic German population and stroking the ego of the wider American public, emphasizing the “gratitude” that German-Americans felt “for the generous opportunities which this great country has offered him.” At the same time, it stressed the contributions that ethnic Germans had made to the United States as a way of demonstrating their dedication to the country and their ability to become Americanized.³⁵ Nazi officials took exception to the pamphlet’s anecdote that the ancestors of many contemporary German-

HSP; “Schurman Hits ‘Propaganda,’ Quits Schurz Foundation,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 23 May 1940.

³⁴ Memorandum Re: Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation, NARA, 10. The Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation, *A Fifth of a Nation* (1940), 14.

³⁵ Foundation, *A Fifth*, 14-15.

Americans were the victims of “religious persecution... petty tyrants, and long wars” before they eventually found refuge in the United States, complaining that this was a thinly-veiled invocation of Hitler’s regime.³⁶

With the *Wehrmacht* set to invade western Europe within weeks, the timing of the Foundation’s campaign was poor. Unfairly, even the title of the fundraising literature brought suspicion. *A Fifth of a Nation*, meant to demonstrate German that one-fifth of Americans could draw their heritage back to Germany, instead brought comparison to the phrase “The Fifth Column.” Critics believed that the Foundation was actually winking at an enemy group that would sabotage or undermine the nation from within. Such criticisms even came from the Foundation’s honorary president, Jacob Gould Schurman, who resigned from the organization in May 1940. Schurman publicly accused the Foundation of using the *A Fifth of a Nation* pamphlet as a cover for covert Nazi propaganda, denouncing the literature’s use of the term “American-German” as an example of Nazi infiltration into German-American cultural organizations.³⁷

Thomas fired back immediately in defense of the Foundation, noting that Schurman himself had contributed to the first ever publication of *The American-German Review*. He reiterated that the new cultural center’s objectives were “cultural, its theme

³⁶ Foundation, *A Fifth*, 7. For contemporary coverage of the fundraising campaign, see: “Schurman Tells of Parting with Schurz Fund,” *New York Herald Tribune*, 22 May 1940, “American-German’ Angers Schurman,” *The New York Times*, 22 May 1940, “Schurz Fund Accepts Schurman Resignation,” *New York Herald Tribune*, 23 May 1940, “Nazi Influence Causes Dr. Schurman to Quit,” *The Baltimore Sun*, 23 May 1940, and “Germans’ Part in Rise of U.S. Forms Exhibit,” *New York Herald Tribune*, 2 June 1940.

³⁷ “Schurman Tells,” 22 May 1940.

Americanization, and its main purpose ‘the integration of Americans of German descent with the rest of the American people.’”³⁸ After the end of the war, the members of the State Department who heavily scrutinized any of the Foundation’s ties to Germany found no evidence that the Nazis had intended to sneak any of their propaganda in through the Foundation’s campaign, particularly when the campaign’s literature indirectly criticized the Nazi regime.

In the face of these accusations, Thomas received some private support from some of the Foundation’s close supporters, who believed that Schurman, a man in his elderly years, had lost his nerve and fell prey to an anti-German pressure campaign.³⁹ One friend, James T. Adams, expressed confidence that the Foundation was in “no way connected with the present Hitlerian regime,” and, like much of the correspondence between Thomas and his friends, expressed private “detestation with everything which Germany is doing at the present time.” Adams in particular understood that “a certain amount of opprobrium may be incurred by anybody today who stands for any contributions made by Germany in its previous form” but expressed hope that “we shall not lose our heads and refuse... to enjoy Beethoven’s music, because Adolf Hitler has proved himself to be a devil let loose from

³⁸ “‘American-German’ Angers Schurman,” *The New York Times*; “Schurman Hits ‘Propaganda,’” *Philadelphia Inquirer*; “Schurz Fund Accepts,” *New York Herald Tribune*; “Nazi Influence,” *Baltimore Sun*; “Germans’ Part in Rise of U.S. Forms Exhibit,” *New York Herald Tribune*, 2 June 1940.

³⁹ Felix Morely to Thomas, 30 May 1940, Folder 6, Box 3, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

hell.”⁴⁰ As another friend put it, the Foundation was “living in a period of madness” and would have to “wait for the storm to blow by.”⁴¹

But significant damage had already been done to Thomas and the Foundation’s image. Just days after Schurman’s resignation, University of Pennsylvania President Thomas Gates resigned from the Endorsement Committee after having accepted Thomas’s invitation two months prior. Gates had initially supported the Foundation due to organization’s support for German refugees and scholars, many of whom had been placed at Penn itself. However, Gates explained, the fundraising campaign was “badly timed” and that “circumstanced over which none of us has any control” brought him to the decision that it was “unthinkable that the Foundation could successfully appeal for support under the present conditions.”⁴²

Amidst the public scrutiny, the Foundation’s director saw it prudent to quietly release the remaining Endorsement Committee members from their duties, suspend the fundraising campaign altogether, and remove as many copies of *A Fifth of a Nation* from circulation as possible. A second letter from James T. Adams reassured Thomas that he would have remained on the committee despite Schurman’s attacks if Thomas saw fit, but that it was ultimately the “very wise” decision to put off these activities. Adams lamented

⁴⁰ James Truslow Adams to Thomas, 4 June 1940, Folder 6, Box 3, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP; Adams to Thomas, 11 July 1940, Folder 6, Box 3, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

⁴¹ Holmes to Thomas, 31 May 1940, Folder 6, Box 3, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

⁴² Thomas S. Gates to Thomas, 27 May 1940, Folder 6, Box 3, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

once more that “Carl Schurz would have loathed Hitler,” but the anti-German sentiment was too strong and “likely to increase very much in the next couple of years or so.” Since the public was on a “witch hunt,” Adams insisted, they could not currently appreciate the spirit of the liberal Germans of 1848, who stood against everything Hitler embodied, and “the culture of the older Germany of Goethe.”⁴³

Facing Official Investigation

By June 1940, as the Nazi war machine rampaged through western Europe, the Foundation’s problems piled up even as the United States ostensibly remained neutral. It was weeks after Jacob Gould Schurman resigned from the honorary presidency, and frantic attempts to shore up private support for the Foundation had no real impact on the organization’s fortunes. Now, just one week before France’s capitulation, Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes took aim at CSMF for alleged Nazi sympathies, sending his assistant to Philadelphia to review the Foundation’s records, publications, and any information about the Foundation’s activities. For Ickes, the lack of a public proclamation from the Foundation on Nazi Germany put their loyalties in question.⁴⁴

In the resulting report, the secretary’s assistant, Saul K. Padover, concluded that the Foundation was “not a Nazi organization,” nor was it “pro-Nazi.” A significant source of the current public misunderstanding came because of the shared name with the Carl Schurz Vereinigung, whose members were using the confusion over the organizations’ similar

⁴³ Adams to Thomas, 11 July 1940, HSP; Ralph H. Lutz to Thomas, 3 July 1940, Folder 6, Box 3, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

⁴⁴ Ickes to Thomas, 18 June 1940, Folder 6, Box 3, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

names to try and represent more official ties between the societies than actually existed. Despite this conclusion, however, Padover's report included troubling evidence for the Foundation. Padover found reason to believe that some members had pro-Nazi sympathies, which "probably explain[ed] why the Foundation has consistently refused to protest against the atrocities and barbarisms of Nazi Germany." Padover listed two founding members, one of whom was deceased, who had expressed admiration for Hitler's efforts to quash workers' strikes.⁴⁵

Padover was less scathing towards Thomas, whom he labeled an "anti-Nazi," even if he was less convinced by the executive director's excuses for avoiding public denunciations of Adolf Hitler. Padover suspected that Thomas knew better but perhaps lacked "the courage, or perhaps the moral integrity, to endanger a good job by criticizing the Hitler regime," which had consequently led to an image of the Foundation being "passively friendly to the Nazi government." Ultimately, Padover found the organization was not a "subversive" one but just had "a poor sense of public relations and [was] blind to the dangerous potentialities of a hostile public opinion."⁴⁶

Unfortunately, this would still be embarrassing for the United States government. The Foundation had recently signed a twenty-year lease for its new headquarters in the Old Custom Building, a federal building next to Independence Hall with important implications for the history of American democracy. Padover suggested that Thomas and the Foundation needed "to obviate criticism and to re-assure loyal German-Americans" by putting the

⁴⁵ Confidential Report, HSP, 10.

⁴⁶ Confidential Report, HSP, 10-13.

Foundation officially “on record as opposed to Hitlerism and as loyal to the principles of American democracy.” In the world today, one could not remain apolitical, and “one cannot separate culture from politics.”⁴⁷ After Padover concluded his investigation, Ickes enclosed his assistant’s confidential report to the Foundation, highlighting “certain definite charges of pro-Nazism” made against it and some of its ranking members.⁴⁸

The report compelled Secretary Ickes to increase the pressure on the Foundation in search of a public stance. He accused the Foundation of working in bad faith in failing to “make an unmistakable public repudiation of the charge,” which could no longer be tolerated by “any forthright American.” Given the Foundation’s experiences in 1934-5 and more recently with the controversy surrounding its fundraising campaign, Thomas maintained that it was most prudent to avoid public political discussion in any direction, even overt criticism of Hitler’s regime. Ickes turned up the heat on the Foundation by demanding that the organization voluntarily agree to cancel its lease at the Old Custom House. A group whose loyalties were in question could not be allowed to set up in the heart of Philadelphia with the federal government as its landlord. If the Foundation did not agree to do so voluntarily, Ickes stated, “I shall be compelled to take such actions as I may see fit to protect what I considered to be in the Government’s interest.”⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Confidential Report, HSP, 1-13.

⁴⁸ Trommler, “Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation,” 176; Ickes to Ferdinand Thun, 12 August 1940, Folder 6, Box 3, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

⁴⁹ Ickes to Thun, 12 August 1940, HSP.

In the midst of the Secretary's insinuation that the Foundation was presently "[un]worthy to bear the name of Carl Schurz," Ickes also made an important suggestion that aligned with Thomas' own thoughts: that the Foundation might lead the way in preserving and protecting German culture from Hitlerism. Ickes lamented that "those commendable phases of German culture" had been subsumed by Nazi tyranny and were nowhere to be found in Europe. Instead, German immigrants of the past had transplanted this culture to the United States, where it had been "preserved" under the protection of free American institutions. "The best service that [the Foundation] could render," Ickes went on, would be the "preservation of German culture." In doing this, the Foundation could emphasize the notion that "Hitlerism has destroyed German culture in Germany by destroying liberty and by substituting barbarism for the fine things of the old German life." Presaging one of the Foundation's many roles in postwar Germany, Ickes suggested that the American way of life had given "asylum" to the culture of older Germany, and now must wait for the opportunity to return from exile to a free German people in its old homeland once the Nazi menace was destroyed.⁵⁰

It was similar to what Thomas had already been planning when he considered the Foundation as a central repository for German culture and the history of German immigrant in the United States. Indeed, the organization had been trying to do just that when fundraising for the very cultural institute set off the public firestorm. The secretary's suggestion was indicative of the ambiguous situation the Foundation confronted throughout the war, where they faced a mix of support and accusations among several

⁵⁰ Ickes to McAneny, 15 August 1940, HSP, 3-4.

departments of the federal government. At various times, members of the Department of the Interior as well as the Department of State openly questioned the loyalties of the organization while other members sought the Foundation's assistance in domestic and foreign matters.

The accusations and threats made by Ickes compelled Oswald Garrison Villard, who had previously resigned from the Foundation in 1934, to intercede on the organization's behalf. Believing that the Interior Department was using his own resignation as evidence of the Foundation's pro-Nazi attitudes, Villard wired Ickes to vouch for the current state of the Foundation, telling Ickes that "the Foundation has been quite altered" since his resignation. They were no longer seeking cultural connections with German society and were wholeheartedly committed to "true Americanism, uninfluenced by... pro-Nazi attitude." Because the Foundation was a patriotic organization, Villard asked that the Foundation's lease with the Old Custom House not be cancelled.⁵¹

By September 1940, Ickes remained unmoved. He chastised Foundation members for being "unwilling or afraid" to publicly profess their patriotism "in the name of Carl Schurz." The actions of the organization may have proved that they are a benevolent society, Ickes allowed, but "you have wholly failed," despite the Interior Department's exhortations, "to use appropriate 'words' to establish yours as a patriotic society." Ickes once again provided the Foundation with an ultimatum: they had until 16 September to

⁵¹ Villard to Ickes, 21 August 1940, Folder 6, Box 3, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

provide a public statement “sufficiently plain and unequivocal to meet the situation,” or the department would take any legal steps possible to secure the cancellation of the lease.⁵²

With no recourse left to avoid becoming taking a definite stance on the Nazi regime and its war of aggression in Europe, the Foundation acquiesced. On 16 September, its executive committee issued a press release denying all possible ties to Nazi Germany. The committee struck at the “brutality” of Nazi Germany, including the ongoing *Luftwaffe* attacks on London, and its “abhorrence” of Nazi totalitarianism. The Foundation, its members insisted, was only interested in preserving the culture of “pre-Hitler Germany” and helping Americans recall “the imperishable contributions” of German immigrants to the United States. These “old cultures in the German Fatherland” were now being “progressively suppress[ed]” by Hitler, the enemy of traditional Germany and, by extension, all Americans of German extraction. The committee prayed for the day “when, through the final triumph of democratic ideals and democratic power, the processes of civilization, wherever they have been violated, will be restored.”⁵³ The statement was well-received, with the *New York Times* insisting that there was “no ambiguity here” as to the Foundation’s intentions and *The Jewish Exponent* of Philadelphia regarding the Foundation’s work with Jewish refugees as “interesting.”⁵⁴

⁵² Ickes to Thun, 6 September 1940, Folder 6, Box 3, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

⁵³ “Schurz Group hits Nazi’s ‘Brutality,’” *The New York Times*, 17 September 1940; “Carl Schurz Foundation Denounces Nazi Regime,” *New York Herald Tribune*, 17 September 1940.

⁵⁴ “No Ambiguity Here,” *The New York Times*, 17 September 1940; “Here and There,” *The Jewish Exponent*, 27 September 1940.

Nazi officials reacted to the statement and its “widespread publicity” with hostility and despair, believing that the Foundation “never showed an understanding for the New Germany and hardly ever tried to.” Some concluded that the Foundation had acted out of pressure from the government and Ickes, and as a result, the German embassy lamented, the Foundation should be considered under the sway of the American government. Worse still for these German officials: the Foundation’s early pivot towards aiding Jewish refugees appeared to be organic and earnestly felt among its members, not something that came as a result of pressure from the American government. As depressing as these Nazi officials found the Foundation’s anti-Nazi statement, it is of particular note that the betrayal of Nazi Germany’s racial ideology appeared to be to point at which they found the Foundation unredeemable.⁵⁵

Thomas also received mixed messages from the U.S. Department of State. Over the course of the war and into the postwar period, various members of the department questioned whether or not the Foundation was collaborating with foreign actors while other members of the same department approached Thomas and his successor about the possibility of collaborating on cultural projects to be carried out in the postwar period. In July 1941, months before the United States entered the war against Germany, an official at the State Department sent a parcel to the Foundation which included a pamphlet on “Agents of Foreign Principals and of Foreign Governments,” a blank registration form to register

⁵⁵ Memorandum Re: Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation, NARA, 13-18. This document, compiled by the State Department as it investigated the Foundation, was assembled using seized materials from German sources and included direct quotations from many Nazi officials on the topic of the American organization.

as an agent of a foreign government, and a letter asking CSMF to consider filling out the form if such activities required the organization to do so. Thomas answered that the Foundation had no official or unofficial contacts abroad, nor activities that would require it to register as an agent of a foreign government. The matter was dropped, but it would not be the last time the Department of State investigated the Foundation.⁵⁶

Preserving the Culture of Old Germany

Despite both official and social scrutiny, the ranking members of the Foundation remained hopeful for the postwar period, especially given that the United States remained neutral.⁵⁷ In fall 1941, with no public indication that the United States was about to enter the war by the end of the year, Foundation members believed that, once “the world settle[d] down,” it could play a role as a cultural mediator between the German and American peoples.⁵⁸ Thomas believed that the larger share of German-Americans was still so “bewildered by the *Wirrwarr* [confusion] of world conditions,” that his organization could seize the unique opportunity if it were forward-looking and “not... caught napping.” The

⁵⁶ Agents of Foreign Principals and of Foreign Governments, 1939, Folder 5, Box 3, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP; Eldred D. Kuppinger to the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation, 16 July 1941, Folder 7, Box 3, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP; Thomas to Kuppinger, 4 August 1941, Folder 7, Box 3, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

⁵⁷ The Lend Lease Act, signed in March 1941, created a system by which the United States could lend or lease war materiel to nations fighting Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan. In June 1941, the United States extended this aid to the Soviet Union. See Albert L. Weeks, *Russia's Life-Saver: Lend-Lease Aid to the U.S.S.R. in World War II* (New York: Lexington Books, 2004).

⁵⁸ McAneny to Frederick Thun, 25 October 1941, Folder 7, Box 3, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

Foundation, with its resources and his leadership, could be deliberate in planning for the next phase so that its members would have a part to play in the “clean-up of Europe,” including working with the United States government on “the propaganda side of the work that will have to be done” in Germany.⁵⁹

Among its domestic activities to help preserve German culture and German-Americana and present it to the American public, the Foundation supported the research of scholars for books, including topics about German-Americans, contemporary refugees, and the German refugees of the failed Revolution of 1848 who sought refuge in the United States. The Foundation gave financial support to two book projects in particular that might acquaint an American audience with the liberal traditions of Germany’s culture. The first of these projects eventually became *The Forty-Eighters: Political Refugees of the German Revolution of 1848* by Adolf E. Zucker, released in 1950, which filled the “genuine need” to give widespread publicity in the United States to the “liberal Germans” of 1848.⁶⁰ The resulting book explored “the group of German idealists who fought to establish a liberal and unified Germany and then came to the United States as refugees from the reaction” and argued that these “refugees” had attempted a “humane revolution” imbued with a “humanitarian spirit,” unlike those in Italy, Russia, and 1933 Germany.⁶¹ The second book

⁵⁹ Thomas to Adamic, 26 November 1941, HSP. Thomas also acknowledged that he could not necessarily “make charity and propaganda go hand in hand,” but hoped that “they can at least be carried on simultaneously.”

⁶⁰ D. Fisher to Adolf E. Zucker, 1 July 1941, Folder 7, Box 3, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

⁶¹ Zucker, *The Forty-Eighters: Political Refugees of the German Revolution of 1848* (New York: Columbia University Press, 195), vii.

project, in conjunction with the Rockefeller Foundation, studied German and Austrian refugees who came to the United States between 1933 and 1941. Many of the refugees included in the study had been the beneficiaries of the Foundation and the Oberlaender Trust, and the research eventually formed the basis of Donald P. Kent's *The Refugee Intellectual*, published in 1953.⁶²

In hopes of softening attitudes of the general public towards those of German ethnicity, the Foundation also sent out materials and books to libraries, schools, and individuals on the contributions of German-Americans. CSMF also took care to try and collect and preserve historical materials and establish an archive on Carl Schurz and "everything relating to German settlers in this country."⁶³ The great hope for the organization's members was that the Foundation could take care to document the positive contributions and qualities of German culture and the impact of Germans to the United States until such time when the Nazi menace passed into history.

The 7 December attack on Pearl Harbor shattered the illusion that the war would be confined to Europe. Though the Foundation continued to foresee a role for itself after the end of the war, it first had to confront the very real possibility of violence or further harassment directed towards Americans of German extraction. With preparations being made to carry the war to Germany, Thomas and others feared that 1942 would open the

⁶² The Oberlaender Trust, Grants Paid, nd; Annual Report, 1952-1953, c. 1953, Folder 5, Box 1, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP, 6-7.

⁶³ Zucker to Theodore Dreiser, 10 September 1942, Folder 1, Box 3, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

sluices of ethnic hatred and deluge German-Americans in hostilities reminiscent of the First World War.⁶⁴ The Foundation used *The American-German Review* as a medium to make its loyalty to the United States known, not only through articles but also through advertisements encouraging its readers to buy war bonds and stamps.⁶⁵

There were initial signs of encouragement. Harold B. Hoskins of the State Department wrote a strongly-worded article calling for American unity and rejecting the “bigoted assumptions” of the World War I generation that accused ethnic Germans of disloyalty and led to “witch-hunting.”⁶⁶ The Foundation consistently reached out to members of the Department of State, hoping one or more government officials, perhaps even the President of the United States, might craft a statement consolidating “the liberal and warmly friendly attitude” that high government officials had shown German-Americans over the month following Pearl Harbor. It would “greatly serve the cause” for the government to issue a statement in no uncertain terms.⁶⁷

Foundation members were also formulating plans to cooperate with the State Department in planning for postwar cultural relations. The connection was made possible in part through the efforts of Stephen Duggan, whose numerous positions and

⁶⁴ Thomas to Hoskins, 19 December 1941, Folder 7, Box 3, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

⁶⁵ *The American-German Review* 8, no. 5 (June 1942), back cover.

⁶⁶ Hoskins, “American Unity and Our Foreign-Born Citizens,” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 220, no. 1 (March 1942), 153.

⁶⁷ Thomas to Adolf A. Berle, Jr., 10 April 1942, Folder 9, Box 3, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

responsibilities in the public and private sphere helped to foster the Foundation-State Department relationship. Duggan was an educator, director of the Institute of International Education, a professor of diplomatic history, and a trustee of the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation who also served on an advisory committee for education programs for the Department of State's Division of Cultural Relations. Duggan's brother had been a key force behind the creation of the Division of Cultural Relations in 1938. In fall 1941, Duggan brought the Foundation to the attention of the State Department and recommended that Executive Director Thomas send along some informational materials on the organization for departmental consideration. Thomas forwarded annual reports and a sample of *The American-German Review* for evaluation, factoring into the department's eventual decisions in to reach out to the members of the executive committee for joint projects.⁶⁸

In early 1942, the Department of State began to advocate for the Foundation to preserve the proper memory of German culture and the German past in preparation for a role as postwar cultural mediator. Once the war was over and the United States government wanted to reestablish cultural and diplomatic relations with the German people, officials could utilize these elements.⁶⁹ The Assistant Secretary of the Department of State, Adolf

⁶⁸ Justin Hart, *Empire of Ideas: The Origins of Public Diplomacy and the Transformation of U.S. Foreign Policy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 23-4; *The Program of the Department of State in Cultural Relations* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1940), 7; Division of Cultural Relations, *U.S. Department of State: Division of Cultural Relations* (Washington, DC: 1940), 1-4; Stuart E. Grummon to Thomas, 29 November 1941, Folder 7, Box 3, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

A. Berle, Jr., approached Foundation President Ferdinand Thun about “the importance of safeguarding what is left of classic German civilization.” The Department’s Division of Cultural Relations also expressed interest in cooperating with the Foundation for a number of projects still in their formulation stage, such as the translation and publication of German literary classics and the establishment of “an institute of free German culture.” Berle invited Thun to Washington to work personally with the Division’s chief on these and other potential postwar projects.⁷⁰ It was just what the Foundation had wanted to hear. It gave comfort to Thomas, who had been trying to encourage his fellow members and Americans of German descent to begin thinking about their role in the postwar world before the attacks on Pearl Harbor.

Now, the door seemed wide open for collaboration with the federal government, and many believed it would be prudent to simply use the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation as ground zero for a new institute that would be the “rallying point” for any attempts to preserve the culture of old Germany or the restoration of relations with “a free Germany.” While a separate institute devoted to German-American history never materialized, such discussions of the Foundation’s role were nonetheless taken as evidence that the

⁶⁹ Americans were not the only one with this inkling: during the war, the members of the London Institute of Sociology similarly suggested that, if Germany as a nation and a culture survived in any postwar period after Nazism, it would be because its cultural values were brought back to Germany. Wolf Lepenies, *The Seduction of Culture in German History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 47.

⁷⁰ Berle, Jr. to Thun, 25 February 1942, Folder 9, Box 3, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

organization's leadership would be "everywhere warmly welcomed" by the federal government.⁷¹

Over the course of the rest of 1942 and early 1943, Thomas was in touch with the Department of State, including the Division of Cultural Relations, and the War Information Board about how the organization could best avail itself to the needs of the federal government during and after the war. He traveled several times to Washington, D.C. to personally strategize with the Office of War Information. The Cultural Division also kept a close eye on the Foundation, keeping in touch consistently and ensuring the organization that they "look[ed] upon them as a real asset" in the realm of cultural affairs and furthering "democracy and the American way of life." Understanding that the "present controversies" of war were still uneven ground with which the German-American organization could work, the State Department and Office of War Information recommended that the Foundation continue close to the course that it had been pursuing: quietly collecting cultural productions and preparing materials for high schools and colleges that demonstrated the importance of German immigrants to American history.⁷²

⁷¹ McAneny to Thomas, 4 March 1942, Folder 9, Box 3, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP; Thomas to Berle, Jr., 10 April 1942, Folder 9, Box 3, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP. Thomas had even hoped that the State Department's request for collaboration could be used as leverage to procure a statement of support from a high-ranking government official. Thomas told Berle, Jr. that, while the Foundation committee was more than willing to engage in cultural projects and those that conserved "German cultural civilization," it would be difficult to secure the cooperation of the broader German-American population, as they were hesitant of doing anything too public related to German heritage for fear that they would be criticized.

⁷² Memorandum of Interview in Washington, D.C. with John M. Begg, 28 October 1942, Folder 10, Box 3, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP; William L.

Other members of the Foundation agreed: the organization should remain careful in how it presented itself and avoid commenting on the war itself for the time being, but that didn't mean that it could remain static and quiet. There should be "active outreach," and its members should "be on the offensive and not on the defensive" when it comes to safeguarding German culture in the United States. They should not cede any ground as they had done during the First World War, but actions needed to be confined "to purely cultural things."⁷³ By early 1943, the Chief of the Division of Cultural Relations was sharing strictly confidential division reports with Thomas monthly.⁷⁴ For the rest of the war, the Foundation put its resources towards the ends agreed upon with the State Department: it would bide its time, attempt to shore up support for American citizens of German descent, preserve "free German" culture, and prepare to take on an expanded leadership position once the war had ended.

Targeted by the Internal Revenue Service

Any grand plans that the Foundation had for the postwar rehabilitation of Germany and the reconstruction of cultural ties were seriously threatened in December 1943, when the organization came to the attention of the Internal Revenue Service.⁷⁵ The following

Schurz to Thomas, 18 December 1942, Folder 10, Box 3, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

⁷³ Memorandum of Interview with Louis Adamic, 3 December 1942, Folder 1, Box 3, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

⁷⁴ Charles A. Thomson to Thomas, 10 February 1943, Folder 1, Box 4, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

⁷⁵ Minutes of Meeting of the Executive Committee, 10 September 1946, Folder 2, Box 34, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP, 2. CSMF was just one of the many

month, the Foundation received a letter that the IRS suspected that its “activities have not been confined to the purposes for which [they] were organized, that is, to honor the memory of Carl Schurz... [and] to cultivate and promote closer intellectual relations between the United States and Germany.” As such, under Section 101 (6) of the Internal Revenue Code, the IRS revoked the CSMF’s tax-exemption status.

The Foundation’s leadership fervently protested that the move would threaten any continuation of the Foundation’s work in “its cultural service to the great body of loyal Americans” and unsuccessfully lobbied for a full hearing before the matter was carried out.⁷⁶ The Foundation and other German-American organizations continuously pressed the IRS to return their status, but it would be nearly two years after the war until this vital mechanism for funding was reinstated for them.⁷⁷ The Treasury Department’s actions cast a pall over the organization, giving pause to those who were inclined to contribute financially to a German-American organization during the war. The veil of uncertainty also slowed new memberships to a trickle just as the Foundation seemed poised to demonstrate its value to the federal government.⁷⁸

German-American organizations that were heavily scrutinized by the IRS: the German Society of Pennsylvania, the German Society of Maryland, and the Nordöstlicher Sängerbund, among others, also suffered anything from intense inspection to having their tax-exempt status revoked. See Wust, *Pioneers in Service*, 34-5.

⁷⁶ McAneny and Thomas to the Commissioner of Internal Revenue, 22 January 1944, Folder 3, Box 4, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

⁷⁷ Elkinton to Eugene Anderson, 6 June 1947, Folder 6, Box 4, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP; Minutes of Meeting, 10 September 1946, NCSA Records, HSP, 2.

For Wilbur Thomas, this was especially baffling. He had been in cooperation with the Department of the Interior and the Department of State on various projects, and now those projects were being directly threatened from a different service of the federal government altogether.⁷⁹ But, owing to a severe illness in June 1946 that sidelined Thomas, the Foundation had to pursue a redress without his leadership. The duties of executive director fell to Howard Elkinton, a friend of Thomas who had joined the Foundation in 1944 to help edit *The American-German Review* once the periodical shifted from historical matters to ongoing cultural developments. Elkinton, who was not of German descent, had been active in the international and humanitarian scene as a member of the American Friends Service Committee since 1917, when he assisted in relief efforts in France. From 1938-1941, Elkinton traveled between Japan and Germany, where he aided refugees in escaping the Third Reich.⁸⁰ Under his leadership, the Foundation became indispensable in aiding the United States government in pursuing cultural reconciliation with occupied Germany in the postwar period.

Once he took the reins, Elkinton similarly disparaged the “strangulation” that the organization felt.⁸¹ He expressed his exasperation of the “unjust” situation to a member of

⁷⁸ Minutes of Meeting of the Executive Committee, 15 October 1948, Folder 3, Box 34, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP, 3.

⁷⁹ For the Foundation’s collaboration with the Department of the Interior on matters of historical conservation, see Irving C. Root to Thomas, 18 June 1942, Folder 9, Box 3, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

⁸⁰ Howard Elkinton October 28, 1892 – July 8, 1955, c. July 1955, Folder 7, Box 10, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

the State Department: “the Department of the Interior congratulates us as tenants [in the Old Custom House], the State Department opens an intriguing vista [of helping in the rehabilitation of Germany] while the Treasury strangles our undertakings.”⁸² Even the end of the war in 1945 did not bring complete relief for the Foundation nor an end to the “lingering resentments of wartime.” Through 1946 and well into early 1947, the Treasury Department remained immovable on the topics of restoring the organization’s tax-exemption status (along with that of similar German-American organizations) despite the Foundation’s repeated attempts to lobby them.⁸³

The Foundation’s immediate postwar position became even more precarious after the Secretary of State requested a formal investigation into the organization in December 1946. While the department was happy to look upon the Foundation as a potential ally during the war, the end of hostilities had brought new questions to light after U.S. officials interrogated Max Ilgner, the president of the Carl-Schurz-Vereinigung, in April and May 1945 regarding Ilgner’s duties as director of I.G. Farben.⁸⁴ In his interview, Ilgner described the Carl-Schurz-Vereinigung as a “section” of the Carl Schurz Memorial

⁸¹ Elkinton to Villard, 8 March 1947, Folder 6, Box 4, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

⁸² Elkinton to Anderson, 21 January 1947, Folder 6, Box 4, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

⁸³ Minutes of Meeting of the Executive Committee, 11 February 1946, Folder 2, Box 34, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP, 1.

⁸⁴ I.G. Farben was a chemical conglomerate and one of the largest corporations in the world. The conglomerate and its subsidiaries were complicit in and became wealthy as a result the Nazi regime’s crimes against humanity, including the supply of Zyklon B used during the Holocaust. See Peter Hayes, *Industry and Ideology: I.G. Farben in the Nazi Era* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

Foundation in the United States, renewing questions about the nature of the relationship between the Foundation and the Vereinigung as well as the Nazi government and even I.G. Farben. The “initial circumstantial evidence” that the department collected pointed to the notion that the Foundation’s president, Ferdinand Thun, possibly wanted to promote “pan-Germanism” even after the Nazi takeover, and that the Foundation might have been bringing Nazi intelligence officers to the United States under the auspices of an educational or cultural exchange.⁸⁵

While pouring over the volumes of seized materials and thoroughly documenting the actions and individuals associated with the Vereinigung, the investigative team found that the Vereinigung and Nazi foreign officials maintained an intense interest in the actions of the Foundation, but that any lingering cultural connection between the two Carl Schurz organizations had tapered off after 1935, and the Foundation’s September 1940 statement denouncing Adolf Hitler and the Nazi attacks on London seemed to convince the last remaining German officials that the American organization could not be relied upon. German sources revealed that, rather than being in league with the Nazis to promote “pan-Germanism,” President Ferdinand Thun’s “feelings against the Third Reich” were well-known to German officials.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ No. 4204 to the United States Political Adviser on German Affairs, Berlin, 12 December 1946, Folder: Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation, Box 3, Records Relating to the Exploitation of Captured German Records, Record Group 59, NARA; Survey of Documentary Sources in Germany in re: Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation, nd, Folder: Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation, Box 3, Records Relating to the Exploitation of Captured German Records, Record Group 59, NARA.

⁸⁶ Documents on Carl Schurz Foundations At FO/SD in Berlin, Folder: Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation, Box 3, Records Relating to the Exploitation of Captured

Ultimately, the investigation cleared the Foundation. The investigators found that the organization's activities after the beginning of the war were mostly "colorless," and even the internal communications of the Vereinigung admitted in October 1940 that "cooperation had never existed between the Vereinigung Carl Schurz and the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation."⁸⁷ U.S. officials ended the investigation in July 1947. The Foundation received additional good news just weeks before the Department of State officially cleared the Foundation of any wrong-doing: the Internal Revenue Service restored the Foundation's tax-exemption status, retroactive to 1 January 1946.⁸⁸

Conclusion

Thomas' decision in 1935 to focus its efforts on cultural preservation rather than cultural exchange was a pivotal one that drastically changed the fortunes of his organization. With the end of all of the ongoing investigations against the Foundation, the organization was able to move more fully into its postwar efforts by the middle of 1947. Howard Elkinton fully took over the duties of executive director by 1946 with the hopes of guiding the Foundation into future and fulfilling Thomas' wish that the organization play a key role in the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Germany. The first opportunities

German Records, Record Group 59, NARA; Memorandum Re: Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation, NARA, 16-18.

⁸⁷ No. 8939, Subject: The Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation, Folder: Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation, Box 3, Records Relating to the Exploitation of Captured German Records, Record Group 59, NARA; Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation, NARA, 19.

⁸⁸ Adjourned Annual Meeting, 7 October 1947, Folder 2, Box 34, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP; Elkinton to Anderson, 6 June 1947, Folder 6, Box 4, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

came quickly. A member of the State Department visited Elkinton in 1946 with the “urgent request” that the Foundation establish a “reorientation institute.” While the Foundation was unable to do so, as it was still under scrutiny from the Treasury Department, Elkinton was heartened by the notion that the organization was now in “immediate demand” and would soon again be called on by its government.⁸⁹

Once the Foundation was out from under the thumb of the Treasury Department, it quickly regained assets needed to assist the government in the efforts to democratize and redeem the German people. Over the next few years of the American occupation of Germany, Elkinton oversaw a number of collaborative projects with the U.S. military government and State Department, including participating in the official exchange of persons program, placing visiting German scholars in American universities, providing financial support to the Free University of Berlin, financing civic education in West Germany, and assisting with city planning.⁹⁰ Yet its actions and preparations during the late 1930s and during the war – which often came as a result of external societal pressures forcing the Foundation into a narrow avenue of activities – in effect helped to prepare the organization for one of its most important collaborations: memory and fête diplomacy beginning in 1948, with the centenary of the German Revolution of 1848.

⁸⁹ Elkinton to Thun, 12 May 1948, Folder 7, Box 4, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP, 2.

⁹⁰ For some of the CSMF’s cooperative efforts in the postwar period, see Kupsky, “True Spirit,” 228-236.

CHAPTER 3

“WE 1948ERS”: CELEBRATING THE REVOLUTION OF 1848

IN THE COLD WAR

Nazi Germany’s defeat was total, as was its physical devastation. Confronted with this overwhelming destruction and the invasion of enemy forces, many Germans grappled with uncertain futures and lives that would be defined by rubble, food lines, thirst, scavenging, black markets, homelessness, exposure, and sickness. When the Third Reich surrendered unconditionally in May 1945, the Allies did not find a nation of ideological fanatics ready to fight to the last man, but instead found that much of the population was marked by passivity, compliance, and resignation.¹ By and large, the Germans did not view the oncoming Allies as liberators but as punitive occupiers who would soon exact a terrible revenge for the horrific crimes of the Nazi regime.²

Faced with the prospect of an indefinite and punitive occupation, many Germans looked for ways to distance themselves from the Third Reich and put themselves in the

¹ Gerd Dietrich, *Kulturgeschichte der DDR, Band 1: Kultur in der Übergangsgesellschaft 1945-1957* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2018), 9, 15-25; Paul Steege, *Black Market, Cold War: Everyday Life in Berlin, 1946-1949* (Cambridge University Press, 2007), 33-4. Nearly half of all deaths for German servicemembers occurred in the last ten months of the war, and more civilians died during this period than in the entire five years of war prior. For descriptions of the destruction at the war’s end, see Ian Kershaw, *The End: The Defiance and Destruction of Hitler’s Germany, 1944-45* (New York: Penguin Press, 2011), 379-80, Richard J. Evans, *The Third Reich at War* (New York: Penguin Press, 2009), 738-9, and Antony Beevor, *The Fall of Berlin 1945* (New York: Penguin Books, 2020), 406-11.

² Frank Biess, *German Angst: Fear and Democracy in the Federal Republic of Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 25-7.

good graces of their occupiers.³ Embracing democracy (earnestly, for many) was one method of accomplishing this goal. Along these lines, there was a potential avenue through which some officials in the American-occupied zone of Germany attempted to pave over the memory of the Nazi regime with a democratic tradition: the memorialization of the hundred-year anniversary of the Revolution of 1848 that had taken place in the city. These officials hoped that publicly celebrating one of the best-known examples of the liberal tradition in the German past could offer a path to reconciliation with their European neighbors, align the German people with the values and ideals of their American occupiers, and make a full and public break with their nation's recent Nazi past.

This chapter explores the conceptualization and implementation of two centennial fêtes in American-occupied Frankfurt and analyzes the concurrent public narratives that developed around them in American, West German, and East German media. As the Cold War hardened in Germany in 1947, this unique avenue of cultural relations provided a means through which both Americans and West Germans hoped to achieve their respective immediate and long-term goals. The narratives that developed around the centennial celebrations (as well as a centennial celebrated in March in East Berlin under the auspices of Soviet and East German officials) were inspired by the demands of the

³ Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann, "Germany is No More: Defeat, Occupation, and the Postwar Order," in *The Oxford Handbook of Modern German History*, ed. Helmut Walser Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 603-4. For examples of German intellectuals, antifascists, and democrats who pushed for democratic renewal after the end of the war, see Sean Forner, *German Intellectuals and the Challenge of Democratic Renewal: Culture and Politics after 1945* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

early Cold War and substantiated the ideological goals of their participants. Officials and organizers selected culturally-significant symbols and speakers that could communicate an ideologically-pure narrative and (trans)national value system, and the coverage of journalists and participation of attendees helped to consolidate this message and increase its visibility.

The first centennial, celebrated in May, honored the revolutionaries in 1848 who had convened a National Assembly at St. Paul's Church (the *Paulskirche*) hoping to establish a federal democracy. The implementation of the May celebration and its surrounding narrative conceptualized and reified "Europe" and "the West" as distinct cultural identities and exhibited a prominent place for West Germans within that community. The second centennial, celebrated in September, still included concrete elements of a cohesive "Western world" and an Atlantic-facing Europe, but it was more strongly-oriented towards the remembrance of a historical German-American relationship. For its central referent, the September centennial used the German-American figure Carl Schurz, a participant in the Frankfurt Revolution of 1848 who subsequently fled to the United States. Through Schurz, organizers sought to use the September centennial to emphasize the Cold War compatibility between the German and American peoples and accelerate the process of cultural "Westernization."⁴

⁴ For efforts by actors to push for West Germany's westernization, see Anselm Doering-Manteuffel, "Perceptions of the West in Twentieth-Century Germany," in *Germany and 'The West': The History of a Modern Concept*, eds. Riccardo Bavaj and Martina Steber (New York: Berghahn Books, 2015), 88-9.

Officials in the U.S. government and the Office of the Military Government (OMGUS) understood that cultural productions and formations had political impacts. Just as these officials were looking to forge economic and political connections throughout the Atlantic world using implements such as the Marshall Plan, they also looked to solidify this community on the cultural level. The carefully-curated image around the festival, then, was a part of a broader push of public and cultural diplomacy forming what Giles Scott-Smith called “intellectual-cultural Atlanticism,” which itself sought to normalize the notion that the Americans and West Europeans (including West Germans) belonged to the same intellectual inheritance based on Western civilization.⁵ Fête diplomacy merged the cultural and strategic spheres of American planning: achieving cultural objectives in occupied Germany (reconciliation and Westernization) could help them to achieved larger, strategic goals in the context of the Cold War by creating an ideological bulwark in central Europe that could resist Soviet expansionism. American motivations only became more urgent after the Soviet military authority and East Berlin officials implemented their own centennial in March, which portrayed the revolution in dogmatic Marxist-Leninist terms.

In implementing the Frankfurt centennials, West German and American officials utilized three major themes to shape the perspectives and outlook of the Western world.

⁵ Giles Scott-Smith, *The Politics of Apolitical Culture: The Congress for Cultural Freedom and the Political Economy of American Hegemony 1945-1955* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 2-6, 58. Even the British military government, hoping to support the ultimate cultural message of the fêtes, took care to present themselves. Im Auftrag, 4 May 1948, Folder: Allgemeine Vorbereitung der Festwoche, Programmgestaltung, Einladungen, Series: 2.1.6.5.2 Paulskirche, A.02.01: Magistratsakten, Institut für Stadtgeschichte, Frankfurt am Main (hereafter cited as ISG).

The first and second themes, respectively, emphasized the historical connections between the American and German people and the historical connections between Germans and the rest of (a Western-facing) Europe. The third theme was an appeal to German nationalism. The Frankfurt centennials, after all, were ostensibly nationalist celebrations, but organizers needed to strike a delicate balance. In 1948, the international community remained wary of German nationalism, and as a result, the narratives that developed often advocated for the unification of Germany but used rhetoric, language, and imagery that were palatable with their respective ideological camps. In Frankfurt, this meant German unification would come on a liberal-democratic basis, undercutting East German appeals for a unified Germany based on a Marxist-Leninist (or, at the very least, a neutralist) worldview. This is not to say that the appeals for unification were not authentic, nor was the acceptance of such narratives total.

The May 1948 centennial is hardly an unknown chapter in German history. Historians have noted how the year 1848 looms large in postwar memory, and the revolution and St. Paul's Church became symbols of West Germany's democratic renewal and the possibility of national reunification through the end of the twentieth century.⁶ Yet these histories overlook the important role played by the American military

⁶ Andrew Demshuk, *Three Cities After Hitler: Redemptive Reconstruction Across Cold War Borders* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2021), 81-2; Robert Gildea, "1848 in European Collective Memory," in *The Revolutions in Europe – 1848-1849*, eds. Robert Evans and Hartmut Pogge von Strandmann (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 213-4; Shelley E. Rose, "Place and Politics at the Frankfurt Paulskirche after 1945," *Journal of Urban History* 42, no. 1 (2015), 147-150; Dieter Bartzeko and Elmar Lixenfeld, eds., *Denkmal für den Aufbau Deutschlands: Die Paulskirche in Frankfurt am Main* (Langewiesche: Königstein, 1998); Evelyn Hils-Brockhoff and Sabine Hock, *Die*

government in making these celebrations joint German-American endeavors.⁷ American military officials went to even greater lengths than previously thought in supporting and publicizing German cultural affairs in the hopes of legitimizing Frankfurt's national celebrations. At the same time, U.S. officials also attempting to manage the boundaries of the narrative that developed around it, hoping that the proper framing would help to concretize the Western community. In this way, both Frankfurt and American officials

Paulskirche: Symbol demokratischer Freiheit und nationaler Einheit (Frankfurt: Institut für Stadtgeschichte, 1998), 70-3.

⁷ For examples of traditional histories of the occupation which analyze the role of OMGUS in acting as the governing authority, carrying out (limited) denazification, distributing food and establishing housing, overseeing the reinstatement of German political life at the local level, and managing the earliest stages of school reform and re-education initiatives, see Daniel J. Nelson, *History of U.S. Military Forces in Germany* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1987), 1-35, Lutz Niethammer, *Entnazifizierung in Bayern: Säuberung und Rehabilitierung unter amerikanischer Besatzung* (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1972), Hermann-Josef Rupieper, *Die Wurzeln der westdeutschen Nachkriegsdemokratie: Der amerikanische Beitrag, 1945-1952* (Opladen, 1993), Rebecca Boehling, "U.S. Military Occupation, Grass Roots Democracy, and Local German Government," in *American Policy and the Reconstruction of West Germany, 1945-1955*, eds. Jeffrey M. Diefendorf, Axel Frohn, and Rupieper (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 281-288, Brian M. Puaca, *Learning Democracy: Education Reform in West Germany, 1945-1965* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009), Walter M. Hudson, *Army Diplomacy: American Military Occupation and Foreign Policy After World War II* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2015). Histories that have focused on the military government's foray into the cultural sphere have largely focused on how OMGUS monitored German cultural productions such as art, theater, music, radio, and newspapers and how American servicemembers and their families contributed to normalized relations between local Germans and Americans. See Hans-Joachim Harder, "Guarantors of Peace and Freedom: The U.S. Forces in Germany, 1945-1990," in *GIs in Germany: The Social, Economic, Cultural, and Political History of the American Military Presence*, eds. Thomas W. Maulucci, Jr. and Detlef Junker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), Cara Goldstein, "The Control of Visual Representation: American Art Policy in Occupied Germany, 1945-1949," *Intelligence and National Security* 18, no. 2 (July 2003), 283-299, and Abby Anderton, *Rubble Music: Occupying the Ruins of Postwar Berlin* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2019).

envisioned that the observances would memorialize a usable German past, demonstrate the compatibility of West Germans with an American-led liberal democratic order in the Cold War, and justify a deeper cultural association between the West Germans and Americans so soon after the end of Nazi Germany.

When juxtaposed with the East Berlin centennial, an analysis of the written and unwritten narratives surrounding the May and September celebrations demonstrates the contestation of common German history, where the revolution, its aspirations, its heroes, and its villains became part of how Germans and their respective allies helped to publicly reify the ideological boundaries and actualize the divide between East and West. Rather than offering a realistic appeal for German reunification, the Frankfurt and Berlin centennials instead became a vehicle through which West and East German officials could position themselves as the legitimate heir of the German nation. Ironically, the celebrations of German national history served to further concretize the divisions of the Iron Curtain and foster a “Cold War mentality.”⁸

The Revolution of 1848 and Germany’s Latent Democracy

By 1948, Americans and West Germans alike looked upon the centennial of the Revolution of 1848 in Frankfurt as an opportunity to celebrate an example of a liberal-democratic tradition in the German past. The Frankfurt revolution was part of a larger series of both interconnected and disparate anti-monarchist uprisings across the continent,

⁸ Konrad H. Jarausch, Christian Ostermann, and Andreas Etges, “Rethinking, Representing, and Remembering the Cold War: Some Cultural Perspectives,” in *The Cold War: Historiography, Memory, Representation*, eds. Jarausch, Ostermann, and Etges (Berlin: De Gruyter GmbH, 2017), 11-7.

each of which resulted from deeply-rooted and complex economic, political, and nationalist issues.⁹ Even among the German-speaking populations of central Europe, the revolutions were not a monolithic movement. The insurrectionists had a variety of objectives: political and social rights, a new constitution, a liberal government to replace the loose coalition of kingdoms known as the German Confederation, a change in land-usage rights, fairer taxes, and an end to the feudal relations that had governed economic and social life. Revolutionaries took to the streets in major cities in Munich and Vienna in early March, and on 18 March demonstrators in Berlin threw up improvised blockades and clashed with the royal troops, leading to the deaths of some 300 protestors and 100 soldiers and officers. Months later, in May 1848, revolutionaries in Frankfurt convened a National Assembly in St. Paul's Church (the *Paulskirche*) in the hopes of creating a liberal and united Germany that would assure basic civil rights and abolish serfdom forever.¹⁰

By May 1849, the movements in central Europe had effectively been defeated by traditional elites, yet the revolution in Frankfurt remained an important beacon in German history and memory. One hundred years later, Western authorities hoped to ground a potential West German government in a democratic tradition by publicly commemorating

⁹ For the dynamic causes of Europe's various revolutions, see Jonathan Sperber, *The European Revolutions, 1848-1851* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) 42-4, 55-9, 65-73, 73-8, 89-112, Wolfram Siemann, *The German Revolution of 1848-49*, trans. Christiane Banerji (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985) 28, 45-6, and Christopher Clark, *Revolutionary Spring: Fighting for a New World, 1848-1849* (London: Allen Lane, 2023), 17-8, 33-5, 109-129.

¹⁰ Sperber, *European Revolutions*, 137-40; Clark, *Revolutionary Spring*, 544-50.

the movement that brought wide swaths of the population together to press for a unified Germany based on liberalism and civil rights. What's more, many of the German liberals who had participated in the revolution fled, ending up in nearby Switzerland, England, and the United States, giving the revolution in Germany a European and Atlantic character as well.¹¹ Men like Carl Schurz and Franz Sigel enjoyed a particular status among postwar German-Americans as an example of positive transatlantic connections and the liberal tradition in the German past.¹² East German and Soviet officials also hoped to exploit the memory of the revolution for contemporary political purposes, pointing to near-simultaneous release of *The Communist Manifesto* by Friederich Engels and Karl Marx in 1848 as evidence that the continental unrest was a cohesive working-class revolution and a prelude to the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917.

Following the end of the Second World War, it did not take long for many Germans in occupied Frankfurt to realize that the memory of such an aspirational liberal democratic moment might be indispensable. The revolution offered a history, vocabulary, and symbolism that aligned ideologically with their American occupiers, though this is not to say that such appeals to a democratic tradition were not also earnest. Properly memorializing the revolution, these officials hoped, could be a means of using German heritage and history to distance themselves from recent Nazi past and demonstrate that

¹¹ Heléna Tóth, *An Exiled Generation: German and Hungarian Refugees of Revolution, 1848-1871* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 1-6.

¹² For example, see Carl Wittke, *Refugees of Revolution: The German Forty-Eighters in America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1952).

the Third Reich was a temporary deviation from Germany's political development.¹³ As a public celebration, by definition dependent on the widespread participation of the general public, the observation might also jolt the population of western Germany out of the dazed, apathetic state that had defined life for many Germans since the end of the war and entice them into caring about their democratic development.¹⁴

For postwar West Germans, preparations for the centenary began as early as late 1945. After establishing a working committee dedicated to the centennial, Frankfurt officials began to reach out to historians, museums, libraries, and state and federal archives looking for materials to preserve and use for observing the centenary.¹⁵ If a future government of Germany (unified or otherwise) were to be democratic in character, these officials believed they would have to provide evidence of a strong foundation of Germany's liberalism, from which a government could draw its authority. The centenary seemed to be the perfect opportunity to "extract from the past elements that are suitable to create a democratic tradition." As such, the "ideology of democracy" and their

¹³ See Hils-Brockhoff and Hock, *Die Paulskirche*.

¹⁴ Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998), 240.

¹⁵ An das Kulturred, 7 August 1944, Folder: Jahrhundertfeier der Paulskirchenversammlung am 18. Mai 1948, Series: 5.11.9 Sonstige Veranstaltungen, A.41: Kulturred, ISG; An das Kulturred, 6 September 1945, Folder: Jahrhundertfeier der Paulskirchenversammlung am 18. Mai 1948, Series: 5.11.9 Sonstige Veranstaltungen, A.41: Kulturred, ISG; An das Kulturred, 7 August 1946, Folder: Jahrhundertfeier der Paulskirchenversammlung am 18. Mai 1948, Series: 5.11.9 Sonstige Veranstaltungen, A.41: Kulturred, ISG.

implications for a “unified, democratic Germany” should be the “leitmotif” for the celebrations.

The working committee acknowledged almost immediately that the observation could not be limited to a nationalist celebration – in fact, given the prevailing circumstances of occupation in late 1945 and early 1946, a centenary that framed the Reich as a nationalist and imperial power was undesirable. Instead, any celebration in 1948 would have to have a “supra-national” and “cosmopolitan” focus that emphasized the revolutionary movement’s “democratic and world-political significance.” It would be imperative that those preparing the celebration infused it with “European significance” and underlined its strong connections to the United States.¹⁶ With this in mind, Frankfurt’s working committee prepared for the centenary under the principle that it should highlight the revolution’s European attachments and “the intellectual relations between Germany and America.”¹⁷

¹⁶ Besprechung über die Massnahmen, c. January 1946, Folder: Jahrhundertfeier der Paulskirchenversammlung am 18. Mai 1948, Series: 5.11.9 Sonstige Veranstaltungen, A.41: Kulturred, ISG; Kulturred to Dr. Appel, 16 October 1945, Folder: Jahrhundertfeier der Paulskirchenversammlung am 18. Mai 1948, Series: 5.11.9 Sonstige Veranstaltungen, A.41: Kulturred, ISG; Ludwig Bergsträsser to Kurt Blaum, 16 March 1946, Folder: Jahrhundertfeier der Paulskirchenversammlung am 18. Mai 1948, Series: 5.11.9 Sonstige Veranstaltungen, A.41: Kulturred, ISG; Ausschuss für die Vorbereitung der Hundertjahrfeier der Paulskirchenversammlung, 7 November 1946, Folder: Jahrhundertfeier der Paulskirchenversammlung am 18. Mai 1948, Series: 5.11.9 Sonstige Veranstaltungen, A.41: Kulturred, ISG.

¹⁷ Rudolf Keller to Otto Vossler, 6 May 1946, Folder: Jahrhundertfeier der Paulskirchenversammlung am 18. Mai 1948, Series: 5.11.9 Sonstige Veranstaltungen, A.41: Kulturred, ISG.

The proposal to give the festivities a more European meaning received a boost from the broader effort on the part of many Europeans to construct a pan-European movement in the postwar period. The notion of a European federation, or a supra-national political alliance of European states, preceded the Second World War, but given the genocidal consequences of the Nazi regime, many revived the quest for a European federation that would ensure peace and act as a counter to the excesses of extreme nationalism.¹⁸ One such organization that emerged out of a patchwork of overlapping and collaborating movements was the Union of European Federalists (UEF), established in Switzerland in September 1946.¹⁹

Even before the onset of the Cold War in 1947, these federalists were often strong advocates of European neutrality. Perhaps most saw European unity as a possible means of addressing the question of German nationalism while also balancing international politics between the Soviet Union and United States. As the Iron Curtain descended across Europe, and especially after the announcement of the Marshall Plan in June 1947, these organizations were faced with a set of choices on how to respond. The reclusive and tightly-controlled nature of the Eastern bloc countries largely precluded pan-European organizations from operating or exerting any influence there, and the Union of European Federalists resolved to take a “begin in the west” approach, where they would cooperate with democratic countries in the west (including the United States, whose Marshall Plan

¹⁸ Martin Dedman, *The Origins and Development of the European Union, 1945-1995: A History of European Integration* (London: Routledge, 1996), 16-8.

¹⁹ Sergio Pistone, *The Union of European Federalists* (Milano, Italy: Giuffrè Editore, 2008), 21-4.

aid would help to reconstruct the continent) with the eventual goal of trying to facilitate democracy in eastern Europe.²⁰

Many members of these organizations even advocated for the integration of Germany into the European Union, believing that it would help to align German national interests more strongly with the rest of Europe, thereby preventing conflict.²¹ The various pan-European organizations deepened their cooperation through 1947 and early 1948, gathering in a conference in Montreux in August 1947 (sponsored by the UEF) to discuss “the German problem” and lay out the principles for a federalist Europe. The UEF’s first official congress even went as far as to elect three Germans to sit on its central committee as evidence of its commitment to integrate Germany into the European federation in order to try and mitigate any potential danger that Germany posed. One week before the Frankfurt centennial in May 1948, organizations of the European Movement arranged a “Council of Europe” at the Hague. The council, chaired by Winston Churchill, brought together European intellectuals, political leaders, and around one thousand participants

²⁰ Geir Lundestad, *The United States and Western Europe since 1945: From “Empire” By Invitation to Transatlantic Drift* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 2-3, 8. While many were happy to invite American dollars in order to reconstruct Europe and check Soviet aggression, they nonetheless remained wary of American attempts to dominate the continent culturally and politically. See also Helga Haftendorn, *Coming of Age: German Foreign Policy Since 1945* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2006), 49-51.

²¹ Mathias Schütz, “Kein Vergessen: Die Europa-Föderalisten, der Verband deutscher Soldaten und die europäischen Veteranentreffen 1952/53,” *Militärgeschichtliche Zeitschrift* 75, no. 2 (2016), 392-4; “Die Beschlüsse des Kongresses der ‘Union Européenne des Fédéralistes,’ Montreux, 27-31. August 1947,” *Die Friedens-Warte* 47, no. 4/5 (1947), 318.

representing nearly all of western Europe, including future West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer and German diplomat Walter Hallstein.²²

When Frankfurt officials planned for the May centennial, they pushed for the inclusion of a definite European element. To this end, planners hoped to invite the Union of European Federalists to participate in the celebrations in some capacity, believing that the fête might be used as a “preliminary stage towards the realization of the pan-European idea” and Germany’s economic integration into the continent.²³

Cold War Divisions

Officials in the American military government quickly came around to the idea of supporting a Frankfurt celebration and recognizing the larger, Atlantic implications of such an observation. As ideological and geopolitical divisions deepened throughout 1947, and it became increasingly apparent that their temporary wartime alliance with the Soviet Union was not successfully transitioning into the postwar period, U.S. officials worked towards creating an ideologically-cohesive Western community that could resist Soviet aggression. OMGUS officials viewed the planning of the centennial as a means of

²² Pistone, *The Union*, 42-3; Schütz, “Kein Vergessen,” 392. Hallstein went on to be the first president of the Commission of the European Economic Community. See also Steven Greer, Janneke Gerards, and Rose Slowe, *Human Rights in the Council of Europe and the European Union: Achievements, Trends and Challenges* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 5-8.

²³ Zur Sitzung des Gesamtausschusses für die Vorbereitung der Hundertjahrfeier der Paulskirchenversammlung, 10 March 1947, Folder: Jahrhundertfeier der Paulskirchenversammlung am 18. Mai 1948, Series: 5.11.9 Sonstige Veranstaltungen, A.41: Kulturamt, ISG; Zur Sitzung des Gesamtausschusses für die Vorbereitung der Hundertjahrfeier der Paulskirchenversammlung, 8 November 1947, Folder: Jahrhundertfeier der Paulskirchenversammlung am 18. Mai 1948, Series: 5.11.9 Sonstige Veranstaltungen, A.41: Kulturamt, ISG.

disseminating an ideological and political message that would help to consolidate this ideological West.

At the Potsdam Conference in July and August 1945, the Grand Alliance (including Great Britain) resolved to determine the fate of postwar Germany jointly by agreeing to decentralize Germany and only gradually allowing the economy to function as a single, heavily-regulated unit. This economic policy never coalesced smoothly, as the United States and Great Britain hoped a strong German economy would stabilize the entire continent, while the French and Soviets were hesitant to see their defeated foe empowered in any capacity, even economically. As a result of disputes with the Soviets as well as hoping to stabilize the economies of their occupation zones, American and British authorities suspended the delivery of industrial reparations to the Soviet zone in mid-1946.²⁴

Subsequent disagreements brought occupied Germany's four-power governing body (the Allied Control Council, which required unanimity for decisions) to a halt. To continue improving the economic situations in their own zones, the British and American

²⁴ Ostermann, *Between Containment and Rollback: The United States and the Cold War in Germany* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2021), 25; Adam Tooze, *The Wages of Destruction: The Making and Breaking of the Nazi Economy* (New York: Viking, 2006), 672-3; Hans-Peter Schwarz, "The Division of Germany, 1945-1949," in *The Cambridge History of the Cold War, Volume 1: Origins*, eds. Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 133; Benn Steil, *The Marshall Plan: Dawn of the Cold War* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2018), 60-5. For the economic difficulties that arose due to the division of Germany, see Petra Weber, *Getrennt und doch Vereint: Deutsch-deutsche Geschichte 1945-1989/90* (Berlin: Metropol, 2020), 74-85 and Astrid M. Eckert, *West Germany and the Iron Curtain: Environment, Economy, and Culture in the Borderlands* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 16-20.

military governments merged their occupation zones into a single, cohesive unit, which they called Bizonia, on 1 January 1947. The Soviets took the consolidation of the American and British zones as evidence that the foundation was being laid for an “American-dominated West German state.”²⁵ The four parties failed to agree on a peace treaty, German reunification, and a coherent reparations policy at conferences in Moscow (March 1947) and London (November-December 1947). U.S. Secretary of State George Marshall’s announcement of American intentions to include West Germany in a European Recovery Plan (the Marshall Plan) and the American push for currency reform in Bizonia further exacerbated tensions.²⁶ While they did not immediately join in the formation of Bizonia, French attitudes on Germany softened throughout 1947, though they remained steadfast that Germany’s revitalization should be carefully managed.²⁷

In the face of this division with the Soviet Union, both American and British officials were beginning to think about Germany in terms of ideological and cultural connections to the Western world. After the Moscow Conference ended without an

²⁵ Ostermann, *Between Containment*, 10; Norman M. Naimark, *Stalin and the Fate of Europe: The Postwar Struggle for Sovereignty* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2019), 162-4.

²⁶ Westad, *The Cold War: A World History* (New York: Basic Books, 2017), 108-11; Steil, *Marshall Plan*, 60-8, 109-10.

²⁷ Françoise Berger, “Economic and Industrial Issues in France’s Approach to the German Question in the Postwar Period,” in *France and the German Question, 1945-1990*, eds. Frédéric Bozo and Christian Wenkel (New York: Berghahn, 2019), 39-42. Of course, as had occurred in all countries, there was an internal debate over how best to proceed over the occupation of Germany, economically and politically. In France, the policy began to shift away from a more hardline approach after the ministers of the Communist Party were ousted in May 1947.

agreement in March 1947, the mayor of Offenbach noted that the Anglo-American position had acknowledged that the future of Europe was dependent on political unity, “creat[ing] firmer foundations for occidental culture,” and supporting “the forces necessary for the preservation of occidental culture... in the face of the powerful Eastern bloc countries.” What’s more, the mayor believed, was that after the Moscow Conference, even the French were “more or less” coming around to supporting this view as well.²⁸ This statement, from a German source, speaks to how American and British officials were thinking about the western zones of Germany in terms of belonging to a kind of “intellectual-cultural” Western culture (in the words of Giles Scott-Smith) and were actively identifying the steps that should be taken in order to create “firmer foundations” for such a transatlantic culture as early as April 1947.²⁹

Historians have recognized that the implementation of the Marshall Plan in 1948 helped to construct a “community of ideas, economic links, and security ties between... ‘the West,’” but it is clear that officials across the Atlantic world were thinking about the construction of this “community of ideas” even before the announcement of the Marshall Plan in June 1947.³⁰ Officials in western Germany, of course, had been appealing to Europe and Western culture as a means of rapprochement and collaboration with their

²⁸ Betr.: Wiederaufbau der Paulskirche, 14 April 1947, Folder: Jahrhundertfeier der Paulskirchenversammlung am 18. Mai 1948, Series: 5.11.9 Sonstige Veranstaltungen, A.41: Kulturamt, ISG. Contemporaneous western German sources often use the word “abendländisch,” which can be translated as both “occidental” and “western.”

²⁹ Scott-Smith, *Politics of Apolitical Culture*, 58.

³⁰ William I. Hitchcock, “The Marshall Plan and the Creation of the West,” in *Cambridge History*, Volume 1, 154.

occupiers since 1945. For both U.S. and American-zone Germans, then, the centennial of 1848, and fête diplomacy overall, would be an excellent opportunity to stage and reify this Atlantic and Western community.

By the end of the year, additional disputes increasingly put the possibility of a unified Germany in doubt. After the failure of a conference in London in December 1947, American officials came to believe that their differences with the Soviets could not be bridged. Subsequently, the three western Allied powers agreed to an additional six-power conference in London for February 1948, this time without the Soviet Union. In the words of John Lewis Gaddis, the call for this conference effectively signaled the “abandonment of any further pretense at four-power cooperation.”³¹

Preparations for this conference between the three Western powers and the Benelux countries sent strong signals to the occupied Germans (to say nothing of the Soviets) that the Allies appeared to be moving towards a more consolidated western European alliance. What’s more, the alliance seemed to have a place for the western zones of Germany, even if that was in the future. The conference’s agenda, which included the Marshall Plan, western European economic integration, the possibility of a West German state, merely solidified these beliefs.³²

³¹ John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 119. Historian Petra Weber called the Moscow Conference a “tragic spectacle of disunity” between the Allied powers and called the London Conference “nothing more than a farce.” Weber, *Getrennt*, 138.

³² For a sample of West German coverage, see “Enttäuschung über die gescheiterte Konferenz,” *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 20 December 1947, “Westeuropa-Allianz zu erwarten,” *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 2 March 1948, and “Westeuropa-Union wird wirklichkeit,” *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 13 March 1948.

Even before the conference began, the British and Americans were planning to introduce currency reform and elections to Bizonia, with the French acquiescing to these plans in exchange for economic concessions.³³ While it didn't settle matters related to Germany, the London Conference resulted in two significant developments. On 17 March, in response to a Soviet-sponsored coup in Czechoslovakia the previous month, the foreign ministers of the five European nations signed the Brussels Pact, pledging military cooperation.³⁴ In addition, the conference's first recommendation, also coming in March 1948, was for the three western occupying powers to authorize Germans in their zones to begin forming a provisional government.³⁵

OMGUS and the Development of the Frankfurt Centennial

It is within the context of this widening ideological gulf between the Soviets and Americans that the American military government viewed the upcoming Frankfurt centennial in May 1948. The western zones of Germany seemed to be moving towards consolidation as an economic and political entity with a Western orientation, but officials were thinking about cultural westernization months before, as frustrations with the

³³ Westad, *Cold War*, 110; Schwarz, "Division," 144. Even Charles De Gaulle, previously a staunch opponent of a revitalized Germany but who in 1948 did not hold any official position in the French government, became open to a western orientation for Germany, believing that the unification of Western Europe was the Old World's "last hope." "De Gaulle für Westorientierung Deutschlands," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 9 March 1948.

³⁴ Michael H. Creswell, "France, German Rearmament, and the German Question, 1945-1955," in *France and the German Question*, 57.

³⁵ Dennis L. Bark and David R. Gress, *A History of West Germany: From Shadow to Substance, 1945-1963* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1993), 210-11.

Soviets mounted. The proper framing of the centennial could help to publicly legitimize a deeper economic and political relationship between Americans and Germans based on their common culture and Western heritage.

The planning of the festival also took place within the context of the larger push by American officials, journalists, and other “memory activists” (in the words of Brian Etheridge) to wage a public campaign to frame Germans as “dedicated democrats standing firm on the front lines of the Cold War.”³⁶ These memory activists used public diplomacy (and highly selective “forgetting” of the recent German past) in order to frame West Germans as “Americanized,” and this campaign only intensified once the ideological divisions between the Soviet Union and United States became more acute. In this narrative, the Germans had not gone to war with Europe and the United States because there was some national defect but because they were under the oppressive thumb of a totalitarian regime. This meant that the Germans were the “first victims” of Hitler and that the Second World War was an ideological rather than a nationalist war.

Due to the political demands of the Cold War, in which the Soviet Union was cast as the new ideological enemy and the antagonistic successor of Nazi Germany, this concept of ideological struggle resonated with many Americans. By conflating socialism and Nazism under the single umbrella of “totalitarianism” (or “Red Fascism”), officials and other memory activists were distancing the German people (Hitler’s “first victims,” in this telling) from the crimes of the Nazi regime and casting present-day Germans as

³⁶ Brian Etheridge, *Enemies to Allies: Cold War Germany and American Memory* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2016), 6.

democrats who could now aid the United States in its centuries-long ideological battle with authoritarianism.³⁷ Fête diplomacy was an additional means by which government officials and activists contributed to this on-going process of constructing a German-American alliance (and the broader Atlantic community) in opposition to a totalitarian threat.

In December 1947, an OMGUS committee recommended that the Frankfurt centennial be used as an opportunity to introduce a potential West German entity to the international community as a nation based on liberal democracy. In pursuit of this goal, the committee suggested that the centennial be paired with historically-significant U.S. actions that marked a clear break between the occupation and the introduction of a provisional West German government. The centennial could be something of a “farewell address” for the military governorship, and the introduction of an Occupation Statute “in the nature of a [German] Magna Carta” would be “the most fitting way” to honor the Revolution of 1848 while also representing “a considerable contribution to the democratization of the Zone.” While the Statute and subsequent ending of the occupation did not occur in 1948, discussion surrounding the possibility reveals how OMGUS officials viewed the centennial as a democratic rebirth that ran parallel to the events of 1848 and signified a clear epochal demarcation from the Nazi past.³⁸

³⁷ Etheridge, *Enemies to Allies*, 3, 11, 57-8, 112, 123-4. For the “construction” of the Soviet Union as an ideological “threat,” see Kenneth Osgood, “The American Construction of the Communist Threat,” in *The Cambridge History of America and the World, Vol. IV: 1945 to the Present*, eds. David C. Engerman, Max Paul Friedman, and Melani McAlister (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 130.

The plan to celebrate the Frankfurt Revolution in May put American military authorities in a unique position. From the end of the war to early 1947, the purpose of the American military government's presence in its zone of Germany was to implement "re-education." To this end, officials carried out denazification, closely supervised the deconstruction and reinstitution of German political life at the local level, controlled the dissemination of information by closing and relicensing radio stations and newspapers, fostered early exchanges bringing German experts to the United States, established information centers and reading rooms to present American culture to the German people, and oversaw school reforms which included the purging of teachers and textbooks from the Nazi era.³⁹ Each of these methods was didactic in its approach: Americans, as the victorious occupying force, had the self-evident "right" to impose change on a defeated population, and it fell to the vanquished Germans to heed this "wise

³⁸ Memorandum to Dr. E. H. Litchfield, 16 February 1948, Folder: Miscellaneous Anniversary of the 1848 German Revolution, Box 206, Records Relating to the Cultural Exchange Program, 1947-1949, Record Group 260, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD (hereafter cited as NARA).

³⁹ Erwin Warkentin, *The History of U.S. Information Control in Post-War Germany: The Past Imperfect* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016), 156-9; Michael Kater, *After the Nazis: The Story of Culture in West Germany* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2023), 6; Nicholas J. Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency: American Propaganda and Public Diplomacy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 25-7. See also James F. Tent, *Mission on the Rhine: Reeducation and Denazification in American-Occupied Germany* (Chicago: The University Press of Chicago, 1982), 12, 40-3 and Kathleen Hooper, *Designing Democracy: Re-Education and the America Houses (1945-1961)* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2014), 12-3, 35.

guidance” in order to break the cycle of militarism and illiberalism that had marked the German nation for the first half of the twentieth century.⁴⁰

Yet, as the western zones of Germany increasingly figured into U.S. global objectives as a bulwark against Soviet expansionism and as a keystone of European stability, officials were beginning to pivot away from a punitive occupation whose central goal was punishment and “re-education” and towards “reorientation,” a more benign term which implied cooperation with the German people rather than the enforcement of a democratization program.⁴¹ This policy shift would not be fully codified until mid-1949, when the State Department and the High Commissioner for Occupied Germany (HICOG) assumed the responsibilities for the occupation from OMGUS, putting the military government in an ambiguous space between the height of punitive occupation and onset of civilian governance. In this space, the military transcended traditional combat and occupation roles and entered the more civilian-oriented responsibilities that would become the norm years later, including cultural diplomacy.

Because fête diplomacy was dependent on collaboration from West Germans, its implementation carried the most prominent hallmarks of “reorientation” rather than “re-education” and presaged this coming shift from occupation to cooperation. Culture could

⁴⁰ Richard Merritt, *Democracy Imposed: U.S. Occupation Policy and the German Public, 1945-1949* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 239-46, 268.

⁴¹ Tent, *Mission*, 2, 12, 254-5, 311; Jarausch, *After Hitler: Recivilizing Germans, 1945-1995* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 130-9; Katharina Gerund und Heike Paul, “Einleitung,” in *Die Amerikanische Reeducation-Politik nach 1945: Interdisziplinäre Perspektiven auf “America’s Germany,”* eds. Gerund and Paul (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2015), 7-14.

not be imposed top-down by fiat, and in order to get West Germans to participate more readily in this cultural diplomacy (and their own reorientation), it had to appear as authentic and congruent with German culture as possible. To this end, many government officials viewed the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation as a potential “friend” with the bona fides and reputation among the Germans to help facilitate change from the bottom-up rather than top-down. The Foundation’s experiences during the war had, unwittingly, prepared it for this role. After popular suspicion of the organization during the war forced the Foundation to confine its activities primarily to the role of conserving the culture of the “older Germany of Goethe” and “interpreting” it for the American public, it was now in the perfect position to help transplant these traditions back into western Germany in a way that was approved of by the United States government and authentic to West Germans.⁴²

U.S. authorities were also heavily influenced by the knowledge that the Soviet Union and East German officials were preparing their own centennial affair to commemorate the March Revolution in Berlin. Like their American counterparts, Soviet officials in the east zone placed a high priority on cultural affairs in Germany and viewed culture as both inherently political and ideological. Soviet cultural officers impressed upon the East German population that Russians had respect for the traditions of German culture such as Goethe and framed themselves as champions of preserving “Old World

⁴² James Truslow Adams to Wilbur K. Thomas, 11 July 1940, Folder 6, Box 3, Series 1A, Group 1, National Carl Schurz Association Records, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA (hereafter cited as NCSA Records, HSP); George Hanstein to Eric M. Warburg, 8 December 1948, Folder 8, Box 4, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

culture,” in direct contrast to the Americans, whose culture the Kremlin portrayed as low-brow and derivative.⁴³

The preparations for the March centennial in the Soviet-occupied zone fell to the Cultural Association for the Democratic Renewal of Germany, established in August 1945 and headed by the chief cultural leader in the zone, Johannes R. Becher.⁴⁴ As they prepared for the March 1948 centennial, members of the Cultural Association and Soviet cultural officers often foregrounded the geopolitical and ideological division in occupied Germany, consistently referencing “the situation we find ourselves in” after “the catastrophe[s] of 1946,” “the failure of the London Conference,” and the “danger[ous]” American plans to create distinct economic zones and forge a separate West German entity. Certain that the Frankfurt festival under OMGUS would certainly “have a political tone,” East German and Soviet planners similarly looked for ways to make the centennial ideologically meaningful and planned for the observation to coincide with the opening of a second People’s Congress in Berlin that styled itself as a champion of German nationalism and a “united and undivided Germany.”⁴⁵

⁴³ Jessica C.E. Gienow-Hecht, “Culture and the Cold War in Europe,” in *Cambridge History, Volume 1*, 402-4.

⁴⁴ At its inception, the Cultural Association exercised considerable ideological plurality to the point where the head of the Soviet-zone Propaganda Administration, Sergei Tulpanov, expressed doubts about Becher’s Marxist loyalties. Yet by the onset of the Cold War during 1947, the organization had become, in the words of Petra Weber, “an extension of” the East zone’s Socialist Unity Party and was banned in the British and American zones. Tulpanov insisted that Becher was “not only not a Marxist” but also “oriented directly towards... Western European democracy.” See Dietrich, *Kulturgeschichte*, 93-100 and Weber, *Getrennt*, 120-2.

St. Paul's Church and Democratic Memory

Most in Frankfurt agreed even before the end of 1945 that the centerpiece of the celebration of the new (or “old”) Germany should be St. Paul’s Church in the heart of Frankfurt am Main. After all, the *Paulskirche* was the site where the Frankfurt National Assembly met to declare Germany’s first democratic government, brief as it was, making the church the clearest symbol and physical manifestation of liberal democracy in Germany.⁴⁶ With such a history, the church was a prime target for what historian Andrew Demshuk called “redemptive reconstruction,” or the rebuilding of cultural landmarks whose historical and cultural symbolism was seen as a means of spiritual or social recovery after the fall of the Third Reich.⁴⁷ Buildings and monuments themselves are just structures, but they become important when they are imbued with the “nation’s rites” (in the words of James Young) that make them become “objects of a people’s national pilgrimage.” St. Paul’s Church, then, became part of a larger project where the state sponsored the “memory of a national past” in order to “affirm the righteousness” of West Germany’s rebirth.⁴⁸ In the *Paulskirche* and the revolutionaries of 1848, Germany could

⁴⁵ Tagesordnung für die Sitzung des Präsidialrates, 16 January 1948, Folder: Tagungen vom 16.1., 9.3., 25.5., 15.7., 7.9., 12.11.1948, Series: Tagungen des Präsidialrates, DY 27: Kulturbund der DDR, German Federal Archives, Berlin-Lichterfelde (hereafter cited as German Federal Archives), 8-10, 29-30.

⁴⁶ Theodor Heuss, President of the Federal Republic of Germany, c. 1953, Folder 10, Box 8, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP; Theodore Heuss, “Parallels and Contrasts,” *Information Bulletin* (March 1952), 24; John Elliott, “Schurman Pays Schurz Honor in Reichstag,” *New York Herald Tribune*, 4 March 1929.

⁴⁷ Demshuk, *Three Cities*, 3, 52.

once more find a new material and spiritual justification for its continued existence after 1945.⁴⁹

The plan to center the church during the centennial received an added boost when its most public champion, Walter Kolb, took office in May 1946. Yet, one year after the end of the war, the church was little more than a pile of rubble. Frankfurt was among the German cities most heavily damaged during World War II, with an estimated 80,000 of the city's 180,000 buildings – including St. Paul's Church - suffering at least some damage.⁵⁰ Much of the church's red sandstone blocks crumbled in, its interior's gallery and windows had been obliterated by the bombing raids, and the pulpit and pews had been reduced to ashes in the ensuing fire.⁵¹

The ruins of the *Paulskirche* were the perfect encapsulation of the physical and spiritual destruction of the German people. In Frankfurt, a city that in 1948 was attempting to frame itself as a symbol of renewal, the *Paulskirche* was at the center of it

⁴⁸ James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 2.

⁴⁹ Ottmar Bühler, "Carl Schurz and the Revolution of 1848," *American-German Review* 14, no. 5 (June 1948), 3-4.

⁵⁰ Bark and Gress, *History of West Germany*, 31; Demshuk, *Three Cities*, 52.

⁵¹ Walter Kolb, "St. Paul's Church Will Rise Again," *American-German Review* 14, no. 2 (December 1947), 25-7; "Die Neue Paulskirche," *Die Neue Stadt* 2, no. 3 (March 1948), 101-104; Gerhard Rosenberg, "Paulskirche, Frankfurt," *The Architectural Review* 106, no. 635 (November 1949), 323-6; "Capital Amid the Rubble: Crowded, Ancient Frankfurt Begins to Bustle Again as Heart of New Bizonia," *Newsweek* 31, no. 3 (19 January 1948), 32; "Wiederaufbau der Paulskirche Frankfurt am Main," *American-German Review* 14, no. 4 (April 1948), 29; "Der Wiederaufbau der Frankfurter Paulskirche," *Mittelbayerische Zeitung*, 16 April 1948.

all. It was *the* “emblem” or central “symbol of submerged democracy in Germany” and a microcosm of this rebirth.⁵² One German journalist highlighted that St. Paul’s Church, with all of its democratic hopes and cultural values, exemplified all that “good Germany” had to offer and would be among the “best witnesses” to sweep away the tyranny of the past.⁵³ The mayor publicly emphasized the symbolic importance of the project, insisting that the “spiritual revival of our people towards tolerance, humanity, and cosmopolitanism” was taking place “[p]arallel with the reconstruction.”⁵⁴

On a personal level, Kolb also saw the May centennial and the reconstruction of the *Paulskirche* as an opportunity to make a case for Frankfurt as the provisional capital of any future West German state. Now that Berlin lay behind the Iron Curtain, the mayor hoped that his city, long an economic and cultural center in Germany and currently housing the American Army Headquarters and Economic Council of Bizonia, had the best claim. His consistent references to the future rededication of St. Paul’s Church as an event that would reinaugurate West German democracy, while certainly sincere, were also geared towards garnering public support for his city as the provisional capital over Bonn.⁵⁵

⁵² “Capital Amid the Rubble,” 32.

⁵³ Walter Saßnick, “Schuld und Sühne,” *Mittelbayerische Zeitung*, 17 October 1946.

⁵⁴ Kolb to Howard Elkinton, 28 January 1948, Folder 2, Box 37, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

⁵⁵ “Wahrzeichen deutscher Demokratie,” *Mittelbayerische Zeitung*, 11 November 1947; Roland Marwite, “Das Haus ist zerfallen,” *Passauer Neue Presse*, 28 June 1946; Demshuk, *Three Cities*, 54, 81-82; Friedhelm Fischer, “German Reconstruction as an

In November 1946, with the city's people still in recovery, Mayor Kolb's office officially announced plans for the restoration of the church with hopes that the project would be finished in time for the one-hundredth anniversary of the 1848 revolution on 18 May 1948. Mayor Kolb wrote to fellow mayors and put out a public appeal for donations to rebuild the church and provide the nation with a symbol of their fatherland's "indestructible unity."⁵⁶ By the time that hundreds of German laborers began digging into the rubble the following March, the mayor's office estimated that pledges and donations earmarked for the church exceeded 500,000 marks, though officials at the time estimated that the repairs would cost around six million marks.⁵⁷

The construction faced headwinds, even among Frankfurters. Many doubted that the church could be reconstructed in time. Among others, there was a fierce debate over the manner of the reconstruction itself: should the reconstructed building come as close as possible to the previous aesthetic in search of "authenticity," or should the building

International Activity," in *Rebuilding Europe's Bombed Cities*, ed. Diefendorf (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), 140-1. Though many observers believed that Frankfurt had the better claim to becoming the capital because of its history and contemporary centrality to German affairs, ultimately the Bundestag voted for Bonn as the capital of West Germany in November 1949.

⁵⁶ Aufruf der Stadt Frankfurt am Main zum Wiederaufbau der Paulskirche, 20 November 1946, Folder: Jahrhundertfeier der Paulskirchenversammlung am 18. Mai 1948, Series: 5.11.9 Sonstige Veranstaltungen, A.41: Kulturamt ISG; From Walter Kolb, c. February 1947, Folder: Jahrhundertfeier der Paulskirchenversammlung am 18. Mai 1948, Series: 5.11.9 Sonstige Veranstaltungen, A.41: Kulturamt, ISG.

⁵⁷ "Wiederherstellung der Paulskirche," *Mittelbayerische Zeitung*, 26 November 1946; Dana Adams Schmidt, "New Era's Symbol Rising in Germany," *The New York Times*, 27 March 1947; "Der Wiederaufbau," *Mittelbayerische Zeitung*. The actual cost of the finished product was about four million Reichsmarks. Demshuk, *Three Cities*, 78.

shed the moral qualms of the past with a modern aesthetic?⁵⁸ There were also vocal detractors who believed that the whole project was absurd on its face, as people still struggled for food. Even ordinary people could not help but note that one could not eat symbolism, nor did hope keep one dry from the rain. To address some of these concerns and to win the support of some of his detractors, Kolb also ordered the simultaneous repairs for an apartment complex (the Friederich-Ebert-Siedlung) to give Frankfurt's rebirth a more practical project to exist alongside its spiritual rebirth.⁵⁹

During reconstruction, Mayor Kolb continued to look outside of the limits of Frankfurt for financial support. He sent a letter to the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation personally appealing for any assistance that the organization might be able to furnish. While the organization was in no position to help monetarily, Executive Director Howard Elkinton wanted to lend moral support and printed a personal appeal from the mayor in its publication, *American-German Review*, in order to stimulate private American donations. Elkinton and the Foundation similarly saw the symbolic importance of the reconstruction, believing that “[e]vidence of *Wiederaufbau* [reconstruction] vitality in central Europe is hope for the future.”⁶⁰

⁵⁸ For these debates, see Demshuk, *Three Cities*, 68-71.

⁵⁹ Demshuk, *Three Cities*, 85.

⁶⁰ Minutes of Meeting of the Executive Committee, 8 July 1946, Folder 2, Box 34, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP; Minutes of Meeting of the Executive Committee, 9 September 1947, Folder 2, Box 34, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP, 2; Elkinton to Kolb, 2 October 1947, Folder 2, Box 34, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP. The Foundation had only regained its tax-exemption status a few months prior and had just finished clearing its debt of \$15,000 with Philadelphia National Bank. For the article, see Kolb, “St. Paul’s Church,” 25-7.

In addition, Kolb requested a presence from the Foundation for the May festivities as a demonstration of the joint American-German commitment to the “high ideals” represented by the revolutionaries and the *Paulskirche*.⁶¹ The Foundation’s executive committee, excited at the prospect of pursuing this type of cultural relations and having “some part in restoring the intellectual and spiritual structures,” tapped Theodore Knauth to represent the organization in Frankfurt. As an official in the Bipartite Control Office in the American military government and the brother of a Foundation member, Knauth was a constructive choice and the perfect go-between for the private organization and occupation officials.⁶²

The March Centennial

But the city of Frankfurt was not the first to celebrate the centennial. Soviet and Soviet-zone authorities in East Berlin commemorated the March Revolution, when demonstrators clashed with Prussian troops over barricades throughout Berlin on 18 March 1848.⁶³ The ensuing celebrations in 1948 adhered rigidly to Marxist-Leninist dogma when it relayed the history of the uprising: the revolutions of Europe stemmed from a series of interrelated working-class uprisings and was led by industrial and

⁶¹ Kolb to Elkinton, 28 January 1948, HSP.

⁶² Minutes of Meeting of the Executive Committee, 13 January 1948, Folder 3, Box 34, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP; Minutes of Meeting of the Executive Committee, 9 April 1948, Folder 3, Box 34, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP; Elkinton to Kolb, 28 April 1948, Folder 3, Box 34, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP; Minutes of Meeting of the Executive Committee, 7 May 1948, Folder 3, Box 34, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

⁶³ Siemann, *German Revolution*, 55-6; Sperber, *European Revolutions*, 109-17.

agricultural workers with materialist concerns. The concurrent nature of the revolutions across Europe pointed towards the development of a pan-European working-class consciousness. This narrative situated the European revolutions as part of the march towards a worldwide Marxist revolution in a manner congruent with the history as told by Soviet historians.⁶⁴

The fact that Friedrich Engels and Karl Marx had been writing *The Communist Manifesto* in the months before and released it “simultaneously” with the outbreak of general European unrest seemingly confirmed the centrality of Marxism to the revolution. The particularly violent and bloody results of the Berlin Revolution (some of the bloodiest of the central European revolutions in 1848) was an important detail for those celebrating in 1948, as well. The clashes between the March Revolution’s protagonists (“the fighters of the barricades”) and authorities were reminiscent of street clashes during the Bolshevik Revolution in October 1917, which only served to underscore the spiritual connection between the two movements and demonstrated that the Bolshevik Revolution was “a very clear echo of the revolution of 1848.”⁶⁵

The adherence to Marxist orthodoxy not only shaped the representation of the revolutionary protagonists, antagonists, and lessons for the centenary audience but

⁶⁴ Boris Fedorovich Porshnev, *K stoletiyu Revolyutsii 1848 Goda* (Moscow State University: 1949), 9-30; Sergei Kan, *Revolutsiya 1848 goda v Avstrii I Germanii* (Moscow: 1948), 221-2; A.S. Nifontov, *Rossiia v 1848 godu* (Moscow: 1949). Historians debate the role of the working class in the March Revolution and the extent to which the working class was driven by economic or political concerns. See Peter Jones, *The 1848 Revolutions* (London: Routledge, 2013), 78-9.

⁶⁵ Tagesordnung, German Federal Archives, 11.

presaged how East German historians interpreted the Revolution over the next two decades.⁶⁶ This presentation of history was clearest in one particular exhibition, entitled “1848 – A Revolution and Its Lessons,” which depicted the revolution as the point where Germany moved from its feudal phase to capitalism. Subsequently, capitalists immediately went about pooling wealth in the hands of a small minority who then “ruthlessly exploit[ed]” the workers. It put Germany on the inevitable path to move “from capitalism to socialism,” but in the end, the East German narrative went, the March uprising had failed to complete the transition to socialism and the installation of a revolutionary government among the workers, because capitalists feared the “revolutionary power of the people.”⁶⁷ The bourgeois liberals who met in St. Paul’s Church (far removed from the protagonist working class rebels of the March uprising) entered into a “pact with the forces of reaction,” abruptly abandoned the revolution, and betrayed the people.⁶⁸

Now, it was up to the 1948 generation to ensure that the Revolution of 1848 was “completed.”⁶⁹ Just as the capitalists and forces of reaction had combined to forestall the workers’ revolution from achieving national unity in 1848, “foreign imperialists and their

⁶⁶ Andreas Dorpalen, *German History in Marxist Perspective: The East German Approach* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1985), 201-18.

⁶⁷ “Hundert Jahre Kampf um Deutschlands Einheit,” *Berliner Zeitung*, 18 March 1948.

⁶⁸ Tagesordnung, German Federal Archives, 9.

⁶⁹ “Von Kapitalismus zum Sozialismus,” *Neue Zeit*, 20 March 1948; Wilhelm Külz, “Deutschland braucht endlich Frieden,” 18 March 1948.

indigenous accomplices” in 1948 were subverting the will of the German people and creating a colony in West Germany out of “fear of democracy.” East Germans were meant to take important “lessons” of ideological enemies and allies from this transcendent past and apply them to their nation’s current ideological fight.⁷⁰

The East Berlin observation celebrated German nationalism and advocated for the reunification of the Allied and Soviet sectors of Germany. An oft-repeated line during the celebrations was Marx’s public call for “one indivisible democratic [German] republic” just days before the outbreak in Berlin, which was taken as evidence by Soviet and East German authorities that the attempt to unite German-speakers in central Europe in 1848 was a response to Marx’s demand for German unification.⁷¹ East German authorities exploited the earnest German desire for reunification and used these sentiments to try and undermine American efforts to consolidate the three western zones.⁷²

Both the United States and Soviet Union accused one another of preventing the eventual reunification of Germany. While Soviet diplomat Vyacheslav Molotov publicly appealed for reunification, the Americans charged, his obstinance and the Soviet commitment to dominating their own zone precluded any opportunities for cooperation.⁷³

⁷⁰ “Berlin hat sich für die Einheit entscheiden,” *Berliner Zeitung*, 20 March 1948; “Hundert Jahre Kampf,” *Berliner Zeitung*.

⁷¹ *Bolshaya Sovetskaya Entsikopediya: Soznanie-Strategiya* (Moscow: 1947), 399; Anton Ackermann, “Ein Volk – ein Deutschland,” *Neues Deutschland*, 17 March 1948.

⁷² Rupieper, “American Policy toward German Unification, 1949-1955,” in *American Policy*, 47.

By the middle of 1947, the Western powers had largely abandoned attempts to work with the Soviet Union and instead pursued “tripartite integration” between the three western zones, making the possibility of a unified Germany with the Soviet zone increasingly unlikely.⁷⁴ The concrete steps taken by the United States and Great Britain to consolidate the western zones further opened up attacks on the western powers as the obstacle to German unity. The Kremlin increasingly positioned itself publicly as the sole patron of German reunification and directed the Socialist Unity Party (SEP) in East Germany to consider itself as the representatives for all German people and to continuously agitate for unification in order to undermine the legitimacy of the emerging West German state and American influence there.⁷⁵ Soviet and East German organizers presented the March centenary as the culmination of a one-hundred-year fight for German nationalism and raising the banner of “unity... [and] justice,” though naturally the 1948 narrative imagined that German unity would take place under governance dedicated to worldwide class revolution.⁷⁶

⁷³ Ostermann, *Between Containment*, 59, 80-2; Schwarz, “Division,” 148; Weber, *Getrennt*, 64.

⁷⁴ Elmer Plischke, *History of the Allied High Commission for Germany: Its Establishment, Structure, and Procedures* (Office of the U.S. High Commissioner for Germany, 1951); Soviet Intentions and Capabilities, 27 February 1950, Folder: Regaining the Psychological Initiative, Box 12, Records Relating to International Information Activities, Record Group 59, NARA, 26. The Soviet Union made one last attempt at reunification in 1952 with his infamous “Stalin Note,” which would have reunited Germany with no conditions, though historians continue to debate the earnestness of this offer. Jürgen Zarusky, ed., *Die Stalin-Note vom 10 März 1952: Neue Quellen und Analysen* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2002), 7-9.

⁷⁵ Weber, *Getrennt*, 138.

At the end of 1947, Soviet and East German authorities hastily put together a German People's Congress for Unity and a Just Peace, which claimed to speak for the entire German nation, east and west. The People's Congress, hailed by the Soviets as the true representatives of the German people over the puppets in Frankfurt, was an integral part of the public push for German unity and the blaming of the capitalist world for the prevention of German reunification. Run by the Socialist Unity Party, the members of this congress published a manifesto demanding a "democratic and united Germany" and denouncing American intentions for the European Recovery Plan and the upcoming Western six-power London Conference, to be put on in February and March 1948.

The SEP and Soviet authorities planned for and implemented a Second People's Congress, this time to coincide with the opening of the March centenary.⁷⁷ Coincidentally, the five western European powers signed the Brussels Pact as the Congress opened. The keynote event occurred on 18 March at mid-morning, when the Second German People's Congress led a procession "for German unity and a just peace" through the streets of Berlin, guiding the rally to the graves of the martyrs who died in the revolution.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ "März-Amnestie für die Ostzone," *Neue Zeit*, 18 March 1948; "Hundert Jahre Kampf," *Berliner Zeitung*.

⁷⁷ Ostermann, *Between Containment*, 82-4. See also Martin McCauley, *Marxist-Leninism in the German Democratic Republic: The Socialist Unity Party (SED)* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 1979).

⁷⁸ "Die Welt blickt auf Berlin," *Neues Deutschland*, 16 March 1948.

The Berlin centenary inaugurated a public contest for the proper representation of the German past over the course of the entire year. West German newspapers (save for those sympathetic to East Germany) rejected the Marxist-materialist interpretation of a “workers’ revolution” and considered the “March days” to be more akin to a violent preamble to the Frankfurt Assembly, which represented the principled pinnacle of the revolution and the European movement for political and civil rights.⁷⁹ There was a similar sentiment in the United States, where newspapers highlighted an anti-communist counter-demonstration in the British sector of Berlin and emphasized the inorganic “Soviet influence” behind the East German celebrations.⁸⁰

One journalist excoriated the efforts of the “Soviet propagandists” who “ignore[d]... history and select[ed] their own symbols from 1848.” The journalist ended their article by praising the “high-minded National Assembly” that met in Frankfurt and noting that the United States “need not be tempted into playing with historical analogy and symbolism,” as they were “likely to be confusing, contradictory, and quite inapplicable to current events.”⁸¹ Unbeknownst to this writer, the American military authorities and West German officials had already identified the upcoming May centennial as an opportunity to cultivate a collective memory that reified the Western

⁷⁹ For examples, see “Märzsturm 1848,” *Offenbach Post*, 6 March 1948, “Für Deutschlands Einheit und Freiheit,” *Hessische Nachrichten*, 6 March 1948, and “Revolution und Paulskirche,” *Rhein-Neckar Zeitung*, 6 March 1948.

⁸⁰ J. Emlyn Williams, “Berlin Marks Centenary of Revolution,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, 18 March 1948; “Rivals of Berlin Mark 1848 Revolt,” *The New York Times*, 19 March 1948; “Clay Hails Berliners,” *The New York Times*, 21 March 1948.

⁸¹ “Echoes of a Revolutionary Year,” *New York Herald Tribune*, 21 March 1948.

world and justified the burgeoning relationship between the West Germans and Americans.

Two members of the U.S. military government, Theodore Knauth and John Elliott (chief of the Political Activities Branch), were on hand in Berlin to observe the celebrations. The dogmatic presentation of the festivities reinforced the strategic importance of the May festival in Frankfurt. In response, the pair discussed how the American military government could best emphasize the Western centennial as an internationally-important event. They also considered what supporting role – if any – Americans could play. With his connection to the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation, Knauth recognized that a larger role for the Foundation could underscore the transnational importance of the festival and give it an American presence that wasn't overly reliant on military officials. The two agreed that such an event would be desirable for the military government, and they passed the suggestion along to Philadelphia and Washington.⁸²

American Guidance on the Centennial

Discussions between Elliot and Knauth resulted in a letter to the organization from Lt. Col. William A. Curtin, the acting deputy chief in the Reorientation Branch on 3 May 1948, to Howard Elkinton. In his letter, Curtin stated that OMGUS headquarters were considering the possibility of arranging an American celebration of the revolution's centenary in the summer in Frankfurt (in addition to the upcoming Frankfurt-originated

⁸² Minutes of Meeting of the Executive Committee, 19 May 1948, Folder 3, Box 34, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

celebrations in May), and he was “anxious” to learn what the Foundation might have had prepared for the occasion and invited the Foundation to cooperate directly with the military government. In particular, John Elliott had suggested that the potential celebration should emphasize the role of Carl Schurz in the revolution, as he would be the most direct way of making it a joint German-American celebration.⁸³

With the 18 May date rapidly approaching, there was too little time for the Foundation to provide any “definite sponsorship” other than representing itself through Knauth’s appointment, though it earnestly expressed to Curtin that the Foundation had “very serious interest in all such affairs of this sort and hope that we can anticipate future events with sufficient time to allow for adequate preparations.” The two sides decided to move forward with a second celebration on 3 July, when the revolutionaries of 1848 brought their “Bill of Rights” before the Frankfurt National Assembly. Elliott, who was a journalist of the *New York Herald Tribune* now “on loan” to the Political Activities Branch of OMGUS, would be the government’s main liaison with the Foundation for the proposed celebration.⁸⁴

The American military government’s involvement for the May observation was limited by design and largely logistical. Its deepest involvement entailed facilitating the transportation, entry, and housing of dignitaries from international universities who were

⁸³ William A. Curtin, Jr. to Elkinton, 3 May 1948, Folder 1, Box 2, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP; Minutes of Meeting, 19 May 1948, NCSA Records, HSP.

⁸⁴ Minutes of Meeting, 19 May 1948, NCSA Records, HSP; Elkinton to Curtin, 13 May 1948, Folder 1, Box 2, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

enthusiastically invited by members of the German academic community.⁸⁵ Otherwise, OMGUS gave its official sponsorship and approval but wanted to take as hands-off an approach as possible in order to present the image of an organic, bottom-up German effort. The image of a celebration that was primarily German-driven was crucial.

Yet OMGUS, in trying to avoid being “overt,” still recognized the importance of the 1848 centennial, especially in light of the fact that the Soviet Union had prepared a similar centenary celebration in Berlin for March 1948. By February, less than a month before the Berlin celebration and a few months before the Frankfurt centenary, the Political Information Branch of OMGUS had developed and issued “guidance on treatment” for the historical and contemporary political circumstances surrounding the affairs. It was clear that the military government was thinking about the May Centennial (as well as the Soviet Berlin celebration) in Cold War terms. The general outline emphasized that media and radio broadcasts (not just “overt military broadcasts”) should highlight three major ideas surrounding any discussion of the Revolution of 1848.

First, it was important to emphasize that the West Germans in 1948 were currently confronted with “the same tasks” as Germans and other Europeans in 1848: they were in a “revolt against a despotic government” and “tyrannical cliques” that sought to crush “free expression of the popular will” and “the free exchange of ideas.” The second point relatedly argued that the Revolution of 1848 should be separated from the publication of the *Communist Manifesto* that same year. Thirty years of “Russian

⁸⁵ Frankfurt Centennial Celebration Participants, 26 April 1948, Folder: 313.7, Box 590, General Records, 1946-1949, Record Group 260, NARA.

experience” and the experiences of Eastern Germany, the guidance relayed, had “dispelled the myth” of the Marxist-Leninist conceptions of history. OMGUS ultimately hoped to “reduce the cheap communist emphasis on the Berlin theatrical barricades of March 1848, as well as all their other noisy slogans.” These first two points aligned perfectly with the larger argument by memory activists in the postwar period that the United States was in confrontation with an ideological and totalitarian rival, and that the German people were now on the front lines of this fight alongside the American people.

The third point challenged the notion that the Revolution of 1848 was a total “failure,” and maintained that revolution should not be presented “in negative or defensive terms.” On the contrary, the revolution had only failed “in Germany,” but the best of the German revolutionaries carried their torches elsewhere and “contributed greatly to the development of western Europe and America.” It was the experience of the revolution “which connect the best of the German spirit and the best of German political aspirations with the great western traditions of dynamic progress.” In both the lead-up to the celebration and for the centennial itself, it was vital that transatlantic media “point out... this connection.”⁸⁶ Importantly, however, the message had to be subtle so that it did not appear as military propaganda. A “‘sledgehammer’ statement” would defeat the purpose entirely.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ Guidance on 1848, 27 February 1848, Folder: Revolution of 1848, Box 37, Records of the Deputy Director, 1945-1949, Record Group 260, NARA.

⁸⁷ Guidance on 1848, NARA; Boris Shub to Charles S. Lewis, 5 March 1948, Folder: Revolution of 1848, Box 37, Records of the Deputy Director, 1946-1949, Record Group 260, NARA.

For OMGUS officials, the logistical effort to disseminate news of the Frankfurt centennial, to provide guidance to domestic and foreign outfits, and to attempt to shape the narrative around its political and cultural meanings was bolstered by the substantial information apparatus that the United States had built up in the years since the end of the war. President Harry S Truman and others remained committed to the notion that the United States needed some kind of information apparatus to present “a full and fair picture of American life and the aims of the policies of the United States government,” and the ability to reach the world’s peoples became only more important with the emerging ideological competition between the United States and the Soviet Union.⁸⁸ When President Truman gave his famous “Truman Doctrine” speech on 12 March 1947, he laid out his vision for containing totalitarian aggression and envisioned U.S. information programs as a natural part of cultural containment in the Cold War.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ Michael Krenn, *The History of United States Cultural Diplomacy, 1770 to the Present Day* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), 76; Cull, *The Cold War*, 23; Justin Hart, “Foreign Relations as Domestic Affairs: The Role of the ‘Public’ in the Origins of U.S. Public Diplomacy,” in Osgood and Etheridge, *The United States and Public Diplomacy: New Directions in Cultural and International History* (Boston: Brill, 2010), 207. For the developing Soviet-American propaganda war, see Osgood, “The American Construction,” 124, Cull, *The Cold War*, 34-6, Weber, *Getrennt*, 138, Vladimir O. Pechatnov, “The Soviet Union and the World, 1944-1953,” in *Cambridge History, Volume 1*, 98-100, and David C. Engerman, “Ideology and the Origins of the Cold War, 1917-1962” in *Cambridge History, Volume 1*, 38.

⁸⁹ Belmonte, *Selling the American Way*, 24; Engerman, “Ideology,” 36; Cull, *The Cold War*, 34-6. See also Jessica C.E. Gienow-Hecht, *Transmission Impossible: American Journalism as Cultural Diplomacy in Postwar Germany, 1945-1955* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1999).

This informational and “psychological warfare” apparatus contributed to the attempts to forge a cultural Atlantic community.⁹⁰ The American military government’s plans to disseminate its narrative of the May centennial were bolstered in January 1948, when the U.S. Congress passed the United States Information and Education Exchanges Act, also known as the Smith-Mundt Act, establishing the foundations for a permanent overseas information program in order “to promote a better understanding of the United States,” its people, and its government’s policies abroad.⁹¹

Influenced in part by the guidance disseminated by OMGUS, media organizations contributed to the shaping of an American- and Western-facing narrative in the months leading up to the Frankfurt centennial. Journalists on both sides of the Atlantic hailed the symbolism of the *Paulskirche* reconstruction project and welcomed the possibilities for Germany and the German-American relationship moving forward. American commentators tended to frame the event as partially an American affair and played up the historical connections to the United States, drawing comparisons between the American Revolution of 1776 and German Revolution of 1848 and likened the *Paulskirche* to

⁹⁰ For how mass media, such as print, radio, and film, contributed to the promotion of the “Atlantic Community,” see Lara C. A. Silver, “The Political Use of Metaphor in the Construction of the Atlantic Community,” in *European Community, Atlantic Community?*, eds. Valérie Aubourg, Gérard Bossuat, and Scott-Smith (Paris: Soleb, 2008), 68.

⁹¹ Gary D. Rawnsley, “The Campaign of Truth: A Populist Propaganda,” in *Cold-War Propaganda in the 1950s*, ed. Rawnsley (Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1999), 34-5; Henry J. Kellermann, *Cultural Relations as an Instrument of U.S. Foreign Policy* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1978), 6-7; Hart, “Foreign Relations,” 217-8; Hooper, *Designing Democracy*, 33.

Independence Hall in Philadelphia.⁹² Several journalists noted the importance of Carl Schurz (as well as other revolutionary refugees), whom they framed as a central character in the revolution and the centenary. Some also noted that then-U.S. President James K. Polk received news of the revolution with acclaim, sending the Frankfurt parliament a note wishing them well in their democratic pursuits.⁹³ In an article anticipating the upcoming May centennial, one article in the *New York Times* drew a comparison between the “ideals” of these Germans in 1848 and those that Americans had professed to hold since their earliest days, and found them to be one and the same.⁹⁴

Western Meanings at the May Centennial

In the end, though it was not completely finished, St. Paul’s Church was refurbished to the point where it could be used as the backdrop of the May centennial. On 18 May, the rededication of the *Paulskirche* officially opened a week-long commemoration against centennial the background the London Six-Power Conference, which had reconvened in May for a second round of talks over the Marshall Plan, West European economic integration, and the potential for an official West German state.⁹⁵ The opening exhibit included major hallmarks of Western civilization: reproductions of the Magna Carta, U.S. Constitution, and the Articles of Confederation (donated by the

⁹² “Capital Amid the Rubble,” 32; Alvin J. Rockwell, “Habeas Corpus,” *Information Bulletin* 127 (27 January 1948), 20-21; Uncle Dudley, “German Tragedy.”

⁹³ Uncle Dudley, “German Tragedy,” *Daily Boston Globe*, 18 May 1948; Jack Raymond, “Germans to Mark Revolution of 1848,” *The New York Times*, 16 May 1948.

⁹⁴ “Revolt of 1848 Marked,” *The New York Times*, 9 April 1948.

⁹⁵ “Die Paulskirche ist fertig,” *Mittelbayerische Zeitung*, 19 May 1948.

Library of Congress) alongside the German constitution of 1848. Almost uniformly across West German and American press, the tolling of the bells at St. Paul's Church heralded an opportunity for the rebirth of German democracy and the possibility for West Germans to rejoin the community of nations.⁹⁶

“Europe” was a significant theme of the week's proceedings. In Frankfurt and elsewhere, participants remembered the revolution not just as a German national moment but also as a “European revolution” that was bourgeoisie in nature rather than class-based.⁹⁷ The “great lesson” of 1848, according to one journalist, was the German unification was a secondary matter – indeed, speaking of German unification “too loudly” was associated with propaganda from the left or ultra-nationalists. Instead, the rebirth of Germany was “primarily about Europe,” and if Germans were to be properly reborn, it would be as “German Europeans.”⁹⁸ Messages from city officials in Cologne, Bielefeld, and elsewhere reflected a similar sentiment, as they welcomed the opportunity

⁹⁶ For a sample of the coverage, see “Der Ruf der Paulskirche,” *Gießener Freie Presse*, 15 May 1948, “Paulskirche 1948 – Symbol der Demokratie,” *Gießener Freie Presse*, 20 May 1948, “Zweisprache in der Paulskirche,” *Mittelbayerische Zeitung*, 25 May 1948, Raymond, “Germans to Mark,” “News and Comment,” *American-German Review* 14, no. 5 (June 1948), 36, “Schwarz-rot-gold über Frankfurts Jahrhundertfeier,” *Hamburger Freie Presse*, 1948, “Die Jahrhundertfeier der Paulskirche,” *Mittelbayerische Zeitung*, 13 February 1948, “Jahrhundertfeier der,” *Passauer Neue Presse*, “Letter from Germany,” *International Women's News*, 1 June 1948, and “German Fete Recalls Days of 1848 Revolt,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 17 May 1948. For the opening program, see Provisional Draft of the Centennial Program, c. 1948, Folder: 313.7 – Frankfurt Centennial Permits, Box 590, General Records, 1946-1949, Record Group 260, NARA.

⁹⁷ “Das Ende der bürgerliche Bewegung,” *CDU-Echo*, 22 May 1948; “Europäischer Umbruch vor 100 Jahren,” *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 16 May 1948; “1848 – das Jahr der Revolution,” *Saarbrücker Zeitung*, 23 February 1948.

⁹⁸ Adolph Meuer, “Nach der Paulskirchen-Feier,” *Donau-Kurier*, 19 May 1948.

for Germany to take its place among “the free peoples of the Earth” and participate in “a new European community.”⁹⁹

Among the events that garnered the most attention in both East and West Germany was the day of the week dedicated to embracing the “European Federation” or “European Union” on 19 May. The various organizations dedicated to pan-European cooperation had gained in strength and membership since the beginning of 1947, and the questions that these organizations had grappled with since the end of the war – on the German question, on the possibility of European federalism and integration, and on the developing Cold War – were on display during the Day of the European Federation. Speakers from Switzerland, Holland, England, France, and West Germany gathered to extol the promise of a politically- and economically-integrated Europe, which would stave off any conflict that might threaten “individual freedom” and help Germany finally move past national socialism.¹⁰⁰ Speakers were careful to note that they did not urge Germany to be drawn into a Western or Eastern bloc, but, intentionally or otherwise, the

⁹⁹ Urkunde der Stadt Köln, 15 May 1948, Folder: Grußurkunde der Stadt Groß-Berlin, Series: unklassifiziert, S4a: Sammlung, ISG; An die Stadt Frankfurt, 16 May 1948, Folder: Zur Jahrhundertfeier der Paulskirche entbietet Bielefeld, Series: unklassifiziert, S4a: Sammlung, ISG.

¹⁰⁰ For a small sample of West German coverage, see “Nur Europa kann Europa retten,” 22 May 1948, *Flensburger Tageblatt*; “Europa-Föderation nur mit Deutschland,” 22 May 1948, *Frankfurter Rundschau*; “Paulskirchenfeier wurde europäisches Ereignis,” *Der Allgäuer*, 22 May 1948, “Was erwartet Europa von Deutschland,” *Fuldaer Volkszeitung*, 22 May 1948, “Europakongreß in der Frankfurter Paulskirche,” *Wesen-Kurier*, 22 May 1948, and “Unabhängiges Europa als Friedensgrundlage,” *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 22 May 1948.

symbolism, values, references associated with “Europe” were almost entirely framed as Western-facing: appeals to free elections, freedom of speech, and civil liberties.

Even East Germans received the imagery of “Europe” as oriented to the Atlantic. Officials and newspapers behind the Iron Curtain attacked the day’s celebrations, and political parties declined their invitations. The Socialist Unity Party claimed that the day celebrating Europe (let alone the entire May centennial) was a front for the “creation of a Western [Germany].”¹⁰¹ Interestingly, it was not merely American press or the Frankfurt centennial that contributed to the notion that “Europe,” as an ideological concept, left the Soviet Union and its patrons out of the community. In their opposition, East Germans themselves contributed to this reification of Europe as oriented towards the Atlantic.

During the celebratory week, Frankfurt also held a “Women’s Conference for Freedom” from 21 to 24 May, attended by six hundred women from the United States and across western Europe. While it was billed as an “interzonal” conference that was open to German women from all zones, East German women were not represented after the General Secretariat ordered that the main East German women’s organization reject its invitation.¹⁰² Once more, while the interzonal conference broached diverse topics ranging from peace to women’s education, the conference and the surrounding coverage

¹⁰¹ “Paulskirche wiederhergestellt, *Die Tageszeitung*, 16 May 1948; Gerhard Ellrodt, “Deutschlands Einheit und die Intellektuellen,” *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, 22 May 1948.

¹⁰² Protokoll Nr. 76 der Sitzung des Zentralsekretariats, 13 May 1948, Folder: Protokoll Nr. 76 (II) - Sitzung am 13. Mai 1948, Series: Zentralsekretariat der SED, DY 30: Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands, German Federal Archives, Berlin-Lichterfelde; “Frauenfrage – politische Frage,” *Der Telegraf*, 20 May 1948.

remained at least somewhat Western-facing throughout. The American and British military government sent representatives, the initial rally took place in the *Paulskirche* under the mottos of “Affirmation of German women to democracy” and “Our way to freedom,” and speakers continued to frame their speeches in a clear Western tradition that emphasized individual and civic rights and unambiguously criticized Soviet totalitarianism. By the end of the week, the conference had passed several resolutions, including those on the restoration of German unity, women’s access to civic education, and “freedom of the individual.”¹⁰³

Among the week’s strongest appeals to German unification came on 20 May, when over 100 delegates gathered in St. Paul’s Church to hold the first meeting of the German Association of Cities (*Der Deutsche Städtetag*) since 1930. The congress, made up of various German mayors and other dignitaries, was most focused on promoting German unification and an occupation statute that would reduce Allied authority. Yet, like other conferences, the proceedings occurred predominately in a Western and European tradition. Those from the French and Soviet zones (with perhaps most if not all of those in the Soviet zone coming from West Berlin) were only in attendance as “guests” rather than official delegates, giving those from Bizonia control of the agenda. In his speech, the mayor of Cologne advocated for unification in terms of a “free federal state.” The assembly also elected West Berlin Mayor Louise Schröder as president of the

¹⁰³ “Eindrücke vom Frankfurter Frauen-Kongreß,” *Marburger Presse*, 4 June 1948; “An dem Frankfurter interzonal Frauenkongreß,” 29 May 1948, Folder: Frankfurter Interzonaler Frauenkongress, Series: unklassifiziert, S6b-38: Materialsammlung, ISG; “Ein Frauenkongreß für Freiheit,” *Neue Zeitung*, 27 May 1948.

association, indicating “the West’s solidarity with Berlin” as well as giving Mayor Schröder a platform to discuss the needs and distresses of her city.¹⁰⁴

1848, 1948, and the Struggle Against Totalitarianism

There were several keynote speakers for the centenary who drew large crowds, including Mayor Walter Kolb and the young president of the University of Chicago, Robert Hutchins.¹⁰⁵ Fritz von Unruh, whose grandfather was a participant in the Revolution of 1848 and who had fled from the Third Reich to the United States, was by far the week’s most heralded speaker.¹⁰⁶ Von Unruh’s speech was a shining example of how American and West German officials and other “memory activists” in the postwar period cast the Cold War not just in terms of a potential military conflict but in terms of an ideological conflict between totalitarianism and democracy that the United States had been fighting for centuries.

His lengthy speech addressed a number of intertwined themes on the latent democratic character of German history, the admirable historical connection between American and German democracy, the unholy connection of Marxism, militarism, and Nazism, and the urgency of the Cold War moment for his German audience. Von Unruh

¹⁰⁴ “Klare Abgrenzung deutscher Verantwortlichkeit,” *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 22 May 1948; Städtetage in der Paulskirche, *Darmstädter Echo*, 22 May 1948; “Deutscher Städtetag in der Paulskirche,” *Gießener Freie Presse*, 22 May 1948.

¹⁰⁵ “News and Comment,” *American-German Review* 14, no. 5 (June 1948), 36-37. For the text of Hutchins’ speech, see The Foundation Stone for a Better World translation, 20 May 1948, Folder: B16 Experts: Reports and Programs 1948-49, Box 961, Correspondence and Related Records 1945 – 1949, Record Group 260, NARA.

¹⁰⁶ Raymond, “Germans to Mark.”

presented Germany's past, present, and future as the eternal struggle between the rights of the individual against the domination of the "aggregate" and "the deification of the state," drawing direct comparisons between the Prussian militarists of the distant past, the Nazis of the recent past, and the Marxists and Soviets of their present. Von Unruh commanded the German people to "resist temptation" and instead remember the generation of 1848, who had sent their best sons to the *Paulskirche* to create a government modeled off of "the great American republic" that guaranteed the rights of the individual. He believed that his fellow Germans ("we 1948ers") could be at the center of a worldwide democratic rebirth, in which the doctrines of liberal democracy would sweep away the philosophies that exalted the state above all else.¹⁰⁷

The American military government was delighted at von Unruh's speech and sought to "give [it] as wide distribution as possible." Officials even went as far to arranging for publishers to receive additional paper in order to print the speech and editorials praising von Unruh's message. OMGUS nonetheless remained cognizant of the importance that this take on the character of a German news piece, with the memorandum emphasizing that the publication of the speech should "not [be] overt."¹⁰⁸

With few exceptions, the festivities were generally well-received by the Western public and welcomed as a success by German and American officials, with Mayor Kolb

¹⁰⁷ "Her zu uns alle, die das sprechen: Hier stehe ich, ich kann nicht anders," *Die Neue Zeitung*, 22 May 1948.

¹⁰⁸ Memorandum, Use of PIB Paper for Publishing Unruh Speech, 3 June 1948, Folder: Pauls KirkeSpeech [sic], Box 28, Records of the Deputy Director, 1945-1949, Record Group 260, NARA.

believing that the celebration and rededication of the *Paulskirche* was a fitting way to initiate “the rebirth of German democracy.”¹⁰⁹ Unsurprisingly, officials and newspapers in the Soviet sector reacted with hostility and derision even before the festivities had begun, and the East’s political parties largely abstained from the entire week to avoid giving it legitimacy. East zone newspapers claimed that the festivities occurred under the auspices of the “champions of Germany’s partition” was only for the “eyes of the West.” Should Germany follow in Frankfurt’s spirit of “division and fragmentation,” it would “herald the end of German unity.”¹¹⁰ The East German challenge to the Frankfurt fête, combined with the narrative of the celebration that had appeared in the Atlantic world, further contributed to the ideological bifurcation that was occurring in Germany.

Summer Plans and the Berlin Crisis

On the international level, Western integration appeared to be accelerating as the Frankfurt centennial was ongoing due to the reconvened six-power conference in London. By May, when the conference resumed, the French signaling their willingness to cooperate, and the powers agreed to establish an International Authority (without the input of the Soviet Union) in the industrially-important Ruhr Valley and agreed to allow for a West German Constituent Assembly to begin drawing up a constitution for a

¹⁰⁹ Kolb to the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation, 28 May 1948, Folder 7, Box 4, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

¹¹⁰ Wilhelm Karl Gerst, “Nicht Sache des Volkes,” *Berliner Zeitung*, 15 May 1948; “Pfingsten 1948,” *Neues Deutschland*, 16 May 1948; “Frankfurt 1848 – Frankfurt 1948,” *Vorwärts*, 20 May 1948.

partially-sovereign West German state.¹¹¹ By the end of the London Conference, West Germans appeared well on their way to establishing their own state and becoming politically and economically integrated into the Atlantic world by way of the Marshall Plan.

Officials also wanted to continue pursuing integration at the cultural level as well. The perceived success of the May centennial in the West, including the widespread positive coverage it received in American and German press, reinforced the American military government's decision to pursue a second centennial in July with the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation as its "co-sponsor."¹¹² Members of the military government believed that a joint centennial highlighting the shared German-American connection through Schurz would go far in promoting the occupation government's objectives and "would be a distinct encouragement to the democratic elements in Germany."¹¹³ Howard Elkinton and John Elliott concurred, believing "that the proposed celebration can do a lot to encourage the Democratic forces in Germany."¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ Berger, "Economic and Industrial Issues," 42; Thomas Alan Schwartz, *America's Germany: John J. McCloy and the Federal Republic of Germany* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 31-2; Hitchcock, "The Marshall Plan," 167.

¹¹² Theodore Knauth to Elkinton, 12 June 1948, Folder 1, Box 2, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

¹¹³ Elliott to Elkinton, 10 June 1948, Folder 10, Box 4, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

¹¹⁴ Elkinton to Paul Bodenman, 20 August 1948, Folder 1, Box 2, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

Few referents for the German-American relationship under the umbrella of liberal democracy were as powerful as Carl Schurz.¹¹⁵ With a foot in both the American and German worlds, along with his association with liberal democracy, Schurz became a figure that peoples on each side of the Atlantic were happy to champion. Howard Elkinton enthusiastically assured the OMGUS officials that the celebration would be the ideal opportunity to demonstrate how “the workings of democracy” could be understood “in the lives of outstanding characters like Schurz,” who exemplified the “thought and ideals” demanded by the occasion.¹¹⁶

The Foundation commissioned Knauth to stay on as their representative in Frankfurt and reached out to George N. Shuster, the president of Hunter College in New York City, to be the headline speaker for the event. Shuster seemed to be the perfect choice to help make the fête one that highlighted the connections of both the United States and Germany. Just days before the Frankfurt celebration on 18 May, the Hunter College president had given a speech in the Library of Congress’s Coolidge Auditorium on “The Forty-Eighters in America,” where he emphasized Carl Schurz as having “a bridge role between Germany and America.”¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵ For a biographical sketch of Schurz, see Hans Louis Trefousse, *Carl Schurz: A Biography* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1998).

¹¹⁶ Minutes of Meeting, 19 May 1948, NCSA Records, HSP; Elkinton to Bodemann, 20 May 1948, Folder 1, Box 2, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

¹¹⁷ “Immigrants of 1848 to be Subject of Talk,” *The Washington Post*, 10 May 1948.

Selecting 3 July for the celebration could also help to underscore the joint German-American nature of the celebration, because organizers could easily pair the 1848 German “Bill of Rights” with the American Declaration of Independence. Ultimately, however, General Lucius Clay, the Military Governor of occupied Germany, asked for a postponement of the festivities. The proposed date came right after the military government’s plan to introduce a new currency (the Deutsche Mark) in mid-to-late June, and the general thought that it would be best if the second centennial could be pushed off for a few months to avoid the chaos, suggesting early September.¹¹⁸

With the extended timeframe, OMGUS hoped to invite the West Germans to participate more fully in the centennial’s arrangement. To this end, John Elliott reached out to prominent German leaders and intellectuals, who expressed their enthusiastic support for the idea. In fact, Mayor Kolb informed Elliott, many prominent West German citizens were planning to mark the occasion with the founding of a new civil society organization that would foster closer cultural relations between the United States and Germany. Postponing the celebration would not only avoid the political and economic confusion of currency reform, but it would give the Germans time to prepare this organization and their own participation.

The U.S. military government believed that the Foundation could take the lead on fostering it as a means of reorienting broader German civil society. If successful, such a

¹¹⁸ Naimark, *Stalin and the Fate*, 159; Elliott to Elkinton, 10 June 1948, NCSA Records, HSP. For further information on the logistical aspects of currency reform, see Craig Dee Scott, “Money Talks: The West German Currency Reform of 1948” Phd Diss., (University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1995), 305-18.

German organization could not only help to stage the celebration from the German side but cooperate with the American military government and promote transatlantic harmony long after 1948. West German officials suggested that this organization once more take on the name of Carl Schurz, the “link binding the democratic forces in the United States and in Germany,” as a means to demonstrating its commitment to cultural rapprochement with the United States.¹¹⁹ The prospect of a revived German Carl Schurz society inspired hesitation in the Foundation’s leadership, because there was a clear institutional memory of the Carl-Schurz-Vereinigung’s takeover by the Nazi regime and the weighty fallout that had descended on the Foundation in the wake.

It was perhaps the name that gave the greatest pause to the Foundation. The name “Carl Schurz” (as it related to organizations in Germany) had “been dragged about so much in the press” that the name itself might burden the new society before it managed to establish itself at all. Elkinton expressed his concerns that this new group might be “a ghost arising from a coffin in order to haunt us,” but Theodore Knauth, Elkinton’s man in Frankfurt, managed to convince him otherwise. Knauth was deeply imbedded in talks regarding the German organization, and he managed to convince Elkinton that a German organization would be a “purely German matter” and a “new creation” made up of “high-class people” that could help “wip[e] out the evil record of the [Vereinigung].”¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ Elliott to Elkinton, 10 June 1948, HSP.

¹²⁰ Knauth to Elkinton, 15 July 1948, Folder 1, Box 2, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP; Carl Schurz Celebration in Frankfurt, 3 September 1948, Folder: Carl Schurz Foundation, Box 339, Records Relating to Denazification, 1945-1949, Record Group 260, NARA; Deutsche Carl Schurz-Gesellschaft, Frankfurt am Main, c. 1948, Folder: 506.0 – Stueben-Schurz [?] Assoc. – Wiesbaden [sic], Box 610, General Records,

The founding membership of the West German organization, which hoped to officially reconstitute its society at or directly following the September centennial, numbered thirty-seven. OMGUS recognized them as among Germany's most respectable citizens: Mayor Kolb, Paul Löbe (the president of the Reichstag from 1925 to 1932), Ernst Beutler (the curator of the Goethe Museum in Frankfurt), the Minister President of Hesse, Mayor Louise Schröder of West Berlin, and Hermann Pünder (the German chairman of the Bizonal Council), among others. With OMGUS having "thoroughly screened" all potential members and given its official sanction, Elkinton agreed that such a relationship "might lead into some very helpful developments of mutual benefit."¹²¹ The German members officially found the name for the new organization: the Carl-Schurz-Gesellschaft, or Carl Schurz Society.

The celebrations – which had already been imbued with a sense of purpose and symbolism for German-American rapprochement – took on a new sense of urgency when the Soviet Union blockaded Berlin on 24 June 1948. The Soviets had become agitated over the reconvened London Six-Power Conference, and after the introduction of the Deutsche Mark, Josef Stalin ordered that the railways, roads, and waterways to Berlin be blockaded. The Soviet premier hoped to force the Western governments to either withdraw completely from Berlin or abandon their plans to establish a separate West

1946-1949, Record Group 260, NARA; Otto von Recum to Hanstein, 31 August 1948, Folder 1, Box 2, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

¹²¹ Elkinton to Bodenman, 22 June 1948, Folder 1, Box 2, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP; Knauth to Elkinton, 15 July 1948, HSP; Carl Schurz Centenary, 3 September 1948, Folder 1, Box 2, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP, 1.

German state. In response, the Western Allies implemented an airlift to Berlin to keep the people of West Berlin fed and warm through deliveries of supplies until the Soviets finally lifted the blockade in May 1949.¹²²

It was fortunate that General Clay had the wisdom to postpone the festivities from June to September in the first place. With the blockade looming over the preparations and rumblings that the Germans would be electing a kind of constitutional convention by 1 September, it was clear to Elkinton and Knauth that the festivities would be taking place during “a mighty critical summer” and one that was “heavily fraught with history.” The Foundation resolved that they should ensure that the celebration met the political moment, even noting that “the right kind of speech by Shuster might be of importance.”¹²³

For the military government, it was important that it appear as though the Germans had taken on a larger part of the responsibility. Officials reiterated their commitment to assisting with the celebration “in every possible way,” including the participation of “General Clay, Ambassador [Robert D.] Murphy, and other top ranking Uncle Sugar military government officials,” but it was important that the event appeared

¹²² John M. Schuessler and Adam R. Seipp, “Introduction,” in *The Berlin Airlift and the Making of the Cold War*, eds. Schuessler, Seipp, and Thomas D. Sullivan (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press 2022), 1; Jared Donnelly, “The Airlift: ‘The Air Force Can Deliver Anything,’” in *Berlin Airlift and the Making*, 15-7. By the time U.S. and British round-the-clock deliveries had finally ended in October 1949, over two million tons of supplies had been flown into Berlin. See also Bark and Gress, *History of West Germany*, 210-230.

¹²³ Knauth to Elkinton, 12 June 1948, Folder 1, Box 2, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

indigenous and organic rather than a “military government sponsored and conducted project.” The German Carl Schurz organization should assume the organizational responsibility and to be the one “representing it to the German people.” Allowing this to be carried out under the auspices of “German initiative and... German organizations” would “more nearly meet German needs,” and therefore German-American needs.¹²⁴

After being pushed back once more to accommodate the forthcoming West German constituent assembly that opened on 1 September to draft a constitution for a potential West German state, the final date became 3 September 1948. George Shuster’s speech would be the “central feature” of the centennial and would be given in German in order to seem like a German-dominated affair and to provide a more substantial “German response.” High-ranking occupation officials would participate, with General Clay himself saying some words. Mayor Kolb, delighted to host another such event, offered up the *Paulskirche* as “a most appropriate place for this affair.”¹²⁵ There would also be a reception afterwards, where Germans and Americans – officials and private individuals alike – might celebrate with one another on a more personal level.¹²⁶

¹²⁴ OMGUS to Dept. of the Army, 22 August 1948, Folder: Organizations and Movements, Box 275, Records Relating to the German Police, Record Group 260, NARA. The reference to “Uncle Sugar,” which continued at least into 1949, appeared to reference the airlift in Berlin, where Americans brought not only food and supplies but candy for the children of West Berlin. See Kaete O’Connell, “‘Uncle Wiggly Wings’: Children, Chocolates, and the Berlin Airlift,” *Food and Foodways* 25, vol. 2 (2017).

¹²⁵ Elkinton to Bodenman, 9 August 1948, Folder 1, Box 2, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

¹²⁶ B.B. McMahon to Elkinton, 30 August 1948, Folder 1, Box 2, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP; Knauth to Elkinton, 15 July 1948, Folder 1, Box 2, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

The September Centennial

Unfortunately for the centenary's organizers, General Lucius Clay was unable to attend due to an on-going four-power negotiation related to the Berlin blockade. Instead, the military government sent General Clarence Adcock, U.S. Chairman of the Bipartite Control Board, to speak in General Clay's stead and "pay tribute to the memory and spirit of Carl Schurz."¹²⁷ General Adcock hailed Schurz as "an enduring link binding Germany and America." Schurz's memory, Adcock declared, stood as a reminder to the world "that democracy is not an exclusive American or Anglo-Saxon phenomenon," but that it had "deep and abiding roots in Germany too." The same "ideals of democracy" that inspired the framers of the American Constitution also drove the "Germans of '48" in Bonn to draft a constitution "that will unify western Germany on a basis of liberty and democracy."¹²⁸

Dr. Shuster was the keynote speaker. Speaking in front of the *Paulskirche*, "so notable a symbol" that Germany had "become itself again," Shuster congratulated the Germans, who "stood ready to take up anew... the quest for freedom" as their ancestors had done. The Revolution of 1848, Shuster assured the audience, was not a single democratic moment but the culmination of an entire period stretching back to 1830 and even 1819. Though the Revolution of 1848 was fleeting, the "dream of freedom" did not

¹²⁷ Elliott to Elkinton, 8 September 1948, Folder 1, Box 2, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP; Peter Muschamp to Elkinton, 8 September 1948, Folder 1, Box 2, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

¹²⁸ Draft Speech – Carl Schurz Celebration, c. September 1948, Folder: Carl Schurz Foundation, Box 339, Records Related to Denazification, 1945-1949, Record Group 260, NARA.

die with them. It still lived in the hearts of German, as it did one hundred years prior, “from beside the Rhine, the Danube, and the Elbe, from Stuttgart to Königsberg and all the towns between.”

Shuster’s hour-long speech also met the political moment in 1948. He hailed Carl Schurz, “a great pilgrim to freedom,” as a binding connection between the German and American peoples. His memory and liberal temperament not only lived on in the United States in the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation but was now reborn in the revived Carl-Schurz-Gesellschaft. Schurz’s ideas “had only to be carried back home again” after surviving “long years of autocratic monarchism and... suppression” of the Third Reich. Schuster also marked the importance of Frankfurt, which symbolized the best that Germany had to offer. It was the historic home of Goethe and had always been a “gateway” to both “the West” and the world.¹²⁹

Following the public festivities, seventy West German and American dignitaries met to celebrate the official founding of the Carl-Schurz-Gesellschaft with Paul Löbe as its honorary president and Ernst Beutler as its executive director (and Howard Elkinton’s counterpart).¹³⁰ In a public release announcing the Gesellschaft, Mayor Kolb hailed Schurz as “one of the staunchest champions of democratic liberty” and evidence of the

¹²⁹ Address to be Delivered by Dr. George N. Shuster, President of Hunter College, at St. Paul’s Church, Frankfurt-on-Main, 3 September 1948, Folder 1, Box 2, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP, 1-14.

¹³⁰ Ernst Beutler to the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation, 5 September 1948, Folder 1, Box 2, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP. The *Gesellschaft* submitted its official application to the military government on 3 September, which was approved by security officials on 25 October 1948. See Deutsche Carl Schurz-Gesellschaft, NARA.

democratic connections between the United States and Germany. The Gesellschaft would be an important component in the larger West German-American cooperative efforts, now that the military occupation was preparing to draw down. In order to make the relationship a more cooperative (rather than imposed) one, Kolb stressed that the Gesellschaft would take up that important part in arranging “fruitful exchanges” to the United States. Perhaps once more thinking (at least in part) in terms of positioning his city as an important international site and a potential capital for the future Federal Republic, Mayor Kolb ended his public notice by emphasizing Frankfurt am Main as “the seat of this society” and the “focal point of all the best forces striving for a German and American cultural exchange”¹³¹

Despite the optimism that Dr. Shuster outwardly portrayed during his speech in Frankfurt, he still had dire concerns about the postwar relationship between the United States and Germany. While on his way back to the United States, Shuster wrote to Elkinton, confiding that he worried that the German-American relationship to this point appeared mostly as “a blend of GIs and wierdly [sic] assorted preachers of democracy.” The Germans had experienced little that the United States had to offer (out of necessity during the occupation), and they had “little knowledge of America apart from their contacts with military government.” The relationship was an uneven one, and Shuster worried about the outlook because “cultural politics [between the two peoples] have been so badly messed up.” The success of the celebrations, however, provided a beacon of

¹³¹ Call for the Foundation of a German Carl Schurz Society, c. September 1948, Folder 1, Box 2, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

hope to all who participated that a robust relationship could be reconstructed.¹³² With the establishment of the Gesellschaft, the Germans might not need to simply heed the didactic commands of American “preachers,” but could also participate more cooperatively in their own reorientation and democratization.

While Howard Elkinton was somewhat disappointed in the lack of attention the September centennial received in the United States relative to the one in May (though Schuster’s address received acclaim in German press), the celebration was a turning point for the Foundation, and it changed the role that the military government envisioned for private cultural organizations in western Germany.¹³³ OMGUS officials were clearly delighted with the proceedings, and it became clear that the Foundation could be an ally in the active cultural reconstruction of Germany in the postwar period. John Elliott expressed his satisfaction with the centenary and asked Elkinton if OMGUS could call on his organization in the future, noting that CSMF now had “a golden opportunity to do constructive work” by “encourag[ing] the democratic forces” and “helping to build up a democratic Germany.” The Germans, Elliott noted, could always use “a friend” in these unsure times, and Elkinton’s organization could fill that role.¹³⁴

¹³² Shuster to Elkinton, 14 September 1948, Folder 1, Box 2, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

¹³³ Carl Schurz Centenary, 3 September 1948, Folder 1, Box 2, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP, 2; Elkinton to Muschamp, 20 September 1948, Folder 1, Box 2, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

¹³⁴ Elliott to Elkinton, 8 September 1948, HSP, 2.

Lucius Clay also wrote to Elkinton to express his thanks to the organization while probing for potential projects for the future. Despite not being able to attend in person, Clay stated that he was “personally gratified” by it, particularly the founding of the Carl-Schurz-Gesellschaft. The German society’s establishment was especially important to General Clay’s plans for Germany, because he saw the “reestablishment of private cultural organizations” as “one of the chief vehicles” for his democratization and reorientation program. The Foundation, among other initiatives, could provide “guidance and assistance” for nascent German civil society organizations. The general invited Elkinton to come to Germany to “establish contacts” and discuss future projects in person.¹³⁵

The excitement in the Foundation was palpable, as they would no longer be sidelined in the reconstruction of Germany. Its leadership now had “the happiest relationship” with the State Department and Pentagon, contrasting heavily with the cloud that had hung over them through 1946.¹³⁶ No longer would they be limited “to the preservation and interpretation of the contributions that the Americans of German descent made.” They could revert to their preferred work: “to build cultural bridges between the United States and Germany.”¹³⁷

¹³⁵ Lucius D. Clay to Elkinton, 6 November 1948, Folder 1, Box 2, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

¹³⁶ Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Committee, 15 October 1948, Folder 3, Box 34, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP, 3-4.

¹³⁷ Hanstein to Warburg, 8 December 1948, HSP.

Howard Elkinton also recognized a major change in the attitude of American military officials while planning for the September centennial. He noted to a friend that the officials had taken great pains to “me[e]t on equal footing” with the Germans when organizing the fête. This arrangement, in which U.S. officials invited West Germans to participate cooperatively in their own democratization, was a drastic departure from much of the rest of the program of the American occupation, where “re-education” and imposed reforms were the order of the day.¹³⁸ Though he may not have recognized it at the time, Elkinton had assisted in one of the earliest instances of the American government’s shift from “re-education” to “reorientation,” which would include more cooperative efforts from the West Germans themselves in General Clay’s democratization program rather than relying on the didactic approach of the early postwar occupation.¹³⁹

Conclusion

By the beginning of 1947, officials in Frankfurt, East Berlin, and the Soviet and American military governments viewed the upcoming centennial of the Frankfurt Revolution of 1848 as an opportunity to use a historical and cultural celebration to achieve contemporary political goals at the dawn of the Cold War. On both sides of the Iron Curtain, authorities developed plans with an eye towards consolidating an ideological community and disseminating narratives that addressed their respective Cold

¹³⁸ Elkinton to R.A. Uihlein, 4 November 1948, Folder 8, Box 4, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

¹³⁹ Clay to Elkinton, 6 November 1948, Folder 8, Box 4, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

War needs. In Berlin, organizers staged the Revolution as a core part of the long march towards a worldwide Marxist-Leninist revolution and a precursor to the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917. For those in Frankfurt, faced with the prospect of an indefinite and punitive occupation, the centennial offered an opportunity for a highly visible national rebirth on the promise of Western liberal democracy, to move out of the shadow of the Nazi regime, and to highlight the revolution's "European meaning" and its transatlantic connections with the United States. For OMGUS officials, planning for the centennials came as these same officials were beginning to conceive of an "intellectual-cultural Atlanticism" with West Germans as a reliable ideological ally against the Eastern bloc.¹⁴⁰

The centennials, which inaugurated a kind of fête diplomacy that West Germans and Americans would use in an official capacity into the 1950s, took place in the context of the increased economic integration between western Europe and the western zones of occupied Germany. By thinking about West Germans as part of a kind of ideological Atlantic community based on common values associated with Western civilization, officials hoped to use the centennial as a means to culturally legitimize these burgeoning economic and political relationships and contribute to the on-going process to forge a cultural Atlantic community and sense of "we-ness" (in the words of Geir Lundestad) based on the common values of Western civilization.¹⁴¹ Because the construction of this Atlantic community was a continuous process to be consistently affirmed and re-

¹⁴⁰ Scott-Smith, *Politics of Apolitical Culture*, 58.

¹⁴¹ Geir Lundestad, *The United States and Western Europe since 1945: From "Empire" By Invitation to Transatlantic Drift* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 66.

affirmed, it could be constructed in quotidian ways such as newspaper articles and cultural productions that cast Americans and Germans as having common roots. Major transatlantic fêtes, however, served as a means to present this community in a substantial and highly-public way, and officials, organizers, attendees, historians, and journalists on both sides of the Atlantic contributed to a public narrative on the festivities that reified “the West” and “Europe” as distinct cultural identities.

But the implementation of fêtes in Frankfurt and East Berlin came at a cost. Despite being rooted in a shared past and officially oriented towards pursuing the full unification of the German people, the competing centennials instead created bifurcating ideological narratives (tightly-controlled by the occupying powers) that offered doctrinal parables and lessons about the German present and its future. These differing memories, and the legitimization of these representations as orthodox, contributed to the polarization of a people and ideologically divergent paths for the two Germanies in the first full year of the Cold War.¹⁴² As the ideological bifurcation of Germany played out in the political realm, the centennials’ participants reflected this deepening division through the competing fêtes.

¹⁴² The competing centennials and their adherence to ideological doctrines opens an important avenue of research for scholars. Just as the histories of East and West Germany provide a compelling case study for differing economic and political systems in what used to be a unified country (or city, in the case of Berlin), so, too, do the memories of these two countries provide a compelling case study from the Cold War through reunification and to the present day. Examining contested memories between East and West – through festivals, books, films, and other cultural productions - may yet reveal other ways in which the citizens and officials of these nations reinforced, magnified, or even tore down ideological divides.

The examination of how both West Germans and Americans conceptualized and implemented the Frankfurt centennial reveals two larger implications. First, it demonstrates that the movement to forge a common Western and Atlantic identity was happening even earlier than the implementation of the Marshall Plan. Second, it foreshadowed an attitudinal shift in the American occupation towards Germany from didactic “re-education” (as had been the general rule under OMGUS) towards the kind of bilateralism and cooperation that would increasingly become the norm after 1949 under HICOG and the State Department. The planning, the presentation of history, and the choosing symbols, speeches, promotions, and conferences were not the result of American imposition but of West German-American collaboration.

In the year that followed, as the State Department assumed the responsibilities for governing Germany from the Army, U.S. officials sought to make Germany’s democratization and German-American reconciliation a more collaborative effort rather than a didactic one. To this end, West German civil society organizations such as the *Gesellschaft* and West German officials at the local and national level figured prominently into the U.S. government’s long-range plans for German democratization. Even before the Frankfurt centennial had been implemented, Americans and West Germans had already identified the next opportunity for transatlantic celebration: the 1949 bicentennial of the birth of German poet Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. With the successful implementation of the 1848 centennials and the beneficial working relationship that it experienced with the Foundation, the military government quickly

arrived at the conclusion that the Goethe bicentennial offered a great occasion to further reify the Western world on the cultural-intellectual axis.

CHAPTER 4

1949: DIVISIONS IN THE YEAR OF GOETHE

Howard Elkinton and the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation did not have to wait long before they were called upon by the U.S. military government for the prospect of collaborating on the next major German national celebration: the bicentennial of the birth of German poet Johann Wolfgang von Goethe in 1949. Elkinton found that the American participation in the 1948 centennials impressed many of the West Germans he was in contact with, because it revealed that Americans were willing to meet them “on equal footing” when it came to celebrating the liberal tradition of the German past. West Germans had expressed to Elkinton that any such “gestures” of respect and reverence for German history and culture “mean[t] a great deal” to them.¹ The Goethe bicentennial offered an excellent opportunity to once more publicly perform this transatlantic friendship.

This chapter examines the planning and implementation of the bicentennial of the birth of Goethe (the Goethe-Year, or the *Goethejahr*) in the United States and West Germany during 1949. For American officials, who throughout 1948 and early 1949 were laying the foundations for an independent West German state, Goethe was an important remnant of pre-Hitler German culture that, if properly remembered and memorialized, could help to legitimize that burgeoning state and its relationship with the United States.

¹ Howard Elkinton to R.A. Uihlein, 4 November 1948, Folder 8, Box 4, Series 1A, Group 1, National Carl Schurz Association Records, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA (hereafter cited as NCSA Records, HSP).

Just as the historical memory of the Revolution of 1848 had furnished a German heritage that was democratic, European, and Atlantic-facing, the historical memory of Goethe nourished the need to present a German past that was intellectual and cosmopolitan.

In Goethe, OMGUS officials found a referent that not only represented the best German culture and history had to offer, but also one that they hailed as foundational to Western civilization. They saluted the poet as the quintessential Western thinker whose life exemplified a commitment to cosmopolitanism and the open exchange of ideas and whose works in literature dealt with the most fundamental traditions of the Western world, such as freedom of the individual and religion. When celebrating Goethe, the concepts of “Western culture” and “German culture” were not in tension but were symbiotic. Officials honored Goethe as the best of German culture precisely *because* of his impact on Western intellectual and artistic culture, making him a European German rather than simply a German nationalist. By properly celebrating Goethe, participants were, in part, cautiously celebrating German nationalism and embedding it within a European and Western framework.

In addition to seeing Goethe as an emblem of European cultural and intellectual connections and a cornerstone of Western civilization more broadly, Americans who participated in the Goethe-Year often saw the United States itself positively reflected in Goethe’s works. As they deliberated Goethe’s meaning, Americans chronicled a special relationship between their nation and the poet, who Americans claimed saw a “glorious

future” and destiny for the young republic.² Goethe, these participants relayed, believed that the United States would grow to spread its culture and benevolence with the rest of the world. A few years into the Cold War and during the year when the intra-German divide became actualized, many Americans found that Goethe’s works and memory reaffirmed their belief that they were destined to be a positive force in the world and protectors of Western civilization against the Soviet Union.

As with the centennials of the 1848 revolutions the previous year, the construction and public performance of this “intellectual-cultural Atlanticism” did not go uncontested.³ In Weimar and other parts of East Germany, Soviet and East German officials advanced their own historical memory of the German poet and theorized what his vision would mean for contemporary Germany in the Marxist-Leninist tradition. The question of the proper remembrance of Goethe was made even more important in light of the deepening divide between the eastern and western zones of Germany, which culminated in 1949 with the founding of the Federal Republic of Germany (May) and the German Democratic Republic (October). The question of German nationalism and reunification remained a major theme of how East and West Germans alike framed the festivities, but the Goethe-Year also became a means of how each German government

² Theodore Huebener, “Goethe Admired America,” c. 1949, Folder 15, Box 11, Series: Herman Witte, 1949-1968, German Society of Pennsylvania Institutional Records, German Society of Pennsylvania Horner Library, Philadelphia, PA (hereafter cited as GSP), 5.

³ Giles Scott-Smith, *The Politics of Apolitical Culture: The Congress for Cultural Freedom and the Political Economy of American Hegemony 1945-1955* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 58.

attempted to legitimize itself and consolidate its legitimacy within the ideological framework of the liberal-democratic or socialist world as their division became actualized.

Goethe in History and Memory

Few, if any, historical Germans were as valuable as cultural currency after 1945 as Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. As a true “Renaissance man,” Goethe labored as a poet, scholar, dramatist, translator, philosopher, scientist, artist, university administrator, and diplomat, among other roles. He traveled extensively throughout Europe and beyond and wrote on the American and French Revolutions.⁴

The appropriation of Goethe for contemporary political ends began long before the Cold War. Historians have noted how organizations and governments throughout the twentieth century consistently “cast and recast [Goethe] to fit political exigencies” from the Weimar Republic through to the Cold War due to his prominence in the pantheon of German national cultural icons and the “symbolic authority” this bestowed.⁵ Given his vast array of public works, the interpretive nature of literary analysis, and the wide travels throughout his life, Goethe’s dynamic life transcended simple characterization. As a result, he became a malleable, multivocal symbol, which different groups could interpret in ways that favored their particular ideological worldview.

⁴ Matthew Bell, ed., *The Essential Goethe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), vii-ix; Jeremy Adler, *Johann Wolfgang von Goethe* (London: Reaktion Books, 2020), 13-4, 31.

⁵ Karin Schutjer, *Goethe and Judaism: The Troubled Inheritance of Modern Literature* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2015), 3.

By the end of the nineteenth century, the German people had already transformed Goethe into something of a national institution. The Weimar Republic's constitutional convention took place in the same theater that Goethe had once presided over. When the Nazis took power, they, too, tried to use Goethe as legitimizing symbol. It was not always easy for the Third Reich to find a place for a poet whose works lauded such ideals as individuality, humanism, and cosmopolitanism, but his status as a giant in German cultural history demanded that the Nazis (self-purported protectors of German cultural traditions) at least pay lip service to the poet. Nazi officials, scholars, and cultural leaders held up Goethe as a paradigmatic Nazi: a champion of German agriculture, a warrior and nationalist, a thorough critic of the Jewish people, and a forerunner of Nazi racial policies.⁶

In the postwar period, such a monumental anniversary as the bicentennial of Goethe's birth dictated that both East and West Germans celebrate in 1949. As it did for much of domestic and global affairs, Cold War ideological demands infiltrated the year's celebrations, resulting in a direct East-West competition to interpret and perform the historical and contemporary legacy of Goethe for a modern audience. The underlying contention was over who owned Goethe's memory. Did he belong to the West by dint of

⁶ Schutjer, *Goethe and Judaism*, 3; Karl Robert Mandelkow, *Goethe in Deutschland: Rezeptionsgeschichte eines Klassikers, Band II, 1919-1982* (Munich: Verlag C.H. Beck, 1989), 78-83. For Nazi attempts to appropriate Goethe, see Erhard Bahr, "The Goethe Society in Weimar as Showcase of *Germanistik* during the Weimar Republic and the Nazi Regime," in *Nazi Germany and the Humanities: How German Academics Embraced Nazism*, eds. Anson Rabinbach and Wolfgang Bialas (Oneworld Publications: 2014) and Henry Gibson Atkins, *German Literature Through Nazi Eyes* (New York: Routledge, 2010).

his birth in Frankfurt, as many Westerners claimed when they strove to connect him as closely as possible to their own heritage? Or did the fact that he moved to and worked in Weimar give East Germans a more substantive stake to his legacy? Was Goethe a cosmopolitan figure whose works emphasized religious tones and individualism or was he a revolutionary figure whose protagonists wanted to usher in a new (read: socialist) world?

Though the Cold War became perhaps the major organizing element of the Goethe-Year narrative in the United States, West Germany, and East Germany, this did not mean that many participants in the West did not try to rise above the East-West divide. Most prominently, German writer Thomas Mann tried to emphasize the apolitical nature of his participation and advocated for German national unity on disinterested terms during his visits to both Weimar and Frankfurt. In doing so, however, Mann and others swam against the strong currents of narratives that imposed Western or Marxist characteristics on Goethe. The very notion that he and others had to consciously reject the ideological divide reveals just how much the Cold War had infiltrated these global celebrations. These participants could actively embrace or seek to subvert the nominal Cold War message, but they could not ignore it.

During a year in which East Germany and West Germany came into being as distinct political entities, many public performances and journalistic narratives of Goethe often appealed to Goethe as a unifying figure that bonded both East and West Germans together, but unification had to come in terms of Westernization or Marxism, not neutrality. In practice, then, appeals to unification were often little more than lip service.

As had happened in 1948, there developed an implicit, intra-German competition for international legitimacy as the proper representative of the German people. The proper and correct memorialization of the past could denote which competing memory of the German past pointed to the true heir in the present.

The Federal Republic of Germany and the Atlantic World

The implementation of Atlantic integration on numerous fronts over 1948 and beginning of 1949 made the successful implementation of the *Goethejahr* all the more important as a means of consolidating the Western cultural community. The London Conference from February to June 1948 had resulted in a military pact (the Brussels Treaty), recommendations for a West German state, authorization for a constituent assembly for September 1948, and further integrated West Germany into the European economy through the internationalization of the Ruhr Valley and the implementation of the Marshall Plan. The Soviet blockade of Berlin, far from driving a wedge into this alliance, had only galvanized the Western allies and West Berliners, whose resistance of Soviet dominion was perhaps the most striking example thus far in the postwar period of West Germans appearing to become the dependable democratic allies that the Cold War needed. Beginning on 1 September, the West German constituent assembly was at work in Bonn drafting a new constitution for a potential West German state.⁷

⁷ Norman M. Naimark, *Stalin and the Fate of Europe: The Postwar Struggle for Sovereignty* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2019), 168, 192-4; William I. Hitchcock, "The Marshall Plan and the Creation of the West," in *The Cambridge History of the Cold War, Volume 1: Origins*, eds. Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 154-176.

The consolidation of the Atlantic world also included ventures without immediate West German participation. On 4 April 1949, twelve countries across the Atlantic Ocean signed the North Atlantic Treaty establishing the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) as a mutual defense alliance.⁸ One month later, after a year of efforts on the part of the European federalists who had met at the Hague in May 1948, ten West European nations signed a treaty in London establishing the Council of Europe, through which Europeans could reinforce their Western heritage and common purpose by promoting human rights and European political and economic interdependence.⁹ Though the Federal Republic was not a member of the Council at its inception, many of the organization's members raised the prospect of including West Germany sooner rather than later, with

⁸ Timothy Sayle, *Enduring Alliance: A History of NATO and the Postwar Global Order* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2019), 12-7; Hitchcock, "The Marshall Plan," 169-70; Thomas Alan Schwartz, *America's Germany: John J. McCloy and the Federal Republic of Germany* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 33.

⁹ Steven Greer, Janneke Gerards, and Rose Slowe, *Human Rights in the Council of Europe and the European Union: Achievements, Trends and Challenges* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 5-10, 58; Norman Weiß, "Origin and Further Development" in *The Council of Europe: Its Laws and Policies*, eds. Stefanie Schmael and Marten Breuer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 5-14; Mark Gilbert, *Cold War Europe: The Politics of a Contested Continent* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015), 73. While "human rights" is typically seen as a universal concept, its interpretation was often heavily influenced by ideology and the Cold War. See Rosemary Foot, "The Cold War and Human Rights," in *The Cambridge History of the Cold War, Volume 3: Endings*, eds. Leffler and Westad (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), Kathryn Sikkink, "The Power of Principled Ideas: Human Rights Policies in the United States and Western Europe," in *Ideas and Foreign Policy: Beliefs, Institutions, and Political Changes*, eds. Judith Goldstein and Robert Keohane (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), and Lora Wildenthal, *The Language of Human Rights in West Germany* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013).

Winston Churchill arguing shortly after the Council's founding that Western democracies and "a united Europe [could not] live without the help and strength of Germany."¹⁰

Yet, even though West Germans were not (yet) party to NATO or the Council of Europe, participants in fête diplomacy were helping to lay the intellectual foundations for German participation in the ideological Atlantic. U.S. officials believed that they first had to establish these stable intellectual and cultural foundations, which reinforced that German and Western culture were mutually constitutive, before Europeans and Americans could fully integrate West Germans politically or militarily. When the Federal Republic eventually participated as a full member in the Council of Europe (1951) and NATO (1955), their membership had been made more palatable, in part, due to the cultural and intellectual groundwork laid by fêtes and other implements of cultural Atlanticization.

In the first half of 1949, the West German state finally came into being. As a result of a Foreign Minister's Conference in Washington, the French officially merged their zone with the British-American Bizonia in April 1949, and the military governors subsequently approved the Bonn constituent assembly's new constitution ("the Basic Law") on 12 May, paving the way for the official establishment of the Federal Republic of Germany on 23 May 1949. The new country was not fully sovereign, however, as it would have powers that were defined and restricted by an Occupation Statute under the oversight of U.S., French, and British Allied High Commissions. The Statute would come

¹⁰ A. H. Robertson, *The Council of Europe: Its Structure, Functions, and Achievements* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger Inc., 1961), 18.

into full force in September, when the first West German government would be seated after elections.¹¹

For the American military government, this meant that 1949 was a transitional period. By mid-year, its responsibilities under the Department of the Army were being transmitted to the Office of the U.S. High Commissioner for Germany (HICOG) under the Department of State, with General John J. McCloy as the American High Commissioner. This “changing of the guard,” in the words of historian Thomas Schwartz, denoted that the American occupation of West Germany moved from a primarily military operation to a civilian one.¹² In the months leading up to the fall, OMGUS drew down its functions, and HICOG planned to assume authority on 21 September 1949, alongside the official inauguration of the first government of the Federal Republic of Germany.¹³

The transition from OMGUS to HICOG foreshadowed the larger attitudinal shift for the American presence in Germany from “re-education” to “reorientation.” The former, formulated as a term and program during the Second World War, had always carried with it negative connotations, which were rooted in its unflinchingly unilateral and didactic nature. The “re-education” had unsurprisingly and understandably given denazification and democratization “the character of a unilateral occupation effort.” But

¹¹ Konrad Adenauer, *Memoirs 1945-53, Translated by Beate Ruhm von Oppen* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1965), 129-30.

¹² Schwartz, *America's Germany*, 29.

¹³ Office of the U.S. High Commissioner for Germany, *1st Quarterly Report on Germany, September 21 – December 31, 1949* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1950), 1-2; Elmer Plischke, *Revision of the Occupation Statute for Germany* (Office of the U.S. High Commissioner for Germany, 1952), 1.

now, as the American presence prepared to transition to a civilian operation, officials transitioned towards using the term “reorientation.”¹⁴ It appeared as the more benign term, but there were also substantive differences in the policies. Where “re-education” was rooted in unilateral reform, “reorientation” would begin to shed this didactic label and pursue the continued democratization of the West German people through more cooperative and bilateral ventures.

The fêtes of 1948 and the planning for the *Goethejahr* of 1949 presaged this shift and stand as early examples of a “reorientation” approach to the occupation, even while under the direction of the military government. In the weeks that followed the September centennial, when Howard Elkinton went directly to West Germany to meet with General Lucius Clay and other officials to outline their joint plan for West German democratization (including plans for the *Goethejahr*), Elkinton noted a “radical shift” in tone from officials, observing that they were placing a “new emphasis on cooperation” rather than dictation.¹⁵ One of the last major projects taken on behalf of OMGUS and its

¹⁴ Statement of Policy Concerning the Revision of the Public Affairs Program for Germany and the Conclusion of a Cultural Treaty, 25 July 1951, Folder: Germany – Cultural Activities, Box 6, Subject Files Relating to Information Programs in Austria and Germany, Record Group 306, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD (hereafter cited as NARA), 2; James F. Tent, *Mission on the Rhine: Reeducation and Denazification in American-Occupied Germany* (Chicago: The University Press of Chicago, 1982), 254-5; Frank Mehring, “The Promises of ‘Young Europe’: Cultural Diplomacy, Reeducation, and Youth Culture in the Films of the Marshall Plan,” in *Die Amerikanische Reeducation-Politik nach 1945: Interdisziplinäre Perspektiven auf “America’s Germany,”* eds. Katharina Gerund and Heike Paul (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2015), 66n.

¹⁵ Adjourned Annual Meeting, 15 October 1948, Folder 3, Box 34, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP, 1; Elkinton to Clay, 29 October 1949, Folder 1, Box 2, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP, John Elliott to Elkinton, 6 November 1948,

Cultural Relations Division was facilitating the Goethe Bicentennial in Frankfurt and Wiesbaden in August, just weeks before the military government's responsibilities officially gave way to German and American civilian control.

Yet, with the official establishment of the Federal Republic, U.S. officials remained wary of a possible resurgence of German nationalism. The specter of German nationalism, of course, had been a concern since the end of the war, but the stakes were increased as the West Germans gained some of their sovereignty back. American policymakers in HICOG developed a program of "double containment," where the occupation and integration of West Germany into the Atlantic world would not only help to "contain" Soviet aggression but would also act as a check on German nationalism.¹⁶ While it was not articulated specifically in terms of this policy of "dual containment," officials believed that the proper transatlantic performance of the *Goethejahr* would help to contribute to this larger mission of Atlantic integration by demonstrating that German culture and Western civilization were symbiotic, not competitive. By celebrating Goethe as a Western (rather than simply German) figure, they were attempting, in part, to contain German nationalism and to embed it within a larger European and Western framework. Ideological Atlanticism would give West Germans access to the Western world, consolidate an ideological bulwark against socialism in Europe, and help the Western world to temper any excesses of German nationalism.

Folder 1, Box 2, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP; Minutes of Meeting of the Executive Committee, 26 May 1950, Folder 4, Box 34, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

¹⁶ Schwartz, *America's Germany*, 86-7, 156.

Goethe in the Soviet Zone

Like their American counterparts, the Soviet military government placed high importance on their cultural mission in East Germany and believed, in the words of Norman Naimark, that “culture was the most visible demonstration of the superiority of Marxism-Leninism.” This meant that the Goethe-Year, to be celebrated from March to August 1949, was one of the most consequential celebrations in the eyes of Soviet officials.¹⁷ Unlike the United States, however, the Soviet Union could not draw on a substantial ethnic German immigrant culture to stake a claim to a transnational connection with the Germans. Rather, the Soviets hoped to align with the German people through their Old-World European culture, in which German and Russian cultural figures were equals. These officials recognized that a new socialist culture could not simply be imposed in East Germany, but instead they had to align the traditions of Marx and Engels on top of a foundation of German cultural heritage, such as classical music and literature, in order to try and gain acceptance from the population.¹⁸

Fêtes were a method of achieving this goal, and Goethe’s works were carefully scrutinized and deployed to help achieve this goal of pushing a Soviet ideological

¹⁷ Naimark, *The Russians in Germany: A History of the Soviet Zone of Occupation, 1945-1949* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1995), 438.

¹⁸ Daniel J. Farrelly, *Goethe in East Germany, 1949-1989: Toward A History of Goethe Reception in the GDR* (Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1998), 3-5; Petra Weber, *Getrennt und doch Vereint: Deutsch-deutsche Geschichte 1945-1989/90* (Berlin: Metropol, 2020), 120; Joy H. Calico, “Hanns Eisler and *Faust* in the German Democratic Republic,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Faust in Music*, eds. Lorna Fitzsimmons and Charles McKnight (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 204.

worldview within the boundaries of German cultural traditions. Johannes R. Becher, the head of the Cultural Alliance for the Democratic Renewal of Germany, and Walter Ulbricht, the soon-to-be First Secretary of the Socialist Unity Party, were at the forefront of the planning. In mid-1948, authorities formed a zonal Goethe Committee, headed by Becher, to coordinate the year's festivities between the Goethe Society in Weimar (established in 1885), the Cultural Alliance itself, the German Central Administration for National Education (*Deutsche Verwaltung für Volksbildung*), the Free German Youth, state educational and cultural committees, and the zone's Free German Trade Union Federation (FDGB).¹⁹

Because Goethe was a stalwart in the German cultural pantheon, planning for the *Goethejahr* on both sides of the Iron Curtain raised the question as to whether or not there would be a single, jointly-celebrated bicentennial. Goethe was a figure whose remarkable importance to German culture might transcend the partition, but the likelihood of a joint celebration always appeared remote, especially with the consolidation of the western zones of Germany over the course of 1947 and 1948 and the movement towards an independent West German state in early 1949.

¹⁹ Bericht über das Goethejahr 1949, c. 1949, Folder: Tagungen vom 16.1., 9.3., 25.5., 15.7., 7.9., 12.11.1948, Series: Tagungen des Präsidialrates, DY 27: Kulturbund der DDR, German Federal Archives, Berlin-Lichterfelde (hereafter cited as German Federal Archives); Kulturausschuss Sitzungsschlussbericht, 18 December 1948, Folder: Bedeutung des Goethe-Jahres, Series: Sitzungen des Ausschusses für Kulturpolitik, DA 1: Volkammer der DDR, German Federal Archives,; Gerd Dietrich, *Kulturgeschichte der DDR, Band 1: Kultur in der Übergangsgesellschaft 1945-1957* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2018), 372-4.

Even at this early juncture of the Cold War, the East German political entity appeared to be lagging behind its West German counterpart in terms of international perception as the true representatives of the German national people.²⁰ With questions of international legitimacy in mind, East German officials exhausted numerous avenues in trying to form a joint celebration with West Germany, though, for these officials, any such celebrations would naturally take place in Weimar, the place in which Goethe worked for a sizeable portion of his life and the place of his death. Before the end of 1948, East German officials, including Weimar *Oberbürgermeister* Gerhard Hempel and Johannes Becher, continuously reached out to Frankfurt Mayor Walter Kolb to probe the possibility of a joint celebration “to ensure that the Goethe celebration of the year 1949 does not turn into another shameful spectacle of German disunity.”²¹

Kolb, perhaps recognizing that East officials seemed to be trying to co-opt West German legitimacy, was noncommittal.²² When private appeals failed, East zone officials applied public pressure. This pressure largely failed, though at least one journalist in the *Frankfurter Rundschau* was somewhat critical of Kolb’s sustained non-answers to

²⁰ For the intra-German competition for international political legitimacy, see William Glenn Gray, *Germany’s Cold War: The Global Campaign to Isolate East Germany, 1949-1969* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003) and Christian Ostermann, *Between Containment and Rollback: The United States and the Cold War in Germany* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2021), 114-6.

²¹ Johannes Becher to Ernst Beutler, 5 November 1948, Folder: Goethefeiern 1949 in der Ostzone, Series: 5.12.5 Goethejahr 1949, A.41: Kulturamt, Institut für Stadtgeschichte, Frankfurt am Main (hereafter cited as ISG).

²² Walter Kolb to Gerhard Hempel, 16 April 1949, Folder: Goethefeiern 1949 in der Ostzone, Series: 5.12.5 Goethejahr 1949, A.41: Kulturamt, ISG.

Weimar and wondered if Kolb and Beutler were missing an opportunity to reach across the Iron Curtain and help break the still-ongoing Berlin blockade under the “sign of Goethe.”²³ When cooperation failed to materialize, East German officials and newspaper organs loudly castigated West Germans for spurning the East’s earnest attempts to put their ideological differences aside and celebrate one of Germany’s greatest sons as a single, unified people.²⁴ With the prospect of a single celebration gone, Soviet and East German authorities marshalled considerable resources for the year in order to make their festivities more extravagant than those of their counterparts in the West. East German and Soviet officials also endeavored to ensure that the messages and lessons behind the bicentennial were tightly controlled, and those who participated in the celebrations were expected to adhere to the official interpretation of the German poet.

Officials behind the Iron Curtain claimed that the bourgeois interpretation of the Weimar Republic and Western world could never properly encapsulate Goethe, because it was the interpretation of the ruling class that “eliminate[d] all progressive and enlightened elements from Goethe’s work.”²⁵ Rather, “the complex world of Goethe” was only “within the reach of communist thought,” and it fell to cultural interpreters in the Soviet Union and East Germany to “liberate” Goethe from its old, bourgeois

²³ “Soll das eine Antwort sein?,” 25 April 1949, Folder: Goethefeiern 1949 in der Ostzone, Series: 5.12.5 Goethejahr 1949, A.41: Kulturred, ISG.

²⁴ “Wo bleibt die Antwort?,” 24 April 1949, Folder: Goethefeiern 1949 in der Ostzone, Series: 5.12.5 Goethejahr 1949, A.41: Kulturred, ISG.

²⁵ “Goethe – Irrungen und Wirrungen,” *Westfalenpost*, 23 February 1949.

trappings and make him “common property” for all the world’s peoples rather.²⁶ Once the progressive peoples of the world were liberated “from social and national serfdom,” they could reach the pinnacle of human culture under socialism and properly explore the works of Goethe, Beethoven, and others.²⁷

Official East German and Soviet narratives roundly rejected the Western interpretation of Goethe as a “cosmopolitan,” which in Soviet discourses became shorthand to denote as something that was “highly foreign to ‘Russian nature,’” bourgeois, imperialist, and an element that undermined the dedication to worldwide national liberation.²⁸ Officials associated cosmopolitanism with a capitalist system that blurred nationalist distinctions, weakened German nationalism and the desire for reunification, and pushed the globe towards homogenization and Americanization.²⁹

²⁶ I. I. Anisimov, “Borba za Gyote,” *Vestnik Akademii Nauk SSSP* 10 (October 1949), 55-65; “Goethe und das Volk,” *Tägliche Rundschau*, 28 August 1949.

²⁷ “Die gesamte Kulturwelt gratuliert,” *Tägliche Rundschau*, 28 August 1949; Dietrich, *Kulturgeschichte*, 376.

²⁸ In Russian and Soviet ideologies, “cosmopolitanism” is complex, and many historians associate the use of “cosmopolitan” as a euphemism for both Jews (as “rootless cosmopolitans”) and middle-class bourgeois culture in general. Frank Grüner, “‘Russia’s battle against the foreign’: the anti-cosmopolitanism paradigm in Russian and Soviet Ideology,” *European Review of History* 17, no. 3 (June 2010), 464; Louis Rapoport, *Stalin’s War Against the Jews: The Doctors’ Plot and the Soviet Solution* (New York: Free Press, 1990), 204-205; “The Soviet Campaign Against Cosmopolitanism: 1947-1952,” *COMPASS* no. 131 (November 1998), 9, accessed online on 10 August 2023 at <https://www.marxists.org/history/erol/periodicals/compass/11-1998.pdf>.

²⁹ Sean Allan, *Screening Art: Modernist Aesthetics and the Socialist Imaginary in East German Cinema* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2019), 64-5.

Instead, in the East German narrative, Goethe was the quintessential German nationalist and congruent with the Kremlin's push for national liberation worldwide. As it had been during the March 1948 centennial, the topic of German nationalism and German unification became a prime avenue for Soviet and East German attacks on the Western world and the United States specifically. Officials behind the Iron Curtain consistently emphasized Goethe's desire for German unification and organized the fête in Weimar as a "celebration of the German nation."³⁰ U.S. officials maintained publicly and privately that these appeals to German nationalism were insincere, but the prospect that the Kremlin could become the patrons of German unification was nonetheless worrisome to them.³¹

The East German discourse portrayed Goethe as a revolutionary and an anti-imperialist figure. He was a precursor of Karl Marx and a "dialectician" whose roots in Central Europe made it impossible that he would belong to any kind of "Atlantic culture."³² Speeches and articles in Berlin, Weimar, Erfurt, and beyond consistently asserted that Goethe's "humanism" should not be thought of as individually-based or religious humanism, as would appear in the West, but instead as a clear antecedent of socialist and Marxist humanism. The Chairman of East Germany's Socialist Unity Party

³⁰ Ostermann, *Between Containment*, 105; "Ein Nationalfeiertag Deutschlands," *Berliner Zeitung*, 28 August 1949; "Goethe-Feier der deutschen Nation," *Neues Deutschland*, 13 August 1949.

³¹ Soviet Intentions and Capabilities, 27 February 1950, Folder: Regaining the Psychological Initiative, Box 12, Records Relating to International Information Activities, Record Group 59, NARA, 26.

³² Naimark, *Russians in Germany*, 438.

emphasized this notion to a crowd in Weimar by referencing Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, in which the protagonist wants to escape is life as a bourgeois businessman. These themes, according to the speaker, made the story a clear forerunner of the *Communist Manifesto*.³³

Towards the end of 1948, the East German Goethe Committee disseminated a set of "guiding principles" consisting of twelve points that would properly lay out the "meaning of the Goethe Year" for the education ministers of the Soviet zone's five states. These principles, which were largely a dogmatically Marxist-Leninist treatment of such concepts as Goethe's humanism, nationalism, "dialectic conception of nature," and (lack of) "cosmopolitanism," would shape how individual locales should publicly celebrate.³⁴ These principles emphasized that Goethe's "life achievement" was his commitment to German national unification, and it was important that individual celebrations emphasized this fact "in the midst of Germany's [contemporary] disunity." The principles also called for celebrants to highlight Goethean themes of class struggle "to overcome outdated power-political relationships," and that any instances of free will and freedom of

³³ "Der organisierte Johann Wolfgang Goethe," *Offenbach Post*, 20 April 1949. For examples of discussion of Goethe's humanism, see "Können wir vor Goethes Augen bestehen?" *Berliner Montag*, 25 April 1949 and "Goethe und das Volk," *Tägliche Rundschau*. For the interpretation of *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* in the East, see Farrelly, *Goethe in East Germany*, 72-87.

³⁴ Dietrich, *Kulturgeschichte*, 371-5. Kulturausschuss Sitzungsschlussbericht, 18 December 1948, German Federal Archives; An alle Landesvorstände des FDGB, 8 March 1949, Folder: Goethe-Jahr, Series: Büros der Sekretäre, DY 34: Bundesvorstand des Freien Deutschen Gewerkschaftsbundes, German Federal Archives; Goethe-Feiern der Jugend in Halle, 25 March 1949, Folder: Goethe-Jahr, Series: Büros der Sekretäre, DY 34: Bundesvorstand des Freien Deutschen Gewerkschaftsbundes, German Federal Archives

individuality for Goethe's protagonists were merely in the service of "the material and moral progress" of the collective. By properly remembering Goethe in this way, the zonal Goethe Committee insisted, the poet would be a guide for East Germany's "spiritual renewal" under Marxist-Leninism.³⁵

Officials also encouraged the participation of the working class, insisting that the FDGB coax its workers to hold observations at factories and other workplaces. For Soviet and East German authorities, interpreting Goethe through a Marxist-Leninist lens meant removing him from the "bourgeois-academic education" of the Weimar Republic and current Bonn regime and ensuring that he belonged to the whole people.³⁶ While it left a considerable amount of the smaller celebrations to individual locales, the Committee also organized "centrally-planned events" in order to enhance the appearance of grassroots participation. Officials arranged artistic exhibitions, "youth days," and other public displays in which the authorities "encouraged [the] participation of trade unionists and activists."³⁷ The East Germans sought to prove their commitment to the non-elites of class by presenting a Goethe prize to a wide cross-section of society, including artists,

³⁵ Leitgedanken zum Goethejahr, c. 1949, Folder: Goethe-Jahr, Series: Büros der Sekretäre, DY 34: Bundesvorstand des Freien Deutschen Gewerkschaftsbundes, German Federal Archives, 1-2.

³⁶ "Dem großen und guten Genius unseres Volkes," *Neues Deutschland*, 30 August 1949.

³⁷ Betr.: 13. Sitzung des Ausschusses für Kulturpolitik, 4 January 1949, Folder: Goethe-Jahr, Series: Büros der Sekretäre, DY 34: Bundesvorstand des Freien Deutschen Gewerkschaftsbundes, German Federal Archives; Bericht über das Goethejahr, German Federal Archives.

scientists, and even working people like Adolf Hennecke, a coal miner.³⁸ Officials took great pains to ensure (and publicize) that celebrations happened “in factories and rural stations,” not just in “scientific institutions.”³⁹

The Soviets were not confined to putting on celebrations of German culture, and, like American officials, sought to use the occasions as a means of building transnational bridges and forging a common intellectual-cultural community rooted in shared values – in this case, on socialist governance and culture. It was an opportunity to demonstrate that the “free people of Germany” had found a “most faithful friend in the Soviet people” in their struggle for freedom and German unification.⁴⁰ As a result, the participation of Russian officials and the inclusion of Russian cultural elements were a crucial part of the East German national celebrations. One speaker in the Weimar festivities told the crowd that the Soviet occupation of the East Zone was fortunate, because the Soviet government had “maintain[ed] Goethe’s legacy and... [brought] it into the possession of the entire people.”⁴¹

The East German narrative tied Goethe closely to Russian poet Alexander Pushkin, who was held up alongside the German as an example of “progressive literary

³⁸ “Hennecke und Heinrich Mann,” *Badische Zeitung*, 30 August 1949; “Goethe-Huldigung im Geist des Friedens,” *Abendpost Weimar*, 27 August 1949.

³⁹ “Ein Nationalfeiertag Deutschlands,” *Berliner Zeitung*, 28 August 1949.

⁴⁰ “Privetstvennye Vystupleniya Inostrannikh Gostey,” *Vestnik Akademii Nauk SSSP* 7 (July 1949), 26-7.

⁴¹ “Weimar eröffnet feierlich das Goethe-Fest,” *Tägliche Rundschau*, 27 August 1949. See also Dietrich, *Kulturgeschichte*, 375-6.

methodology” and the Soviet “anti-Western and anti-cosmopolitan campaign.”⁴² 1949 was not just the two-hundredth anniversary of Goethe’s birth but also the one-hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the birth of Pushkin, giving the year “two anniversaries of world significance.” Pushkin and Goethe, who were “geniuses of equal significance” and representative of Old-World European culture, personified the best of the Russian and German peoples and gave them an intellectual and cultural bond. It was a bond that the American people, as a barbaric people with no high culture to speak of, could not replicate. In celebrating Pushkin and Goethe simultaneously and tying together the literary and ideological worlds of the Russian and East German nations, Goethe was “another link in the chain of friendly cultural relations which is now being actively forged between the Soviet people and German people.”⁴³

The first internationally-important event of the East German celebration came in late July, when German writer Thomas Mann arrived in Weimar as part of his first visit back to Germany since Adolf Hitler assumed dictatorial powers in March 1933.⁴⁴ Mann, who was intensely worried about German nationalism and militarism even after the fall

⁴² “Ein bedeutungsvoller Empfang,” *Neues Deutschland*, 30 August 1949; Naimark, *Russians in Germany*, 398-401, 436; Farrelly, *Goethe in East Germany*, 5-7.

⁴³ “Mit Goethe voran zur Einigung Deutschlands,” *Offenbach Post*, 29 August 1949.

⁴⁴ In early 1933, Mann had been traveling abroad to give a series of lectures in early 1933 and was warned that it would not be safe for him to return to Germany after the Nazis consolidated power. He stayed in exile, eventually settling in the United States, where he was granted citizenship. Thomas Mann never resided in Germany again. He spent much of the rest of his life in the United States and briefly in Switzerland, where he died in 1955.

of the Third Reich, returned to the country of his birth for the first time in 1949 to celebrate the *Goethejahr* under the condition that each government would allow him to celebrate in both Weimar and Frankfurt. Thomas Mann visited West Germany first (on 25 July) and subsequently told East German officials that he would accept Weimar's invitation only if he could give the same speech that he had in Frankfurt am Main, so that observers would not see him as favoring one Germany or the other.⁴⁵

Despite Mann's attempts to remain above the Cold War divide, he could not avoid the ideological pressures being placed on him by the geopolitical moment in either Frankfurt or Weimar. To begin, East German officials boasted that Mann's arrival had caused quite a stir among his American patrons and Walter Kolb, who had tried to discourage Mann from going East. Mann also felt compelled to add a small preamble to his speech in East Germany in order to defend his appearance.⁴⁶ Despite his attempt to remain disinterested, East German newspapers welcomed Mann's appeals to "German unity" as well as his passion for modernity and "technical progress," all of which the East Germans and Soviets believed applied to their socialist modernity over the American alternative. East German papers informed their readers that Mann had come to East

⁴⁵ Vortrag von Thomas Mann, Ansprache im Goethejahr, 25 July 1949, Folder: 1949 Juli 25: Goethejahr: Goethefeier in der Paulskirche, Series: 19T Veranstaltungen, S3: Sammlung Ortsgeschichte, ISG; See below for Mann's experience in the West German celebrations.

⁴⁶ Badener Tageblatt, "Sowjetzonaler Goethe-Ausschuß an Dr. Kolb," 2 July 1949; Mandelkow, *Goethe in Deutschland*, 152-4; Naimark, *Russians in Germany*, 439-40.

Germany to stake a claim for a “utopia” and “a new humanism.”⁴⁷ After Mann received the East German Goethe Prize, he pledged to donate the prize money to needy artists, which was taken as evidence by East Germans that West Germany could not care for its artists as the Soviet zone did.⁴⁸

Analysis of the East German affair in the West was, of course, highly critical. American and British onlookers criticized the Weimar bicentennial as transparently propagandistic, with one journalist noting that Goethe might not be above politics, but he was certainly “well above [the Soviet] kind” and that of the “militant anti-Fascist democrats.”⁴⁹ The Soviet use for Goethe was not unlike the Nazis’ use of the poet in the past: the Russians wanted to use Goethe to “give some trappings of respectability” for their occupation and turn him into “an apostle of world communism.” Weimar and East Germany may be insulated from “freedom of communication,” but Goethe’s multi-faceted works were products “of a free mind, untrammled by the whip-cracking of ideological dictators,” and the Soviet attempts “to pervert them to political use” would soon be “forgotten.”⁵⁰

⁴⁷ “Ein neues Solidaritätsgefühl – ein neuer Humanismus,” *Neues Deutschland*, 2 August 1949; “Thomas Mann ruft zum Frieden,” *Neues Deutschland*, 2 August 1949; “Ein Nationalfeiertag Deutschlands,” *Berliner Zeitung*, 28 August 1949.

⁴⁸ Dietrich, *Kulturgeschichte*, 375; “Festlicher Tag in Weimar,” *Neue Zeit*, 2 August 1949; “Höhepunkt meiner Europareise,” *Neues Deutschland*, 2 August 1949. Mann later confided that the found the East celebrations shared “fatal similarities with the Hitleresque” given its tightly controlled nature. Naimark, *Russians in Germany*, 440.

⁴⁹ “Comrades in Weimar,” *Manchester Guardian*, 19 February 1949.

Reception was icy in West Germany as well, as commentators similarly noticed that the “Red Goethe” celebrations were transparently “a matter of political cultural propaganda.” Few of the participants stuck to Goethe as a topic and would frequently veer into tangents such as transnational working-class unity and the virtues of the Soviet Union. Eastern zone newspaper would merely parrot the “manifesto” of the Socialist Unity Party, and one could easily anticipate “each line from a speech,” because it came not from a proper reading of Goethe but “from a political system.” The concurrent West German celebration, according to one writer, was the true representation of Goethe and “the only one that truly matters.”⁵¹

Goethe in the Western World

Because there was no centralized set of guiding principles for its participants, the interpretation of Goethe throughout the Western world was less cohesive than it was behind the Iron Curtain. Indeed, as a dynamic figure, Goethe’s multivocal symbolism could represent anything from Western civilization and intellectual culture, Euro-Atlantic transatlanticism, German nationalism, the Cold War mission of the United States, and more. Professors, journalists, and writers from across the Western world debated a range of topics for examination and drew an assortment of lessons for the present. Yet, despite the variety of participants and the absence of the kind of message discipline (for lack of a

⁵⁰ J. Emlyn Williams, “Germans Laud Goethe – Zones Apart,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, 29 July 1949; “Soviets Adopt Goethe,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 18 February 1949.

⁵¹ “Goethe im Schaufenster, *Die Welt*, 28 August 1949; “Der ‘rote’ Goethe in Weimar,” *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 30 August 1949; “Hennecke und Heinrich Mann,” *Badische Zeitung*; “Feiern und Festakte Überall,” *Bunte Welt*, 7 January 1950.”

better word) that appeared in the east zone, major throughlines nonetheless developed that formed a cohesive Western narrative that, in part, reflected the Cold War.

Even before American involvement in the war, the poet had already become shorthand for the German culture that preceded Hitler and was worth preserving once the Nazi regime had been defeated. When U.S. officials and Foundation members considered how best to safeguard the culture-in-exile of “older Germany” during the war, Goethe’s works and cultural legacy were at the forefront of their minds.⁵² For American officials after the war, Goethe’s status as Germany’s favored son made him the ideal model to demonstrate the capacity of West Germans for redemption. John J. McCloy, who replaced General Lucius Clay as the chief American officer in West Germany after Clay retired in mid-May 1949, hailed the poet as an example of German capacity for proper “expressions of political thought.”⁵³

Yet Goethe’s usefulness extended past just his status as a “German” poet and a national symbol for Germany. Western *Goethejahr* narratives framed Goethe as a figure who belonged to the entirety of Western civilization. Military government officials, journalists, and members of private organizations alike all used possessive language when underscoring the poet’s importance: American officials who strategized for the *Goethejahr* often held him up as a hallmark of “our entire Western heritage” and “our

⁵² James Truslow Adams to Wilbur K. Thomas, 11 July 1940, Folder 6, Box 3, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

⁵³ Joint HICOG-EUCOM release number 1, 4 October 1949, Folder: Entertainment, Ceremonies, Box 14, General Records, 1949-1952, Record Group 466, NARA, 7.

civilization” when they justified their plans.⁵⁴ These and other remarks denoted that Goethe belonged to the West as a cultural community as much as Germany, though they naturally also thought it important to highlight the centrality of his German heritage as a way of framing German and Western culture as congruous. Western observers cast Goethe predominately as a figure of liberalism, an “Olympian,” and a cosmopolitan and citizen of the world who traveled extensively throughout and thought about the Western world.⁵⁵ The poet was, if not religious himself, certainly influenced by religion and Christianity, which undergirded Western civilization overall.⁵⁶

For West Germans torn between acknowledging their desire for German unity and supporting their developing ideological ties with the West, many tried to thread the needle between Goethe as the quintessential German and the quintessential Western thinker. In the end, even in West Germany, substantially less of the narrative around Goethe was devoted to German unification as a political goal than appeared in the East, which may have pleased some U.S. officials concerned about the affair becoming too nationalistic.

⁵⁴ Goethe Bicentennial Foundation, c. 1947, Folder: Goethe Festival, Box 590, General Records, 1946-49, Record Group 260, NARA; Military Government Projects, c. 1949, Folder: Goethe Festival, Box 590, General Records, 1946-49, Record Group 260, NARA.

⁵⁵ Huebener, “Goethe Admired America,” GSP, 1-5.

⁵⁶ Gerardus van der Leeuw, “Goethe and the Crisis of Civilization” in *Goethe and the Modern Age*, ed. Arnold Bergstraesser (Chicago: Henry Regenery Company, 1950); “Goethe und die Religion,” *Rheinischer Merkur*, 2 April 1949; “Goethes Religiosität,” *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 22 March 1952.

For OMGUS officials, the geopolitical and ideological angle of the *Goethejahr* became all the more important after learning of the “voluminous propagandistic program of the Russian Military Government for the Weimar celebration.” With the Soviet plans to heavily subsidize the efforts, American officials were looking ways to free up money to contribute to the Goethe-Year, including appealing to private organizations for their help.⁵⁷ It was important for the year-long Goethe celebrations in the United States, Frankfurt (the place of Goethe’s birth), and Wiesbaden (which possessed a theater much more suitable than anything Frankfurt could offer) to have a thoroughly-Western character and the participation of as many Atlantic allies as possible. To bring it to an “internationally important level,” American officials proposed to invite theatrical troupes and other participants from France and Great Britain as well as facilitating the participation of international scholars in West Germany’s celebrations, and worked as best as they could to make this happen behind the scenes.⁵⁸ Goethe also figured prominently into a summer vacation course for German youth held at the Free University of Berlin in 1949 under the joint sponsorship of the French, American, and British governments which focused on “the traditions of Western Civilization and their relevance today.”⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Memorandum for Mr. [Eric T.] Clark on Interview with Professor Beutler, 8 November 1948, Folder: Goethe Festival, Box 590, General Records, 1946-49, Record Group 260, NARA; Project Title: Goethe 200th Anniversary, c. 1949, Folder: Cultural Exchange Projects, Box 706, Records Relating to Student Exchanges and Other Cultural Activities, Record Group 260, NARA.

⁵⁸ Project Title: Goethe 200th Anniversary, NARA.

Within weeks of the end of the September 1948 centennial, OMGUS officials broached the possibility of observing the bicentennial. Henry Kellermann of the U.S. State Department believed that the *Goethejahr* gave the American government “a number of excellent opportunities to place the American people on record as favoring a lasting, positive relationship between the United States and those groups in Germany which represent the best in German cultural tradition.”⁶⁰ But in the United States, private German-American and literary organizations had been considering the possibility of celebrating the Goethe bicentennial since late 1946 and early 1947.

The first major plans for the bicentennial were already in place by the fall of 1947, when the Goethe Bicentennial Foundation was established in Illinois (with former U.S. President Herbert Hoover as its honorary chairman) to help organize the festivities in the United States during the 1949 summer in Aspen, Colorado. From its outset, knowingly or unknowingly, the Bicentennial Foundation placed Goethe into an ideological framework that appeared to be colored by the first year of the Cold War. Its members hailed Goethe as one of the greatest “international minds in the culture of the Western World” whose writings and philosophy depicted man as rising “to become a free individual.” “Goethe’s conception of man and society,” the Bicentennial Foundation posited, was “an expression of the central value of our entire Western Heritage.” The

⁵⁹ Proposal for a Summer Vacation Course, Berlin 1949, Folder: Youth Activities, Box 132, Records Pertaining to Educational Affairs, 1945-1949, Record Group 260, NARA.

⁶⁰ Henry J. Kellermann to Elkinton, 18 May 1949, Folder 10, Box 4, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

organization's purpose, then, was to "re-examine and re-interpret" Goethe for its twentieth-century audience, which it planned to do by combining Goethe with a "symphony" of other examples of "world literature" (almost exclusively from Western traditions) at a meeting in Aspen.⁶¹

The Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation itself had been working to build a network and societies and universities in the Philadelphia area to honor Goethe and was coordinating with the Goethe Bicentennial Foundation as early as July 1948. The Executive Committee tasked one of its members, Adolf E. Zucker, with constructing a committee of "outstanding scholars" to get in touch with universities and other organizations to implement programs in both the United States and Germany that would "properly commemorate Goethe."⁶² By the time the Goethe Bicentennial Foundation committee reached out to the CSMF in early January 1949 about forming a local Goethe committee in Philadelphia, locals and members of both the German Society of Pennsylvania and Memorial Foundation had already formed the Goethe Association of Philadelphia to streamline the planning and help organize the Goethe celebrations nationwide.

Both the Memorial Foundation and military officials were interested in bridging the Atlantic through these celebrations, physically as well as ideologically. In February, Alonzo Grace of the military government's Cultural Relations Division suggested that it

⁶¹ Goethe Bicentennial Foundation, NARA.

⁶² Minutes of Meeting of the Executive Committee, 9 July 1948, Folder 3, Box 34, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP, 3, 6.

would be fruitful to have exchanges as part of the festivities.⁶³ The CSMF identified Ernst Beutler, the curator of the Goethe Museum and the man overseeing the reconstruction of the poet's birthplace, the *Goethehaus* in Frankfurt.⁶⁴ Unfortunately, Beutler could not leave Frankfurt, as his time was dominated by the effort to oversee the reconstruction of the *Goethehaus* in preparation for the year's coming festivities.

Instead, Beutler suggested Edwin Redslob, the head of the Free University of Berlin, who was both an "able Goethe scholar" and fluent enough in English to make a meaningful speech.⁶⁵ Redslob himself was hesitant to leave his administrative duties and anticipated not being able to arrive in the United States until spring 1950 at the earliest. Recognizing the importance of providing evidence of transatlantic cooperation and goodwill, Alonzo Grace and the Cultural Relations Division of the Army lobbied Redslob hard, finally securing his commitment to give a speaking tour in the United States beginning in November.⁶⁶ Despite concerns that it might be too late or too brief of a visit "to be effective" to the *Goethejahr*'s overall aims, the State Department requested the

⁶³ Minutes of Meeting of the Executive Committee, 9 November 1948, Folder 3, Box 34, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP, 3; Minutes of Meeting of the Executive Committee, 18 January 1949, Folder 3, Box 34, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP, 4; Philadelphia, den 28. Februar 1949, 28 February 1949, Box: Vol. 10: 1949 and 1950, Series: Meeting Minutes, German Society of Pennsylvania Institutional Records, GSP; Elkinton to Howard Johnston, 25 February 1949, Folder 9, Box 4, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

⁶⁴ Minutes of Meeting of the Executive Committee, 9 November 1948, HSP, 3.

⁶⁵ Elkinton to Johnston, 25 February 1949, HSP.

⁶⁶ Alonzo Grace to Elkinton, 7 July 1949, Folder 11, Box 4, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation's help in developing Redslob's American itinerary and taking care of his affairs during his stay.⁶⁷

One important project singled out by both OMGUS and private German-Americans was the rebuilding of the place of Goethe's birth, the *Goethehaus* and the adjoining Goethe Museum, both of which had been destroyed during the war. Much like the *Paulskirche*, Walter Kolb and other Frankfurt officials prioritized the *Goethehaus* when it came to physical reconstruction in the city because of the history and cultural symbolism associated with the buildings, though funds were tight.⁶⁸ The Memorial Foundation had made overtures to their contacts in the Department of State about the possibility of helping to rebuild the adjacent Goethe Museum in mid-1946, though they were told that, with pressing social and economic issues in the American zone, the reconstruction of the *Goethehaus* would have to wait.⁶⁹

The military government's budding relationship with the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation after the 1848 centenary, and the prospect of the *Goethehaus* as a site of cultural rehabilitation *and* the Cold War, brought the museum and library back into play and made their reconstruction important "not only for Germany but for all of our

⁶⁷ Minutes of Meeting of the Executive Committee, 13 September 1949, Folder 3, Box 34, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP, 3.

⁶⁸ Ernst Beutler to Magistrate of Frankfurt, 30 June 1948, Folder: Freies Deutsches Hochstift: Vorbereitungen zum Goethejahr 1949, Series: 6.4.2.6 Wiederaufbau, A.41 Kulturamt, ISG.

⁶⁹ Eugene Anderson to Elkinton, 21 August 1946, Folder 5, Box 4, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

civilization.”⁷⁰ Officials turned to private American sponsorship in the hopes of raising 20,000 DM to bridge the gap. “A gift of this kind,” OMGUS officials believed, would “give tangible expression of American interest in the Goethe celebration” in the face of Soviet support for the east zone fête.⁷¹ HICOG impressed upon the Memorial Foundation that rebuilding the *Goethehaus* would be “one of the finest contributions which the United States could make.”⁷² The Memorial Foundation agreed, believing that making the reconstruction “Goethe shrine in Frankfurt” a joint West German-American endeavor would further repair cultural bridges between Americans and West Germans.⁷³ By the end of 1949, the organization had collected and forwarded \$15,000 to Ernst Beutler in Frankfurt to demonstrate their commitment to this cultural rapprochement.⁷⁴

Ultimately, the reconstruction of the *Goethehaus* was not completed in time to be rededicated as a part of the *Goethejahr*. Yet the physical incompleteness of the building did not prevent it from being an extension of the festivities and a manifestation of West Germany’s postwar physical, spiritual, and intellectual reconstruction – what Andrew

⁷⁰ Project Title: Goethe 200th Anniversary, NARA.

⁷¹ Military Government Projects, NARA.

⁷² Grace to Elkinton, 11 January 1949, Folder 9, Box 4, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

⁷³ Elkinton to Kellermann, 20 May 1949, Folder 10, Box 4, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP; Elkinton to John J. McCloy, 5 July 1949, Folder 11, Box 4, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

⁷⁴ Adjourned Annual Meeting, 21 October 1949, Folder 3, Box 34, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP, 5. By the end of 1950, the total donations had reached about \$25,000, and the HICOG Special Projects fund contributed an additional DM 150,000.

Demshuk called “redemptive reconstruction.”⁷⁵ It supplemented the rest of the Goethe-Year, because, as his birthplace, it symbolized Goethe himself and the characteristics associated with the Western fêtes. As a future repository for cultural artifacts and his literature, it represented prewar German culture that was free and open, intellectual, and cosmopolitan. Even in its incomplete state, one West German journalist hailed the *Goethehaus* as “Europe’s bulwark” against illiberalism and totalitarianism from the East.⁷⁶ What’s more, much like the Goethe-Year itself, the *Goethehaus* reconstruction effort was a transatlantic affair thanks to American donations, which Frankfurt officials welcomed as contributions to “deepening the mutual understanding between America and Germany” and demonstrations of the “shared cultural ideas” between the two.⁷⁷

When officials finally rededicated the *Goethehaus* in May 1951, Adolf Zucker of the CSMF and the high commissioners of the United States, France, and Great Britain were on hand to commemorate the event. American High Commissioner McCloy himself said a few words for the occasion, echoing many of the themes of the *Goethejahr* in the West. McCloy called Goethe a “universal genius” whose cosmopolitanism rose above “narrow nationalism” and exalted Goethe’s commitments to the ideals “of freedom and the individual.” The High Commissioner unambiguously referenced the east zone’s

⁷⁵ Andrew Demshuk, *Three Cities After Hitler: Redemptive Reconstruction Across Cold War Borders* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2021), 3-4, 53, 67-8.

⁷⁶ “Bollwerk Europas” *Rhein-Echo*, 23 August 1949.

⁷⁷ Frankfurt official on behalf of Kolb, 17 May 1950, Folder: Sonstige Goethefeiern in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und anderen Ländern, Series: 5.12.5 Goethejahr 1949, A.41: Kulturamt, ISG.

Goethejahr when he declared that “totalitarians, in [Goethe’s] own country or elsewhere, have never been able to invoke his name successfully.”⁷⁸

Celebrations in West Germany

Frankfurt, the place of Goethe’s birth, was physically and ideologically central to West German narrative, in direct competition with Weimar. After all, Goethe was Frankfurt’s “greatest citizen” and its “greatest son.”⁷⁹ The city itself, “an environment of freedom,” had a “decisive... influence” on the poet’s dedication to “a free exchange of ideas, values, and experiences” that “command[ed] the attention of the entire Western world.” had come to pass because the poet himself was “reared in an environment of freedom, the Free City of Frankfurt.”⁸⁰ These same “long democratic traditions” extended to the present and helped to breed free educational and social institutions that worked towards “a European Germany,” such as the Johann-Wolfgang-Goethe-University and the *Freie Deutsche Hochstift*, the literary association that owned the *Goethehaus*.⁸¹

⁷⁸ Robert P. Ball, “Goethe House Restored,” *Information Bulletin* (June 1951), 3-6; Adolf E. Zucker, “The Dedication of the Reconstructed Goethehaus,” 17, no. 5 (June 1951), 6, 13-4.

⁷⁹ Frankfurt huldigt Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, seinem größten Sohn, c. 1949, Folder: 1949 Juli 25: Goethejahr: Goethefeier in der Paulskirche, Series: 19T Veranstaltungen, S3: Sammlung Ortsgeschichte, ISG; Frankfurt am Main pays tribute to its greatest citizen, c. 1949, Folder: 1949 Juli 25: Goethejahr: Goethefeier in der Paulskirche, Series: 19T Veranstaltungen, S3: Sammlung Ortsgeschichte, ISG.

⁸⁰ Goethe Bicentennial Convocation and Music Festival 1949, c. 1949, Folder: 1949 Juli 25: Goethejahr: Goethefeier in der Paulskirche, Series: 19T Veranstaltungen, S3: Sammlung Ortsgeschichte, ISG; Ausstellung des Historischen Museums: “Frankfurt zur Zeit Goethes,” c. 1949, Folder: Ausstellungen 1948-1952 in verschiedenen Ausstellungsräumen, Series: 5 Wechselausstellungen, A.45.02 Historisches Museum, ISG.

Thomas Mann visited Frankfurt on 25 July, where he was honored by Mayor Walter Kolb and the city. As he would attempt the following week in East Germany, Mann hoped that his visit would remain nonpartisan and devoid of the ideological tensions of the Cold War. However, like would happen in Weimar, Mann's visit was not always interpreted in newspapers and the larger Western narrative in a manner keeping with his intentions. Mayor Kolb's opening speech quickly foisted Cold War rhetoric onto the occasion by welcoming Mann back to the "free city of Frankfurt" and noting that Mann had "faithfully managed Germany's artistic and intellectual heritage" during his time as an American citizen. For the Frankfurt mayor, Mann's work was always "European-Occidental" in nature and congruent with "the old dream" of Germany's intellectuals: "Europe as a cultural and political unit." In bringing Mann back to Germany (if only briefly) and to Frankfurt in particular, West Germany saluted "humanity," "cosmopolitanism" and the "categorical demand for 'Europe.'"⁸²

In late August, culminating on Goethe's birthday on 28 August, Frankfurt dedicated an entire week to the poet, and newspapers across West Germany dedicated huge portions of their newspapers Goethe on 28 and 29 August.⁸³ The opening session on 24 August began with a speech from Walter Kolb, who once more used the occasion to

⁸¹ Frankfurt am Main pays, ISG; "Goethe und die Idee der Freiheit," *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 14 November 1949.

⁸² Pressestelle der Stadt Frankfurt am Main, 25 July 1949, Folder: 1949 Juli 25: Goethejahr: Goethefeier in der Paulskirche, Series: 19T Veranstaltungen, S3: Sammlung Ortsgeschichte, ISG, 1-4. For Mann's speech, see Vortrag von Thomas Mann, ISG.

⁸³ For examples of full-newspaper coverage, see the 27 August 1949 issue of *Der Abend* and the 28 August 1949 issue of *Frankfurter Rundschau*.

express western Germany's "genuine desire to cooperate with the powers of the West in an effort toward reconstruction and world peace." The city hosted an international congress of scholars, "exhibitions of Goetheana," and international performances of some of the poet's plays. At the scholars' conference (denounced as elitist and bourgeois in the East), eighty intellectuals from across the world (including Turkey, Romania, and even one professor from "the Russian zone") took part. Members of American societies were well-represented, with Ernst Jockers, the president of the University of Pennsylvania and member of the German Society of Pennsylvania, and Adolf Zucker of the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation on hand for the festivities.⁸⁴

Like Thomas Mann before him, one speaker on 28 August, Adolf Grimme, attempted to rise above the partisan nature of the Cold War by arguing that Goethe could not be given a contemporary label. Grimme, a politician and a member of the Social Democratic Party, criticized the recurring worldwide theme of trying to interpret Goethe through present, ideological lenses. "Frankfurt's greatest son," Grimme asserted, could not be "a liberal" nor "a friend of reaction" nor "a democrat or a socialist." Undoubtedly cognizant of the ideological pressures of the year, Grimme quoted Goethe himself in asserting that the poet could only be judged "in spirit which the times are reflected." It would be inappropriate, therefore, for "any part to lay claim to Goethe."⁸⁵

⁸⁴ Zucker, "Germany Marks the Goethe Bi-Centennial" *The American-German Review* 16, no. 1 (October 1949), 27-8.

⁸⁵ Goethe Heute: Gedenkrede in der Paulskirche zu Frankfurt am Main, 28 August 1949, Folder: 1949 Juli 25: Goethejahr: Goethefeier in der Paulskirche, Series: 19T Veranstaltungen, S3: Sammlung Ortsgeschichte, ISG, 3, 8-9.

Grimme's plea was more of an outlier than the norm. The main thrust of the proceedings honored Goethe's memory as a broader part of Europe and Western civilization. The city of Frankfurt honored a number of intellectuals with Goethe Plaques, often couching the awards in terms of contributions to the Western world. Walter Kolb awarded French poet André Gide the Goethe Plaque due to his "ongoing service to awakening and shaping the European spirit." For British writer Victor Gollancz, the Goethe Plaque came due to the writer's "generous fight for a happier Europe." Kolb awarded the prize to American professor and University of Chicago President Robert Hutchins for his "forward-looking work of education and unification in the occidental spirit" and to Spanish philosopher Jose Ortega y Gasset, "the free, brave, and incorruptible guardian... of Western tradition," for his "critical illumination of German idealistic philosophy and classical poetry from the perspective of the European spirit."⁸⁶

In West Germany (as well as the United States), much of the *Goethejahr* was an intellectual and literary affair, in contrast to East German efforts to make the celebrations (at least appear) more accessible and central to working-class Germans. The West German Goethe-Year saw the establishment of the *Deutsche Akademie für Sprache und Dichtung*, an academy for German authors and scholars and a "place of freedom" independent "from the state and the political world."⁸⁷ Less than forty miles north of

⁸⁶ Auszeichnungen bei der Goethe-Feier der Stadt Frankfurt, 28 August 1949, Folder: 1949 Juli 25: Goethejahr: Goethefeier in der Paulskirche, Series: 19T Veranstaltungen, S3: Sammlung Ortsgeschichte, ISG.

⁸⁷ Karoline Wirth, *Der Verein Deutsche Sprache: Hintergrund, Entstehung, Arbeit, und Organisation eines deutschen Sprachvereins* (Bamberg: University of Bamberg Press, 2010), 118-9; Pressestelle der Stadt: Deutsche Akademie für Sprache und

Frankfurt, the city of Wetzlar observed their Goethe Festival Week from 24 to 28 August by holding a week-long “European conversation.” The city invited scholarly delegates from western Europe as well as the United States, South Africa, India, and China to participate in the hopes of fostering West European and German reconciliation and helping western Europe to “begin again.”⁸⁸

As they had during the 1948 centennial, the Union of European Federalists held a day celebrating and promoting European federalism as part of the broader Frankfurt festivities. Held on 27 August, concurrent with an advisory meeting of the recently-organized Council of Europe in Strasbourg, the “Day of European Youth” largely eschewed any discussion over the United States but was nonetheless heavily coded as Western. After welcoming remarks to some 700 guests by Mayor Kolb and Dr. Erwin Stein, the Hessian Minister of Education, many of the featured speakers honored the theme of the day (“Germany is a part of Europe”) and argued in favor of deep, lasting European cooperation and unification with a prominent place for Germany within that community.⁸⁹

Many of the speakers invoked Goethe as a means of appealing to the cosmopolitan heritage of Germans: Goethe was not only a “great German” but as a “European and citizen of the world.” A speaker from the Netherlands implored

Dichtung, 28 August 1949, Folder: Goethejahr 1949: Festakt am 200. Geburtstag, Series: unklassifiziert, S6b-38: Materialsammlung, ISG.

⁸⁸ “Deutsche und Europäer müssen neu anfangen,” *Hamburger Allgemeine*, 29 August 1949.

⁸⁹ “Deutschland ist ein Teil Europas,” *Hessische Nachrichten*, 29 August 1949.

Germany's youth to "learn to think in a European way" as a means of solving many of Germany's present problems. The chairman of the French Foreign Affairs Committee, Salomon Grumbach, welcomed German participation with open arms, claiming that a united Europe was "not possible without Germany." The Italian speaker echoed this sentiment, declaring that "no nation is more important for Europe than Germany." Much like other orators, the speaker advocated for the admission of a "democratic and European-minded Germany" into the community of European nations as a means of fostering peace on the continent.⁹⁰

With radio broadcasts beginning on New Years Day and continuing through August, entire newspaper editions dedicated to Goethe, and even articles publishing quizzes on the poet, some West Germans wondered if the oversaturation was "too much Goethe."⁹¹ One journalist warned that German schoolchildren would get "complexes when they hear the name of Goethe" and a whole generation of Germans might turn off the radio once they hear the poet's name due to the prolonged and "exaggerated 'cultural propaganda.'"⁹² Others wondered if it would be effective: after the celebration reached

⁹⁰ "Tag der europäischen Jugend," *Allgemeine Zeitung*, 17 August 1949; "Kein Europa ohne Deutschland," *Allgemeine Zeitung*, 29 August 1949; "Deutsche Jugend muß europäisch denken," *Rhein-Ruhr-Zeitung*, 29 August 1949; "Europäische Föderalisten," *Darmstädter Echo*, 29 August 1949; "Tag der europäischen Jugend," *Weser-Kurier-Bremen*, 30 August 1949; "Tag der europäischen Jugend," *Mannheimer Morgen*, 30 August 1949.

⁹¹ Plan der Goethe-Sendungen in Jahre 1949, c. 1948-9, Folder: Goethe-Sendungen von Radio Frankfurt zum Goethejahr 1949, Series: 5.12.5 Goethejahr 1949, A.41 Kulturamt, ISG; "Sehr viel Goethe – zuviel Goethe?" *Hamburger Allgemeine*, 22 July 1949; "Was Wissen Sie von Goethe" *Offenbach Post*, 21 May 1949.

⁹² "Zum Goethe-Jahr," *Der Tagesspiegel*, 21 August 1949.

“its hectic peak in August,” would it simply fade away as if was never there? Could the “gap between the people and the genius” every be “bridged?”⁹³

Several Germans worried about the “unworthy” commodification of Goethe’s name, with one student complaining that “you really shouldn’t name every necktie and every piece of chewing gum after Goethe.”⁹⁴ Others highlighted that the year would have some lasting effects: academics founded a German Academy, publishers printed volumes of Goethe’s works (perhaps as many as thirty million copies), and work continued apace on the *Goethehaus*.⁹⁵ Perhaps the year was overloaded with Goethe, but it also seemed that no expense was spared to remind West Germans of their rich cultural and intellectual history.

Celebrations in the United States

The Goethe event in the United States that drew the most attention on either side of the Iron Curtain was the Goethe Bicentennial Convocation and Music Festival held in Aspen, Colorado from 27 June through 16 July. The selection of Aspen seemed puzzling, but its organizers believed that the location would help “avoid the distractions of an urban metropolis” and provide the kind of idyllic scenery that Goethe himself would have appreciated as a naturalist.⁹⁶ The scholarly event featured writers and professors from

⁹³ “Erste Halbzeit des Goethe-Jahres,” *Hannoversche Presse*, 28 May 1949.

⁹⁴ “Reklame um Goethe unwürdig,” *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 2 May 1949.

⁹⁵ “Post Festum,” *Frankfurter Neue Presse*, 30 August 1949; “Goethe und die Wirtschaft,” *Frankenpost - Hof*, 26 November 1949.

⁹⁶ Thornton Wilder, “World Literature and the Modern Mind,” in *Goethe and the Modern Age*, 213.

across the Western world, and the program of lectures, unsurprisingly, overwhelmingly placed Goethe within the context of both Western civilization and the twentieth-century moment. For example, American and European lecturers strove to relate the German poet to their own countries, resulting in such speeches as “Goethe and the English Mind,” “Goethe and the Italian Mind,” “Goethe and Scandinavia: Yesterday and Today,” and “Goethe and Twentieth-Century France.”⁹⁷

William E. Hocking, Professor Emeritus at Harvard University, credited Germany during Goethe’s life for establishing “the chief European basis for the codes” and “binding ingredients of civilization.”⁹⁸ The former Minister of Education, Arts, and Science in the Netherlands exalted Goethe as an example of cosmopolitanism and argued that Americans and Europeans were “not really divided” but “belong[ed] to the same civilization.”⁹⁹ Ernst R. Curtius of the University of Bonn concurred, drawing the tradition of Goethe back to a common foundation of Western civilization and the “basis of Western thought”: Homer, Plato, Aristotle, and even the Bible.¹⁰⁰ American novelist and Pulitzer-prize winner Thornton Wilder went as far as declaring that Goethe would be

⁹⁷ See Bergstraesser, *Goethe and the Modern Age*.

⁹⁸ Press Release, 5 June 1949, Folder: 1949 Juli 25: Goethejahr: Goethefeier in der Paulskirche, Series: 19T Veranstaltungen, S3: Sammlung Ortsgeschichte, ISG; William Ernest Hocking, “Binding Ingredients of Civilization” in *Goethe and the Modern Age*, 253, 257.

⁹⁹ Press Release, 5 June 1949, ISG; Gerardus van der Leeuw, “Goethe and the Crisis of Civilization” in *Goethe and the Modern Age*, 348.

¹⁰⁰ Ernst Robert Curtis, “The Medieval Basis of Western Thought” in *Goethe and the Modern Age*, 237-8, 249-51.

“scared to death by the cultural developments in the communist-controlled areas” and hoped that Western Europe and the United States could help recover Goethe’s reputation.¹⁰¹ The penultimate speaker of the convocation, Spanish philosopher Jose Ortega y Gasset (soon to be granted the Goethe Plaque in Frankfurt), tasked Europeans with the duty of rebuilding civilization on the foundation of Goethe’s ideals.¹⁰²

West German newspapers were receptive to the Aspen convocation, even if the location seemed a bit out of place, because it demonstrated an international appreciation for the German poet.¹⁰³ For one journalist, the “Goethe Congress” provided a great opportunity for the free exchange of ideas and spirited disagreement, even allowing for one lecturer (Barker Fairley of the University of Toronto) to make the argument that Marxist interpretations would become the standard Goethe interpretation in the near future. While the journalist believed that the speakers could have spent more time trying to meet the “present cultural and economic crisis,” ultimately the convocation was a success in the realm of West German-American relations, because it demonstrated the “great... bond” of “friendship between” the United States, Europe, and Asia.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ “Thornton Wilder über Goethe,” *Neue Presse*, 1 July 1949.

¹⁰² “Wir müssen nicht verzweifeln,” *Neue Presse*, 12 July 1949; Auszeichnungen bei der Goethe-Feier der Stadt Frankfurt, 28 August 1949, Folder: 1949 August 28: Goethefeier, Series: 19T Veranstaltungen, S3: Sammlung Ortsgeschichte, ISG.

¹⁰³ H. B. Kranz, “Goethe-Feiern in Amerika,” *Der Tagesspiegel*, 18 August 1949; “Der Amerikanische Goethe-Kongreß,” *Der Tagesspiegel*, 28 July 1949; “Vom Kongo nach Colorado,” *Sie*, 24 July 1949.

¹⁰⁴ “Der Amerikanische Goethe-Kongreß,” *Der Tagesspiegel*, 28 July 1949.

Celebrations continued across the United States in the latter half of the year. Much of the American *Goethejahr* was dedicated to centering the United States, emphasizing a special connection between Goethe and Americans, and referencing the contemporary relationship between the United States and West Germany. Goethe was a cosmopolitan who connects with all lands, the American narrative collectively went, but in the last years of his life, he became especially enthralled with the New World. He maintained tight friendships with many Americans and read extensively about the young republic, because he wanted to remain connected to the country “whose glorious future he foresaw” in contrast to the “declining culture of the Old World.” Goethe seemed to predict the Cold War destiny that many Americans in 1949 believed they were fulfilling in their ideological struggle against totalitarianism.

The connection went both ways: not only was Goethe an influence to Americans, but “the vision of the birth of a new [American] culture radiating benefits to all mankind undoubtedly influence[d] Goethe” when writing *Faust, Part II* (1832). For one author, there was likely “no other country in which Goethe was [more] interested,” scientifically and culturally, “than the United States.”¹⁰⁵ Additional events centering the United States, such as events with themes related to “What Goethe Means to America,” “Goethe and His American Friends,” and “Goethe’s Influence on America,” occurred in the last months of the year.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ Orie William Long, “Goethe’s American Visitors,” *The American-German Review* 15, no. 6 (August 1949), 24-8; Walter Wade pugl, “Goethe’s Interest in America,” *The American-German Review* 15, no. 6 (August 1949), 29-32; Huebener, “Goethe Admired America,” GSP.

In keeping with the notion that celebrations in the West were primarily an intellectual affair, American colleges and universities held observations throughout the year. Harvard University, Hunter College, Louisiana State University, the University of Miami, the University of Wisconsin, Colgate University, Loyola University, and more – seemingly down to “the smallest provincial colleges” and local high schools in Philadelphia - celebrated the poet. Celebrations ranged from single days to a week and even, in the case of Harvard, events over several months. There were also substantial civic celebrations in New York City, Chicago, Philadelphia, and San Francisco.¹⁰⁷ Members of the Memorial Foundation considered the celebration in San Francisco, put on with assistance by local German-American societies, especially appropriate due to the city’s reputation as “a city of culture, tolerance, and liberalism,” the exact ideals that American celebrations of Goethe wanted to highlight.¹⁰⁸ The city of Frankfurt, along with the Goethe University, sent an address to twenty American universities thanking them for their participation in the *Goethejahr* and hoping that Goethe’s birthplace, destroyed during the recent war, “should rise again as a symbol of peace and understanding between peoples.”¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ “Goethe Bicentennial in Philadelphia” *The American-German Review* 16, no. 1 (October 1949), 31; For Release, 2 October 1949, Box: Vol. 10: 1949 and 1950, Series: Meeting Minutes, German Society of Pennsylvania Institutional Records, GSP; “The Goethe Bicentennial in Retrospect,” *The American-German Review* 16, no. 1 (October 1949), 30.

¹⁰⁷ “The Goethe Bicentennial in Retrospect,” 30; Kranz, “Goethe-Feiern.”

¹⁰⁸ “The Goethe Festival in San Francisco,” *The American-German Review* 16, no. 3 (February 1950), 20.

For the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation and the State Department (having taken over the responsibilities in Germany from the military government), the celebration of the *Goethejahr* extended all the way through to the end of December, when Dr. Edwin Redslob of the Free University of Berlin arrived in the United States.¹¹⁰ Redslob gave his first lecture on Goethe at Harvard University, but there was a second motive for his lecture circuit in the United States. Both the State Department and Dr. Redslob hoped that the latter's tour would garner American support for the fledgling Free University and help to stabilize it in its earliest years behind the Iron Curtain, giving both the United States and West Germany a foothold deep in East German territory.¹¹¹ The State Department's "personal request" to the CSMF was to help with Redslob's arrangements and itinerary in order to "mak[e] the cause of the Free University better understood in America."¹¹²

While West German newspapers were largely impressed with the American demonstrations of friendship and the "extensive preparations" that went into celebrating Germany's greatest son, East German newspapers heavily criticized the celebrations in

¹⁰⁹ Frankfurt begrüßt US-Universitäten, c. 1949, Folder: 1949: Goethejahr, Series: 19T Veranstaltungen, S3: Sammlung Ortsgeschichte, ISG.

¹¹⁰ "Professor Redslob Visits America" *The American-German Review* 16, no. 3 (February 1950), 40.

¹¹¹ Elkinton to Johnston, 25 February 1949, HSP. For more information on the Free University of Berlin and its connection with the United States and the West during the Cold War, see Tent, *The Free University of Berlin: A Political History* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1988).

¹¹² Minutes of Meeting of the Executive Committee, 20 December 1949, Folder 3, Box 34, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

both West Germany and the United States.¹¹³ For East Germans, Western celebrations not only adhered to an outdated and wrong-headed “bourgeois-liberal” understanding of Goethe and relied on American-led attempts to represent the poet as a “Western spirit.” The spectacles themselves were small, “disappointing,” and elitist at the expense of the working class. Frankfurt itself, little more than a “place of pilgrimage of the Olympian cult,” paled in comparison to Weimar, the “old [and] new city of Goethe” that showed the “Goethean spirit come to life in the service of human progress.”¹¹⁴ The “most unusual” meeting in Aspen, Colorado drew considerable derision, with one journalist insisting that the meeting place was predominately chosen as a corrupt, commercial, “money-making scheme” high in the mountains above the ordinary masses.¹¹⁵

Perhaps the largest failure, for East Germans, was the “non-completion” of his birthplace, the *Goethehaus*. Frankfurt authorities like Kolb had laid out such “big speeches and big plans” only to have nothing substantial come of it. Such a failure contrasted heavily with the *Goethehaus* in Weimar, which had been rebuilt by the East Germans “quickly and energetically.” The incomplete *Goethehaus*, along with the generally disappointing affairs held in the West, was evidence that the “McCloy State” lacked funds and could not properly honor Goethe, as they had in the East.¹¹⁶

¹¹³ Kranz, “Goethe-Feiern.”

¹¹⁴ “Weimar – alte, neue Goethestadt,” *Sonntag*, 28 August 1949; “Comrades in Weimar,” *Manchester Guardian*, 19 February 1949.

¹¹⁵ “So feiert die Welt den Großen Deutschen,” *Sonntag*, 28 August 1949.

¹¹⁶ “Kein Geld für Goethe,” *Tägliche Rundschau*, 24 August 1949.

Conclusion

By chance, the year 1949 saw not only the official division of Germany, with the founding of the Federal Republic of Germany and German Democratic Republic, but also the celebration of one of the Germany most cherished national icons. In the context of the Cold War, where both West and East German states emerged and both Soviets and Americans were seeking to consolidate their ideological communities, the diverging memories and celebrations of Goethe were now no longer just contributing to ideological division and the consolidation of the Atlantic and Soviet worlds. The bicentennial became a means by which the nascent Federal Republic of Germany and the burgeoning German Democratic Republic could legitimize themselves as new states and justify their place in their larger ideological worlds.

In the West, Goethe was remembered as the quintessential German intellectual and a foundational thinker in Western civilization, and many Goethe-Year participants believed that his spirit could help bring West Germany back into the international as a culturally-European nation. Further, many in the United States also recalled the unique destiny Goethe foresaw for their young republic in the early nineteenth century. It was a destiny that many believed they were fulfilling in the Cold War in their ideological struggle against the Soviet Union.

By the end of year, the foundations of much of the Atlantic world and Western European integration had been firmly established with a set of concrete institutions: the Marshall Plan had established an Atlantic political economy, the Council of Europe promoted common cultural values, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization was the

most critical symbol yet of an Atlantic Community (though West Germany was not yet part of either the Council of Europe or NATO). Yet the Federal Republic, while not fully being integrated into the military aspects of the Western world, had been placed within the intellectual-cultural conceptualization of the Atlantic. Two years of fête diplomacy had been a fundamental instrument in accomplishing this objective, and its premise of cooperation and meeting the West German people as equals was finally reflected in the larger American policy towards the occupation once the Department of the Army's responsibilities transferred to the civilian guidance of the U.S. State Department.

In the coming years, HICOG's newly created Office of Public Affairs would enlarge its programs of educational and informational activities in the same spirit of reciprocal cultural exchange as the Frankfurt centennials and the *Goethejahr* fêtes. The new decade brought a new and dangerous dimension to the Cold War: the outbreak of the Korean War and the prospect that West Germany might be next to experience an invasion from its socialist counterpart. With new threats and fears that public commitments to democracy were being undermined in the Federal Republic and elsewhere, the American High Commission looked for further opportunities to consolidate the intellectual-cultural Atlantic, especially in highly strategic and symbolic areas.

CHAPTER 5

HICOG AND EUROPEAN INTEGRATION IN WEST GERMANY

In July 1950, State Department officials in the Office of Public Affairs circulated a research paper expressing concern about the acceleration of Soviet propaganda attacks on the United States and the Western world more broadly. The Soviets were using a multi-front propaganda offensive aimed at the populations of Western nations to sow confusion, undermine confidence in Western governments, and drive a wedge between the members of the “free world.”¹ It was just one of several reports and memoranda within the first years of the 1950s that revealed American consternation over Kremlin efforts to divide the West and, if not usher in the outright collapse of liberal-democratic governments, at least inspire “neutralism” in West Germany and other European nations, whereby these countries would abandon their commitments to the wider, American-led Atlantic world.² American officials resolved to re-doubling their efforts of using long-term “political-psychological action” and the “power of diplomacy and propaganda” to integrate the Atlantic world in a cultural and ideological realm, as NATO and the Marshall Plan had done in the spheres of military and political economy. For the Federal

¹ The Soviet “Peace Offensive,” c. July 1950, Folder: The Soviet “Peace Offensive,” Box 11, Records of Research Projects Regarding Diplomatic Relations, Record Group 59, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD (hereafter cited as NARA), 1a-2.

² Statement of Policy Concerning the Revision of the Public Affairs Program for Germany and the Conclusion of a Cultural Treaty, 25 July 1951, Folder: Germany – Cultural Activities, Box 6, Subject Files Relating to Information Programs in Austria and Germany, Record Group 306, NARA, 4.

Republic of Germany specifically, which was not yet fully assimilated into the Atlantic world (militarily) and whose population seemed vulnerable to neutralism due to their aspirations to eventually reunify with East Germany, the American attempt to “regain[] the psychological initiative” against the Soviets meant raising “public awareness of [the Atlantic’s] basic community of interests” and promoting West Germany’s close “association with[in] the Atlantic Community.”³

This chapter explores the implementation of *fête* diplomacy through three cultural festivals, with and without the assistance of the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation, in areas of strategic and symbolic importance in Western Germany in the early 1950s. They were the first such festivals under the High Commissioner for Germany (HICOG) and the State Department, which had taken over the responsibilities for occupied Germany in the fall of 1949, but the cultural objectives and implementation of these festivals was largely congruent with earlier efforts under the American military government. With ongoing developments at the international level encouraging European integration, Westernization, and Atlanticization, U.S. officials were on the defensive against Kremlin attempts to drive a wedge between the members of the liberal-democratic world, and the

³ Analysis of Major Psychological Objectives and Tasks in 1951, 16 January 1951, Folder: 1950 General, Box 3, Records Relating to Worldwide Program Objectives, 1948–1957, Record Group 59, NARA, 1; Soviet Intentions and Capabilities, 27 January 1950, Folder: Regaining the Psychological Initiative, Box 12, Records Relating to International Information Activities, Record Group 59, NARA, 26; Psychological Initiatives for the Next Three Months, c. May-June 1950, Folder: Psychological Objectives for the Rest of 1950, Box 3, Records Relating to Worldwide Program Objectives, 1948–1957, Record Group 59, NARA, 1; Defense in the Cold War, 20 January 1951, Folder: 1950 General, Box 3, Records Relating to Worldwide Program Objectives, 1948–1957, Record Group 59, NARA, 6-7.

cultural festivals of the 1950s promoted European integration and Atlantic consolidation at the intellectual and cultural level. By encouraging West Germans to recognize and publicly celebrate their European and Western heritage, the festivals also served as a means of countering the Kremlin propaganda that encouraged “tendencies of neutralism” and “fear of commitments with the West.”⁴

The first of these celebrations came in 1950, when the city of Nuremberg celebrated the 900th anniversary of the first time the city’s name was mentioned in official documents. In the aftermath of the International Military Tribunal, the Nuremberg anniversary festival became an important symbolic site for the possibility of West Germany’s democratization and Westernization. Citizens of the city and the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation (once more acting as the public face of American participation for U.S. officials) hoped to draw on the city’s medieval past to paint over the crimes of the Third Reich, restore the city as a cultural center, and promote its importance as a possible economic engine of western Europe. As the centennial of the Revolution of 1848 had provided evidence of a democratic political culture in German history and the *Goethejahr* had provided evidence of Germany’s intellectual and cultural bonds to Western civilization, so too did Nuremberg’s cultural celebration have its place in establishing German culture as mutually constitutive and fundamental to Western civilization, past and future.

In the months before the Nuremberg celebration, HICOG and representatives of Great Britain, France, and West Berlin also conceived of a cultural festival to be held in

⁴ Statement of Policy, NARA, 4.

West Berlin, where Western nations could promote their national cultures. The festival served a number of intellectual and geopolitical objectives. First, while the participants were demonstrating their national cultures, it came with the understanding that these cultures were derived from the same, Western heritage. Second, it was a medium through which the Western nations could affirm their commitment to the city and its people in the aftermath of the Berlin blockade. Third, it provided the possibility for American outreach to East Berliners (and perhaps other Germans) behind the Iron Curtain. Fourth, for the United States, who was represented through a number of private institutions and organizations including the Foundation, it became an opportunity to showcase American culture and counter Soviet propaganda aimed at dividing the Western world and charging that the United States was culturally backward and different from the Europeans. With a stage to promote American culture to Europeans, U.S. officials hoped, this festival might not only tighten Western bonds but also “destroy[] the legend of ‘American cultural barbarism’” advanced by the Kremlin.⁵

U.S. officials in HICOG also identified Passau, the eastern-most city of the Federal Republic, as an important symbolic and strategic site which warranted a cultural festival in order to energize public opinion in favor of European integration. With the city being less than thirty miles away from the border with Czechoslovakia, Passau seemed to be an ideal location through which to launch informational activities and carry out celebrations “within sight and hearing of people behind the Iron Curtain.”⁶ In 1952, in

⁵ Statement of Policy, NARA, 15.

collaboration with city officials and the various governments of western Europe, HICOG helped to implement the first of what would become an annual cultural festival called “European Weeks,” where local and European participants could showcase the major ideals of European and occidental culture in a city so close to the fault line with the socialist world. The Passau festival, which aimed to celebrate European culture as a whole rather than a German-American connection, took place without the assistance of the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation, but nonetheless demonstrated the importance U.S. officials in HICOG placed on such fêtes.

Each of these festivals, taking place in cities with historical, geopolitical, and symbolic importance, continued the earlier trend of American officials meeting the German people in a cooperative and equitable enterprise rather than the top-down approach exemplified by other occupational efforts. Taking after their predecessors in the American military government, State Department officials recognized that the celebrations could not appear to be imposed “without manifest German consent” for fear that it might cause rejection or resentment among the Germans, even if the Federal Republic was not yet a fully sovereign nation. These festivals, then, aligned with HICOG’s “educational and civil objectives” of bringing in West Germans more fully and cooperatively into their own Westernization and encapsulated the shift from didactic re-education to cooperative reorientation that was presaged by fête diplomacy under the American military government. By appealing to the West Germans and enlisting their

⁶ “European Weeks in Passau,” *Information Bulletin* (Washington, D.C.: October 1952), 19-20.

voluntary (and hopefully exuberant) participation, officials hoped, the cultural festivals could further assist the United States in integrating “Germany into Europe” and pursuing Germany’s “final inclusion into the Atlantic Community.”⁷

From A Didactic to a Cooperative Approach

The transfer of the responsibilities of the occupation from military control to civilian control under High Commissioner John J. McCloy was part of the larger movement by West Germany’s allies to begin revisiting the nature and rigidity of the occupation overall. On 22 November 1949, just months after the Federal Republic of Germany was established, West Germany and the Western powers signed the Petersberg Agreement, recognizing West German independence, defining its rights, and clarifying the relationship between the Federal Republic and the Western powers in greater detail than the Occupation Statute. While the signing of the Petersberg Agreement did not end state of war and occupation nor establish full West German sovereignty, it was a monumental step that began the transition towards doing so and represented the first real postwar treaty signed by the Federal Republic as an international partner rather than as a subject of occupation.⁸

⁷ Statement of Policy, NARA 3-5.

⁸ Mark Gilbert, *Cold War Europe: The Politics of a Contested Continent* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015), 72-3; The United States Delegation at the Intergovernmental Study Group on Germany to the Secretary of State, 12 July 1950, *Foreign Relations of the United States* (hereafter cited as *FRUS*), 1950, Vol. IV, Document 398. The Allies retained “supreme authority powers” and “essential security controls” over West German foreign policy and retained the right to intervene into West German domestic affairs if deemed necessary.

Through the Petersberg Agreement, the Western allies also recommended West German membership in the Organization for European Economic Co-operation (OEEC), which had been established in 1948 in order to oversee the distribution of Marshall Plan aid.⁹ In addition, the signatories of the Petersberg Agreement recommended that West Germany “be promptly admitted to the Council of Europe,” and West Germany was admitted as an associate member of the Council in July 1950.¹⁰ These steps, among others, signified how many West Europeans accepted the notion that West Germans shared a common purpose and identity with the other nations in the West.

There was a renewed sense of urgency for West Germany’s Atlanticization after June 1950, when the armies of North Korea invaded South Korea. With North Korea penetrating the border into western-supported South Korea, Americans and Europeans feared that an invasion of West Germany and western Europe might be next.¹¹ While there had been limited discussions on West Germany’s participation in the defense of Europe before June 1950, the outbreak of the Korean War made the idea more palatable. On 12 September 1950, U.S. Secretary of State Dean Acheson formally requested the remilitarization of West Germany.¹²

⁹ To that point, West Germany had been represented by Bizonia’s membership, but with this recommendation would take on the responsibilities as an independent nation.

¹⁰ The United States High Commissioner for Germany (McCloy) to the Secretary of State, 22 November 1949, *FRUS* 1949, Vol. III, Document 141.

¹¹ James S. Corum, “Adenauer, Amt Blank, and the Founding of the Bundeswehr, 1950-1956,” in *Rearming Germany*, ed. Corum (Boston: Brill, 2011), 33-36.

Even the French were warming to the idea, though the French government was faced with the conundrum of empowering West Germany to defend against possible Soviet aggression while also limiting the German ability to menace France itself. To thread this needle, the French proposed the Pleven Plan in October 1950. Named for French Prime Minister René Pleven, the plan called for a European Defense Community that would disperse West German soldiers throughout a wider European army, putting them under the military command and political control of non-Germans and containing the excesses of German nationalism.¹³

On the West German side, Chancellor Konrad Adenauer hoped to parlay possible German contributions to Europe's military defense into further concessions that moved his nation towards full sovereignty.¹⁴ Germans were no longer defeated enemies in the eyes of the Western powers, Adenauer told his allies, but were partners, and they should be treated as such. The chancellor noted that West German military contributions in exchange for its sovereignty would help to "overcome the hesitant attitude of the German people" and would lead them away from "the idea of neutralization" by convincing them

¹² Sheldon A. Goldberg, *From Disarmament to Rearmament: The Reversal of US Policy Toward West Germany, 1946-1955* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2017), 119.

¹³ Mathias Schütz, "Kein Vergessen: Die Europa-Föderalisten, der Verband deutscher Soldaten und die europäischen Veteranentreffen 1952/53," *Militärgeschichtliche Zeitschrift* 75, no. 2 (2016), 394; David Clay Large, *Germans to the Front: West German Rearmament in the Adenauer Era* (University of North Carolina Press: 1996), 91-5.

¹⁴ Petra Weber, *Getrennt und doch Vereint: Deutsch-deutsche Geschichte 1945-1989/90* (Berlin: Metropol, 2020), 131.

that their “sacrifices are... worthwhile.”¹⁵ Adenauer formally requested that the Occupation Statute be “superseded by a system of contractual agreements and security pact” that would treat West Germany as an equal member of the international community, and American High Commissioner for Germany John J. McCloy, who recognized Adenauer as a champion of the Western world, recommended that the relationship between the Allies and West Germany be progressively replaced with bilateral contractual agreements.¹⁶

The Western Powers and the Federal Republic met in Brussels in December 1950 to begin formal talks on West Germany’s contributions to Europe’s military defense, but the talks were not confined to German remilitarization and the potential European Defense Community.¹⁷ In Brussels, the Allies also formally recognized the changing nature of the relationship between their governments and West Germany, and they indicated that they were “prepared to place their relationship with the German Federal Republic to an increasing degree on a contractual basis.”¹⁸ In doing so, the Allies began a

¹⁵ Large, *Germans to the Front*, 73; The United States High Commissioner for Germany (McCloy) to the Secretary of State, 17 November 1950, *FRUS*, 1950, Vol. IV, Document 417; United States Delegation Minutes of the Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the United States, United Kingdom, and France, 19 December 1950, *FRUS*, 1950, Vol. IV, Document 427.

¹⁶ McCloy to the Secretary of State, 17 November 1950, *FRUS*; The United States High Commissioner for Germany (McCloy) to the Secretary of State, 1 December 1950, *FRUS*, 1950, Vol. IV, Document 421.

¹⁷ Goldberg, *From Disarmament*, 133-4.

¹⁸ The United States High Commissioner for Germany (McCloy) to the Secretary of State, 22 December 1950, *FRUS* 1950, Vol. IV, Document 428.

transition by which they were steadily ceding their “power” to operate within West Germany (as postwar victors) in favor of the “right” to do so with the assent of the West German government.¹⁹ Foreign nations would soon no longer be occupiers but ambassadors with an embassy status.

As HICOG officials at the time acknowledged, this shift towards bilateral contacts was not just occurring in the political and military spheres, but it had been occurring at the cultural level for some time by that point. In July 1951, Henry J. Kellermann of the State Department penned a policy paper, subsequently sent to West German officials, which recommended a cultural treaty between the two nations on a bilateral basis that would coincide with HICOG’s broader “transition planning” for the Federal Republic. Like their predecessors in OMGUS, State Department officials in the newly-created Office of Public Affairs understood that ideological and “cultural rapprochement,” based on the supposed common values of Western civilization, was fundamental in order to make sure that the economic, political, and military relationships rested on a solid foundation.²⁰ The Atlantic world and Europe as political and ideological entities could not merely grow by “diplomatic contacts” or “bilateral military alliances” but had to be grounded in a shared consciousness and sense of community among its people.²¹ By the

¹⁹ Henry J. Kellermann, *Cultural Relations as an Instrument of U.S. Foreign Policy: The Educational Exchange Program Between the United States and Germany, 1945-1954* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1978), 76; Statement of Policy, NARA, 2.

²⁰ Statement of Policy, NARA, 4.

²¹ “Bund Europäischer Jugend,” *Wir Alle* 24 (February 1951), 12.

end of 1951, West German and American officials were negotiating a cultural convention that would formally recognize that the relationship between the two countries had shifted from being didactic to being bilateral.²²

In shifting HICOG's cultural outlook from top-down re-education to cooperative reorientation, Kellermann and other officials recognized a truism of *fête* diplomacy since it was first conceptualized in 1947: that West German assent and cooperation was fundamental to the overall process of Western integration. Such a treaty would not be anything functionally new, Kellermann noted, but it would be codifying the bilateral cultural cooperation that had already been happening transnationally.²³ The general contours of *fête* diplomacy, then, remained largely constant through the transition from OMGUS to HICOG. Most important, perhaps, was that cultural rapprochement still required the help of non-governmental organizations such as the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation in order to appeal to Americans, Germans, and even Europeans in a manner that seemed authentic.

For the Foundation itself, the main difference was a change in its partners within the U.S. government: they had developed a close working relationship with the military

²² For more information on the Cultural Convention, including negotiations and its importance to the broader West German-American cultural relationship, see Chapter 5.

²³ Notes on Meeting of Cultural Convention, 13 November 1951, Folder: Cultural Convention, Box 6, Subject Files, 1946-1953, Record Group 59, NARA, 1-2; Statement of Policy, NARA, 14; Minutes of Meeting of the Executive Committee, 26 May 1950, Folder 4, Box 34, Series 1A, Group 1, National Carl Schurz Association Records, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA (hereafter cited as NCSA Records, HSP), 4.

government's Education and Cultural Relations Division but now worked with its replacement, the State Department's Office of Public Affairs. But the justification, conceptualization, and implementation of the cultural fêtes under HICOG in the early 1950s largely remained consistent. When HICOG oversaw cultural celebrations in Nuremberg, Berlin, and Passau, they did so with the goal of soliciting the "active participation" of West German, European, and American publics and institutions and giving intellectual and cultural support "for the idea of Germany's association with the West and, in particular, for a European unity."²⁴

An Anniversary in the Shadow of the Nuremberg Trials

In 1950, the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation represented the United States in the 900th anniversary of the city of Nuremberg, a city which was trying to shed its association with the crimes and antisemitic ideology of the Nazi regime. Such an evocation of the city's medieval history and culture, of course, demanded highly-selective forgetting. The city was, in many ways, the "cradle of the Nazi movement." Its intellectual climate fostered antisemitism and the *völkisch* nationalist movement and provided a fertile "breeding ground" for the Nazi Party in its infancy. Both before and after Hitler's seizure of power in 1933, its rally grounds hosted yearly parades dedicated to the party, with the 1934 rally being the subject of Leni Riefenstahl's dramatic propaganda film *Triumph of the Will*. It became a political stage for major Nazi

²⁴ Statement of Policy, NARA, 1-5, 15.

declarations and was the epicenter of the regime's proclamation of racial laws denying German citizenship to Jews and laying out "racial crimes" as a crime against the state.²⁵

The city's infamy continued into the postwar period, as Nuremberg went from a symbol of Nazi prowess and racial nationalism to an emblem of its defeat and victors' justice, beginning with an American victory parade in April 1945 at the Nazi rally grounds. Owing in large part to Nuremberg's centrality to the Nazi Party, coupled with the fact that its Palace of Justice was largely intact and could hold hundreds of potential defendants, the victorious Allies chose the city as the site for the postwar International Military Tribunal.²⁶ The British, Americans, and Soviets had resolved to pursue justice against Nazi officials as early as October 1943, when the Allies publicly issued their Moscow Doctrine declaring their intent to "pursue [Nazi war criminals] to the uttermost ends of the earth" in order to bring them to trial.²⁷ A subsequent London Charter, issued in August 1945, laid out the detailed laws, charges, and court procedure for the pending tribunal.²⁸ The city would be the central site of this international spectacle.

²⁵ Eckart Dietzfelbinger and Gerhard Liedtke, *Nürnberg – Ort der Massen: Das Reichsparteitagsgelände Vorgeschichte und schwieriges Erbe* (Berlin: Christoph Links Verlag, 2004), 23-37, 93; Francine Hirsche, *Soviet Judgment at Nuremberg: A New History of the International Military Tribunal after World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 1; Sharon Macdonald, *Difficult Heritage: Negotiating the Nazi Past in Nuremberg and Beyond* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 14. See also Andrew Rawson, *Showcasing the Third Reich: The Nuremberg Rallies* (New York: Spellmount 2012).

²⁶ Dietzfelbinger and Liedtke, *Nürnberg*, 93- Hirsche, *Soviet Judgment*, 2.

²⁷ Arie J. Kochavi, *Prelude to Nuremberg: Allied War Crimes Policy and the Question of Punishment* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 57.

The International Military Tribunal (IMT) at Nuremberg began on 20 November 1945 and lasted 218 days, during which the multinational court indicted 24 Nazi officials and organizations were indicted of war crimes. The tribunal issued its sentences on 1 October 1946, including sentencing twelve Nazi officials to death by hanging.²⁹ Ensuing efforts by the British, American, and Soviet officials to assemble a second International Military Tribunal in 1946 failed, leaving the Americans to hold the so-called “Subsequent Proceedings,” or “Nuremberg Military Tribunals” (NMT), in their occupation zone alone, which were held between December 1946 and April 1949 and tried an additional 185 persons.³⁰

The longer the trials carried on, OMGUS officials found, the more West Germans came to view the trials in Nuremberg (including the IMT) as “unfair.” By the end of the 1949, many West Germans appeared eager to escape from the long, overbearing shadow of the Third Reich, with only 38% believing that the IMT was “fair” in 1950 (down from 78% in 1946).³¹ The conclusion of the trials had not brought satisfaction among many

²⁸ Donald Bloxham, *Genocide on Trial: The War Crimes Trials and the Formation of Holocaust History and Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 10.

²⁹ Hirsche, *Soviet Judgment*, 106, 384-8. The most notable Nazi official to stand trial during the International Military Tribunal, Hermann Göring, escaped hanging by committing suicide the night before the sentence was to be carried out.

³⁰ Devin O. Pendas, “The Fate of Nuremberg: The Legacy and Impact of the Subsequent Nuremberg Trials in Postwar Germany” in *Reassessing the Nuremberg Military Tribunals: Transitional Justice, Trial Narratives, and Historiography*, eds. Kim C. Priemel and Alexa Stiller (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012), 249; Kochavi, *Prelude to Nuremberg*, 169; Bloxham, *Genocide on Trial*, 4.

critics either, who thought that the punishments meted out during the Trials (and denazification in general) were incomplete. The Nuremberg Military Trials brought the city up to the eve of its 900th anniversary, to be celebrated in 1950 from 14 to 30 July.

For Nuremberg Mayor Otto Ziebill, the opportunity to celebrate the anniversary and put on an exhibit of the city's history and culture was a chance to help the city "regain[] the old good name that it possessed for centuries" as well as "make us new friends at home and abroad."³² Medieval Nuremberg had a flourishing artistic life. It was the birthplace of sixteenth-century figures Hans Sachs, a poet and playwright, and Albrecht Dürer, a painter and printmaker who was perhaps the most prominent artist during the German Renaissance. In commentary presented by West Germans, the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation, and even HICOG, Dürer and Sachs played a significant role in the attempt to remember and evoke pre-Hitler German culture. Not all officials in Nuremberg wanted official American participation, however, and some feared that HICOG and America House officials might exhibit undue influence on the city's proceedings.³³ The Foundation's participation helped to address this issue, and the official American footprint remained light.

³¹ Pendas, "The Fate," 251. Nearly a third of West Germans in 1950 believed that the International Military Tribunal was "unfair."

³² Macdonald, *Difficult Heritage*, 64.

³³ Clemens Wachter, *Kultur in Nürnberg, 1945-1950: Kulturpolitik, kulturelles Leben, und Bild der Stadt zwischen dem Ende der NS-Diktatur und der Prosperität der fünfziger Jahre* (Nuremberg: State Archive of Nuremberg, 1999), 354.

The main contribution of the Foundation to Nuremberg's 900th anniversary came in the form of a large, papier-mâché model of the city "as it appeared in 1625," during the time of Dürer and Sachs, complete with some 4,000 houses, churches, the Schöner Brunnen fountain, and other buildings of the inner city. The model, measuring about 12 feet by 8 feet, was constructed by a Berlin architect and had previously been presented to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City in October 1929 by the Friends of German Art in New York as a symbol of the long cultural relationship between the United States and Germany. Even in 1929, the model was meant to capture "Nuremberg's richness and continuity of artistic tradition" and celebrate the city as "a free city" dedicated to "religious freedom and political equality." Among the individuals who presented the model to the museum was Oswald Villard, who had been an early member of the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation but who had resigned in 1934 out of fear that the Nazi Party was having undue influence on the American organization.³⁴

In late 1945 and early 1946, as the International Military Tribunal was ongoing in Nuremberg, Villard reached out to the Metropolitan Museum of Art about the model. As an accurate representation of the city at its cultural height, the model might be the "only guide" for reconstructing the city physically and culturally.³⁵ Villard turned to his friends

³⁴ "The Presentation of a Model of Nuremberg," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 24, no. 10 (October 1929), 250; Margaret R. Scherer, "A Model of Nuremberg," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 24, no. 10 (October 1929), 257-8; "Museum Gets Model of Old Nuremberg," *The New York Times*, 19 October 1929; Activities of the Foundation, c. 1952, Folder 4, Box 1, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

³⁵ Oswald Garrison Villard to Wilbur K. Thomas, 28 January 1946, Folder 6, Box 4, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP; Villard to William Church Osborn, 29 January 1946, Folder 6, Box 4, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

at the Foundation about the possibility of housing the model. By June 1947, after some hesitation due to the U.S. government's on-going anti-Nazi investigation into their organization, the Foundation agreed to house the model. Its members believed, like Villard, that it might be an instrument of cultural diplomacy once the Foundation was cleared of any wrongdoing.³⁶

To the Foundation's good fortune, the business with the federal government was resolved the next month. But before this came to pass, there was still a dark cloud that hung over the organization in the eyes of the government and many Americans, and the Foundation's president believed that the organization should merely house and display the model for the foreseeable future as part of its mission to display German-American and pre-Hitler German culture to the American people. The Foundation might one day present it to the mayor and city of Nuremberg "as a good will gesture from this side," but only "after things have quieted down a bit on the other side."³⁷ The disquiet was not confined to the Foundation itself but was compounded by scrutiny that the city experienced due to the still-ongoing Nuremberg Military Tribunals. Until international attention had moved on, it would perhaps be better to put off reaching out to the city or even bringing it to the attention of American officials.

³⁶ Villard to Howard Elkinton, 3 March 1947, Folder 6, Box 4, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP; Villard to Elkinton, 18 February 1947, Folder 6, Box 4, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

³⁷ George McAneny to Villard, 12 June 1947, Folder 6, Box 4, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

Until then, the CSMF set up the model in a special display room to celebrate the city in the years before the Third Reich. The model was flanked with images of Nuremberg before the start of World War II and art, including such “timeless work” as etchings from Albrecht Dürer.³⁸ The Foundation also took to *The American-German Review* in order to celebrate the city’s culture and try to offer a countervailing, long-view perspective on Nuremberg. While the city was currently “widely known as the center of the denazification trials,” there was much more to the city. The shadow of the trials and the Third Reich had obscured “generations of cultural bloom” that had preceded Hitler’s rule. Before then, Nuremberg was a central city in the Holy Roman Empire, where it prospered as a nexus of trade and was known as “the great center of craft work” and a “center of art and culture.”³⁹

In mid-1948, shortly after the Foundation set up this display room (and as the Foundation negotiated with OMGUS officials for the September 1948 centennial), Mayor Ziebill reached out to the Foundation to profess that his city had “the greatest interest in getting the model of the city of Nuremberg into its possession.”⁴⁰ The Foundation, of course, was amenable to this, as a transatlantic gesture of this nature was always its intention when it agreed to take on responsibility for housing the model. In returning the

³⁸ Elkinton to Villard, 18 December 1947, Folder 6, Box 4, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP; “The Foundation,” *The American-German Review* 14, no. 5 (June 1948), 45.

³⁹ “Nuremberg and the Creative Arts,” *The American-German Review* 14, no. 6 (August 1948), 24.

⁴⁰ Otto Ziebill to Elkinton, 12 July 1948, Folder 8, Box 4, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

model to the city that it represented, the Foundation hoped that it could act as a symbol of aspiration for the people of Nuremberg.⁴¹ American High Commissioner John J. McCloy agreed that the model would help represent the good work of the democratization of Germany by serving as a reminder of Germany's cultural heritage. He offered the help of the Department of State to ensure that the model made it to Bremerhaven, where it was forwarded along and arrived in Nuremberg on 9 May.⁴²

In addition to the model, Mayor Ziebill requested that a member of the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation join the city's official celebrations on 16 July as an expression of German-American cooperation. For this honor, the Foundation tapped Arthur Graeff, a local historian and member of the organization, who brought a resolution from the Foundation to present to Mayor Ziebill and his city. The resolution underscored the model of Nuremberg as an expression of "a time of creative art which has been recognized by the Western world as a period of great importance to civilization, not only in the inheritance of Europe but also in the heritage of the peoples of the United States of America." Graeff declared his "appreciation of nine hundred years of Nuremberg's existence" and carried the Foundation and U.S. government's hopes that, "when properly

⁴¹ Ziebill to Elkinton, 2 June 1949, Folder 10, Box 4, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

⁴² Elkinton to John J. McCloy, 5 July 1949, Folder 11, Box 4, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP; Patricia J. Dermody to Elkinton, 5 September 1949, Folder 11, Box 4, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP; Margaret Conlan to George Hanstein, 17 April 1950, Folder 4, Box 5, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP; Ziebill to Hanstein, 3 June 1950, Folder 5, Box 5, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP. The help of the Department of State was particularly helpful due to the logistical difficulties of transatlantic travel that persisted in the years after the end of the Second World War.

placed” in the city it represented, the model would “instruct the children of Nuremberg in their precious heritage and inform them in regard to the city which they and their fathers have loved.” The resolution ended with the hope that the model and its donation should “be an aid in rebuilding a bridge of cultural understanding between the people of Germany and the people of the United States.”⁴³

In a private letter to Mayor Ziebill, Foundation President George McAneny echoed much the same sentiment from the resolution (that McAneny had penned). Nuremberg’s history was embedded in “European cultural heritage,” and “the cultural heritage that fell to the United States of America” from Germany and Europe, and the cultural of Nuremberg was “of the greatest importance for the Western world.” McAneny also added that he hoped that the model would “expand the bridge of understanding and cultural relations” between their two peoples.⁴⁴

Coincidentally, on 13 July, the day before the opening of the Nuremberg cultural festival, the West German government formally accepted an invitation from the Council of Europe to become an associate member of the organization.⁴⁵ While the Federal Republic would not become a full member for another year, its ascension into the Council imbued the anniversary with additional European meaning, as the regional

⁴³ Suggested Text for Nuremberg Resolution, c. July 1950, Folder 6, Box 5, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

⁴⁴ McAneny to Ziebill, 16 July 1950, Folder 6, Box 5, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

⁴⁵ A. H. Robertson, *The Council of Europe: Its Structure, Functions, and Achievements* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger Inc., 1961), 19.

coverage of the anniversary was interwoven with articles and editorials on West Germany's European future.⁴⁶

The opening ceremonies included a lot of familiar faces for the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation. Frankfurt Mayor Walter Kolb gave his congratulations to Nuremberg on behalf of the cities of West Germany. George N. Shuster, an old friend of the Foundation and who had been the headline speaker at the September 1948 centennial, was also present. Shuster had been appointed as the American *Land* Commissioner for Bavaria, and among his first acts as commissioner (before he even officially took over the office the following week) was to represent General McCloy and HICOG at the Nuremberg festival and express his enthusiasm for Germany's role in European unification.⁴⁷

Overall, the cultural festival and its subsequent coverage made little overt acknowledgment of the city's recent history, and the festival was as much a matter of forgetting as it was of remembering. One journalist at the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* noted that there was an "icy silence" surrounding the Nuremberg Trials or the city's symbolic centrality to the Nazi regime. This silence was particularly obvious at the festival's central exhibit, entitled "Nuremberg – Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow." The exhibit, which took place at the city's Congress Hall and centered on the Foundation's donated

⁴⁶ For examples, see "Ein 'Bundespakt' für Europa," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 18 July 1950 and "Liberalisierung – verpflichtendes Prinzip für Europa," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 18 July 1950.

⁴⁷ "Neunhundert Jahre Nürnberg," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 15 July 1950; "Shuster: 'Ich will Freundschaft bringen,'" *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 26 July 1950.

model, made no mention of the Nazi past. Instead, the Nuremberg of the “past” referenced the nineteenth and early twentieth century, while the Nuremberg of “tomorrow” emphasized the reconstruction yet to be done and the potential of the future.⁴⁸

With a few exceptions, the majority of the local and regional newspaper coverage similarly toed the line by emphasizing Nuremberg’s liberal past and cultural and economic connections with Europe and the United States. It was a “cosmopolitan” city bustling with “strength and civic pride” in its artistry, and its place as an historical center for trade, industry, and culture was on par in grandeur with London, Paris, and Florence. The cultural and economic past also augured well for the Nuremberg of “tomorrow,” as commentators argued that the industry represented by historical and contemporary Nuremberg could be an engine of West Germany’s rebirth by exporting cars, electronics, iron, and machinery parts abroad.⁴⁹ Just days after West Germany became a member of the Council of Europe and was becoming further integrated economically into Western world, Nuremberg’s history as a free city of trade seemed to indicate that economic liberalization would be a “binding principle for Europe” and the “only viable path” for Germans moving forward.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Wachter, *Kultur in Nürnberg*, 356-7; Dietzfelbinger and Liedtke, *Nürnberg*, 104.

⁴⁹ For examples, see Wilhelm Hausenstein, “Die magnetische Stadt,” *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 13 July 1950, “Das 900jährige Nürnberg will seine Weltgeltung zurückgewinnen,” *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 15 July 1950, “Neunhundert Jahre Nürnberg,” 15 July 1950, and “Nürnberg, die Stadt,” *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 15 July 1950.

⁵⁰ “Liberalisierung,” *Süddeutsche Zeitung*.

Soviet-American Culture Wars

In April 1950, months before the Nuremberg anniversary, American, British, and French High Commissioners gathered with West Berlin officials to conceive of a possible cultural festival to be held in West Berlin. The festival would serve a number of purposes: as a symbol of Western solidarity, as an exhibition of the best of the West's national cultures, and as a sign of the Atlantic's commitment to the city after the Berlin blockade. Berlin, like Germany as a whole, had been divided into four sectors between the victorious Allies in the immediate postwar period, though it lay entirely in the Soviet zone and the eventual German Democratic Republic. U.S. officials had hoped that the Berlin Cultural Festival would feature a much more prominent place for American contributions on their own merits than had appeared in the 1948 Frankfurt centenary, 1949 Goethe bicentennial, and 1950 Nuremberg anniversary. In response to Soviet propaganda efforts and the strategic importance of Berlin itself, it became important to highlight America's cultural heritage rather than being limited to the German-American cultural relationship or Germany's European heritage (though these remained important themes).

This emphasis on more visible American participation resulted from an accelerating propaganda war between the United States and Soviet Union to win the hearts and minds of the world's peoples by, in part, disparaging their Cold War rival's vision of modernity and governance. For the Soviet Union, who dashed out to an early lead in the international propaganda arms race, their appeal to the world's peoples and corresponding attempts to diminish the United States on the world stage proceeded along

at least two interconnected fronts.⁵¹ The first of these was a “cultural offensive,” a campaign to promote Russian culture internationally by sending its artists and musicians abroad and connecting European and Russian “Old World culture” while attacking American culture as inferior, shallow, and materialistic. Its ultimate goal was to drive a wedge between Europeans and Americans, whom Soviets framed as culturally-alien.⁵² The second front of this intertwined campaign was a “peace offensive” that framed the Soviet Union as the most reliable and responsible steward for world peace in the face of aggressive American imperialism.⁵³

Despite OMGUS and HICOG successes on the cultural front in West Germany, U.S. officials remained vigilant against what they saw as Soviet attempts to “encourag[e] tendencies of neutralism and... instill[] fear of commitments with the West,” thereby

⁵¹ Rosa Magnusdottir, *Enemy Number One: The United States of America in Soviet Ideology and Propaganda, 1945-1959* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 17-28.

⁵² Jessica C. E. Gienow-Hecht, “Culture and the Cold War in Europe” in *The Cambridge History of the Cold War, Volume 1: Origins*, eds. Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 404. To be sure, many nationalists in Europe were wary of imported American culture and a consumer-driven economic system. European charges of American “materialism” were not uncommon, but this did not mean that Europeans were easily driven into the arms of the Soviet Union. For European challenges to American culture, both from nationalists and Leftist parties, see Alexander Stephen, *The Americanization of Europe: Culture, Democracy, and Anti-Americanism After 1945* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006), 23-86, Mary Nolan, *The Transatlantic Century: Europe and America, 1890-2010* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 239-244, and Richard F. Kuisel, *Seducing the French: The Dilemma of Americanization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 37-69.

⁵³ “State Dept. Official Tells of Red Cultural Offensive,” *New York Herald Tribune*, 15 November 1951; Emily Genauer, “Battle of the Arts,” *New York Herald Tribune*, 13 July 1951; Petra Goedde, *The Politics of Peace: A Global Cold War History* (New York: Oxford University Press), 27.

trying to undermine the long-term American goal of “achieving a full and lasting integration of Germany into Western Europe.”⁵⁴ There was cause for concern elsewhere. Early American propaganda efforts into eastern Europe appeared to be failing by the end of the 1940s, and the Soviet Union entrenched itself further there while also advancing in Asia. The 1949 “loss” of China to the Chinese Communist Party was compounded by the 1950 invasion of South Korea by North Korea. Across the world, socialist takeovers appeared to be on the rise, with the Soviet Union ostensibly leading the successful propaganda charge.⁵⁵ The cumulative challenges to American power worldwide convinced many officials to make the ideological public relations battle a larger part of their comprehensive foreign policy strategy for the Cold War.

The Soviets ramped up their “cultural offensive” throughout 1950 by sending increasing numbers of musicians, ballerinas, and artists abroad to represent their country at international festivals. At a Brussels music festival in May 1951, the Soviet Union sponsored a number of entrants, two of whom took first and second place while two Americans, not officially sponsored, took ninth and eleventh place. While seemingly harmless on the surface, the Soviets were using these international victories as a major

⁵⁴ Statement of Policy, NARA, 4.

⁵⁵ Gary D. Rawnsley, “The Campaign of Truth: A Populist Propaganda,” in *Cold-War Propaganda in the 1950s*, ed. Rawnsley (Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1999), 35-36. Regardless of contemporary American views on China and the Korean War, these and other events were owed more to the agency of local actors rather than these actors being in thrall to the dictates of the Kremlin. For examples with regards to the start of the Korean War, see Chen Jian, *Mao’s China and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 54-55 and David Halberstam, *The Coldest Winter: America and the Korean War* (New York: Hyperion, 2007), 92.

propaganda boon, arguing that the United States were “cultural barbarians” with nothing to offer the world but superficial Hollywood movies and pop culture exports. After two Russian musicians took top honors, one American journalist lamented that the Russians had “won their point” of being “culturally superior.” At an artistic festival in Milan, the Soviets presented over a dozen artistic exhibits. At a music festival in Florence, the Kremlin sponsored four of its best ballet stars to wow the world. After the United States made no appearance in either, the Soviet press accused Americans of being “too materialistic” to be concerned with true artistic beauty.⁵⁶

By the beginning of the 1950s, many Americans began to fear that they were losing the cultural battle on the international stage, and that this loss would have negative consequences to the U.S. ability to compete in the Cold War. The United States, these journalists and officials argued, was not just an economic or military power, but a cultural one as well. This cultural power simply needed to be unleashed.⁵⁷ One *New York Times* editorial cautioned that cultural presentations to the world were a crucial part of “the propaganda war”: “when Russians are represented in European festivals and the US is not, the loss is ours... But because of our foolish disregard of the immense importance of the ‘cultural offensive’ we have... lost many an intellectual battle throughout the

⁵⁶ Herman A. Lowe, “U.S. Trails in Cultural Propaganda,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 16 November 1951; Genauer, “Battle of the Arts.”

⁵⁷ Henry Luce articulated a similar sentiment in his famous article in *Life* on “the American Century” when he called on the United States to rejection isolationism and to take its place as a “world power” based, in part, on its cultural ideals as “the great inheritor[] of all the great principles of Western civilization.” “Henry R. Luce, “The American Century” *Life*, 17 February 1941, 65.

civilized world without a struggle.” If the United States did not meet this challenge, Kremlin officials would continuously beat the drum of “cultural superiority over the rest of the world.”⁵⁸ A few editorials laid the blame squarely at the feet of the State Department rather than American artists, arguing that Americans left to their own devices were unable to properly compete with the best that the Soviet government had personally curated, selected, and financially supported in their propaganda battle. It was “part of the cold war” and “a kind of war... as surely as the war is being fought in Korea.”⁵⁹

U.S. officials similarly felt the pressure to respond to Soviet cultural propaganda abroad, with a particular focus on Europe and West Germany. The initial plan had been to schedule the Berlin cultural festival for September 1950, but it was ultimately pushed to the following year.⁶⁰ American officials, believing that the Soviets were focusing in on Berlin as a “pressure point” on the West, wanted to maintain public commitments to the city in order to combat the Soviet cultural offensive and prevent a “splitting effect on Western society.”⁶¹ If the United States was going to help to preserve and consolidate “the ‘North Atlantic concept’” being forged through military, economic, and political

⁵⁸ “Export of Culture,” *The New York Times*, 4 December 1950.

⁵⁹ Lowe, “U.S. Trails”; “Russia Seeks Place in Sun As ‘World Cultural Center,’” *The Arizona Republic*, 18 December 1951.

⁶⁰ Michael Krenn, *Fall-Out Shelters for the Human Spirit: American Art and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 67.

⁶¹ Statement of Policy, NARA, 7; Soviet Intentions and Capabilities, 27 February 1950, Folder: Regaining the Psychological Initiative, Box 12, Records Relating to International Information Activities, Record Group 59, NARA, 8, 26.

bonds, the Office of Public Affairs needed to marshal its resources, including non-governmental resources and foreign national organizations, to help “serve[] the cause of freedom,” prevent Soviet attempts to “weaken, divide, and confuse the free peoples,” and enhance the public perception “of basic community interests between members of the North Atlantic community.”⁶²

Meeting this cultural propaganda challenge was a crucial part of the ideological battle with the Soviets, as it was not a mere competition between artists and dancers but between ways of life. For the United States, the only way an artist could truly flourish was in a free society and a “free atmosphere” unburdened by totalitarianism and the demands of the state. The arts were meant to be a primarily individual (or small group) pursuit, not a collective one. The purpose of art should not be to follow the dictates of the Kremlin or to “to preach and indoctrinate” but to be an expression of the artist’s soul. The Soviet system, on its face, did seemingly have an advantage over the American way of life. Because everyone in Russia “work[ed] for the state, the best talents can be chosen and sent to such a competition... under the threat of Politburo liquidations.” The United States, as a more decentralized system, could not compel its citizen to compete under the national flag.⁶³

⁶² Defense in the Cold War, 20 January 1951, NARA, 1-3, 7. While the “North Atlantic” in this document refers most prominently to the NATO community, it also carves out space for an ideological and psychological defense of West Germany, which was considered part of this Atlantic community even though it would not become a NATO member until 1955.

⁶³ Paul Beckley, “Meeting Russia’s Cultural Offensive,” *New York Herald Tribune*, 12 April 1951; Genauer, “Battle of the Arts.”

It was a challenge that Henry J. Kellermann in the State Department argued that the United States needed to meet, but this required the participation of private citizens and organizations as well, not just State Department officials. The United States had to marshal the power of its citizenry as well as “the best talents throughout the Western World” to demonstrate “the mighty cultural potential which the United States harbors and sometimes seems to hoard within its borders.”⁶⁴ George Kennan argued that the United States “must accept propaganda as a major weapon of policy,” lest they be left behind in the public relations arms race through carelessness or indifference. To this end, the State Department would have to change its attitude and turn over every stone that might help present the United States to the world in a more positive light.⁶⁵ American officials and congressmen alike wanted to go on the “psychological and spiritual offensive” against Soviet propaganda and win the Cold War public relations battle.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Germany: Today and Tomorrow, 5 May 1952, Folder 2, Box 2, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP, 44.

⁶⁵ William S. Lucas, “Beyond Diplomacy: Propaganda and the History of the Cold War,” in *Cold-War Propaganda*, 19.

⁶⁶ Rawnsley, “The Campaign of Truth,” 36. One important implement to confronting the challenge of Soviet propaganda was the oft-studied Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF), an anticommunist organization backed by the Central Intelligence Agency established in June 1950. As historians have noted, U.S. officials saw the CCF as a means to forge Atlanticism along the “cultural-intellectual plane,” similar to what the Marshall Plan and NATO had done economically and militarily. The CCF’s first major foray into cultural festivals came in May 1952, when it backed a “Masterpieces of the Twentieth Century” festival in Paris to promote “the intellectual and artistic achievements of the free world.” Paris was a crucial spot for U.S. officials, many of whom feared that the people of Paris were wary of European integration and open to the prospect of “neutrality.” In 1950, the Soviet Union spent over \$150 million in propaganda in France alone to promote these tensions. See Sarah Miller Harris, *The CIA and the Congress for Cultural Freedom in the Early Cold War: The Limits of Making*

This included the Federal Republic. While U.S. officials felt that their cultural penetration into West Germany and West Berlin had been successful so far, they did not want to lose any hard-fought gains. State Department officials wanted to redouble their efforts and ensure that the American cultural footprint had a much larger display and impact in Berlin than anywhere else before. In pursuit of larger American representation, the State Department turned to a number of private American cultural and artistic organizations, including the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation, in order to make it a propaganda success.

Preparing for a Festival in Berlin

Officials, Western media, and private actors who assisted in the government's democratization program alike consistently referenced Berlin's symbolic and geopolitical importance in the Cold War. Before and during the Cold War, the United States and its allies had gone to considerable length to try and maintain a significant presence in the former German capital, including an official radio broadcaster (*Rundfunk im amerikanischen Sektor, Berlin*, or RIAS, established in 1946) and plans for a permanent educational institution (what became the Free University of Berlin in December 1948).⁶⁷

Common Cause (New York: Routledge, 2017), 2, Gienow-Hecht, "Culture and the Cold War," 410, Michael Hochgeschwender, *Freiheit in der Offensive?: Der Kongreß für kulturelle Freiheit und die Deutschen* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1998), 205-9, Scott-Smith, *Politics of Apolitical Culture*, 2, Scott-Smith, "The 'Masterpieces of the Twentieth Century' Festival and the Congress for Cultural Freedom: Origins and Consolidation, 1947-1942," *Intelligence and National Security* 15, no. 1 (Spring 2000), 121-2, Beckley, "Meeting Russia's Cultural Offensive," and "Export of Culture," *New York Times*.

⁶⁷ See Nicholas Schlosser, *Cold War on the Airwaves: The Radio Propaganda War Against East Germany* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2015), 1-12 and James F. Tent, *The Free University of Berlin: A Political History* (Indianapolis, IN:

The importance (and vulnerability) of the city became only more acute in the aftermath of the Soviet blockade from June 1948 to May 1949, though the blockade had the opposite effect of Josef Stalin's intentions. The Western allies were galvanized, and the ensuing airlift engendered considerable affection among West Berliners and convinced much of the population that the Soviets were the aggressors.⁶⁸

Even after the blockade, American officials constantly worried that the Soviet and East German governments would menace the West's position in the city, whether through propaganda to cause unrest or even a direct invasion.⁶⁹ Officials expressed concern over the so-called Deutschlandtreffen, a "march on Berlin" by the Free German Youth from East Berlin into West Berlin in May 1950. While the Free German Youth's march went

Indiana University Press, 1988), 78-91. American authorities received considerable help from private American organizations in helping to make the Free University success, including the Rockefeller Foundation and the Oberlaender Trust of the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation. The Foundation not only provided a \$10,000 grant to the university to aid in "its heroic struggle" but also helped to place American scholars such as Eric Wollencott Barnes of Dickinson College at the university to become "helpful liaison[s]" between the university and the American people. Wollencott officially left Dickinson College in 1953 to become the permanent head of the Institute of American Studies at Free University. Elkinton to Hugo Hemmerich, 6 July 1950, Folder 13, Box 41, Series 1A, Group 2, NCSA Records, HSP; Hanns Gramm to Lucius D. Clay, 17 March 1949, Folder 12, Box 41, Series 1A, Group 2, NCSA Records, HSP; Tent, *Free University*, 244.

⁶⁸ For information on the Berlin Airlift and the Western response, see John M. Schuessler, Adam R. Seipp, and Thomas D. Sullivan, eds., *The Berlin Airlift and the Making of the Cold War* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2022).

⁶⁹ Security Aspects of Deutschlandtreffen: Preparations for Meeting the Threat of the Community Rally in Berlin, Whutsuntide, 1950, c. 1950, Folder: Deutschland Treffen, Box 38, General Records, 1947-1952, Record Group 466, NARA, 2-3; Scott Krause, *Bringing Cold War Democracy to West Berlin: A Shared German-American Project, 1940-1972* (New York: Routledge, 2019), 100-1.

without the violence that HICOG and West Berlin officials had anticipated, it reinforced the notion that Berlin was a vulnerable point of propaganda attack for the Soviet Union and East Germany, especially in light of North Korea's aggression against South Korea.⁷⁰

The city's "island existence" amidst the sea of East German socialism put it in a precarious position, as the Berlin Blockade and Deutschlandtreffen had demonstrated, but it also came with opportunity. It provided the West with a possible "beachhead," in the words of generals Maxwell Taylor and John J. McCloy, and it could be "a natural reflector of Western orientation into the realms of the East."⁷¹ Given Berlin's geopolitical and ideological position in the Cold War, the city made a logical point-of-entry for the projection of American cultural propaganda and public diplomacy, including a cultural festival.⁷²

From the initial planning stages, the High Commissioners of the United States, France, and Great Britain believed that a cultural festival in Berlin had great "propaganda value," because it would serve as highly-visible evidence of "Western international

⁷⁰ Krause, *Bringing Cold War Democracy*, 109-110; Ostermann, *Between Containment*, 120-130.

⁷¹ Security Aspects, NARA, 1-4; Project – A People's Theater in Berlin, c. 1951-1952, Folder 10, Box 6, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP. For the symbolic and geopolitical importance of Berlin, see Krause, *Bringing Cold War Democracy* and William Stivers and Donald A. Carter, *The City Becomes a Symbol: the U.S. Army in the Occupation of Berlin, 1945-1949* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Military History, 2017).

⁷² American media also emphasized the strength of Berliners and their connections to the West in order to garner American sympathy for the city. Brian Etheridge, *From Enemies to Allies: Cold War Germany and American Memory* (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 2016), 85-93.

solidarity and the confidence of the Western World in Berlin.”⁷³ The high commissioners also recognized that there would undoubtedly be “a certain deficit” that came out of the festival, but that these losses would be worth the political costs. The commissioners were even willing to add to this deficit by allowing visitors to pay in East Marks in order to attract those from behind the Iron Curtain.⁷⁴

In addition to reaffirming their support for Berlin, the festival would also be a stage on which the Atlantic nations could showcase their own national cultures and emphasize their common, Western roots. For the United States, it would also be a chance to counter the Soviet cultural offensive and demonstrate American high culture.⁷⁵ With the plans taking shape, officials partnered with private organizations such as the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation, American Federation of Arts (AFA), and National Gallery of Art to provide the Berliners (and the wider international audience), whom they relied on to begin assembling much of the American contribution.⁷⁶ When officials contacted

⁷³ Commandant Gaugain to Secretary General and Allied General Secretariat, 21 December 1950, Folder: AK-ICEA, Box 27, Classified Subject Files, 1949-1953, Record Group 466, NARA; French Point of View on the Expenses for Organising the Berlin Festival of 1951, c. 1951, Folder: AK-ICEA, Box 1, Classified Subject Files, 1949-1953, Record Group 466, NARA; Berlin Cultural Festival Brief, 1 February 1951, Folder: AK-ICEA, Box 27, Classified Subject Files, 1949-1953, Record Group 466, NARA; Progress Report on Berlin Festival 1951, c.1951, Folder: AK-ICEA, Box 27, Classified Subject Files, 1949-1953, Record Group 466, NARA.

⁷⁴ Gaugain to the Duty Secretary-General and Allied General Secretariat, 23 June 1950, Folder: AK-ICEA, Box 1, Classified Subject Files, 1949-1953, Record Group 466, NARA.

⁷⁵ Krenn, *Fall-Out Shelters*, 67; Krenn, *The History of United States Cultural Diplomacy: 1770 to the Present Day* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017), 79.

the Foundation and others, they were sure to stress the Cold War importance: American participation was a means of both countering accusations of “cultural barbarism” and underwrite “the spirited and gallant stand of the West Berliners.”⁷⁷ There was an added Cold War dimension once officials learned that the Soviet and East German governments were planning an East Berlin Youth Festival for August, the month before the West Berlin Cultural Festival. Now, the West Berlin festival would be a direct “countermeasure” to the East Berlin festival.⁷⁸

For the most part, private actors did not need to be convinced of the propaganda potential of art, as many had already been arguing in favor of “art diplomacy” and “art as a weapon” to show that the United States was more than just “a nation of nuts and bolts.”⁷⁹ On 1-2 June, in the midst of preparing for the Berlin Cultural Festival, the

⁷⁶ Henry A. Byrcade to David E. Finley, 23 February 1951, Folder 9, Box 5, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP; David Monod, *Settling Scores: German Music, Denazification, and the Americans, 1945-1953* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 234.

⁷⁷ Berlin Cultural Festival, 17 April 1951, Folder: Berlin Cultural Festival, Box 3, Subject Files, 1946-1953, Record Group 59, NARA; Albert G. Sims to Henry Moe, 12 May 1951, Folder 12, Box 5, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

⁷⁸ Berlin Cultural Festival, 17 April 1951, NARA; Memorandum, 7 May 1951, Folder 12, Box 5, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP. The desire to get this artistic collection right stemmed from an earlier foray by the U.S. government into presenting American art abroad, which ended as a debacle. In 1946, the State Department had organized an exhibition of American art entitled *Advancing American Art*. The exhibition was regarded as a “disaster,” with some in the United States arguing selected paintings were “un-American.” After even President Harry S Truman criticized the collection, the State Department began withdrawing funds, and the exhibit was cancelled. Krenn, *Fall-Out Shelters*, 14-49.

⁷⁹ Krenn, *Fall-Out Shelters*, 54-8.

American Federation of Arts held a convention in Philadelphia in which its participants (with members of the Foundation in attendance) made the case for taking a robust approach to “American’s cultural responsibilities in the world today” in order to counter “charges of materialism and imperialism” and more fully realize the nation’s role “as an exponent of democracy.”⁸⁰

Berlin Festivals, East and West

The Soviet Union selected East Berlin as the site of the Third World Youth Festival in August 1951.⁸¹ Its purpose, as had become commonplace in Soviet cultural diplomacy in East Germany, was to distance the East Germans from the memory of their Nazi past and to insist that the Federal Republic inherited the tradition of militarism and imperialism. Officials hoped to institute a socialist political culture, enhance Soviet-East German cultural ties, and “re-educate” the East German people, particularly the supposedly-impressionable and unhappy East Berlin youth.⁸²

The two-week festival, which welcomed as many as one and a half million people from around the world, opened on 5 August in Walter Ulbricht Stadium. The festival

⁸⁰ The American Federation of Arts Invitation, c. May 1951, Folder 12, Box 5, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP; The American Federation of Arts Annual Convention Program and Schedule of Events, 2 June 1951, Folder 13, Box 5, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

⁸¹ The previous festivals were in Prague in 1947 and Budapest in 1949.

⁸² Joël Kotek, “Youth Organizations as a Battlefield in the Cold War,” in *The Cultural Cold War in Western Europe, 1945-1960*, eds. Scott-Smith and Hans Krabbendam (Portland, OR: F. Cass, 2003), 170-1; Pia Koivunen, *Performing Peace and Friendship: The World Youth Festivals and Soviet Cultural Diplomacy* (Munich: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2022), 21, 46-8.

featured national delegations in national costumes, cultural events such as a ballet representing the Five-Year Plan, artistic competitions, a march of “Progressive women” against American imperialism, and a lengthy parade organized by Free German Youth that ended with a speech by the eponymous Ulbricht, who commanded young West Germans to resist West German remilitarization as a path toward German reunification.⁸³ Against the background of the on-going Korean War, its architects framed the festival as one “in defense of peace” and paired it with other Soviet-led calls on the international stage for peace in Korea and throughout the world.⁸⁴ Its participants lambasted American imperialism and warmongering and West German rearmament and honored Josef Stalin and the Soviet Union as an “invincible bulwark of peace in the world.”⁸⁵

Ahead of the East Berlin Festival, the three western High Commissioners, the West German government, and the Berlin Senate formulated plans on how to best undermine the Soviet-backed festivities and demonstrate the contrast between life under totalitarianism and life in the West. While they believed that the West Berlin Cultural Festival would meet this challenge in September, these officials also wanted to directly

⁸³ “Two Weeks in August: East German Youth Strays West,” *Background* (Washington, D.C.: Office of Public Affairs, September 1951), 1-7; Kotek, “Youth Organizations,” 176.

⁸⁴ “Resolution of World Peace Council,” *USSR Information Bulletin* 11, no. 15 (Washington, D.C.: Embassy of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics: August 1951), 468; O. Solovyev, “World Youth Festival for Peace,” *USSR Information Bulletin* 11, no. 15 (Washington, D.C.: Embassy of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics: August 1951), 469. See also “Communist Festival for Youth, East Berlin, August 1951,” *Background* (Washington, D.C.: Office of Public Affairs, August 1951), 1-3.

⁸⁵ Kotek, “Youth Organizations,” 172.

challenge the East Berlin festival as it was ongoing in August. The United States government kept the intra-city border open as best as it could in order to try and entice East Berliners into the western half of the city. Despite the best efforts of the East German government to prevent it, the American sector welcomed anywhere from half a million to over a million East Germans, distributing more than one million free meals, hosting visitors in the RIAS studio, and presenting West Berlin as a place of “normalcy” through films, theater, and music programs.⁸⁶

In an internal research report that appeared three months after the end of the August Festival, officials in the HICOG Office of Public Affairs found that East Germans who had ventured into the western sector found not only that life in West Berlin was favorable compared to the East, but also that these visitors were relaying their experiences to friends and family back home. U.S. officials regarded this as a major “propaganda victory,” believing that the themes of “freedom, prosperity, and hospitality” had filtered back and increased overall sympathy for the West in the general East German population.⁸⁷ On the world stage, Western media assailed the East festival, likening the parades and marches to the Nazi-era Hitler youth, reporting about “rancid food” and insufficient housing, and praising the efforts of the United States and West Berliners to

⁸⁶ Kotek, “Youth Organizations,” 174-7; Ostermann, *Between Containment*, 178-9.

⁸⁷ Are East Zone Youth Spreading the Message of West Berlin? A Study of the Effects of the Berlin Youth Festival on the East Zone Population, 26 November 1951, Folder: HICOG 110, Box 3, Research Reports on German Public Opinion, Record Group 306, NARA, a, 3.

welcome those from the East and to provide an atmosphere free of Soviet-East German “harpings.”⁸⁸

The August Youth Festival in East Berlin had scarcely ended before West Berlin, already decorated with posters and a welcoming atmosphere, began its celebration in early September. In addition to the artistic exhibit curated by American museums and funded by the Oberlaender Trust, the festival’s organizers wanted to provide “a multiplicity of events” that would provide “something for every taste” in order to cast as wide a net as possible for the interests of the international public, particularly “visitors of lower income levels and the population of the East.”⁸⁹ There were sporting events, an automobile exhibition, and several stages displaying art, music, and theater. The American contribution involved a stage production of *Oklahoma!*, the Julliard Quartet, the Hall Johnson Choir, and other artists.⁹⁰ France sent the national orchestra of Paris, a presentation of sculptures, and its premiere theater troupe, Comédie Française (whom OMGUS had tried unsuccessfully to get to join in *Goethejahr*). Great Britain was represented by Shakespeare performances and a string quartet.⁹¹

⁸⁸ Kotek, “Youth Organizations,” 174; Duncan MacBryde to Albert Hamilton, 6 September 1951, Folder: German Youth Festival, Box 12, Subject Files, 1948-1953, Record Group 59, NARA; Pia Koivunen, *Performing Peace and Friendship: The World Youth Festival and Soviet Cultural Diplomacy* (Munich: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2022), 52-6.

⁸⁹ On the Cultural and Sports Plans for the September Festival of 1951, 15 February 1951, Folder: AK-ICEA, Box 27, Classified Subject Files, 1949-1953, Record Group 466, NARA.

⁹⁰ American Participation in the Berlin Arts Festival, 3 October 1951, Folder: Berlin Cultural Festival, Box 3, Subject Files 1946-1953, Record Group 59, NARA, 1-4.

The festival, especially the American contribution, received a warm response throughout the Western world (though it was understandably ignored in East Germany and the Soviet Union). HICOG reported “highly favorable comments” towards the American art exhibit, with one German journalist appreciating the exhibit because “most of us had no idea that there actually exists something like art over there.”⁹² One significant countervailing voice was that of Shepard Stone, HICOG’s Public Affairs Director. Stone was disappointed with the American productions, believing that the American contributions went over the heads of the West Berliners, and he singled out *Oklahoma!* as “fifth rate.”⁹³ Other members of HICOG seemed bewildered by Stone’s criticisms and believed that the entire slate of American cultural exhibitions had a successful run, with the receptions of the performances ranging “from favorable to wildly enthusiastic.”⁹⁴ Mayor Ernst Reuter of West Berlin concurred, believing that the American contribution and the festival overall enhanced the morale of his citizens.⁹⁵

A HICOG research report conducted in the aftermath of the festival found that West Berlin impressions of the cultural festival were “preponderantly favorable” and bore out the notion that the festival had contributed to the inhabitants’ morale. Over half

⁹¹ Krenn, *Fall-Out Shelters*, 63-4.

⁹² Message From Berlin to Department of State, 21 September 1951, Folder 15, Box 41, Series 1A, Group 2, NCSA Records, HSP.

⁹³ Monod, *Settling Scores*, 235.

⁹⁴ American Participation, NARA, 3.

⁹⁵ From HICOG Berlin to HICOG Frankfurt, 4 October 1951, Folder: Cultural Festival 1952, Box 3, Subject Files, 1946-1953, Record Group 260, NARA, 9.

of West Berliners and Germans who were polled were happy that the festival emphasized Berlin as a “cultural center” and drew attention to Berlin’s status “as an outpost of democracy.” An additional 16% of respondents emphasized that the festival was important, because it promoted “the European idea” and demonstrated cultural connections and “spiritual unity” between the Western nations who had participated. With this kind of feedback, HICOG had good reason to believe that many of its major objectives had been achieved.⁹⁶

Yet West German approval of the festival also came with caveats. West Berliners were understandably pleased that their city became the center of international attention, but HICOG officials found that the festival itself “did not appear to have been effective” at the level of reorienting basic cultural attitudes and instilling a better appreciation of American culture. Those who were already appreciative of American culture and politics continued to be so, while those who were more critical of the United States largely did not leave the festival with an increased appreciation. Officials attributed this limited cultural impact was owed in large impact to the high education of visitors who would be drawn to a cultural festival, who tended to be less-impressed with American culture.⁹⁷

Overall, despite any detriments of the cultural festival, American and West Berlin officials alike were pleased with the end result. They believed that it had provided a “psychological shot in the arm to the West public” and had “afforded a confining [sic]

⁹⁶ An Appraisal of the Impact of the Berlin Cultural Festival, 10 March 1952, Folder: HICOG 127, Box 4, Research Reports on German Public Opinion, Record Group 306, NARA, a, 1-6.

⁹⁷ An Appraisal of the Impact, NARA, 7-8.

display to the Soviets... and the people under their domination, of the vibrance and variety of Western arts.” West Berlin Mayor Ernst Reuter, in particular, was “thumping and plumping for an encore supported by Allied funds and brightened by Western artists,” and officials began to plan for a second West Berlin cultural festival shortly thereafter.⁹⁸

HICOG and the West Berlin press during and after the cultural festival had positive reactions to the art exhibit specifically, reporting that nearly three thousand people visited the exhibit within the first five days.⁹⁹ An official in HICOG’s Office of German Public Affairs told Howard Elkinton that he had hopes that the exhibit’s success would “greatly lessen[.]” inter-departmental inhibitions regarding future festivals, and that the Oberlaender Trust and Foundation could “take a great portion of the credit” in the U.S. government’s willingness to pursue additional art and cultural exhibitions throughout western Europe.¹⁰⁰ The art exhibit, to which the Foundation contributed, remained in Germany even after the festival had ended, and in October it was moved from the Schönberg Rathaus in the American sector to Schloss Charlottenburg in the British sector of the city for much of the rest of October.¹⁰¹ The Foundation also helped

⁹⁸ Cultural Festivals, Past and Future, 24 November 1951, Folder: Berlin Cultural Festival, Box 3, Subject Files 1946-1953, Record Group 59, NARA.

⁹⁹ The Exhibition of American Works of Art in Berlin, 26 September 1951, Folder 15, Box 41, Series 1A, Group 2, NCSA Records, HSP.

¹⁰⁰ Sargent B. Child to Elkinton, 19 September 1951, Folder 15, Box 41, Series 1A, Group 2, NCSA Records, HSP.

¹⁰¹ Exhibition of American Works, NCSA Records, HSP.

to publicize the art exhibit through *The American-German Review*, which by 1951 had about 4,000 subscriptions in U.S. Information Centers, German and American universities, and transatlantic cultural organizations.¹⁰²

Concurrently, Elkinton and the assistant editor of *The American-German Review*, Alice Finckh, were in discussions with U.S. officials about taking over a short-lived State Department publication on overseas cultural information, *News Notes on Special Areas*. It was by no means unusual for the Foundation to work closely with both OMGUS and the State Department on presenting issues that the U.S. government felt deserved promotion, and the Foundation's takeover of this publication was fairly minor, but it nonetheless demonstrated that, as HICOG's responsibilities in West Germany receded, it looked to off-load some of its responsibilities to private hands. Part of these responsibilities was the dissemination of cultural information, and HICOG now arranged for information previously appearing in *News Notes* to now be sent to the Foundation for publication.¹⁰³ More significant, however, was that this move eventually paved the way in 1953 for the Foundation to take over HICOG's flagship publication, *Information Bulletin*, which it continued to publish it under the title *Current Germany*.

¹⁰² Hanstein to Tom Simpson, 19 February 1951, Folder 4, Box 37, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP; Simpson to Hanstein, 13 April 1951, Folder 4, Box 37, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP; Oberlaender Trust to Bartlett H. Hayes, 5 September 1951, Folder 15, Box 41, Series 1A, Group 2, NCSA Records, HSP.

¹⁰³ Ben Crosby to Alice Finckh, 18 December 1951, Folder 4, Box 37, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

Passau: Gateway to the East

As a HICOG official noted to Howard Elkinton after the end of the Berlin Cultural Festival in 1951, the success and widespread attention paid to the fête may have decreased some hesitancy among U.S. officials with regards to supporting future celebrations as a matter of cultural and public diplomacy. Stemming from this success, HICOG officials turned toward the city of Passau, located along the Inn, Danube, and Ilz Rivers in southeastern Germany. There, HICOG and local officials organized the “European Weeks” festival in 1952, this time without the assistance of the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation due to the focus being primarily on indigenous European cultural productions. The European Weeks festival was another implement through which participants promoted European camaraderie and embedded German culture within the larger framework of western Europe. Western European nations gathered to promote friendship and transnational exchange and to celebrate their national cultures and common heritage. At the Passau festival, German culture could be treated as equal to other European national cultures.

Like Berlin and Nuremberg, Passau was a place permeated with both troublesome history and contemporary geopolitical and symbolic interest. Adolf Hitler called Passau home as a child, and it served as a central location where the fledgling Nazi Party organized and sought to make international contacts in its search for legitimacy.¹⁰⁴ During the war, it served as the location for a series of small satellite camps attached to

¹⁰⁴ Anna Elisabeth Rosmus, *Out of Passau: Leaving a City Hitler Called Home* trans. Imogen von Tannenberg (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2004), 32, 36-7.

Dachau concentration camp: Oberilzmühle (Passau-I), established in October 1942 and Waldwerke (Passau-II), established in March 1944.¹⁰⁵

In divided Germany, Passau brought its own strategic and cultural importance. It lay on the German border with Austria, and, as the eastern-most city of West Germany, it was less than thirty miles away from the German border with Czechoslovakia, putting it “within sight and hearing of people behind the Iron Curtain.”¹⁰⁶ Much like Berlin, Passau could be “a spring board for informational activities,” and a yearly festival could “certainly contribute to the U.S. mission in Europe.” Due to this “strategic position,” the HICOG Cultural Affairs Officer at the Regensburg Public Affairs Field Center proposed a festival for 1952 that would “encourag[e] the idea of European integration and provid[e] moral support to the Iron Curtain border area.”¹⁰⁷ With the Korean War still on-going, American officials emphasized the importance of affirming their commitment to the borderlands of West Germany.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ Wolfgang Benz and Barbara Distel, eds., *Der Ort des Terrors: Geschichte der nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslager*, Volume 4 (Munich: Verlag C.H. Beck, 2005), 408-413; Rosmus, *Out of Passau*, 2-3. For a history of these camps, see Elmar W. Eggerer, “‘Waldwerke’ und ‘Oberilzmühle’: Die Passauer KZ-Aussenlager und ihr Umfeld,” in *Passau in der Zeit des Nationalsozialismus: Ausgewählte Fallstudien*, ed. Winfried Becker (Passau: Universitätsverlag, 1999). A third satellite camp, Passau III, existed briefly, and prisoners carried out the work of loading and unloading ships.

¹⁰⁶ “European Weeks in Passau,” *Information Bulletin* (Washington, D.C.: October 1952), 19-20.

¹⁰⁷ Third European Weeks Festival in Passau, 2 February 1954, Folder: Germany – Cultural Activities, Box 6, Subject Files Relating to Information Programs in Austria and Germany, Record Group 306, NARA.

¹⁰⁸ Thomas Jehle, *Die Auswärtige Kulturpolitik des Freistaats Bayern, 1945-1978* (Munich: Verlag C.H. Beck, 2018), 184.

In the words of one historian, HICOG cultural officers believed that such a festival could be used to combat any feelings of neutralism or “lack of local interest... in the European movement” in the city. A cultural festival specifically aimed at integrating as many West European participants as possible and highlighting “the common cultural heritage of the free world” might help to “propagandiz[e] the European idea” and shore up support from Europeans and West Germans for European and Western integration.¹⁰⁹ HICOG, as the animating force behind the creation of the festival, help to “guid[e] the international and political aspects of the festival” and selected a cultural program that highlighted western Europe’s role in defending the “culture of the free world,” in keeping with the U.S. strategic mission of consolidating the ideological West.¹¹⁰ Pan-European cultural performances and political lectures could emphasize the importance of recognizing the common cultural heritage of all Europeans (and the ideological Atlantic) as a basis of successful West European integration at the political level.¹¹¹

American officials found Passau and Bavarian state officials eager to cooperate. To that point, the idea of European integration enjoyed strong support in Bavaria: the West German *Land* had an active chapter of the European Union, six Bavarian politicians participated in the 1948 Hague Conference of the Union of European Federalists that eventually resulted in the Council of Europe, and the city of Munich held its own opera

¹⁰⁹ Alexander Wegmaier, “*Europäer Sein und Bayern Bleiben*”: *Die Idee Europa und die Bayerische Europapolitik, 1945-1979* (Munich: Verlag C.H. Beck, 2018), 187.

¹¹⁰ Third European Weeks, NARA; Wegmaier, “*Europäer Sein*,” 187.

¹¹¹ Jehle, *Auswärtige Kulturpolitik*, 184-5.

festival in 1950 in part as a means of cultural diplomacy with other Europeans.¹¹² The Passau municipal council believed that it was the “special duty” of Passau’s citizens to go about the work of “national reconstruction” and recognized the potential of such an event, “and in so doing discharged the duty of all western towns to be custodian and protector of the major values of Europe’s culture.”¹¹³ One newspaper called Passau a “gateway... to the East” for Europe due to its proximity to the Iron Curtain, which also gave the city a role as a “bulwark for the defense of Occidental ideals and way of life against the threats of an eastern world.” For this reason, it made sense that a “rally for a united, free Europe” should take place there.¹¹⁴

The first such festival in 1952, organized by Passau city officials and the HICOG Public Affairs office, featured a major American footprint - so much so that officials warned about being too overt in future festivals if the goal was to be “representative of European culture.”¹¹⁵ The U.S. Seventh Army Symphony Orchestra played alongside a Mozart opera, and the U.S. Army Field Band and the 43rd Infantry Division’s Winged Victory Choir also contributed to the festivities. Yet the festival also involved numerous representatives from West Germany and from European federalist organizations. The cultural program put forth a “panoramic pageant of Western cultural entertainment and

¹¹² Wegmaier, “*Europäer Sein*,” 178-184; Jehle, *Auswärtige Kulturpolitik*, 172-8.

¹¹³ Council of Europe, *Official Report of Debates* (Strasbourg, 1983), 171-2.

¹¹⁴ “Passau – Tor Europas nach dem Osten,” *Donau-Zeitung*, c. August 1953. Tourist money also played a role for the city council, which had also organized a spring fair in 1951 in the hopes of engaging the economic and cultural sectors of the city.

¹¹⁵ Third European Weeks, NARA.

current issues,” and its festival slogan was unambiguous: “We Stand for a United States of Europe.” An accompanying lecture program included various European speakers (such as West German Eugen Kogon, then-president of the Union of European Federalists), most of whom extolled the “European Union movement” and promoted the ideological and political unification of West Europe. The festival found a receptive audience: in the aftermath of the European Weeks festival, the membership of Passau’s district association of the European Union rose dramatically.¹¹⁶

HICOG was “pleased” with the first few annual iterations of the festival. Representatives and individuals from western Europe poured into Passau in increasing numbers from year to year. In the festival’s second year, there were approximately 30,000 paid attendees, along with countless others seeking out free attractions. An increase in tourist traffic and overnight stays in the area year-over-year brought “most encouraging figures” and much-needed money. In addition, the European Weeks festival received extensive and positive coverage throughout the continent, which officials hoped would act as a positive force in favor of West Germany’s European integration and European unity overall. Officials boasted four radio stations carrying programs from the festival and counted at least 370 newspaper articles across 186 West German newspapers covering the second annual festival in 1953, amounting to “almost 4,000 column inches of publicity.”¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ “European Weeks in Passau,” 19-20; Wegmaier, “*Europäer Sein*,” 187. For more information on Eugen Kogon and his relation to Cold War liberalism and European integration, see James Chappel, “The God That Won: Eugen Kogon and the Origins of Cold War Liberalism,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 55, no. 2 (2019): 339-363.

Conclusion

At the beginning of the 1950s, American officials consistently expressed concern over the political, ideological, and military threats to the cohesion of the Western world. At the same time that the Atlantic world was increasingly integrating along economic, political, cultural, and even military lines, the Soviet Union sought to subvert this developing community with cultural propaganda aimed at undermining West Europeans' commitments to the emerging U.S.-led alliance and promoting their own cultural connections to Europeans through "Old World" culture rather than American Atlanticism.¹¹⁸

For US officials in HICOG, who took over responsibilities for occupying West Germany from the American military government, this meant that the consolidation of the Western world on the cultural and ideological plane was a process that required constant reaffirmation. HICOG continued to see fête diplomacy as an integral part of its broadly-conceived program to validate a cultural relationship with West Germany. Along with other vehicles, such as the Congress for Cultural Freedom, Information Centers, and exchange programs, the HICOG-backed implementation of cultural festivals helped to publicly address Soviet ideological challenges to the Western world by performing the cultural cohesion of the Atlantic world and West German friendship with the United States and western Europeans.

¹¹⁷ Third European Weeks, NARA.

¹¹⁸ Gienow-Hecht, "Culture and the Cold War," 410.

HICOG officials oversaw several cultural fêtes of the early 1950s in areas that, in the first years of the Cold War, were of vital symbolical and geopolitical importance. The Nuremberg cultural festival of 1950, which opened one day after West Germany became a member of the Council of Europe, highlighted the city's Western and European heritage while also advancing a vision for the future in which the industry of Nuremberg would be an engine for West German and European prosperity. The West Berlin Cultural Festival, held in direct competition with a Soviet-backed festival in East Berlin, publicly reaffirmed the West's commitment to Berlin while showcasing the shared cultural heritage between Americans and West Europeans. The first "European Weeks" festival in the shadow of the Iron Curtain in Passau in 1952 similarly highlighted the commonality of values between West Germans and western Europeans and promoted European integration. On the surface, these festivals seemed like discrete celebrations. Yet, when taken as a whole, they gave intellectual and cultural support to the concept of European integration and West German inclusion in Europe at a time when West Germany was progressively accessing European institutions at the international level.

CHAPTER 6

THE “BRIDGE CHARACTER”: THE CARL SCHURZ CENTENNIAL YEAR

In 1952, West Germans and Americans held a year-long transatlantic observation of the one-hundredth anniversary of the arrival of Carl Schurz in the United States. Schurz had arrived in New York on 17 September 1852 in the wake of the failed Frankfurt Revolution of 1848, when he had hoped to be part of the movement to establish a liberal democracy that would unite the German-speaking peoples of central Europe. Because he had a foot on both sides of the Atlantic, Schurz was the quintessential personification of the deep historical and cultural compatibility between the two peoples and justified their current postwar relationship. Taken as a whole, the Schurz centennial, which involved not just public fêtes in the summer but year-long supplemental events such as exhibitions, widely-disseminated speeches, radio documentaries, press releases, and more - was an additional medium through which the two nations publicly displayed transatlantic rapprochement and consistently reaffirmed their shared heritage and place in a common ideological and intellectual community.

Carl Schurz was a multivocal referent that could stand in for such qualities as liberal democracy, cosmopolitanism, bipartisanship, anti-imperialism, peace, progress, and justice – all important attributes that both the United States and Federal Republic wanted to portray about themselves in 1952. Due to the deepening propaganda battle between the United States and Soviet Union, the year-long series of fêtes and other events became a vehicle through which Americans attempted to meet accusations from

the Kremlin that the United States was an imperialist power and a unique threat to world peace. U.S. officials mobilized extensive resources to incorporate the Schurz centennial into a larger propaganda campaign, the Campaign of Truth, through which private American individuals and civil organizations disseminated a positive image of the United States and the American way of life.¹ Officials and private participants portrayed Schurz not only as the exemplification of the American commitment to peace, progress, and justice but also as an example of what technological, scientific, and economic possibilities could be achieved in a free, open, and welcoming environment.

The contours of the centennial were also, in part, influenced by the ongoing negotiations for West Germany participation in the military defense of Europe. Amidst widespread hesitancy to see Germans rearmed, the public remembrance of Carl Schurz underscored the existence of an historical German heritage of liberal democracy. For West German officials eager to orient their country to the Western world, the consistent emphasis that Schurz represented the most honorable traditions of the German past (and

¹ While historians have often viewed the Campaign of Truth primarily as a precursor to the United States Information Agency, a thorough examination of the Schurz centennial as a vehicle for this campaign illuminates how state-private relationship for propaganda worked in practice. For example, see Darren Newbury, *Cold War Photographic Diplomacy: The US Information Agency and Africa* (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2024), 38, 43, Nicholas J. Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency: American Propaganda and Public Diplomacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 51-62, and Laura A. Belmonte, *Selling the American War: U.S. Propaganda and the Cold War* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 104. In one notable exception, Toby Rider examines how U.S. officials used the Campaign of Truth to try and mobilize such disparate sources as the Radio Corporation of America, General Electric, and International Business Machines Corporation (IBM) to promote the American way of life during the Olympic Games. Toby C. Rider, *Cold War Games: Propaganda, the Olympics, and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2016), 54-8.

aligned with the historical and contemporary values of the United States) lent intellectual support to West Germany's full participation in the Atlantic world, which now included military participation.

The centennial year was also especially meaningful for the overall development of West German-American cultural relations for two additional reasons. First, it occurred concurrently with the negotiation of a cultural convention that would formally recognize that the relationship was bilateral and cooperative rather than unilaterally imposed. In practical terms, this move had already been demonstrated through the development of *fête* diplomacy before 1948, when U.S. officials recognized that they had to meet West Germans as far as possible on equal terms in order to maximize the possibility that the celebrations aligned with the traditions and sensibilities of the population. The cultural convention gave official recognition to this move across the entire American public affairs program in the Federal Republic.

Second, and relatedly, the Schurz centennial provided a year-long opportunity for West German officials and cultural organizations to shoulder an increasing amount of the burden in terms of organizing and carrying out the festivities. Since the founding of the Carl-Schurz-Gesellschaft in September 1948, U.S. officials hoped that West German organizations would someday be capable of taking on the financial and logistical responsibilities of a bilateral cultural relationship. In 1952, while officials in both countries were negotiating a convention to recognize the cultural partnership as equal, West German organizations had matured to the point where they could step up their

efforts to publicly demonstrate a bilateral cultural relationship through the series of centennial-related fêtes.

Western Integration and the Cultural Convention

Since the founding of the Federal Republic of Germany in 1949, the nation had become increasingly figured into the attempts to foster political, economic, and even military integration in western Europe and the Atlantic World. West Germany officially took over membership of the Organization for European Economic Co-Operation from Bizonia authorities in 1949. In January 1951, the Western allies included the Federal Republic in negotiations for contributions to Europe's defense. West Germans were party to an April 1951 treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community, a supranational organization which provided an economic framework for West European political unification and represented the first step towards a future common market. The Federal Republic became a full member of the Council of Europe, itself a push for West European political and economic unification, in May 1951. By September 1951, the Western powers and the Federal Republic were in negotiations to revise the Occupation Statute and sign a General Treaty that would officially end the occupation of West Germany and establish it as a sovereign nation.²

But this integration at the political, economic, and (potentially) military level was also happening concurrently and with the support of cultural rapprochement. Believing

² Michael Gehler, *Three Germanies: From Partition to Unification and Beyond* (London: Reaktion Books, 2021), 59, 68-70; Sheldon A. Goldberg, *From Disarmament to Rearmament: The Reversal of US Policy Toward West Germany, 1946-1955* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2017), 136-7.

that West German civil society and the U.S.-West German cultural relationship had matured to the point of stability, U.S. officials in mid-1951 recommended that the United States and West Germany begin to negotiate a treaty which would place American cultural operations in the Federal Republic on a contractual and consensual basis with the West German people rather than one imposed by an occupational force. Simultaneous with ongoing negotiations of treaties to revise the Occupation Statute and establish a European Defense Community, diplomats began to negotiate the cultural treaty in December 1951. U.S. officials believed that the cultural agreement could imbue these budding political and military relationships with ideology and “common purpose” (the “strength of the Western coalition”) and “lend force and credence to [American] intentions of working with the Germans as equal partners in the community of the West, in cultural as well as in military and material terms.”³

Yet these officials recognized that such a cultural convention would not be a new development in any practical way. It would merely codify, on paper, what had been happening in practice on the ground in West Germany for years by that point, in no small part due to the bilateral and cooperative nature of *fête* diplomacy.⁴ Henry J. Kellermann, the State Department’s Director of German Public Affairs, noted that the cultural negotiations would be more akin to a “declaratory” statement that would lay out the

³ Proposed Cultural Convention, 24 January 1952, Folder: Cultural Convention, Box 6, Subject Files, 1946-1953, Record Group 59, NARA, 1-3.

⁴ In addition to these transatlantic celebrations, exchange-of-persons programs were just one of the methods through which Americans and West Germans were already carrying out cultural diplomacy with and without direct government assistance.

changed U.S.-German cultural relationship and be aimed primarily at the West German public. Ultimately, Kellermann acknowledged, HICOG wanted to publicly get rid of its “didactic approach” in favor of “a cultural cooperation and information program based largely on request and mutual agreement.”⁵ Given the importance of the convention and its overlap with the Schurz centennial, it is perhaps no surprise that the convention’s chief negotiators (West German Chargé d’Affaires Heinz L. Krekeler and Kellermann) were also an important part of the year’s celebrations.⁶

Such a cultural agreement would decrease the responsibility of government officials for conducting cultural diplomacy in favor of the private sector, which was made possible by the maturing of German cultural organizations and the willingness of American organizations like the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation to pursue person-to-person connections of their own volition. The reestablishment of effective West German

⁵ Notes on Meeting of Cultural Convention, 13 November 1951, Folder: Cultural Convention, Box 6, Subject Files, 1946-1953, Record Group 59, NARA 1-2; Statement of Policy Concerning the Revision of the Public Affairs Program for Germany and the Conclusion of a Cultural Treaty, 25 July 1951, Folder: Germany – Cultural Activities, Box 6, Subject Files Relating to Information Programs in Austria and Germany, Record Group 306, NARA, 4-5. Henry J. Kellermann, *Cultural Relations as an Instrument of U.S. Foreign Policy: The Educational Exchange Program Between the United States and Germany, 1945-1954* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1978), 159-162.

⁶ Due to the structure of the West German Constitution, involvement of the individual German states was also a necessity and prolonged the negotiations. For the intra-West German negotiation, see Abschrift des Schreibens “Der Vorsitzende des Schulausschusses vom 10. April 1952 – Sch. Nr. 380,” c. March 1952, Folder: Kulturabkommen zwischen der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und den USA, Series: 4.7.2 Abschluß bilateraler Abkommen, 504: Kultusministerium, Hessische Hauptstaatsarchive, Wiesbaden (hereafter cited as HHStAW) and Kabinettsvorlage, 27 July 1952, Folder: Kulturabkommen zwischen der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und den USA, Series: 4.7.2 Abschluß bilateraler Abkommen, 504: Kultusministerium, HHStAW.

organizations had been a core part of General Lucius Clay's ambitious American postwar plan for the total rehabilitation, democratization, and reintegration of West Germany, and it was for this purpose that Clay permitted the founding of the Carl-Schurz-Gesellschaft in Frankfurt in 1948. Many commentators at the time welcomed this development, especially in West Germany, even if it was not exactly clear at the time how long it would take these nascent organizations to blossom into groups that could drive cultural relations on their own. Still, the foundation of the Gesellschaft seemed to be emblematic of the beginning of a new era of cultural relations and the construction of "bridges" across the Atlantic Ocean.⁷

West German civil society had become more active since the Gesellschaft was established in September 1948. The Gesellschaft quickly merged with another Frankfurt organization and rebranded itself as the Steuben-Schurz Gesellschaft in Wiesbaden. In October 1949, a new organization founded in Bremen took the name Carl-Schurz-Gesellschaft (or Karl-Schurz-Gesellschaft). Both of these groups worked to become a significant presence for West German cultural outreach in the postwar period by sponsoring exchanges, gatherings, exhibitions, lectures, and more to promote a cultural

⁷ For coverage of the founding of the Carl-Schurz-Gesellschaft, see *Wiedergründung der Carl-Schurz-Gesellschaft*, 7 June 1948, Folder: Deutsche Carl-Schurz-Gesellschaft Frankfurt am Main, Series: 5.17.2.2 Vereine zur Förderung des Kulturaustausches, A.41: Kulturamt, Institut für Stadtgeschichte, Frankfurt am Main (hereafter cited as ISG), *Vorschläge zu einem abgeänderten Entwurf des Anrufs betr.: Deutsche Carl Schurz-Gesellschaft*, c. 1948, Folder: Deutsche Carl-Schurz-Gesellschaft Frankfurt am Main, Series: 5.17.2.2 Vereine zur Förderung des Kulturaustausches, A.41: Kulturamt, ISG, "Brücken von jenseits des Ozeans," *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 4 September 1948, and "Wir bauen eine Brücke," *Marburger Presse*, 30 September 1948. There was significantly more cross-pollination between public and private actors in the Frankfurt society than in the case of the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation.

and economic relationship between the United States and Federal Republic.⁸ Howard Elkinton welcomed these organizations, believing that they could help foster a balanced, transatlantic partnership by completing the “German jobs” in the reconstruction of cultural politics without “too much dependence on America.”⁹ The centennial year offered the opportunity to demonstrate the role of West German organizations on the international stage, and several of these groups became an animating force behind many of the Schurz Centennial observations held in the Federal Republic.

Carl Schurz in History and Memory

Just as few people in history could be held up as an example of German culture as Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, there were few people in history that were as emblematic of a positive German-American relationship and a hallmark of idealistic liberal democracy as Carl Schurz, the namesake of the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation. Even before the Second World War, Americans and Germans alike frequently invoked Schurz’s name. Each nation had celebrated the centennial of his birth in 1929, featuring a speech from future West German President Theodor Heuss and glowing coverage from

⁸ Satzungen der Steuben-Schurz-Gesellschaft, c. 1949, Folder: History Steuben-Schurz Gesellschaft Wiesbaden, Box 612, General Records, 1946-1949, Record Group 260, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD (hereafter cited as NARA); Liebe Bremer, c. 1949-1950, Folder: German American Club Activities, Box 4, General Records, 1945-1952, Record Group 466, NARA; “News and Comment...,” *The American-German Review* 17, no. 6 (August 1951), 32.

⁹ Howard Elkinton to John Riedl, 26 February 1951, Folder 9, Box 5, Series 1A, Group 1, National Carl Schurz Association Records, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA (hereafter cited as NCSA Records, HSP), 1-2.

German newspapers.¹⁰ The German Carl-Schurz-Vereinigung and American Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation (founded in 1926 and 1929, respectively), embodied the importance of Schurz's name to representing the prewar transatlantic relationship.¹¹ After the war, Schurz's name was used for a reconstructed bridge in Baden-Württemberg in May 1947, and officials used Schurz's name to christen a Frankfurt housing settlement in 1950 as "an exemplary achievement of American and German cooperation and visible evidence of common efforts made by men of our two nations in an ideal spirit of good will."¹²

Schurz was the perfect referent for the values that both the United States and Federal Republic wanted to associate themselves with in the Cold War, when "the issues of freedom" were as important as they were in the middle of the nineteenth century.¹³ The details of Schurz's life became a major oft-repeated asset for the carefully-coordinated

¹⁰ Elisabeth Piller, *Selling Weimar: German Public Diplomacy and the United States, 1918-1933* (New York: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2020), 336-7; "Karl Schurz-Feier," *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 3 March 1929.

¹¹ Rennie W. Brantz, "German-American Friendship: The Carl Schurz Vereinigung, 1926-1942" *The International History Review* 11, no. 2 (May 1989), 233-237.

¹² Georg Sauer, "Die 'Carl Schurz' Brücke vor der Verkehrsübergabe," *The American-German Review* 13, no. 5 and 6 (June-August 1947), 12; Elkinton to Millard Langfeld, Jr., 24 June 1942, Folder 2, Box 7, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP; "Carl Schurz through the Lens of Time," *The American-German Review* 17, no. 4 (April 1951), 2; HICOG Housing Project, c. 1950-1951, Folder 8, Box 5, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP, 1, 4, 12; Walter Kolb to John J. McCloy, 19 December 1950, Folder 8, Box 5, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP, 1-2.

¹³ Annual Report, 1952-1953, Folder 5, Box 1, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP, 4; Carl Schurz Centennial, 1852-1952, Delivered at Liederkrantz, New York City, 3 March 1952, Folder 9, Box 6, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP, 2.

propaganda campaign during the centennial year, when participants portrayed Schurz as a figure who challenged corruption and imperialism, promoted fairer relations with Native Americans and Filipinos, and opened educational avenues to newly-freed black Americans.¹⁴ The yearlong celebration of the Carl Schurz Centennial in the United States and West Germany was a public success in large part because of the multivocality of the memory of Carl Schurz that could serve the myriad of motivations of its organizers and participants. For all actors involved, whether they were private or public, West German or American, the memory and representation imbued in Carl Schurz as a historical figure was key to substantiating their geopolitical, ideological, and ethnic goals.¹⁵

As an implement of cultural diplomacy, the Schurz Centennial served three intertwined intellectual needs for its participants. First, as a German who went on to serve in public life in the United States, the memory of Schurz highlighted a German-American relationship that was deeply-rooted in history, thereby providing a cultural and

¹⁴ Ruth Buka to L.J. White, 9 November 1951, Folder 1, Box 2, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP, 2; Carl Schurz, 3 December 1951, Folder: Carl Schurz Centennial, Box 29, Subject Files: 1948-1953, Record Group 59, NARA 2-3. For modern challenges to the historical legacy of Carl Schurz, in particular related to Native American schooling and the end of Reconstruction, see Trefousse, "Carl Schurz and the Indians," *Great Plains Quarterly* 4, no. 2 (Spring 1984), 115, Simon Moya-Smith, "Deb Haaland becoming interior secretary is a chance to fix an agency that acts with contempt," *NBC News*, 18 December 2020, Julius Wilm, "Jenseits der Legende vom guten Deutschen: Carl Schurz in den USA," *Geschichte der Gegenwart*, 24 April 2022, and Dirk Kurbjuweit, "Kein Held ist Perfekt," *Der Spiegel*, 15 May 2022.

¹⁵ After the First World War, German-Americans were similarly motivated to highlight recognition for the historical achievements of Germans. Even history textbooks became a battleground for the achievement of these ethnic goals. Jonathan Zimmerman, "'Each 'Race' Could Have Its Heroes Sung': Ethnicity and the History Wars in the 1920s," *The Journal of American History* 87, no. 1 (June 2000), 92-4, 101.

intellectual justification for the contemporary West German-American relationship. U.S. officials wanted a wide American audience for the celebrations in order to garner as much public support for the Atlantic relationship, but they also wanted to impress upon West Germans that Americans “appreciate [liberal] persons like Carl Schurz, born in Germany.”¹⁶

Second, Schurz’s experiences in the Revolution of 1848 personified the capacity of Germans for democratic political thought and its centrality in the Western world ideologically and culturally. While this was also a theme of previous iterations of fête diplomacy, it became all the more important in 1951, when Western and Federal Republic officials began high-level discussions of the possibility of West Germany’s rearmament and contribution to Europe’s military defense.¹⁷ U.S. and West German officials knew they could not take widespread acceptance of West German sovereignty and remilitarization for granted. Commentators in the United States, Great Britain, and even in West Germany itself watched the military negotiations with apprehension and skepticism, and many alarmists believed that these were steps towards the “renazification of Germany.”¹⁸

¹⁶ Elkinton to Walter J. Kohler, 1 August 1952, Folder 2, Box 2, NSCA Records, HSP.

¹⁷ James S. Corum, “Adenauer, Amt Blank, and the Founding of the Bundeswehr, 1950-1956,” in *Rearming Germany*, ed. Corum (Boston: Brill, 2011), 29-36; David Clay Large, *Germans to the Front: West German Rearmament in the Adenauer Era* (University of North Carolina Press: 1996), 40-6, 62-107, 111-129.

¹⁸ Gavriel D. Rosenfeld, *The Fourth Reich: The Specter of Nazism from World War II to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 106-12. For conflicting memories over Germany and the work of “memory activists” in putting for a

As one West German journalist noted, negative impressions of Germans and Germany were still “noticeable in the press and politics of the USA,” but this same observer hoped that the memory of Carl Schurz and the participation of the American press in this transatlantic celebration might help to change this perception.¹⁹ U.S. and West German officials similarly hoped that, for those who had concerns about the limits of denazification and the speed with which West Germany was being reintegrated back into the community of nations, the public demonstration of West German-American friendship, shared history, and Schurz’s liberal roots in Germany would help overwrite the memories of the recent Nazi regime, assuage the fears of the general public, and stake a claim for West Germany in the Atlantic world.

Third, Schurz’s symbolism and the transatlantic celebrations provided an avenue through which the United States could confront the challenges of Soviet propaganda. Just as the Soviet “cultural offensive” necessitated the planning of the Berlin Festival of 1951 with a significant American presence, U.S. officials also viewed the Schurz centennial year as a means of addressing a second, concurrent Soviet propaganda front: the Soviet “peace offensive.”²⁰ Through this campaign, the Soviet Union went to great lengths to

positive memory of Germany, see Brian Etheridge, *From Enemies to Allies: Cold War Germany and American Memory* (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 2016), 93-112. For the debate on German remilitarization within West German society itself, see Adam Seipp, “A Reasonable ‘Yes’: The Social Democrats and West German Rearmament,” in *Rearming Germany*, 55-70 and Corum, “Adenauer, Amt Blank, and the Founding,” 36-8.

¹⁹ “Ein Leben für die Freiheit,” *Kasseler Post*, 16 September 1952.

²⁰ “Cultural Offensive,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, 7 December 1951.

frame itself as the proper custodians of world peace while singling out the United States as unique threat to peace due to their status as an imperial and atomic power. The “peace offensive” and “cultural offensive” were naturally intertwined: as part of its criticisms of American absence at major international cultural festivals, the Soviets charged that the United States was filled with “cultural barbarians” who were too busy producing weapons, thinking about preparing for war, and riding “on the waves of... munitions” to concern itself with more peaceful pursuits such as art and music.²¹ Through its peace campaign, the Soviets provided support to international organizations that could disseminate the Kremlin’s message on the world stage, such as the Communist Information Bureau (*Cominform*), which was founded in 1947 to coordinate resistance to the European Recovery Plan but eventually became a conduit through which Soviet officials channeled peace rhetoric.²²

The Soviet Union also backed the World Peace Council (WPC), which was established and based in Paris in 1949 until the French government expelled the organization from the city in 1951.²³ The Council’s purpose was both cultural and

²¹ As they assailed the United States on the world stage, the Soviets were also spending considerable sums and manpower to developing atomic weapons and conventional arms while entrenching their power into Eastern Europe by military force. By August 1949, the USSR had detonated its first atomic weapon, and by the middle of 1955 had subsidized Kalashnikov factories in several countries in the Warsaw Pact. C.J. Chivers, *The Gun* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2011), 201-262.

²² Gary D. Rawnsley, “The Campaign of Truth,” in *Cold-War Propaganda in the 1950s*, ed. Rawnsley (Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1999), 32.

²³ “World Peace Council,” *The Department of State Bulletin* 33, no. 835 (July 1955), 80.

political, to lend an “authentic” and local voice through which Soviet rhetoric could be filtered in order to influence global opinion. Its rhetoric targeted the United States and Western leaders as warmongers and imperialist threats to peace while arguing that the cause of peace aligned most uniformly with the international pursuits of the Soviet Union. U.S. officials saw these organizations as little more than a front to defend Soviet foreign policy and attack the Marshall Plan. George Shuster, a friend of the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation and then-former Land Commissioner of Bavaria, referred to the WPC as “something mildly akin to the Cultural Chamber once presided over by Goebbels.”²⁴ While officials assailed the WPC as transparently beholden to the Kremlin, the organization remained a formidable challenge on the world stage.²⁵

It was these challenges that the officials believed the eventual Schurz centennial celebrations could meet. The carefully-deployed memory of Schurz epitomized the virtues of American idealism and became shorthand for such themes as humanitarianism, peace, justice, bipartisanship, and the promise of freedom under a liberal-democratic system that U.S. officials wanted to conflate with the image of their nation. These causes

²⁴ The Soviet “Peace Offensive,” c. July 1950, Folder: The Soviet “Peace Offensive,” Box 11, Records of Research Projects Regarding Diplomatic Relations, Record Group 59, NARA, 3; George Shuster to Robert Hutchins, 8 January 1952, Folder 7, Box 6, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP. Historians differ over whether the WPC was “the first great front group of the Cold War” or whether such a label “would be an oversimplification,” but the U.S. State Department worried that the World Peace Council was “one of the most active and influential” fronts for the Soviet Union. See Patrick Iber, *Neither Peace nor Freedom: The Cultural Cold War in Latin America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), 2 and Petra Goedde, *The Politics of Peace: A Global Cold War History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 27.

²⁵ Iber, *Neither Peace nor Freedom*, 50-1.

that Schurz championed during his life were a strong juxtaposition to the Kremlin's efforts to challenge the tenets of liberal democracy and amplify propaganda of American imperialism, warmongering, and poor race relations. Officials believed that Schurz's memory could be indispensable for bolstering American morale and reminding the American public of their Cold War mission and historical destiny to stand against authoritarianism.²⁶

The Campaign of Truth and Carl Schurz

In response to the accelerating Soviet propaganda campaign and the anticipation of violence in Korea, the United States under Harry S. Truman launched its "Campaign of Truth" in April 1950, which ushered in what one historian called a "period of transition" for the United States.²⁷ Building on the infrastructure of the Smith-Mundt Act of 1948, which gave legislative backing to American overseas public diplomacy efforts, the Campaign of Truth signaled the State Department's acceptance of the centrality of propaganda and American public diplomacy as the United States tried to take back the mantle as "champions of peace" from the Soviet Union.²⁸ The Campaign of Truth would use powerful metaphors and referents to promote international understanding of the

²⁶ Carl Schurz Centennial, 3 March 1952, Folder 9, Box 6, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP, 2.

²⁷ Rawnsley, "The Campaign of Truth," 31-4, 36-9.

²⁸ The Betrayal of Peace, c. 1950, Folder: Soviet Peace Campaign, 1950, Box 3, Records Relating to Worldwide Program Objectives, 1948-1958, Record Group 59, NARA, 1.

United States, to disseminate the “truth” of the American way of life, and to attack international communism.²⁹

Like their Soviet rivals, the State Department recognized that a crucial part of any propaganda campaign abroad lay in the voices appearing authentic and endogenous rather than as coming at the behest of the American government, and officials developed programs for the Campaign of Truth based on this axiom of trying to mobilize the authenticity of ordinary Americans.³⁰ To this end, private organizations would be a central component of this and other campaigns to counter Soviet propaganda. Harnessing the power of private organizations would also help to defray the cost of such endeavors, as the State Department and HICOG knew that they did not have the financial resources to compete with the more heavily-centralized government of the Soviet Union in the realm of cultural propaganda.³¹

The Campaign of Truth became a crucial avenue for U.S. officials to challenge the Soviet peace offensive. In response to a Soviet-led signature campaign which framed

²⁹ Michael L. Krenn, *The History of United States Cultural Diplomacy: 1770 to the Present Day* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2017), 68-70. Rider, *Cold War Games*, 50-1. For additional information on the Campaign of Truth, see Scott Lucas, *Freedom's War: The American Crusade Against the Soviet Union* (New York: New York University Press, 1999), 84, Wilson Dizard, *Inventing Public Diplomacy: The Story of the U.S. Information Agency* (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2004), 48-51, and Giles Scott-Smith, *The Politics of Apolitical Culture: The Congress for Cultural Freedom and the Political Economy of American Hegemony 1945-1955* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 62.

³⁰ Rider, *Cold War Games*, 54-5.

³¹ Memorandum on Urgent Need to mobilize United States Private Industry for Pro-Democratic Information, nd., Folder: Cooperation with Private Enterprise Section, Box 27, Subject Files, 1948-1953, Record Group 59, NARA.

the leaders of the Soviet Union as leaders of the Korean War peace movement, the State Department issued a policy paper in July 1950 directing officials to frame the United States as the true champion of “peace,” properly considered. Much like the ideas of “democracy” and “freedom,” the concept of “peace,” despite seemingly being a universal idea, held a different set of institutional values and assumptions for both the Soviet Union and the United States.³² Unlike the totalitarian Soviet Union, the United States claimed to offer not just peace, but a peace worth having. It was “peace with freedom” under liberal democracy that was “more reflective of basic human needs and aspirations... [and] indissolubly [linked] with the ideas of freedom and justice” rather than peace under a totalitarian government. Executing this concept of “peace with freedom” meant cooperating with information agencies at home and abroad, highlighting the statements of officials and private individuals alike, and pursuing the support of domestic and international groups to this end.

By the eve of the Schurz centennial year, the notion that peace was associated with “freedom” and “security” was a core theme of American public diplomacy to discredit the Kremlin’s message.³³ In November 1951, the Acting Secretary of State distributed a memorandum to 130 diplomatic and consular offices worldwide, describing the upcoming propaganda efforts for 1952. The first three months of the year, at least, should have a “major emphasis... on *Peace With Freedom*,” with efforts to highlight a

³² Goedde, *Politics of Peace*, 27.

³³ “Peace in Our World”: A Theme for Official United States Propaganda, c. 1951, Record Group 59, Box 3, Folder: Soviet Peace Campaign, 1951, Records Relating to Worldwide Program Objectives, 1948-1957, 2.

number of relevant themes through “carefully planned and coordinated approaches” that aligned with “the major continuing objectives of U.S. foreign policy.” Relevant themes include those such as “a message of peace of all peoples,” peace in accordance with American “religious and humanitarian practices,” and displays of “World Brotherhood... showing the cultural heritage which all nations share.”³⁴

For State Department officials, the memory of Carl Schurz perfectly fit the Campaign of Truth and “our present emphasis upon ‘peace with freedom.’”³⁵ It was no coincidence that, as officials conceived and circulated this memorandum in October and November 1951, State Department officials were beginning to formulate plans for the Carl Schurz centennial in 1952 with many of these same themes in mind. Inter-departmental fact sheets on Schurz’s life (provided by the Foundation) placed a thorough emphasis on his commitment to duty and his embodiment of freedom and liberal democracy. By November, the International Press and Publications Division (INP) was already putting together a comprehensive program to implement the project which included a potential slogan (“Born Free and Equal – *Freiheit, die ich meine*”) and a pamphlet series (“Carl Schurz Centennial – The Doom of Slavery”).³⁶

³⁴ The Acting Secretary of State to Certain Diplomatic and Consular Offices, *Foreign Relations of the United States* (hereafter cited as *FRUS*), 1951, Volume I: National Security Affairs; Foreign Economic Policy (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1979), Document 335. Italics in the original.

³⁵ Duncan MacBryde to Various Divisions re: Carl Schurz Centennial, 24 January 1952, Folder: Carl Schurz Centennial, Box 29, Subject Files: 1948-1953, Record Group 59, NARA, 1-4. Emphasis in original.

³⁶ Buka to White, 9 November 1951, 1-2.

In addition, Schurz was the prime example of “Germany’s contribution to America’s scientific and cultural progress” and the good works that could be done by “liberal European immigrants” in a free, American environment. The celebrations and the surrounding coverage were to personify Carl Schurz “as the typical example of what any man, or nation, can achieve in a democratic society and under the Free World’s way of life,” especially if they possessed the “industry and ability which German settlers” like Schurz brought to the United States. To this end, the International Press and Publications Division worked with the Foundation to compile materials about Schurz that the State Department thought would satisfy the themes of “Freedom,” “Strength,” and “Progress,” among others.³⁷

The Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation was the obvious choice of patron to publicly “carry the ball” while official government organs provided logistical support and disseminated news as widely as it could behind the scenes.³⁸ The Foundation had initially only planned a small commemoration in its own headquarters and coordinating a small dinner at the Liederkrantz Club in New York, but with the State Department having fallen under “the spell of Carl Schurz,” in the words of Howard Elkinton, the centennial year would be the perfect opportunity to “alert the people of this country of the contributions

³⁷ Proposed Plan: Carl Schurz Centennial Observance, 16 January 1952, Folder: Carl Schurz Centennial, Box 29, Subject Files: 1948-1953, Record Group 59, NARA, 1-7; Carl Schurz, 3 December 1951, Folder: Carl Schurz Centennial, Box 29, Record Group 59, NARA, 1-3; MacBryde to Various Divisions, NARA, 1.

³⁸ Memorandum of Conversation, Carl Schurz Centennial, 21 November 1951, Folder: Carl Schurz Centennial, Box 29, Subject Files: 1948-1953, Record Group 59, NARA.

which Germans have made to the USA and also to further an understanding of the people of West Germany.”³⁹

Officially, the State Department’s attendance at the March dinner would be only as spectators, though their presence still gave official weight and authority to the proceedings. The Foundation secured the cooperation of the longtime friend of the Foundation, George Shuster, who had spoken at the September 1948 centennial and served in the position of Land Commissioner of Bavaria in 1950. As Land Commissioner, Shuster had overseen various U.S. programs during the transition from military occupation to the jurisdiction of the State Department, and he seemed perfectly positioned to give insights into the goings-on of cultural reconstruction across the Atlantic, especially as HICOG’s responsibilities appeared to be winding down.⁴⁰

Within the State Department itself, the project grew immensely in the first few weeks of planning. The Department of State created a committee to promote the year’s festivities, and before long the committee included a wide swath of the Department’s divisions, such as the Government Affairs Institute, Public Liaison Division, International Information and Education Exchange Program, International Motion Pictures Division,

³⁹ Elkinton to George McAneny, 14 February 1952, Folder 8, Box 6, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP; Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation to William Lichtenfels, 11 February 1952, Folder 8, Box 6, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

⁴⁰ Memorandum of Conversation, 12 February 1952, Folder: Carl Schurz Centennial, Box 29, Subject Files: 1948-1953, Record Group 59, NARA; Minutes of Meeting of the Executive Committee, 18 October 1951, Folder 4, Box 34, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP, 3.

International Broadcasting Division, and more.⁴¹ The Department's devotion of resources demonstrated its commitment to the centennial and its full-court press strategy to disseminate it widely internationally. The first major commentary came via radio in December 1951, when the International Information Administration broadcasted "Commentary on Schurz's Life" worldwide.⁴²

By mid-January, the State Department and the Foundation had developed a preliminary outline for the year to incorporate the Schurz Centennial. The Schurz centennial year contained much more than fêtes, or large celebrations with the involvement in the public. While many of these celebrations were implemented in August and September in both the United States and West Germany, the Department of State and West German officials strove to ensure that they saturated the entire year with other events in support of these fêtes. Along with the Foundation, they arranged exhibitions, press releases from local officials, speeches, radio coverage, and other events throughout the year that were meant to highlight these most favorable attributes of Schurz and feed into the positive public image of the United States and West Germany. These supplemental events, officials hoped, would underscore the summer fêtes while constantly and publicly reaffirming the common cultural roots between their two nations.

⁴¹ Elkinton to Louis Thun, 19 February 1952, Folder 8, Box 6, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP; Millard Langfeld, Jr. to Carl Schurz Centennial Committee, 13 March 1952, Folder: Carl Schurz Centennial, Box 29, Subject Files: 1948-1953, Record Group 59, NARA.

⁴² Carl Schurz Centennial Coverage, c. 1952-1953, Folder 2, Box 2, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP, 1.

The official plan belied the Department's hope that the centennial year would "advance the public relations of the Department of State at home and to make a distinct [overseas] contribution to the Campaign of Truth."⁴³ One official bluntly approved of the "propaganda potential" of the centennial, believing that "its exploitation is something for which all our media should be mobilized." The Department envisioned utilizing media as broadly as possible, including radio, television, magazines (specifically the Foundation's periodical, *The American-German Review*, which had circulation among information centers in West Germany), pamphlets, motion pictures, and school programs. It also directed officials to organize a letter-writing campaign to Germany for the occasion, because "the propaganda value of such letters, when used by [*Voice of America*], and by the Press and Publication Branches... will be obvious." Officials believed total saturation of the observations would bolster the wider American propaganda effort abroad.⁴⁴

Schurz played numerous roles in his life: newspaper editor, "educator, diplomat, brigadier-general and promoter of democratization of officer-soldier relationships, special commissioner of the Freedmen's Bureau, senator and cabinet-member." Based on this full and admirable life, it would not be difficult for materials aimed at "media exploitation" to frame Schurz in such a way that would bolster the American (and German) position in the Cold War by "underlin[ing] the importance of Carl Schurz as a historical figure of great significance for Germany and the United States."⁴⁵ Department

⁴³ Proposed Plan, NARA, 1.

⁴⁴ MacBryde to Various Divisions, NARA, 1-4; Proposed Plan, NARA, 1-7.

officials believed that they could count on journalists to take up interest in Schurz, as he was “an eminent member of that profession.”⁴⁶

By February, the Department circulated its operational plan widely to its own officials as well as to the Foundation. The aim of the centennial year was to dramatize Schurz’s story to “epitomize the vast scope of opportunity available to any individual within the framework of a democratic society such as exists in America.” In addition, it would “strengthen the bond of friendship between the United States” and Germany by “discreet exploitation of Schurz’ German origin” and emphasize that Schurz’s story was not just an American story but had “world-wide implications.” Officials also issued guidance for coverage of the events and memory of Schurz, directing reportage to utilize a number of different categories, including “German-American achievements” and “German-Americana,” Schurz’s historical role as a reformer and “champion of abolition” and “international peace,” his “spiritual kinship with the Great Emancipator,” Abraham Lincoln, and “the link between the German movement of 1848 and modern Germany’s struggle toward democracy.”⁴⁷

Because it was important from an optics standpoint that the centennial, including both the fêtes and supplemental events, as much as possible to be organic, it largely fell

⁴⁵ George Hanstein to Werner Lutz, 21 March 1952, Folder 9, Box 6, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

⁴⁶ Operational Plan – Carl Schurz Centennial Observance, c. January-February 1952, Folder: Carl Schurz Centennial, Box 29, Subject Files: 1948-1953, Record Group 59, NARA, 1, 3-4.

⁴⁷ Operational Plan, NARA, 1, 3-4.

to the Howard Elkinton and the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation to drive the plans forward publicly and work with West Germans across the Atlantic. The Foundation distributed relevant information on Schurz's life and the yearlong celebrations to domestic and international media, the State Department's press services, libraries, speakers, local and state officials, *Voice of America*, and beyond that highlighted the core themes and attributes of the year.⁴⁸ The Foundation transmitted news from Germany and furnished information to newspapers and publications such as the High Commissioner for Germany (HICOG)'s *Information Bulletin*, *New Yorker Staats-Zeitung*, *New York Times*, *Philadelphia Gazette-Democrat*, a local Philadelphia radio station, and even publications in West Germany such as *Die Welt*, *Neue Zeitung*, and *Stuttgarter Nachrichten*.⁴⁹

At their meeting, Elkinton also suggested using a future Foundation dinner planned for 5 May in Philadelphia for the centennial. The Foundation wanted Langfeld and the State Department to lock in a prominent speaker, with Elkinton hoping for General Lucius Clay. Elkinton also suggested a number of other projects that could bolster the public profile of the centennial, including the possibility of co-sponsoring American pilgrimages to Germany. It was a project that the Department wanted to avoid specifically, as they did not want to be seen as wrapped up in a commercial tourism project. Langfeld and the State Department still believed that such an exchange would be

⁴⁸ Langfeld to Elkinton, 28 February 1952, Folder 8, Box 6, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

⁴⁹ Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation Reports, 1945-1952, Folder 4, Box 1, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP, 7; Articles in Periodicals, April 1952-January 1953, Folder 5, Box 1, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP, 1-2.

a very good project that “should be encouraged,” and he suggested that the Foundation look to Germany – including the nascent Carl-Schurz-Gesellschaft in Bremen – for a transatlantic partner to complete this. It was an echo of the U.S. and West German governments’ on-going negotiations for a cultural convention that would cede the responsibilities of cultural contacts to private actors, particularly in the realm of exchange-of-person programs that would enhance transatlantic understanding on a person-to-person basis. The meeting ended with the executive director of the Foundation happily agreeing to supply the State Department and any media members with a complete background of Carl Schurz, which U.S. officials used as guidance in order to facilitate the public face of the centenary in accordance with its chief propaganda aims.⁵⁰

The Carl Schurz Centennial in the United States

The Liederkranz dinner on 3 March served as the “opening gun” for the festivities in the United States. It was not a public fête in the sense of the May 1948 centennial or the Goethe-Year celebrations, where thousands of people were involved. Yet it was nonetheless important, because it fed into the public perception of West German-American rapprochement and helped to prime audiences for the public celebrations to come later in the year.

There were two main speakers for the Liederkranz meeting on 3 March: Dr. Arthur D. Graeff, a local historian and member of the Foundation, and Dr. George Shuster. Graeff began his brief remarks (and the official American centennial festivities)

⁵⁰ Memorandum of Conversation, c. February 1952, Folder: Carl Schurz Centennial, Box 29, Subject Files: 1948-1953, Record Group 59, NARA, 1-2.

by hailing Schurz as the proper symbol of West German-American rapprochement. The life, career, and services of Carl Schurz “have function for us today” during the Cold War and formed “the foundations upon which to base our thinking” at home and abroad.⁵¹ Shuster spoke next, reporting on the present circumstances surrounding American cultural relations with Germany and speaking at length on the proposed cultural convention between West Germany and the United States. The convention, Shuster believed, would inaugurate a new era of cultural relations and serve to strengthen West German-American cultural ties at a point when economic, political, and military ties were deepening. For this new era, private organizations such as the Foundation would play an increasingly significant role as HICOG’s role lessened.⁵²

The Department of State took great care to ensure that there was strong coverage of the dinner locally and abroad, demonstrating just how much these officials believed that even a private dinner could support *fête* diplomacy by making these instances of West German-American cultural rapprochement highly visible. The Department’s International Press Service, International Motion Picture Service, and *Voice of America* were on hand to give the meeting “complete publicity throughout Germany” as well as “other appropriate areas of the world.” International broadcasts included excerpts of both speeches as well as a description of the planned observances for the entire year. As with

⁵¹ Carl Schurz Centennial, HSP, 1-7.

⁵² “Dr. Shuster auf Schurzfeier über D.A. Kulturaustausch,” *New Yorker Staats-Zeitung und Herold*, 5 March 1952; “Die Bedeutung der Schurz-Feier zum Zentennial seiner US-Einwanderung,” *Sonntagsblatt Staats-Zeitung und Herold*; Elkinton to Thun, 19 February 1952, Box 6, Folder 8, NCSA Records, HSP.

the overseas broadcasts that would follow throughout much of the year, members of the State Department's press team ensured that the coverage of the Schurz Centennial was broadcast through four local radio networks in the American zone as well as by radio in the American sector (RIAS) of Berlin, who transmitted the news into the Soviet Zone as well. Elkinton later noted how German visitors to the Foundation spoke positively about Shuster's speech after hearing it in West Germany.⁵³

Shortly after the Liederkrantz dinner, Henry J. Kellermann, the Director of the Office of German Public Affairs in the State Department, reached out about speaking at the Foundation's annual meeting on 5 May, as General Lucius Clay was unable to attend. Kellermann was a native of Berlin, served as a propaganda and research analysis for the American federal government during the Second World War, had been serving as the Acting Chief of the Division of German Information and Reorientation Affairs since November 1949, and was currently a central part of the on-going U.S.-West German cultural convention negotiations. He was exactly the high-profile speaker that the Foundation had been hoping for, and his presence promised to bring a lot of attention to the affairs. Elkinton took this as evidence that the centennial's opening ceremonies had pleased the State Department, joking that it was "a little diverting how suddenly [U.S officials] find Schurz as an ideal character for their purposes."⁵⁴ In addition, Elkinton and

⁵³ Carl Schurz Centennial Coverage, c. 1952-1953, Folder 2, Box 2, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP, 1-2; Elkinton to Wilbur K. Thomas, 14 March 1952, Folder 9, Box 6, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP, 1; Elkinton to Langfeld, 3 July 1952, Folder 3, Box 7, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

⁵⁴ Elkinton to Thomas, 14 March 1952, 1.

officials also secured the participation of Heinz L. Krekeler, the Chargé d’Affaires of the Diplomatic Mission of the Federal Republic of Germany, who represented the West German half of the cultural convention negotiations.⁵⁵

The 5 May dinner took place at the Foundation’s headquarters in Philadelphia. Krekeler spoke first, warning of the dangers of Soviet expansionism and declaring that West Germans should follow in Schurz’s footsteps by “fight[ing] for freedom and human dignity.” The Chargé d’Affaires tied American and German history together by invoking the intellectual legacy of Thomas Jefferson, the Declaration of Independence, the “pursuit of happiness,” and the premise of “checks and balances” that would help West Germans strive for a “democratic Germany.” The German diplomat concluded his remarks by emphasizing “the precious goods of peace and freedom” had to be developed organically, fostered by a transatlantic U.S.-West German relationship.⁵⁶ Henry Kellermann, the keynote speaker, echoed many of the same themes in his lengthy speech, emphasizing that Schurz was part of the “finest heritage” from both the United States and Germany and whose spirit could create a “true and lasting union” between the two nations. In addition, Kellerman highlighted the negotiations of the cultural convention, which would

⁵⁵ Heinz L. Krekeler to Elkinton, 20 March 1952, Folder 9, Box 6, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP; Langfeld to Begg, 9 April 1952, Folder: Carl Schurz Centennial, Box 29, Subject Files, 1948-1953, Record Group 59, NARA; Kellermann, *Cultural Relations*, 160.

⁵⁶ German Consulates and Missions, c. March 1952, Folder 9, Box 6, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP, 1-23.

“encourage and facilitate the initiation of joint projects designed to promote the very principles” that the two nations were pledged to support.⁵⁷

Once more, officials hoped that giving this meeting extensive coverage would feed into the public perception that West German-American cultural rapprochement was an on-going process. The 5 May dinner, in particular, could set the stage for the summer fêtes by reaffirming just what West Germans and Americans would be celebrating if they came out to remember Carl Schurz. The Krekeler and Kellermann speeches reached a wide international audience, and the Foundation furnished a local radio station with Kellermann’s speech for rebroadcast.⁵⁸ In the United States, text copies of Kellermann’s speech in particular were in high demand.

During the evening’s festivities, the Foundation donated to Krekeler and the German Diplomatic Mission offices (and soon-to-be German embassy) a portrait of Carl Schurz that had been hanging in their Board Room along with six volumes of Carl Schurz’s political papers, speeches, and correspondence to be kept at the Diplomatic Mission’s library.⁵⁹ Dr. Krekeler accepted these gifts by privately assuring Elkinton of their value as a gesture of German-American friendship and “the ideals for which Carl

⁵⁷ Kellermann to Elkinton, 13 May 1952, Folder 1, Box 7, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP; Germany: Today and Tomorrow, 5 May 1952, Folder 2, Box 2, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP, 1-45.

⁵⁸ Carl Schurz Centennial Coverage, HSP, 1; Broadcasts, May 1952-April 1954, nd, Folder 5, Box 1, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

⁵⁹ At a Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Carl Schurz Foundation, 5 May 1952, Folder 1, Box 7, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP; Elkinton to Krekeler, 8 May 1952, Folder 1, Box 7, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

Schurz has lived and fought,” which were “the best guarantee for increasingly friendly relations between our two peoples.”⁶⁰

In the leadup and aftermath of the 5 May dinner, Krekeler also notified Elkinton of an interesting upcoming project to the Foundation, where the West German government planned to bring a group of one hundred Americans to Germany for six weeks during the upcoming summer, perhaps influenced by the participation of the Chargé d’Affaires in the cultural agreement negotiations. Krekeler asked if the Foundation would be willing to name one or two persons who would most benefit from participating. Krekeler told Elkinton that objective of the project, approved by Bonn in October 1951, was not only to acquaint American guests with life and institutions in West Germany but to express “a small token of our deep gratitude for the many similar opportunities offered by the Government and the people of the United States.”⁶¹ It was further evidence that Bonn and West German cultural organizations were taking on more and more financial responsibility for the bilateral cultural politics ahead of the Cultural Convention.⁶²

⁶⁰ Krekeler to Elkinton, 17 May 1952, Folder 7, Box 7, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

⁶¹ Krekeler to Elkinton, 30 April 1952, Folder 1, Box 7, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

⁶² Elkinton to McCloy, 19 May 1952, Folder 1, Box 7, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP. In response, the Foundation named Arthur Reed Hogue, a professor of history at Indiana University who owned a considerable amount of “Schurziana” and married Carl Schurz’s great-great niece, and Francis Daniel Pastorius V, a descendant of the Krefelder that founded Germantown in 1683. Elkinton and the other members of the Foundation believed that the symbolism of choosing descendants of historic German-Americans was obvious.

In the aftermath of the May dinner, the prospects of West Germany's full reintegration into western Europe as a sovereign nation looked as bright as ever. As a result of the negotiations to revise the Occupation Statute, West Germany, France, Great Britain, and the United States signed a General Treaty at Bonn on 26 May to end the Allied occupation, and the delegates signed a treaty establishing the European Defense Community (EDC) in Paris the next day. Both the General Treaty and European Defense Community Treaty, however, had difficult passages through the West German and French legislatures. The EDC Treaty ultimately failed, and the General Treaty languished for a few years before it was officially ratified in October 1954, with the Western occupation of the Federal Republic not ending until the following year.⁶³

Following the signing of each treaty, HICOG officials and Howard Elkinton alike hailed the agreement as a demarcating moment in history that only served to reinforce the importance of the German-American centennial celebrations (unbeknownst to the difficulties the agreement would face in Paris and Bonn). Elkinton foresaw the nations entering "a new era" of political and cultural relations, reinforced by the anticipation of the likely arrival of a cultural convention. Once the responsibilities of HICOG receded, it would leave the Foundation "as a working nucleus" to help promote closer ties with the West German government and their civil society that was now beginning to bloom.⁶⁴

⁶³ Gehler, *Three Germanies*, 70-2.

⁶⁴ The Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation Address by H.W. Elkinton at Byndenwood, 31 May 1952, Folder 2, Box 2, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP, 1-2, 15.

As part of the centennial, the Foundation also reached out to mayors and governors across the United States in cities and states where Schurz played a profound historical role and there was a large German-American population.⁶⁵ The resulting public proclamations were often very close echoes of the keywords and themes developed by the Foundation and State Department. Mayor Vincent Impelletterri of New York City hailed Schurz as a great and progressive American and a “staunch champion of honesty in government and foe of discrimination” who worked for “Civil Service reform, just treatment of Indians, education of Negroes, and... social reforms.”⁶⁶ Proclamations from New York State, South Dakota, and elsewhere echoed these sentiments, calling Schurz a vanguard of liberal democracy and emblematic of immigrants “of the finest quality and character to come to our shore and become Americans.” The state proclamations of Pennsylvania and New York also emphasized the current-day importance of the German-American relationship, emphasizing that the interests of West Germans were “so closely bound to ours,” and that the 1952 Centennial was “appropriate” to demonstrate the investment of Americans in “the success of the West German Republic.”⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Governors, c. 1952, Folder 2, Box 2, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP, 1-2; Minutes of Meeting of the Executive Committee, 19 June 1942, Folder 5, Box 34, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP, 2.

⁶⁶ Proclamation, City of New York, c. August-September 1952, Folder 2, Box 2, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

⁶⁷ Statement, State of New York, 14 August 1952, Folder 2, Box 2, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP; Proclamation, State of South Dakota, 8 September 1952, Folder 2, Box 2, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP; Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Governor’s Office, 3 September 1952, Folder 2, Box 2, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

Throughout the rest of the summer and into September, the Foundation assisted in putting on a number of Schurz-related celebrations. On 24 August, as citizens of Syracuse celebrated German Day, Karl Koenig of Colgate University delivered an address on the life of Carl Schurz. The next day, the State Department distributed a documentary, *Schurz, the Reformer*, to its circulation desks to be transmitted via radio. The usage of this documentary spanned as far as Vietnam and Yugoslavia. On 12 and 13 September, Bard College held a conference on “Carl Schurz and Liberalism Today.” The conference itself was the product of Bard Professor Felix Hirsch, who had been in contact with the State Department to offer his support for the “worthy enterprise” of celebrating the Schurz centennial and connecting its importance to the present day.⁶⁸ The same day that the conference ended, the State Department’s German radio service and *Voice of America* broadcasted a half-hour dramatization of the life story of Schurz and his symbolism of “unshakable political integrity and passionate dedication to social reform” courtesy of material supplied by the Foundation.⁶⁹ Before 17 September, the National Maritime and Aeronautical Association paid its respects to Schurz in New York City by laying a wreath in Carl Schurz Park.

⁶⁸ Annual Report, 1952-1953, HSP, 3; Carl Schurz Centennial Coverage, c. 1952-1953, Folder 2, Box 2, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP, 1-2; Felix E. Hirsch to Langfeld, 23 February 1952, Folder: Carl Schurz Centennial, Box 29, Subject Files: 1948-1953, Record Group 59, NARA.

⁶⁹ “Briefs,” c. 1952, Folder: VOA This Week #11, Box 7, Voice of America, (VOA) Historical Files, Record Group 59, NARA; Elkinton to Vaughn DeLong, 15 September 1952, Folder 5, Box 7, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

The year's ceremonies peaked on 17 September, the day that Schurz and his wife arrived in New York in 1852. Members of the Foundation, accompanied by German and U.S. officials, arrived in Morningside Heights in New York to participate in a wreath-laying ceremony at a statue of Carl Schurz. Representatives of the German Consulate General in New York also participated, laying their own wreath as well.⁷⁰ A luncheon followed the ceremony, where Foundation member Robert H. Fife gave a speech on Carl Schurz as "Immigrant and Patriot," once more positioning Schurz as an important historical and contemporary "diplomatic bridge" between the two countries. Fife ended his remarks with perhaps a perfect encapsulation of how the State Department would have wanted to wield Schurz's name against Soviet propaganda, emphasizing that Schurz's "principles of racial freedom and individual liberty... belong to our most sacred political heritage."⁷¹

The Carl Schurz Centennial in the Federal Republic of Germany

While the Liederkrantz dinner on 3 March, the date of Schurz's birth, served as the "opening gun" of the American observations, the Carl-Schurz-Gesellschaft in Bremen held their first major observation of the centennial almost a month earlier on 7 February. To lend its authority to the affairs, the American Consul General and the U.S. Land Commissioner of Bremen, Admiral Charles R. Jeffs' office suggested that all members of

⁷⁰ Elkinton to Shuster, 9 September 1952, Folder 4, Box 1, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP; Annual Report, 1952-1953, HSP, 3.

⁷¹ Minutes of Meeting of the Executive Committee, 17 September 1952, Folder 5, Box 34, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP, 2; Carl Schurz: Immigrant and Patriot, September 1952, Folder 2, Box 2, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP, 4-7.

their staff should attend the ceremony if they were able to do so. In the old Bremen town hall, the Gesellschaft celebrated the centennial with opening speeches by Bremen Senator Hermann Apelt and Admiral Jeffs.⁷² Federal Republic President Theodor Heuss gave the keynote address in which he attested to the importance of the memory of Carl Schurz, “the patron saint of the German-American relationship.” Heuss believed that Germans should look on Schurz as “a moving force” whose timeless “memory should move us, too.”⁷³ Two months later, in April, Heuss continued the centennial observances when he presented the Foundation with an essay book from Carl Schurz’s days as a student in Cologne.⁷⁴

In late June, Secretary Acheson made an official trip to West Berlin, the “Western wedge” behind the Iron Curtain, where he helped to mark the construction of the American Memorial Library.⁷⁵ There, Acheson presented Mayor Ernst Reuter with a volume containing exchanged letters between Carl Schurz, “a liberal of German birth,”

⁷² Information Office, Public Affairs Section to All American Staff Members, 22 January 1952, Folder: 040 Entertainment, Ceremonies, Box 18, General Records, 1949-1952, Record Group 466, NARA.

⁷³ Theodore Heuss, “Parallels and Contrasts,” *Information Bulletin* (March 1952), 23-25; “Hundertjahrfeier der Einwanderung von Carl Schurz hier und im Reich,” *New York Staats-Zeitung und Herold*, 2 March 1952. For the full German text of the speech, see Vortrag von Bundespraesident Professor Heuss vor der Carl-Schurz-Gesellschaft zu Bremen, 7 February 1952, Folder: 040 Entertainment, Ceremonies, Box 18, General Records, 1949-1952, Record Group 466, NARA.

⁷⁴ Report of the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation, c. 1954, Folder 5, Box 1, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP, 14.

⁷⁵ Eric Barnes to Elkinton, 23 January 1952, Folder 7, Box 6, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

and Abraham Lincoln, which had been prepared for the occasion by the Library of Congress. With the centennial year in mind, Acheson noted that Schurz brought the “fine heritage of 1848” to the United States, including “humanitarian principles and [devotion] to the democratic concept that all men are created equal.” The Memorial Library served as a tribute to this culture in Germany and Berlin, to which the United States owed much of its cultural heritage. With the State Department’s official contribution, an “expression of friendship and understanding,” Acheson wished that the “ideals of Carl Schurz and Abraham Lincoln” would continue to inspire those who would defend freedom “in Berlin as in America.”

The following day, Secretary Acheson spoke at a public cornerstone-laying event for the library. He hailed the “Old World” as the “basis of our cultural heritage,” and the library was a symbol of the desire of the United States to reextend knowledge back to “the common man” in Berlin, East and West. In a thinly veiled attack on the Soviet world’s propaganda offensive worldwide, Acheson claimed that the “freedom to learn” for all – “to study, to seek the truth,” was the “essence of a free society.” “Truth and freedom” were “inseparably joined,” as tyrants always sought “to throw up barricades against the truth.” Now, governments behind the Iron Curtain were “deathly afraid of this freedom.” Unfettered access to the knowledge of libraries and “open shelves” were a death knell to tyrannical regimes. Where the Acheson claimed the United States promoted doors open-wide, “so that the truth may guide us,” other regimes bound their people “behind barbed wire.” As West Germany took its place among the community of nations and regained the powers of self-government, Berlin, too, would benefit from this

arrangement even if it did not apply to the city behind the Iron Curtain. Acheson wished the best to the people of West Berlin and hailed the “Germans of the Soviet zone” who “have kept burning in their hearts the flame of liberty, truth, and the rule of law,” waiting eagerly for the day “when they may rejoin the free world in a Germany united in peace and honor.”⁷⁶

In the United States, the Foundation included Acheson’s remarks in its August edition of *American-German Review*, the entirety of which was dedicated to the history and relevance of Carl Schurz. Elkinton penned the opening article on “the virtue of [Schurz’s] life,” expounding on “our government’s interest in Schurz” due to his application to the post-World War II and Cold War world. The State Department’s interest, Elkinton wrote, stemmed from the end of the war, when Americans became more acutely aware of “the struggle for political freedom and the liberty of the individual” which had been present in Europe in 1848. Schurz, as exemplified by the U.S. government’s efforts over the better part of a year, was “particularly important today when men and women in West Germany are struggling to make ideals come true, where liberty and freedom have again to struggle with the forces of reaction.” Due to the pressures facing West Germans from within and from behind the Iron Curtain, Schurz was the man of “unusual significance for middle Europe in 1952.”⁷⁷

⁷⁶ Carl Schurz Centennial Year 1952, c. 1952-1953, Folder 2, Box 2, NSCA Records, HSP; “Laying the Cornerstone of the American Memorial Library at Berlin, Remarks by Secretary Acheson,” *The Department of State Bulletin* 27, no. 680 (July 1952), 3-6.

⁷⁷ Elkinton, “Carl Schurz – The Virtues of His Life,” *The American-German Review* 18, no. 6 (August 1952), 3-4.

The Steuben-Schurz-Gesellschaft, in order to properly publicize “the memory of a man who should mean more to us today than ever before” and to “revitalize [Schurz’s memory] in broader [public] circles, took on the lion’s share of the responsibility for Schurz Centennial events in the summer and fall.⁷⁸ In June, the society sponsored a spring festival where Americans and West Germans could mingle informally and celebrate their transatlantic relationship. Echoing the sentiments of the cultural convention currently being negotiated, the surest way to reform relations on a national level was to first engage in person-to-person relationships on an individual level.⁷⁹ At the same time, the organization was also looking towards the culminating day of the year, 17 September by planning a traveling exhibition on the life and times of Carl Schurz and their lessons for West Germans in the present day. In cooperation with the Smithsonian Institute (at the behest of the State Department), the organization began to accumulate “Schurziana” - engravings, letters, speeches, images, articles, and even an original flag from the 1848 revolution from archives and museums in Germany as well as from the United States via HICOG and private citizens.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ An unsere Mitglieder, Freunde, und Förderer, 15 September 1952, Folder: Amerikanische Besatzung in Frankfurt und Gründung der Steuben-Schurz-Gesellschaft, Series: unklassifiziert, S6b-38: Materialsammlung, ISG.

⁷⁹ Frühlingsfest der Steuben-Schurz-Gesellschaft, *Die Neue Zeitung*, 16 June 1952.

⁸⁰ Elkinton to Max Kraus, 11 June 1952, Folder 2, Box 7, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP; “Deutsch-amerikanische Ehrung für Carl Schurz,” *Die Neue Zeitung*, 22 August 1952; Albert Rapp to F. Rademacher, 5 June 1952, Folder: Ausstellung 1948-1952, Series: 5 Wechselausstellungen, A.45.02 Historisches Museum, ISG; Carl-Schurz-Wanderausstellung, 29 August 1952, Folder: Ausstellung 1948-1952, Series: 5 Wechselausstellungen, A.45.02 Historisches Museum, ISG; Albert Rapp to Dr.

On the centennial day, West Germans marked the occasion with a Frankfurt ceremony sponsored by the Steuben-Schurz Gesellschaft at St. Paul's Church. The church was a fitting place for the commemoration: in 1848, the church was the site where revolutionaries gathered a National Assembly with the hopes of declaring a new German republic, and St. Paul's Church had served as the backdrop for the centennials in May and September 1948. Its historical and cultural symbolism were impossible to miss and made all the more important after the church was reconstructed after being damaged during the war – it served as an emblem for West Germany's physical and spiritual revival and its international legitimacy.⁸¹ In a show of transatlantic cooperation with their counterparts in the Frankfurt Gesellschaft, members of the Foundation participated in the affair.

The new High Commissioner for Germany, Walter J. Donnelly, spoke in his first public appearance since replacing John J. McCloy as High Commissioner in early August.⁸² Donnelly's appointment had been welcomed by many in the Federal Republic, because it appeared, in the aftermath of the initial signing of the General Treaty in May 1952, to signal that American officials were fully preparing to transition “from

Breitenbach, c. 1952, Folder: Ausstellung 1948-1952, Series: 5 Wechselausstellungen, A.45.02 Historisches Museum, ISG; Carl Schurz Exhibit, c. 1952, Folder 5, Box 7, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP, 1-5.

⁸¹ Andrew Demshuk, *Three Cities After Hitler: Redemptive Reconstruction Across Cold War Borders* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2021), 3, 52.

⁸² Peter Müller to Alfred Bauer, 19 August 1952, Folder 4, Box 7, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP; “Schurz Anniversary,” *Information Bulletin* (September 1952), 25.

occupation status to sovereignty.”⁸³ Donnelly’s speech, widely reprinted in West German newspapers in part or in whole, reiterated that many of the lessons to be found for West Germans in 1952 could be found in the liberal and defiant spirit of Carl Schurz. Schurz would surely have recognized the threats coming from Communism and Nazism, “the twin children of totalitarianism.” Thanks to his “firm grasp of history and... love of freedom,” he would have dedicated his life in West Germany to protecting his now-democratic homeland from these ideologies. The “legacy” of Schurz was that his ideas and idealism had “won him immortality,” and that Germans and Americans alike should reflect on the democratic inheritance that he handed down.⁸⁴ Following Donnelly’s speech, the High Commissioner joined the Steuben-Schurz Gesellschaft for a dinner. The meeting included a number of dignitaries, including German and American officials as well as members of the Foundation from Philadelphia, and provided an intimate setting in which the participants could further offer their collective hopes at a fruitful West German-American cultural relationship moving forward.⁸⁵

Publicly, the speech inaugurated a broad campaign across West Germany to memorialize Schurz’s historical contribution to the United States, German-American relations, and peaceful, democratic governance. The Steuben-Schurz Society worked

⁸³ Current Informational Report: Mr. Donnelly’s Arrival in Germany (German Press Re-Action), c. 1952, Folder 4, Box 7, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

⁸⁴ Walter J. Donnelly, “The Legacy of Carl Schurz,” *Information Bulletin* (October 1952), 7-8, 12.

⁸⁵ German Journey, 1952, Alice H. Finckh, c. 1952-1953, Folder 5, Box 7, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP, 9; Carl Schurz Exhibit, HSP, 1-5.

closely with cultural ministries in Berlin, Hamburg, and Bremen to distribute over 160,000 posters, 500,000 brochures, and other materials to nearly every one of the 33,000 schools in the Federal Republic. One such poster depicted various events in Schurz's life: fighting in the streets during the Revolution of 1848, his "escape to freedom" in the United States, his time in the American Civil War, his friendship with Lincoln, and his negotiations with freed slaves and Native Americans.⁸⁶ For those schools under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education, the Steuben-Schurz Gesellschaft convinced the ministry to encourage all schools to celebrate Schurz on 17 September. The organization even managed to convince the Federal Republic Post Office to issue a commemorative stamp celebrating Schurz.⁸⁷

Donnelly's speech also kicked off the traveling exhibit of Schurziana, officially entitled "Carl Schurz and the 1848 Movement." The exhibition chronicled Schurz's youth and his participation in the 1848 Revolution, but the majority of its emphases were on Schurz's adventures "as reformer," his ability to "ris[e] above party," his work as an abolitionist and friend of Native Americans, and his advocacy for peace through strength, even co-opting the Bible verse "they shall beat their swords into plowshares" for Schurz. Once transmitted to the Federal Republic, the exhibit became part of the first major

⁸⁶ Carl Schurz: Ein Leben für die Freiheit, c. 1950-2, Folder: Carl Schurz: Ein Leben für die Freiheit, Series: 52412 Hessen, 3012: Plakatsammlung, HHStAW.

⁸⁷ To Our Members, Friends, and Sponsors, 15 August 1952, Box 7, Folder 4, NSCA Records, HSP.

cooperative effort between the Carl Schurz Gesellschaft in Bremen and Steuben-Schurz Gesellschaft in Frankfurt to promote closer German-American relations.⁸⁸

After stints in Frankfurt am Main and Stuttgart, the exhibit reached Bremen. There, the Gesellschaft merged the exhibit with a public celebration of United Nations Day on 24 October at a local *Amerika Haus*. The exhibition, attended not only by the public but by members of the Bremen Senate, American officials, and members of the Steuben-Schurz Gesellschaft, welcomed the improving relations between Schurz' native and adoptive homelands and hoped to "show men of good will that the desired [democratic] world order can be attained through cooperative effort."⁸⁹

As a preamble for Carl Schurz, the celebration opened with speeches and an exhibition on the good work of the United Nations in the realms of refugees, prisoners-of-war, and human rights more broadly. These activities, one speaker noted, would have "received Schurz' hearty endorsement." This conflation of the U.N.'s work with that of Schurz (and, in turn, that of the United States) was perhaps the most fitting ending celebration to the Carl Schurz centennial, and it spoke to the international importance that officials and private citizens alike put on the memory of Carl Schurz and its implications for world peace. Schurz had worked "on a binational scale" toward universal humanitarian goals, and since Schurz now stood as a metaphor for both the United States and West German-American relations, so, too, was the United States striving towards

⁸⁸ "Schurz Anniversary," 25.

⁸⁹ "Carl Schurz Exhibition," *Information Bulletin* (January 1953), 9.

these same goals of humanitarianism and international cooperation.⁹⁰ In early November, the exhibition left Bremen and made stops of about two weeks each in Hamburg, Berlin, Munich, Liblar (the site of Schurz's birth), and Düsseldorf before ending up in Essen from early-to-mid-June, 1953. Those who participated in the exhibition had much to be happy about, and they considered it a "great success" with visitors ranging from 2-3000 in both Liblar and Berlin.⁹¹

Overall, the September festivities and the Schuziana exhibition received glowing coverage throughout West German print. As might be expected, the accounts often utilized similar language, whether it was from Schuziana materials, guidance papers, or High Commissioner Donnelly's speech in order to highlight Schurz as a man whose German heritage and actions during the Revolution of 1848 played as significant a role as his actions in the United States. The headlines alone, remembering Schurz as an "unflinching rebel of freedom," a man who lived "a life for freedom," and a "revolutionary and statesman" were indicative of the value the memory of Carl Schurz had to legitimizing West Germany's cultural and democratic rebirth.⁹² Most newspapers,

⁹⁰ "Carl Schurz Exhibition," 9.

⁹¹ Carl-Schurz-Wanderausstellung, c. 1953, Folder: Ausstellung 1948-1952, Series: 5 Wechselausstellungen, A.45.02 Historisches Museum, ISG.

⁹² "Unbeirrbarer Rebell der Freiheit," *Deutscher Kurier*, 20 September 1952; "Carl Schurz: Unbeirrbarer Rebell der Freiheit," *Frankfurter Weststadt-Anzeiger*, 18 September 1952; "17. September 1852: Ein Rebell der Freiheit," *Mannheimer Morgen*, 17 September 1952; "Ein Leben für die Freiheit," *Main-Echo*, 16 September 1952; "Das Leben eines Revolutionärs," *Stuttgarter Nachrichten*, 17 September 1952; "Gegen das Unrecht und für die Freiheit," *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 18 September 1952; "Revolutionär und Staatsmann," *Die Welt*, 18 September 1952.

of course, emphasized that the “German-American” served as an eternal bond between the two nations. One Swiss journalist noted that, with a foot in “two worlds,” Schurz had fully embodied the German-American relationship that was once more beginning to blossom after years of war and occupation.⁹³ Such a sentiment succinctly captured the multivocality that the memory of Schurz had demonstrated over the entire year: being molded as a stalwart example of the good German, the idealistic American, and the bridge between them as they face the Cold War in 1952.

Signing the Convention and the End of the Occupation, 1953-1955

Throughout the entirety of the Carl Schurz centennial year in 1952, West German and American officials (including centennial participants Henry Kellermann and Heinz Krekeler) had been diligently negotiating a cultural convention that would formally normalize the cultural relationship between their two nations and put it on bilateral footing. The negotiations finally came to fruition in April 1953, when U.S. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer signed a cultural agreement (rather than a formal treaty) in a public ceremony that gave “official sanction... to the *de facto* bilateralism that had characterized U.S.-German cultural cooperation for quite some time.”⁹⁴ In the end, as if to exemplify the importance of

⁹³ “Rückkehr der Söhne,” *Die Tat*, 23 September 1952.

⁹⁴ Kellermann, *Cultural Relations*, 161; Konrad Adenauer to John Foster Dulles, 9 April 1953, Folder: Kulturabkommen zwischen der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und den USA, Series: 4.7.2 Abschluß bilateraler Abkommen, 504: Kultusministerium, HHStAW; Dulles to Adenauer, 9 April 1953, Folder: Kulturabkommen zwischen der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und den USA, Series: 4.7.2 Abschluß bilateraler Abkommen, 504: Kultusministerium, HHStAW; “Remarks by Secretary Dulles and

cultural rapprochement to buttressing and sustaining the emerging political relationship, the U.S.-West German cultural convention went into effect before the General Treaty that officially revised the Occupation Statute, which was ratified in October 1954 and finally went into effect in May 1955.

The signing of the cultural convention ushered in what the Federal Republic later called an “Era of Encounters” in the 1950s, owing to the private citizens on each side of the Atlantic who had “overcome wartime estrangement” to forge an “Atlantic Bridge” (including an organization named as such).⁹⁵ West German organizations, such as the Steuben-Schurz-Gesellschaft, increasingly began to operate on their own after 1952 (though sometimes with federal funding), putting on exhibits in American Information Centers and *Amerika Häuser*, sponsoring talks, hosting American guests and dignitaries, funding transatlantic exchanges for students, and more.⁹⁶ The Carl Schurz Memorial

Chancellor Adenauer,” *The Department of State Bulletin* 28, no. 720 (Washington, D.C.: April 1953), 568; Kellermann, *Cultural Relations*, 162.

⁹⁵ Christine M. Totten, *Roots in the Rhineland: America’s German Heritage in Three Hundred Years of Immigration, 1683-1983* (New York: German Information Center, 1983), 68. For information on the *Atlantik-Brücke*, see Anne Zetsche, *The Atlantik-Brücke and the American Council on Germany, 1952-1974* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021). For West German-American cultural diplomacy after 1955, see Manuela Aguilar, *Cultural Diplomacy and Foreign Policy: German-American Relations, 1955-1968* (New York: Peter Lang, 1996).

⁹⁶ “Sheila liebt Bach und Berlin,” *Frankfurter Neue Presse*, 8 December 1958; “Botschafter Dowling besuchte Frankfurt,” *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 10 March 1960; “Gibt es eine amerikanische Zivilisation?,” 15 September 1953, Folder: Programm vom 14. bis 25.9.1953, Series: 4 Veranstaltungsprogramme (gedruckt), V113: Amerika Haus Frankfurt, ISG; Amerikanisches Glas aus drei Jahrhunderten, 24 April 1954, Folder: Programm vom 14. bis 25.9.1953, Series: 4 Veranstaltungsprogramme (gedruckt), V113: Amerika Haus Frankfurt, ISG; Liederabend mit Nan Merriman

Foundation, having established deep connections with West German civil society organizations outside of the confines of HICOG's authority, continued to pursue deeper relations with the Steuben-Schurz-Gesellschaft and Carl-Schurz-Gesellschaft but also eagerly engaged with newer organizations such as the *Atlantik Brücke*, the Ernst-Reuter-Gesellschaft in the Free University of Berlin, and *Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen*.⁹⁷

Compared to their other West European allies, U.S. officials were the strongest advocates for the gradual return of the Federal Republic's sovereignty. Even before the General Treaty was ratified, HICOG was preparing for a time when its responsibilities would be coming to an end. The cultural convention that promoted private initiative in cultural relations was part of this preparation. In addition, officials looked to off-load the responsibilities of publishing its flagship publication, *Information Bulletin*, which disseminated information on HICOG's policies, occupation regulations, operations, and activities in West Germany. The natural partner for this was the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation, and, in late 1953, the Foundation began printing a four-page newsletter under a new name, *Current Germany*. The Foundation printed *Current Germany* and *The American-German Review* on alternating months, using *The American-German Review* for articles primarily on culture and German-Americana while *Current Germany* included

(Mezzosopran), 16 June 1961, Folder: Juniprogramm 1961, Series: 4
Veranstaltungsprogramme (gedruckt), V113: Amerika Haus Frankfurt, ISG.

⁹⁷ Elkinton to Walter Erbe, 18 June 1952, Folder 2, Box 7, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP; Laubrinus to Carl Anthon, 24 August 1954, Folder 8, Box 9, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records HSP; Harry J. Krould to Elkinton, 18 April 1955, Folder 4, Box 10, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

political, economic, and cultural issues in West Germany and Berlin.⁹⁸ The organization's channels remained open with the West German government and HICOG, who forwarded materials on "vital developments" in West Germany to the Foundation through 1955.⁹⁹

The new publication exemplified the important personal connections that the Foundation had made in its postwar relationship with both OMGUS and HICOG. Carl Anthon, a former university advisor for the American High Commission's Berlin Element who kept in close communication with his former contacts in West Berlin, was in charge of publishing *Current Germany*. Howard W. Johnston, the Chief of the Higher Education Division in the Education and Cultural Relations Division in OMGUS who was instrumental in helping the Free University to get off the ground, served as the managing editor for *Current Germany* and represented the organization directly in Washington, D.C.¹⁰⁰

Predictably, *Current Germany*, like the Foundation overall, remained an instrument which advocated for West Germany's Atlanticization, and the periodical

⁹⁸ Roger H. Wells to Anthon, 29 November 1953, Folder 8, Box 39, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

⁹⁹ *Current Germany*, c. 1953, Folder 8, Box 39, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP; Langfeld to Anthon, 5 October 1953, Folder 8, Box 39, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP; Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation to Ruth Tamm, 7 April 1954, Folder 9, Box 39, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP; Axel von dem Bussche to Hanstein, 23 June 1955, Folder 6, Box 10, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

¹⁰⁰ Elkinton to John McCormick, 25 May 1955, Folder 5, Box 10, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP; Anthon to Cecil B. Lyon, 10 February 1954, Folder 9, Box 39, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP. In addition, Alonzo Grace, who served as the Director of the Education and Cultural Relations Division under the military government, went on to become president of the Foundation in the months before the first publication.

championed West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer's push for deeper Western integration.¹⁰¹ The first issue, published in November 1953, carried articles on refugees flooding into West Berlin from East Germany ("an infallible barometer for the political weather in the Soviet Zone"), the on-going West German "economic 'miracle,'" and West Germany's ability to meet its wartime debts to its current allies.¹⁰² The publication cheered the successful ratification of the General Treaty in October 1954 as a demonstration of "the vitality of the western alliance," "the determination of the free world to stop further Soviet aggression," and "the willingness [of the governments of free nations] to trust Germany as a full-fledged partner in arms."¹⁰³

The General Treaty finally went into effect on 5 May 1955, and the occupation of West Germany officially came to an end. Two months later, Howard Elkinton died unexpectedly of a heart attack. The sheer outpouring of well-wishes attested to his role in overseeing the important role for the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation as "an essential tie between Americans and Germans"¹⁰⁴ Letters came from officials and diplomats from the Federal Republic, current and former U.S. officials like Theodore Knauth, Alonzo

¹⁰¹ For examples: "Sovereignty for Germany," *Current Germany* 1, no. 5 (Philadelphia: July 1954), 3; "A Neutral Role for Germany?" *Current Germany* 2, no. 1 (Philadelphia: November 1954), 2-3; "Adenauer and Western Unity," *Current Germany* 2, no. 5 (Philadelphia: July 1955), 1.

¹⁰² "The Refugee Tide," *Current Germany* 1, no. 1 (Philadelphia: November 1953), 1-2; "The Economic 'Miracle,'" *Current Germany* 1, no. 1, 2; "Germany Pays Her Debts," *Current Germany* 1, no. 1, 2.

¹⁰³ "German Rearmament and Western Unity," *Current Germany* 2, no. 1, 1-2.

¹⁰⁴ "Friends and their Friends," *Friends Journal* 1, no. 13 (September 1955), 203.

Grace, and Henry J. Kellermann (whose letter was sent on the day of Elkinton's death), newspaper editors and journalists, members of the Carl-Schurz-Gesellschaft, Steuben-Schurz-Gesellschaft, Steuben Society of America, the *Freie Deutsche Hochstift* of the Goethe Museum, the International Institute of Philadelphia, and universities with which Elkinton developed working relationships.¹⁰⁵ The breadth of letters spoke to Elkinton's personal position at the center of a widespread, transatlantic network that facilitated the restoration of West German-American cultural relations on a grassroots level "in so short a time after the end of the war."¹⁰⁶

Conclusion

Though there were a number of hands and a myriad of motivating factors that impelled the organizers to carry out the Carl Schurz centennial throughout 1952, the multivocality of Schurz's symbolism satisfied the major objectives of its participants. For U.S. officials, Schurz's notable public life and association with liberal democracy, abolition, and anti-imperialism helped portray the United States in a positive light during

¹⁰⁵ For a small sample of these letters, see Kellermann to Hanstein, 8 July 1955, Folder 7, Box 10, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP, Theodore Knauth to Hanstein, 9 July 1955, Folder 7, Box 10, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP, Alonzo Grace to Hanstein, 11 July 1955, Folder 7, Box 10, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP, Hanstein to Johannes H. Haas-Heye, 13 July 1955, Folder 7, Box 10, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP, Elizabeth A. Campbell to Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation, 15 July 1955, Folder 7, Box 10, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP, Ernst Beutler to Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation, 25 July 1955, Folder 7, Box 10, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP, K.H. Voss to Hanstein, 27 July 1955, Folder 7, Box 10, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP, and Georg Rohde to Hanstein, 16 August 1955, Folder 8, Box 10, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

¹⁰⁶ Margarethe Bitter to Grace, 14 July 1955, Folder 7, Box 10, Series 1A, Group 1, NCSA Records, HSP.

an onslaught of Kremlin propaganda. For West German officials, Schurz's participation in the Revolution of 1848 branded him as a figure driven by his love of "freedom" – an oft-repeated sentiment in West German press that belied a country looking to emerge from the shadow of the Third Reich and fully join the Western community, perhaps even militarily. For West German cultural organizations, the centennial offered the opportunity to exert themselves on the world stage and assume a larger share of the responsibility in their own democratization and West German-American cultural rapprochement. Ultimately, the memory of Carl Schurz reinforced a long, historical relationship between two peoples, from which closer economic and political ties in the twentieth century might flourish.

Significantly, the year-long celebrations came as the United States and Federal Republic were in negotiations for a cultural convention that would publicly declare that the American cultural presence in West Germany was based on the consent of the population rather than the right of an occupying force to impose new cultural arrangements on a conquered people. This convention, which diplomats were negotiating simultaneously with other international talks to revise the Occupation Statute and include West Germany in a potential European Defense Community, demonstrated that the nature of the U.S.-West German relationship had changed, and that the highest levels of the U.S. government were committed to pursuing a relationship with their erstwhile enemy as "equal partners in the community of the West" culturally, politically, militarily, and economically.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁷ Proposed Cultural Convention, NARA, 2.

Taken together, the 1952 centennial and cultural convention represented the culmination of the transition from an imposed occupation to a bilateral partnership that had been occurring in the cultural sphere since early 1948. What's more, this transition had begun even before the Marshall Plan began the slow process of progressive political and economic integration of West Germany into the Atlantic world and well before the Western powers began negotiating West German's piecemeal return to sovereignty. Shared fêtes between West Germans and Americans did not end in 1952 – on the contrary, they became a staple of the transatlantic relationship well through the end of the twentieth century. But following the signing of the cultural convention, the American occupation authorities were looking for ways to offload costs and responsibilities to private initiative. Public funding and support never completely disappeared from the equation, but cultural and civil society organizations increasingly came to the fore affirm the ongoing normalization of West German-American cultural relations. They were able to do so because of the institutional pathways and personal connections that had developed over years of postwar cooperation in service of fostering cultural rapprochement and consolidating the ideological West.

CHAPTER 7

CODA: GERMAN-AMERICAN FÊTES AND THE COLD WAR

For Western Cold Warriors, categories such as “the Atlantic” and “the West” were more than geographical spaces. They were social and ideological constructs that united their members through a common cultural and political inheritance distilled from the core tenets of the Enlightenment and Western civilization, including liberal-democratic governance, individual political and civil rights, and economic liberalization in direct opposition to the ideological threat represented by the totalitarian, collectivist, and atheistic Soviet Union. For its proponents, the construction of an Atlantic community was not a singular act but instead was a comprehensive and multifaceted enterprise that required marshalling political, military, economic, intellectual, and cultural resources at the international level. The European Recovery Plan and the Organization for European Economic Co-Operation created a political-economic framework.¹ The Council of Europe and Congress for Cultural Freedom normalized the view that Americans and western Europeans descended from a common Western tradition and contributed to a kind of “intellectual-cultural Atlanticism.”² The North Atlantic Treaty not only created a

¹ William I. Hitchcock, “The Marshall Plan and the Creation of the West,” in *The Cambridge History of the Cold War, Volume 1: Origins*, eds. Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 154; David W. Ellwood, “From the Marshall Plan to Atlanticism: Communication Strategies and Geopolitical Narratives,” in *European Community, Atlantic Community?*, eds. Valérie Aubourg, Gérard Bossuat, and Giles Scott-Smith (Paris: Soleb, 2008), 39-56.

² Steven Greer, Janneke Gerards, and Rose Slowe, *Human Rights in the Council of Europe and the European Union: Achievements, Trends and Challenges* (Cambridge:

military alliance but also served as a “symbol of unity” among the Western powers and as evidence of the American commitment to the preservation of the Atlantic world.³

In the aftermath of the Second World War, the members of this community, while faced with an ideological and military threat behind the Iron Curtain, also had to confront the question of whether or not West Germans could be ever incorporated into the Western world. The Nazi regime, after all, was not just a political system but a cultural system that had seemed to infect and choke all aspects of the German nation with its illiberalism and racial ideology, and the depths of Nazi atrocities had raised doubts about whether Germans could ever again align culturally, morally, and politically with the free world. Yet, with a new totalitarian threat emerging from the East, many officials, strategists, and “memory activists” in the United States increasingly viewed the situation of central Europe through the lens of geopolitics and saw West Germans as a potential bulwark against the Soviet expansionism.⁴ Especially after the Cold War divisions began to harden throughout 1947, the effort to imagine and construct an Atlantic community that could stand against the Kremlin increasingly included a place for West Germans, though the effort to incorporate Germans so soon after the end of the Second World War was never uncontested throughout the West.

Cambridge University Press, 2018), 5-10, 58; Scott-Smith, *The Politics of Apolitical Culture: The Congress for Cultural Freedom and the Political Economy of American Hegemony 1945-1955* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 6, 58.

³ Timothy Sayle, *Enduring Alliance: A History of NATO and the Postwar Global Order* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2019), 17.

⁴ Brian Etheridge, *Enemies to Allies: Cold War Germany and American Memory* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2016), 6.

When U.S. officials were beginning to think more concretely about Germans as a part of the ideological Atlantic by mid-1947, the full economic, political, and (especially) military integration of West Germans was still years away from being palatable to the peoples of the Western world. The Atlantic community first had to accept West Germans as a part of its ideological community, meaning that the cultural and intellectual relationship between the United States and West Germany and between West Germany and the Atlantic world was one that had to first be conceptualized and subsequently affirmed and reaffirmed at the grassroots level. Because the construction and affirmation of this transatlantic identity was a continuous process, it took place concurrently with and in support of consolidation of the West at the international level.

In service of the continual attestation of the Atlantic community, fête diplomacy was (and remains) a highly-visible medium through which transnational and transatlantic identities could be publicly performed in a manner that coopted the tastes and traditions of its intended audience and situated it within a supranational framework. By striving to present an organic, endogenous, and genuine expression of German and European cultural traditions, values, and heritage, the organizers of these fêtes hoped that the celebrations would foster a sense of ownership and investment among the participants. As such, the organization and performance of transatlantic fêtes, as well as the process of disseminating their intended message, required a vast cast of private and public actors. State and non-state organizers on both sides of the Atlantic were involved in coordination and planning by selecting symbols and referents rooted in the past but which could propagate lessons and parables for the present. But fête diplomacy was also entirely

dependent on mobilizing public support, turning attendees, historians, journalists, and others into (witting or unwitting) instruments of foreign policy by helping to construct and amplifying the intended narrative and discourse of the celebrations.

The relationship between the Federal Republic and the rest of the Atlantic community began gradually moving towards becoming equal partnerships after the Petersberg Agreement in November 1949, which began to relax Allied controls in West Germany, and the decision by the Allies in Brussels in 1950 to begin revising the Occupation Statute and replace it with a series of “contractual agreements.”⁵ The latter decision, agreed upon in exchange for the Federal Republic’s military contribution to the defense of western Europe, progressively restored West German sovereignty, and signaled that the Allied powers were steadily ceding their power to operate unilaterally within West Germany in favor of requiring the assent of the people and government of West Germany as an equal member of the international community. The cultural agreement signed by the West Germans and Americans in April 1953 signified that, at least in the realm of cultural relations, Americans recognized that the transatlantic relationship should be characterized as an equal partnership.

In West German-American cultural relations, fête diplomacy previewed this shift from unilateral imposition to bilateral cooperation long before official negotiations on the Occupation Statute began after 1949. In the early postwar period, the overwhelming American presence in occupied Germany in the social and cultural sphere -

⁵ Henry J. Kellermann, *Cultural Relations as an Instrument of U.S. Foreign Policy: The Educational Exchange Program Between the United States and Germany, 1945-1954* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1978), 76.

denazification, re-education, school reform, licensing new media outlets, and the earliest exchange-of-persons projects under the American military government - was marked by a didactic approach, where American occupiers instructed the conquered Germans in the ways of democratization. Even the libraries and lectures of *Amerika Häuser* and Information Centers, dedicated to providing information on American culture, politics, and way of life for Germans to regard as exemplary, belied this one-way, instruction-from-above process.

Fête diplomacy, on the other hand, was a unique avenue of postwar relations, because it was highly dependent on the input, cooperation, and active participation of West Germans from its inception. Officials in OMGUS and HICOG were well aware that trying to publicly impose its will on German historical traditions (as it could in other elements of West German society) would have appeared inorganic and foreign. What's more, trying to present the memory, heritage, and history of the West German people incorrectly or inelegantly may have drawn the ire and rejection of the West German people and defeated the objective of the cultural democratization program altogether. For this purpose, the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation proved to be an eminently-capable cultural mediator that was able to balance the Cold War foreign policy demands of U.S. government on the one hand and the authentic national and ethnic demands of the German people on the other. Authenticity and sincerity in the demonstration was also equally vital American and European audiences, who were just as important as German audiences in conceiving of and accepting this Cold War ideological community.

To the good fortune of American and West German officials, there were several prominent anniversaries to celebrate in the early years of the Cold War. The particular choices and subject matter for these fêtes – the Revolution of 1848, Goethe, Schurz, and cultural festivals – all served an important function in creating the ideological Atlantic. In their own ways, they were both German and transnational (encompassing Europeans, Americans, or both), and each seemingly symbolized Germany's embeddedness within both Europe and the Western community more broadly.

Taken as a whole, the intention of these fêtes was to forge an ideological Atlantic and to create a reliable ally on the front lines of the Cold War, and the participation of numerous nationalities in various locales meant that a number of parallel discourses could all contribute to this singular goal. The fêtes could be a tool of German-American rapprochement, as occurred during the September 1948 and 1952 centennials that highlighted Carl Schurz as the quintessential referent for a historical and contemporary compatibility between the German and American peoples. The celebrations could promote European integration and emphasize Germany's cultural belonging in Europe's past, present, and future, as they did through May 1948 centennial and the cultural festivals in Nuremberg, Berlin, and Passau. Fêtes could harmonize German history and Western civilization and present them as mutually constitutive and symbiotic, as the Western world did for much of the Goethe bicentennial. Despite the variety of locations and subject matters, each of these fêtes contributed to a more cohesive, overarching narrative and became a building block of the ideological Atlantic that supported the process of westernization for the people of the Federal Republic.

It is difficult to assess the effect of fête diplomacy on the Atlanticization of the West German people. The events were well-attended by thousands of participants, given widespread coverage in written and broadcast media, and were praised in the positive reports of officials (who were often motivated to see them as a success), but these do not definitively prove the impact of the fêtes or the depths to which they facilitated the intellectual acceptance of the German people into the Western world. Part of this difficulty lies with the nature of cultural studies, which eludes neat categorization and quantification. But what contribution the celebrations may have had is also inextricably bound up with the fact that the fêtes were not discrete events that can be isolated from the sweeping and multidimensional mission to consolidate the Western world against the Soviet Union and find a place for West Germans within that alliance. They were not meant to be a self-contained project but part of a cultural program aimed at undergirding and giving spiritual meaning to broader political, economic, and military foundations being erected in the first ten years of the Cold War.

The long view of history tells us that the Atlantic alliance, while imperfect and never without fractures, nonetheless served as a significant counterweight to the Soviet Union's postwar vision. In addition, West Germany not only became a respected member of the international community but became a significant engine in the European and world economy. In 1945, after nearly half a century of unimaginably destructive world wars in which Germany was at the center, there was little indication that German ethnicity in the United States would ever be something that could be publicly acknowledged, much less something that might be an asset or publicly celebrated. Yet the

Cold War circumstances changed this, making the German-American connection (based on shared heritage and common values associated with liberal democracy) a keystone in the Atlantic world and an ideological bulwark against the Soviet Union.

Official logistical and financial support for fêtes decreased after the end of 1952, as West German and American organizations assumed a larger share of the responsibility for carrying out these relations, but they did not cease to exist. Rather, these cultural celebrations and fêtes remained a staple of how Americans and West Germans publicly reaffirmed this cultural connection through the end of the twentieth century and beyond. Even after the responsibilities of the High Commissioner officially ended in 1955, the cultural pathways and impulses represented by joint celebrations remained strong on both sides of the Atlantic. While these celebrations certainly served ethnic motivations by celebrating German heritage in the United States, many continued to be a conduit for supporting contemporary geopolitical initiatives and articulating ideological meaning.

Carl Schurz was not the only figure that could be honored in the pantheon on German-American heroes. After a wartime hiatus, German-Americans began to once again publicly celebrate Francis Daniel Pastorius, the founder of Germantown, the first permanent German-American settlement in what would become the United States. It had been celebrated up to the outbreak of the Second World War and was renewed as an annual September celebration once more in 1951, on Pastorius' three-hundredth birthday.⁶ The celebrations, uniting some fifty German-American groups in the

⁶ Pastorius Day Celebration, Philadelphia, Pa. – 76th Congress, Second Session, *Congressional Record, Appendix* (1939), 196; Presidential Report, *Year Book, Vol. 2: Spring 1951*, Folder 81, Box 2, Series: Annual Reports, Women's Auxiliary of the

Philadelphia area (including the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation), also took on a more transatlantic character when members of the West German public and diplomats began to take part. Heinz Krekeler, just months after becoming the West German ambassador to the United States, spoke to the Philadelphian crowd in 1953. The following year, German diplomat Joachim Jaenicke spoke amidst the international ratification debate regarding the General Treaty signed in May 1952. Jaenicke took to the stage to express his disappointment at the recent failure of France to ratify the European Defense Treaty and to extol the success of West Germany's European integration as he vied for the American public's support for ratification and the full restoration of West German sovereignty.⁷ It became something of a tradition for representatives of the Federal Republic to join in on the Pastorius Day celebrations, where "Mother Germany" could reaffirm its commitment to the American people and its contributions to American society through German-Americans.⁸

In 1958, German-Americans in New York began an annual September tradition of celebrating General Friedrich Wilhelm von Steuben, the Prussian military officer who

German Society of Pennsylvania, Joseph Horner Memorial Library, German Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia (hereafter cited as GSP), 9.

⁷ Herman Witte to Adolph Reifferscheidt, 6 July 1955, Folder 2, Box 6, Series: Herman Witte, 1949-1968, German Society of Pennsylvania Institutional Records, GSP; Ansprache des Gesandtschaftsrats Jaenicke, 12 September 1954, Folder 1, Box 6, Series: Herman Witte, 1949-1968, German Society of Pennsylvania Institutional Records, GSP. The General Treaty was officially ratified the next month, in October 1954.

⁸ Witte to Karl W. Schick, 7 July 1956, Folder 3, Box 6, Series: Herman Witte, 1949-1968, German Society of Pennsylvania Institutional Records, GSP; W. Fabricius to Witte, 21 June 1956, Folder 3, Box 6, Series: Herman Witte, 1949-1968, German Society of Pennsylvania Institutional Records, GSP.

contributed to the success of the American Revolution by training and instilling discipline among the unruly Continentals. In the postwar period, and especially with regards to reporting on the Steuben Day festivities, American newspapers were split on whether to describe von Steuben as a “Prussian” (a term which remained heavily associated with imperialism and militarism) or a “German,” with most making the cognizant choice to describe him as the latter. The first parade, celebrated in 1958, was led by a flag donated by West German President Theodor Heuss.⁹

The parade grew dramatically over its first few years, and by its fourth year (1961), as many as 15,000 German-Americans took part while some 200,000 spectators looked on, including the mayor of Dusseldorf and the German winner of that year’s Miss Universe contest.¹⁰ The following year, a full year after the erection of the Berlin Wall in August 1961, West Berlin Mayor Willy Brandt was the honored guest in order to demonstrate the American commitment to the city, and he was joined by 25,000 marchers and 100,000 onlookers.¹¹ By the mid-1960s, the German-American celebration had become a staple of the city: President Lyndon Johnson designated 17 September as von Steuben Day as a reminder of the “contribution of the dedicated American citizens of

⁹ Philip Benjamin, “9,000 March Here to Honor Steuben,” *The New York Times*, 21 September 1958.

¹⁰ “Steuben Parade Attracts 200,000,” *The New York Times*, 1 October 1961.

¹¹ “Brandt, Rockefeller, and Wagner Lead Steuben March,” *The New York Times*, 30 September 1962.

Germanic derivation,” and attendance in the parade became something of an “obligatory” pilgrimage for local politicians in the last few weeks during election season.¹²

In 1976, revelers throughout the Western world celebrated the bicentennial of the American Revolution. Outside of the United States, nowhere marked the occasion as fervently as West Germany. Commentators attributed this “diplomatic flattery” to West German “gratitude,” “pride in its own democracy,” interests in highlighting its own “contributions,” and the presence of nearly 450,000 American servicemembers stationed throughout the country.¹³ The transatlantic celebrations began early: after President Richard M. Nixon formally requested on 2 July 1973 that the Federal Republic take part in the efforts to commemorate the bicentennial, German diplomats noted that they felt “particularly called upon to celebrate” due to their special relationship and the role that Germans had had in the founding of the United States and its subsequent national development.¹⁴ West German officials, including Heinz Krekeler, called on West German individuals and organizations to take part in any way they could, including traveling to the United States to demonstrate their friendship. As a result, organizations such as the

¹² Von Steuben Day is Set for Sept. 17,” *Washington Post*, 17 September 1964; Paul L. Montgomery, “Politicians Abound as 13,000 March in 12th Steuben Parade,” *The New York Times*, 21 September 1969.

¹³ “Over the World, Bicentennial is remembered,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 6 June 1976; Craig R. Whitney, “Rockefeller Accepts Tribute in Germany on U.S. Bicentennial,” *The New York Times*, 16 May 1976; Margot Hornblower, “The Big Worldwide Birthday Party,” *Washington Post*, 25 April 1976.

¹⁴ “Über den Atlantik Hinweg,” in *200 Jahre USA: Beiträge aus der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Vol. 1* (Bonn: Inter Nationes, 1977), 8.

Steuben-Schurz Gesellschaft and Goethe Institute were among the numerous organizations that were involved.¹⁵

Over a year before the official festivities, West German President Walter Scheel made his first official visit to the United States in June 1975 to mark the thirtieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War and to inaugurate joint West German-American celebrations of the Bicentennial. U.S. President Gerald Ford and President Scheel each spoke on the “roots of the friendship between our peoples,” including “common democratic convictions,” their Atlantic Partnership, and “the common American-European commitment to the ideals of the Western world.” The West German president concluded the day’s festivities by announcing the establishment of a John J. McCloy Fund, named for the American High Commissioner, in order to fund German-American educational exchanges.¹⁶

Over the course of 1976, there were between three and four thousand events held across 2,000 towns and cities across West Germany. There was a convocation at St. Paul’s Church in Frankfurt with Vice President Nelson Rockefeller in attendance, tying West German and American democratic movements together. The various German states all sent their congratulations and developed their own programs to demonstrate “friendship and solidarity.” City officials and veterans’ groups visited their sister cities in

¹⁵ Heinz Krekeler, “Alle Machen Mit!,” *200 Jahre, Vol. 1*, 9-10; “Alle Sind Aufgerufen,” *200 Jahre USA: Beiträge aus der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* [2] (Bonn: Inter Nationes, 1977).

¹⁶ “Für die Ideale in der heutigen Welt,” in *200 Jahre USA: Beiträge aus der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* [3] (Bonn: Inter Nationes, 1977), 19; “Ein grosser Freund Deutschlands,” in *200 Jahre* [3], 21-5.

the United States. Bavarian officials declared the year as the “Year of Re-Encounters,” reaffirming German-American friendship through personal contacts. The province of Hesse, particularly interested in challenging the notion that Hessians were adversaries during the American Revolution, put on a traveling exhibition (“Hesse and America”) which depicted many Hessians as simple folk who were tricked by the English but soon sympathized with their American “enemies” and deserted. Dusseldorf Academy put on an exhibit entitled “The Hudson and the Rhine.” Officials in Nordrhein-Westfalen established scholarships for American college students. In every federal state, there were exhibits on German-American art, immigration, and even documents from Europe during the American Revolution (including one from Hamburg in August 1776 that declared that Europe, not England, was the “fatherland of America”).¹⁷

Less than a decade later, on 25 June 1983, U.S. President Ronald Reagan gave a radio address marking the German-American “Tricentennial,” the 300-year anniversary of the first German immigration and settlement in North America. In his address, Reagan emphasized that “West Germans and Americans are rightfully proud of our common values as well as our shared heritage,” echoing the truism that had been so central to

¹⁷ Tia Gindick, “Bicentennial Fever – Everybody Else Has It,” *Los Angeles Times*, 4 March 1976; Martin J. Hillenbrand, “Alte Brücke – Neue Wege,” *200 Jahre USA: Beiträge aus der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* [2] (Bonn: Inter Nationes, 1977), 2-3; Margot Hornblower, “The Big Worldwide Birthday Party,” *Washington Post*, 25 April 1976; Craig R. Whitney, “Hessians, Foes in War, Are Friends in Bicentennial,” *The New York Times*, 10 March 1976; Robert J. Dunphy, “Europe Boards the ’76 Bandwagon,” *The New York Times*, 18 January 1976; “Gemeinsam für die Sache der Menschlichen Freiheit,” *200 Jahre USA: Beiträge aus der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* [3] (Bonn: Inter Nationes, 1977), 52; “Wer-Was-Wann-Wie-Wo,” *200 Jahre, Vol. 1* (Bonn: Inter Nationes, 1977), 28-31.

West German-American cultural relations in the years after the Second World War: Americans and Germans shared a special bond, and their shared cultural and political inheritance, inextricable bound to Western civilization, stretched back three hundred years. His radio address highlighted German-American heritage, German contributions to American society, and “shared heritage” of the two nations, but the fête also became the opportunity for the president to underscore the current, tenuous situation between NATO (in which West Germany had been the “linchpin” for three decades) and the Soviet Union and the need for the United States and its European allies to “modernize our aging forces to assure an effective deterrent.”¹⁸

Over the course of the entire year, the Presidential Commission on the German-American Tricontinental recorded as many as 737 events in 45 states and Washington, D.C. as “German-American or Tricentennial-related.”¹⁹ Vice President George H.W. Bush joined West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and President Karl Carstens in Krefeld (the city from which the first German immigrants sailed to North America in

¹⁸ “Radio Address to the Nation on the Tricentennial Anniversary Year of German Settlement in America,” 25 June 1983, *Ronald Reagan Presidential Library & Museum*, accessed online on 1 March 2024, <https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/archives/speech/radio-address-nation-tricentennial-anniversary-year-german-settlement-america>. The celebrations took place during a public debate over the deployment of American Pershing-II missiles in West Germany and brought accusations that officials were attempting to use the Tricontinental celebrations in order to “evoke popular support” for “militarism” and the stationing of these “weapons of mass destruction.” Anti-nuclear protestors demonstrated in both Krefeld and Philadelphia during the June celebrations. Jennifer Preston, “It’s Germans’ Turn in October,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 30 June 1983; Michael Roddy, “District to Recall Its German Roots,” *Los Angeles Times*, 2 October 1983.

¹⁹ Walter F. Naedele, “U.S. Salutes German Heritage,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 2 August 1983.

1683), and Mayor William Green of Philadelphia was welcomed as a special guest by Krefeld Mayor Dieter Puetzhofen. Bush lauded the German-American history by emphasizing that “our histories are utterly intertwined,” and that they shared the values of “peace, freedom, and the dignity of the individual.” With an eye towards the Cold War, Bush underscored the importance of their alliance and NATO for “keep[ing] the Free World free” and asked that the two peoples must make sacrifices... to keep our defenses strong.”²⁰ On 6 October, President Karstens returned the favor by celebrating the Tricentennial in Philadelphia with Vice President Bush.²¹ Four years later, in 1987, Congress passed a joint resolution designating 6 October as “German-American Day” to annually recognize contributions to American life made by Germans and the “friendly relations between West Germany and the United States.”²²

The Tricentennial fêtes – along with many of the West German-American celebrations over the second half of the twentieth century – carried all of the same hallmarks and narratives as those of the early Cold War period. Their importance was in the highly-visible nature of this transatlantic friendship, and German-Americans, who made up possibly the largest ethnic group in the United States at the time, could

²⁰ Totten, *Roots*, 66; “Krefeld Celebrates the Tricontinental,” *German-American Tricontinental Newsletter* no. 5 (Washington, D.C.: August 1983), 1-2.

²¹ Naedele, “Bush to Sub for Reagan at Phila. Fete,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 23 September 1983.

²² A Resolution to Celebrate the German-American Heritage, c. August 1987, Folder 18, Box 1, Series: Miscellaneous, Erich Uhlenbrock papers, GSP.

challenge negative perceptions of West Germans and celebrate the deeply-rooted contributions of Germans to American society.²³

Commentators lauded the celebrations as the perfect “occasion to revival ancestral ties between the two nations.”²⁴ One journalist noted that the celebrations were an opportunity for citizens of Philadelphia and Krefeld to “transcend politics for intensely personal cultural encounters” and take advantage of “countless private diplomatic exchange between private citizens of the two nations,” as Philadelphians shared their homes and streets with revelers from West Germany. Thirty-five years after the officials of OMGUS and West Germany collaborated to put on massive demonstrations in the city of Frankfurt, this commentator could have not have summed up the meaning of the 1983 fêtes and their cultural importance more directly or more succinctly: they were a “marvelous exercise in grass-roots diplomacy.”²⁵

²³ Ben Bradlee, “German-American Tricentennial,” *Boston Globe*, 30 October 1983.

²⁴ Roddy, “District to Recall.”

²⁵ Linda Bowen Santoro, “Ethnic Experience,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 7 October 1983; Santoro, “...but the celebration isn’t about war,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 7 October 1983.

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