

2011

# The long road home: Alfred Andersch, Hans Werner Richter, and the German search for meaning in catastrophe

Aaron Dennis Horton

*Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College*, [greatsasuke88@hotmail.com](mailto:greatsasuke88@hotmail.com)

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool\\_dissertations](https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_dissertations)



Part of the [History Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Horton, Aaron Dennis, "The long road home: Alfred Andersch, Hans Werner Richter, and the German search for meaning in catastrophe" (2011). *LSU Doctoral Dissertations*. 3836.

[https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool\\_dissertations/3836](https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_dissertations/3836)

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at LSU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in LSU Doctoral Dissertations by an authorized graduate school editor of LSU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [gradetd@lsu.edu](mailto:gradetd@lsu.edu).

THE LONG ROAD HOME:  
ALFRED ANDERSCH, HANS WERNER RICHTER, AND THE GERMAN SEARCH FOR  
MEANING IN CATASTROPHE

A Dissertation  
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Louisiana State University and  
Agricultural and Mechanical College  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
in  
The Department of History

By  
Aaron D. Horton  
B.A., East Tennessee State University, 2003  
M.A., East Tennessee State University, 2005  
May 2011

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This study owes debts to numerous individuals and institutions, and I hope in my effort to list them all I do not omit anyone. First, I would like to thank the helpful and knowledgeable professors at Louisiana State University who have given me a tremendous amount of support and guidance over the past several years. This includes my dissertation advisor, David Lindenfeld, as well as the members of my dissertation committee: Suzanne Marchand, David Culbert, and Thomas DiNapoli. I would also like to thank Meredith Veldman and Paul Hoffman for their assistance on my general examination committee. I would be remiss not to mention Doug Burgess, Stephen Fritz, Mel Page, Colin Baxter, Junko Tezuka-Mathis, and the late Christa Hungate at East Tennessee State University for their invaluable guidance during my undergraduate, graduate, and teaching careers there. For the present project, I would also like to thank the helpful and friendly staffs of the United States National Archives II in College Park, Maryland and the Prescott Memorial Library at Louisiana Tech University in Ruston, Louisiana for their assistance in sifting through what often seemed like an endless array of boxes and folders. Thanks are also due to the staff of the interlibrary loan department of Ottenheimer Library at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, where I am employed as a Visiting Professor at the time of this writing. In a timely and efficient manner, they acquired countless rare books and articles for me over the course of my research. Finally, I would like to thank my friends and family, who never stopped believing in me, even when I was unsure of myself. My wife Suzie, in particular, deserves a tremendous amount of praise for her unending support and patience during the grueling process of writing this dissertation.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....   | ii  |
| ABSTRACT .....  | iv  |
| CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION .....   | 1   |
| CHAPTER 2: GERMAN PRISONERS OF WAR IN THE UNITED STATES DURING<br>WORLD WAR II: AN OVERVIEW.....                      | 11  |
| CHAPTER 3: ALFRED ANDERSCH AND HANS WERNER RICHTER .....  | 48  |
| CHAPTER 4: <i>DER RUF</i> : THE CALL GOES OUT.....  | 80  |
| CHAPTER 5: OCCUPATION, OPTIMISM, AND OPPOSITION: ANDERSCH, RICHTER,<br>AND THE SECOND VERSION OF <i>DER RUF</i> ..... | 120 |
| CHAPTER 6: GROUP 47 AND BEYOND: AN EXTENDED EPILOGUE .....  | 212 |
| CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION .....   | 265 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY.....   | 271 |
| VITA .....  | 279 |

## ABSTRACT

The primary subjects of this dissertation are the post-World War II German authors Alfred Andersch and Hans Werner Richter. Drawing from a mixture of the authors' writings and previously-researched as well as new archival sources, this study will examine their roles as editors of the U.S. Army-sponsored POW newspaper *Der Ruf*, as founders of the postwar West German journal, also titled *Der Ruf*, and, most famously, as founding members of the influential postwar West German literary circle Group 47. Each of these developments led directly to the next, and this study will explore the various processes that linked them together. Existing studies have offered various interpretations, ranging from the belief that the authors' time in America strongly impacted their development as writers to claims that their later careers were strongly informed by desires to distance themselves from accusations of "collaboration." Most works tend either toward an exclusively historical or literary focus, but this study seeks to unite previously disconnected areas of scholarship in order to arrive at a more complete understanding of the authors' roles in the emergence of post-World War II West German literature.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The legacies of Nazism and World War II have undoubtedly impacted German cultural development. Countless politicians, scholars, writers, artists, filmmakers, and many others have struggled to come to terms with the events of 1933-1945. Those who experienced personally the dual catastrophes of Nazism and World War II often were particularly and understandably fixated on comprehending the causes, character, and consequences of that brief but pivotal twelve-year period. The range of experiences for Germans intellectuals was broad. Some, such as Thomas Mann and Bertolt Brecht, fled into exile to avoid Nazi persecution. Others, including socialist politician Kurt Schumacher, remained in Germany and suffered accordingly through internment in concentration camps. Like many others of their generation, the subjects of our study, Alfred Andersch and Hans Werner Richter, remained in Germany despite their internal misgivings about Hitler's regime. Where Mann or Brecht had already achieved notoriety before the Nazis came to power, Andersch and Richter would achieve their fame after the war as voices of postwar West German literature, using their wartime experiences as primary evidence of their credibility and authority to speak for the postwar generation.

Those wartime experiences would be fundamental to the emergence of both Andersch and Richter as prominent figures in the postwar literary scene. Both were former communists who ended up serving in the *Wehrmacht*, both were captured in Italy, and both were, like 372,000 of their countrymen, transported to the United States, where they were held captive for the remainder of the war. The future authors were given their first, experimental opportunities to produce for an audience, however captive it may have been, when each was selected to take part in a secret project to promote American democracy to German POWs through a nationwide

camp periodical called *Der Ruf* (“The Call”). Their sometimes reluctant participation in the production of *Der Ruf* would inspire both men to continue their efforts to promote a new, democratic direction for Germany that would combine elements of Western democracy with the socialist principles of their communist backgrounds. When they returned to Germany, they helped found a political journal, also named *Der Ruf*. Published by Curt Vinz’s Nymphenburger Verlag, this new *Ruf* would begin with a powerful sense of optimism, built on the notion that the devastation of the war had provided Germany an opportunity to rebuild a completely new political, economic, and social structure that would ensure lasting peace in Europe. This optimism soon gave way to frustration, as Andersch and Richter realized that their hopes were unfeasible in light of postwar political realities, most notably the emerging Cold War rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union. The authors’ increasingly sharp criticisms of the Allied occupation resulted in their dismissal from *Der Ruf* in April 1947 after a refusal to comply with American censors’ requests to “tone down” the paper’s content. Vinz complied with American demands for the authors’ removal for fear of losing his publishing license, a common occurrence during the U.S. occupation when German publications violated official guidelines. Andersch’s and Richter’s dismissal from *Der Ruf* led ultimately to their foundation of Group 47, a postwar literary circle that became a launching pad for several prominent authors including Günter Grass and Heinrich Böll.

While there are numerous studies of the American POW camps, and several biographical and literary studies of Andersch and Richter, none manage to examine in depth the authors’ experiences as POWs or to link together their earliest “writings,” from the interrogations in which both proved themselves “valuable” to the U.S. war effort, to their participation in editing and writing for the reeducation-minded POW newspaper *Der Ruf*, to their subsequent criticism

and rejection of American occupation in their postwar *Der Ruf*. Broader studies of German POWs or even reeducation focus largely on American roles or the experiences and attitudes of the general prisoner population, while studies of Andersch or Richter tend to focus more closely on their literary careers, offering thematic analyses of their postwar writings. This study will examine the authors' POW experiences as formative phases in their intellectual development, paying careful attention to the process of transition from willingness to cooperate with U.S. reeducation efforts to a highly public criticism of the United States so harsh that they were banned from their own journal. Andersch and Richter were both present and highly visible at each stage of this process, and this study seeks to determine the motives behind their assertions. Was their early willingness to cooperate an opportunistic attempt to secure better treatment than the majority of POWs? What aspects of each individual's attitude and disposition particularly impressed U.S. authorities such as Walter Schoenstedt, who selected anti-Nazi prisoners for *Der Ruf*? Did they ever genuinely believe in American democratic ideals? Was their stark anti-Americanism in the second *Der Ruf* genuine criticism, or an attempt to distance themselves from earlier collaboration?

In exploring these questions, this study will map the trajectory of the authors' careers as a means of seeking better to understand two complex and often controversial figures who found themselves in "exile" as prisoners of war in the United States and who experienced firsthand the privations both of wartime and its aftermath. Neither author achieved the notoriety or status of writers such as Thomas Mann or Günter Grass. Nevertheless, the importance of Andersch and Richter to Germany cultural and intellectual history should not be understated. Their legacy is and will remain connected to the founding of Group 47, and this study will demonstrate the various processes that led to that pivotal event. Because this study deals with a broad array of



material ranging from official U.S. military documents to works of fiction, it occupies a space somewhere between historical and literary scholarship. One cannot hope to write about writers without engaging in some degree of literary analysis, but as a historian I feel obligated not to stray too far from the context in which a given work of fiction was produced. This study is written with the understanding that historical context is not only valuable, but *essential* to literary analysis, while recognizing that characters, themes, and symbolism in fiction can have a powerful resonance with the lives of the individuals who produce it. This study may therefore not be as “historical” as a work based entirely on traditional sources, and likewise it is certainly not as systematic in its literary analysis as one might expect from an expert in literary studies. Instead, the study will navigate between the two fields in hopes of producing a work that weaves together the various aspects of Andersch’s and Richter’s experiences, from their time spent as POWs to the foundation of Group 47 and beyond. This task has not yet been adequately accomplished in existing literature, and my sincere hope is that this study will help bridge different fields of scholarship while reexamining the careers of Andersch and Richter as two among many representatives of their generation of intellectuals.

Chapter 2 provides a general overview of German prisoners of war in the United States. Chapter 3 deals with the authors’ lives leading up to their capture and imprisonment in the U.S., and Chapter 4 then deals specifically with their participation in the first version of *Der Ruf*. Chapter 5 examines the authors’ experiences upon returning to Germany, focusing particularly on the founding, content, and downfall of the second *Der Ruf*. Chapter 6 serves as an extended epilogue, dealing with the authors’ post-*Ruf* careers, which included most notably the founding of Group 47. All translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

## Historiography

There are numerous primary and secondary sources that deal with German prisoners of war in the United States. They range from broad overviews to studies of particular camps or aspects of POW experience. The earliest comprehensive study can be found in volume X/1 of the 22-volume series *Zur Geschichte der deutschen Kriegsgefangenen des zweiten Weltkrieges*, edited by Erich Maschke. This volume, Hermann Jung's *Die deutschen Kriegsgefangenen in amerikanischer Hand* (1972), provides a thorough overview of German prisoners' experiences in the United States, and includes a large appendix of primary documents. Jung includes extensive lists of the camps, numerous maps, camp statistics, and even daily cafeteria menus. While exceptionally thorough in terms of information, the author says little about the role of intellectuals like Andersch and Richter in reeducation. Daniel Costelle's *Les Prisonniers*, written in 1973, is an impressive study that draws extensively from interviews conducted personally by the author, as well as numerous letters and newspapers. As an oral history, Costelle's work is exceptionally valuable in providing numerous examples of prisoner attitudes on a wide variety of issues, ranging from camp conditions to Nazism among POWs. Unfortunately, Costelle does not utilize footnotes, a difficulty for one seeking to examine his sources more closely. Judith Gansberg's *Stalag U.S.A.* (1977) is the earliest American overview of the topic. Gansberg's survey is an adequate treatment, but she provides fewer direct examples of prisoner recollections or government orders and motives than many other studies. Arnold Krammer's *Nazi Prisoners of War in America* (1992) is a more recent overview. Krammer utilizes an abundant array of statistics and personal recollections, some of which were unavailable to Costelle, Jung, or Gansberg.

Some studies are narrower in focus, dealing with particular aspects of the German POW experience in the U.S. Arthur L. Smith's *The War for the German Mind* (1996) examines prisoner reeducation efforts not only in the United States, but in Great Britain and the Soviet Union, as well. Ron Robin's *The Barbed-Wire College* (1995) focuses more narrowly on prisoner reeducation in the United States by a number of methods ranging from college courses taught in the camps to carefully-selected reading material and the official reeducation program at Fort Eustis, Virginia. Robin argues that the reeducation program was futile, and maintains that the project's leading figures, many of whom were university professors, allowed their own interests to determine the program's intellectual character. Robin devotes a brief chapter to *Der Ruf*, but he focuses mostly on the newspaper's failure to resonate with the majority of prisoners, despite the fact that it sold out frequently, forcing increased printings with every new issue. The majority of Robin's work focuses on the attitudes and actions of U.S. officials, and prisoners' reactions to efforts to influence their political views. Neither Smith nor Robin examines the interrogation records of prominent participants in reeducation, documents that shed a great deal of light on the process by which prisoners such as Andersch and Richter were selected to work on *Der Ruf*.

Lewis Carlson's *We were Each Other's Prisoners* (1997) is an excellent oral history that deals with both German and American prisoners during World War II. Like Costelle, Carlson draws heavily from interviews with former POWs, and arranges his study by topic rather than nationality. Therefore, the reader can experience German and American views of camp life, which often contrasted significantly, as German prisoners in American hands often had far better living conditions than American GIs in German *Stalags*. Aside from providing valuable information unavailable elsewhere, Carlson's study provides a fascinating comparison between

German and American POWs, drawing attention to similarities including attempts to deceive or outwit one's captors, as well as differences in terms of treatment and conditions.

Other studies focus on individual camps or groups, examining their subjects in great detail. Monographs such as Allen Koop's *Stark Decency: German Prisoners of War in a New England Village*, which examines closely the history of Camp Stark, New Hampshire, or Kurt Landsberger's *Prisoners of War at Camp Trinidad, Colorado 1943-1946*, deal with the histories of specific camps. Other studies, including Robert Billinger's *Hitler's Soldiers in the Sunshine State* and Betty Cowley's *Stalag Wisconsin* examine more broadly the history of camps in a particular state. Wesley Harris' *Fish out of Water: Nazi Submariners as Prisoners in North Louisiana during World War II* is an interesting micro-history in which the author recounts the surprising tale of a U-Boat crew captured while attempting to transport refined uranium to Japan. The crew was held in secret at Camp Ruston, Louisiana because the War Department did not want the German government to know that while capturing the U-Boat crew, American soldiers had recovered a German encryption machine that would allow interception of vital military communications. Almost all of these studies approach the topic from an American perspective. Although they include many interesting anecdotes about individual prisoners, most focus on the details of a camp or camps' establishment and local attitudes toward and interactions with German prisoners.

There are also several memoirs and autobiographies written by former German prisoners. Most works by former prisoners in America have been published in the United States, including Reinhold Pabel's *Enemies are Human* and Georg Gaertner's *Hitler's Last Soldier in America*. These and other studies provide fascinating accounts of individual experiences, which help humanize more general accounts of German POWs in America. The subjects of the present

study both produced works about their experiences. Hans Werner Richter's novel *Die Geschlagenen (The Defeated)* is a semi-autobiographical account in which the character Gähler serves as Richter's proxy. Like Richter, Gähler is captured in Italy and finds himself eventually in a prison camp located in the American Midwest. While fictionalized, the novel's scenes convey an authenticity confirmed by numerous other memoirs and studies. Alfred Andersch was less forthcoming about his experiences, and his memoir, *Die Kirschen der Freiheit* ("The Cherries of Freedom"), deals almost exclusively with his arrival at the decision to desert and surrender to American troops. As will be discussed later, Andersch's memoir serves in many ways as a justification for his desertion, while Richter's asserts that there was no shame in fighting in the *Wehrmacht* for one's comrades, rather than for Hitler and the Nazis.

Several biographies published in Germany examine the lives and careers of Andersch and Richter. Stephan Reinhardt's *Alfred Andersch: Eine Biographie* is a lengthy study of Andersch's life, but focuses largely on the author's literary career, with much of the study devoted to an analysis of thematic elements in the writer's novels and stories. Published in 1971, it has nothing to say about the author's later works, including his last novel, *Winterspelt*. Bernhard Jendricke's *Alfred Andersch: Mit Selbstzeugnissen und Bilddokumenten*, published eight years after the author's death, provides a concise overview of Andersch's life and career, allowing for a more complete perspective. Eberhard Schütz's *Alfred Andersch* is a well-written study of Andersch, though it devotes little attention to Andersch's life before he became a recognized author. In addition, Andersch's correspondence with his mother Hedwig, as well as with fellow author and friend Arno Schmidt, has been collected and published. Richter was a less controversial figure than Andersch, who frequently garnered attention for his egotism and confrontational assertions about a variety of subjects, including his adamant refusal to aid Günter

Grass in campaigning for the Social Democratic Party (SPD) in the early 1970s. One of the few studies of Richter is Sabine Cofalla's *Der "soziale Sinn" Hans Werner Richters: Zur Korrespondenz des Leiters der Gruppe 47*, which focuses on Richter's role as a founder of Group 47, whose authors sought in part to establish a new German literature that broke with a past stained, as they saw it, by Nazism.

Volker Wehdeking's *Der Nullpunkt: Über die Konstituierung der deutschen Nachkriegsliteratur (1945-1948) in den amerikanischen Kriegsgefangenlagern*, published in 1971, provides an interesting analysis of the material and literary influences on those German prisoners who later enjoyed success as writers, including not only Andersch and Richter, but Walter Kolbenhoff, Walter Manzen, and Gustav René Hocke as well. Wehdeking, a professor of German and literary studies at the Hochschule der Medien in Stuttgart, focuses primarily on major literary influences and themes in the authors' works, contributing a very useful source of literary analysis. As the title suggests, Wehdeking's work also discusses the impact of the POW experience on the development of major concepts and themes that came to characterize postwar German literature. However, he devotes relatively little space to the historical context of the topic, choosing instead to devote the majority of the study to literary themes, indicated by chapter subheadings including "The Poet and the Nazi State," and "Irrational Militarism." The present study will focus more closely on the transition from collaboration to opposition in an attempt to distinguish opportunism from genuine conviction.

In his *Der Ruf: Eine Zeitschrift zwischen Illusion und Anpassung*, Jérôme Vaillant explores the history of the second *Der Ruf*. While he does discuss the early days of the paper under the direction of Andersch and Richter, he devotes nearly half of his study to its history during the editorship of Erich Kuby, an individual more "agreeable" to the occupation

authorities. Vaillant's study is a broader survey that discusses the paper and its contributors as a whole, whereas the present study focuses more narrowly on the second *Der Ruf* as one of several phases in the literary careers of Andersch and Richter.

## CHAPTER 2

### GERMAN PRISONERS OF WAR IN THE UNITED STATES DURING WORLD WAR II: AN OVERVIEW

In the year following Pearl Harbor, the United States had very few prisoners of war within its borders. The government and military command were far more concerned with negotiating the prospect of a two-front war in which the United States' chief allies, Great Britain and the Soviet Union, placed an increasing amount of pressure on the former to mount an offensive in the European theater. Even in late 1942, there were only 431 foreign prisoners of war in United States.<sup>1</sup> Britain already had nearly 250,000 POWs in camps within its borders, leading Lord Halifax, London's representative in the United States, to propose successfully that the United States accept an initial 50,000 prisoners in anticipation of upcoming campaigns that would inevitably increase the number of POWs in Allied hands.<sup>2</sup> Such expectations proved accurate. In November 1942, U.S. troops under the command of Generals George Patton and Omar Bradley united with British Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery to launch a massive campaign against Field Marshal Erwin Rommel's *Afrika Korps* in North Africa. As Allied and Axis forces battled across Tunisia, Algeria, and Libya, American and British forces began to overwhelm Rommel's exhausted and poorly-supplied forces. With each victory, the number of German and Italian prisoners in Allied hands increased, until tens of thousands found themselves in hastily-constructed POW holding camps in Morocco. As captives were processed and transported out of North Africa, the United States accepted nearly 130,000 prisoners into domestic POW camps.<sup>3</sup> The flood of German and Italian prisoners into American and British

---

<sup>1</sup> Arnold Krammer, *Nazi Prisoners of War in America*. (Lanham, MD: Scarbrorough House, 1979), 1.

<sup>2</sup> Judith M. Gansberg, *Stalag U.S.A.: The Remarkable Story of German POWs in America*. (New York: Thomas Crowell, 1977), 4-5.

<sup>3</sup> Daniel Costelle, *Les Prisonniers*. (Paris: Flammarion, 1977), 21.



hands continued with the Allied invasion of Italy in September 1943, until hundreds of thousands of enemy prisoners found themselves either in Britain or the United States. Ultimately, approximately 425,000 enemy prisoners of war were held in over 500 camps of various sizes<sup>4</sup> in the United States. The process of accommodating and managing such a number of captives was often haphazard, as officials in the Office of the Provost Marshal General (PMG), the branch responsible for overseeing foreign POWs, struggled to fulfill the Geneva Convention's requirements for treatment of enemy prisoners while pursuing an initially covert plan to foster a positive view of American democracy among the captives. This chapter provides an overview of the United States' management of German POWs, who represented the vast majority of prisoners in American camps at nearly 372,000,<sup>5</sup> in order to establish a contextual background for the present study.

### **The Journey**

The journey to POW camps in the United States began in Casablanca, Morocco and Oran, Algeria, where prisoners from the North African and Italian campaigns were loaded onto ships that would transport them across the Atlantic. Despite sporadic encounters with enemy U-Boats, not one of the transport ships was sunk during the six-week long crossing.<sup>6</sup> Many prisoners, including Eberhard Ladwig, were relieved to escape the filthy conditions in the North African camps. Ladwig recalled that

...prisoners were put in an enclosure where normally one might keep animals...It was very dirty and wet, and we were forced to sleep on the ground in the mud. It was a relief to be taken down to the harbor and loaded onto a civilian ship of the New York/Puerto Rico line.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> Krammer, *Nazi Prisoners*, vii.

<sup>5</sup> Gansberg, *Stalag U.S.A.*, 1.

<sup>6</sup> Krammer, *Nazi Prisoners*, 17.

<sup>7</sup> Lewis H. Carlson, *We Were Each Other's Prisoners: An Oral History of World War II American and German Prisoners of War*. (New York: Basicbooks, 1997), 87.

Conditions on the ships were generally pleasant for the captives. Not only were prisoners well-fed, but guards were also instructed to provide POWs with “luxuries” such as cigarettes and reading material. Prisoners would also be allowed occasionally to participate in various above-deck activities, including shuffleboard and boxing or wrestling exhibitions. Depending on the facilities on particular ships, many prisoners even slept in cabins rather than in crowded cargo holds.<sup>8</sup> Such treatment would be characteristic of prisoners’ experiences throughout most of their incarceration in American hands due to an official determination to adhere rigorously to the various requirements for prisoner treatment under the Geneva Convention. This strict adherence was driven not by humanitarian concerns for enemy prisoners’ welfare, but rather by fears that any perceived mistreatment of German captives would lead to harsher treatment of American prisoners in German camps. Such generous treatment elicited powerful criticism among many Americans, most readily visible in newspaper and magazine editorials. For example, an article from the 10 June 1943 issue of the *Washington Daily News* complained that prisoners often dined on “ice cream and stewed plums,” luxuries that were frequently unavailable to American soldiers.<sup>9</sup> One ship’s menu from the week of 24 July 1944 included items such as bacon, minced beef, round steak, baked potatoes, fresh fruit, cake, and coffee.<sup>10</sup> While menus were not always so rich with hearty fare, prisoners rarely complained of having too little to eat. In fact, Eberhard Ladwig was “disgusted” that many prisoners ate so much they became sick.<sup>11</sup> Such circumstances were a far cry from the often extreme privations endured by American prisoners in German hands.

---

<sup>8</sup> Krammer, *Nazi Prisoners*, 16.

<sup>9</sup> Krammer, *Nazi Prisoners*, 16.

<sup>10</sup> Carlson, *Each Other’s Prisoners*, 70.

<sup>11</sup> Carlson, *Each Other’s Prisoners*, 88.

Most prisoners were congenial and cooperative, performing various shipboard chores, which included kitchen and janitorial duties, with little complaint. Unsurprisingly, the most ardently anti-American prisoners were officers. According to the provisions of the Geneva Convention, captor nations were required to maintain their captives' chain of command, so that enemy officers were charged with implementing any orders from their captors. As such, German officers often imposed strict discipline on the enlisted men under their command while in captivity, perhaps in an attempt to remind them of their duty to the Fatherland. According to an article by Second Lieutenant Yvonne Humphrey from the *American Journal of Nursing*, German officers "came close to arrogance" and had a "great loathing inside them for all things democratic and American," and punished enlisted men with solitary confinement and a diet of bread and water for even the most minor infractions, such as failure to salute enthusiastically.<sup>12</sup> Evidently, the officers who were most ideologically devoted to Hitler fully accepted official Nazi claims that the United States was on the verge of defeat, with its cities in ruins and a demoralized population. Indeed, many fully expected that they would eventually greet Hitler's invading armies when they arrived in America after winning the war in Europe.<sup>13</sup> From the beginning of German soldiers' time as prisoners of the United States, there was a stark division between those who remained devoted to Hitler and the Nazis and those who were either apathetic or actively anti-Nazi.

Upon arrival at one of two "Ports of Embarkation," either Camp Shanks, New York, or Norfolk, Virginia, prisoners were processed by an increasingly complicated array of American agencies. A commanding general at each port oversaw the logistics of unloading prisoners, including the order in which ships unloaded their captives and the manner in which they

---

<sup>12</sup> Yvonne E. Humphrey, "On Shipboard with German Prisoners," *American Journal of Nursing*, v. XLIII, n. 9 (Sept. 1943), 821-822.

<sup>13</sup> Krammer, *Nazi Prisoners*, 16.

disembarked. Military police herded the confused masses of POWs through the various stages of processing. The Quartermaster's Office confiscated and stored those prisoners' possessions that hadn't already been snatched away by souvenir-seeking American soldiers.<sup>14</sup> The office was also charged with disinfecting captives' clothing with DDT, a job often carried out by African-American soldiers. Finally, railroad officials under the direction of the Chief of Transportation had to manage the complicated process of allocating trains to transport prisoners to camps located throughout the United States.<sup>15</sup>

As prisoners proceeded through the various stages of processing after disembarking, intelligence officers kept a watchful eye out for prisoners who might be of particular value to U.S. intelligence operations. Those deemed valuable to the war effort would undergo interrogations more thorough than the cursory versions conducted upon capture. Many of these "valuable" prisoners were transferred to other locations, including Fort Meade, Maryland and Forts Hunt and Tracy near Washington, D.C., for extended interviews with intelligence officials.<sup>16</sup> Most of these prisoners were expected to provide information of tactical or strategic value, such as troop positions, German military plans, or even the names of spies.<sup>17</sup> Some prisoners, having revealed anti-Nazi sentiments in interrogation, would later be utilized in an initially secretive "reeducation" project which began with the distribution of a prisoner-produced newspaper, *Der Ruf (The Call)*, which American authorities intended to encourage a positive view of the United States and democracy among the general population of prisoners. The project was clandestine until the conclusion of the war in Europe for the same reason that prisoners were well-fed according to Geneva provisions: American authorities feared retaliatory treatment of

---

<sup>14</sup> Krammer, *Nazi Prisoners*, 17.

<sup>15</sup> Krammer, *Nazi Prisoners*, 17.

<sup>16</sup> Gansberg, *Stalag U.S.A.*, 15.

<sup>17</sup> Gansberg, *Stalag U.S.A.*, 15.

their own men in German POW camps. Notable individuals (and future authors) such as Alfred Andersch and Hans Werner Richter took part in this process, although the literary and intellectual focus that came to characterize *Der Ruf* appears sometimes to have been beyond the scope of the average prisoner's interests or concerns.

As prisoners set out on their often-lengthy journeys across the United States toward their destination camps, many were struck by various surprising features of American society. French historian Daniel Costelle conducted a series of interviews in the 1970s for his impressive *Les Prisonniers*, a work that draws heavily from oral recollections and provides anecdotal evidence unavailable elsewhere. One interviewee, Horst L. from the Afrika Korps, was astonished by the number of automobiles in the United States:

The thing that struck me the most...was what I first thought were automobile factories. I said to myself: "the number of car factories here is astonishing." In fact, it was the parking lots in front of factories. I'd never seen anything like that before. [Such] masses of cars in the parking lots...<sup>18</sup>

Another captive from the Afrika Korps, Willibald Bergmann, was surprised by the attitudes of the American guards:

The first thing that struck me was that the guards spent their time making fun of Jews, worse than [what one would find in] Germany. [It was] unbelievable. Every time he saw a Jew passing outside [the train], he would curse and grab his gun. I told my comrade: "[Nazi editor of *Der Stürmer* and vocal anti-Semite Julius] Streicher would do the same!"<sup>19</sup>

Upon arrival in the prison camps, many were impressed by the amenities provided by their captors. Werner Baecker recalled, upon his arrival at Camp Roswell, New Mexico, that:

The first thing that struck me upon arrival was...that there was ice cream, cakes, [other] good food, organization, running water, both hot and cold, [and] central heating. [What a] place...<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup> Costelle, *Les Prisonniers*, 25.

<sup>19</sup> Costelle, *Les Prisonniers*, 27.

<sup>20</sup> Costelle, *Les Prisonniers*, 27.

Indeed, American authorities provided more than adequate food and housing for enemy POWs, hoping to guarantee the safety of American prisoners in German hands.

### **The Camps**

On 15 September 1942, shortly after the United States agreed to accept 50,000 POWs from Great Britain, the Provost Marshal General's Office began the process of identifying suitable locations for camps.<sup>21</sup> Numerous sites were already prepared for housing war captives, thanks to President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) project. The CCC was created to provide employment to young men during the Great Depression by putting them to work on various civic projects, including the construction of roads and irrigation canals, planting trees, and disaster relief. There were numerous abandoned CCC camps scattered across the country, with a majority concentrated in the South and Southwest. These camps already had barracks for housing workers, and they were usually located in rural areas. Both features appealed to American authorities; partly because little construction was required, but especially due to the camps' distance from key industrial sites. The War Department also made arrangements to house prisoners at several military bases, including Fort Meade, Maryland, Fort Bragg, North Carolina, Camp Shelby, Mississippi, and Fort Sam Houston, Texas.<sup>22</sup>

According to the Geneva Convention, POW camps were to be constructed to the same standards as those used to house the captor nation's soldiers. Because American authorities were determined to adhere rigorously to the Convention, camp facilities were quite extensive and comfortable. In large, "permanent" camps, prisoners were housed in barracks (often freshly built by the Army Corps of Engineers), and most camps had separate dining, medical, administrative, and recreational facilities. The pleasant accommodations for enemy prisoners was one of several

---

<sup>21</sup> Krammer, *Nazi Prisoners*, 26.

<sup>22</sup> Krammer, *Nazi Prisoners*, 27.

factors that elicited criticism from the American media and general public, many of whom believed the prisoners were being “pampered.” In fact, locals living in towns near POW camps often mockingly called them “The Fritz Ritz.”<sup>23</sup>

Prisoners enjoyed an abundant supply of food that far surpassed what they might have expected to eat back home. Camp menus commonly featured such hearty fare as roast pork and meatloaf, along with fresh vegetables, eggs, cake, coffee, and milk.<sup>24</sup> In 1944, Colonel Martin Tollefson, director of the Provost Marshal General’s Prisoner of War Division, ordered that effective 1 July camp menus would be adjusted to suit the tastes of particular groups of prisoners.<sup>25</sup> In other words, German prisoners would dine on generous portions of pork and sausage, Italians ate spaghetti and other pastas seasoned with tomato-based sauces and olive oil, and the few Japanese prisoners were given menus offering abundant fish and rice. The adjustment in prisoner diets infuriated civilian observers, further fueling accusations of prisoner “coddling,” but Tolleson justified the action by claiming correctly that the measure would reduce the amount of wasted food in the camps.<sup>26</sup> Many prisoners left large portions of their food uneaten due to cultural food preferences, so Tolleson reasoned that a diet more suited to inmates’ tastes would result in less wasted food.

The Geneva Convention also required that captor nations pay their POWs at rates comparable to their regular salaries. Prisoners’ pay was distributed according to rank: enlisted men received 80 cents a day, while officers received anywhere from \$20 to \$40 a month.<sup>27</sup> Enlisted men were required to perform labor in and around the camp to earn their pay, but officers were free from the obligation. Prisoners could also earn extra money by volunteering for

---

<sup>23</sup> Krammer, *Nazi Prisoners*, 28.

<sup>24</sup> Krammer, *Nazi Prisoners*, 48.

<sup>25</sup> Krammer, *Nazi Prisoners*, 49.

<sup>26</sup> Krammer, *Nazi Prisoners*, 49.

<sup>27</sup> Krammer, *Nazi Prisoners*, 83-84.

additional labor beyond their regular chores. Initially, prisoners' labor involved various on-site duties at the camp. Those prisoners with special skills often found themselves serving as cooks, secretaries, or medical personnel. Others performed basic cleanup and other manual labor. Later, prisoners would be contracted out to local individuals and businesses, as nationwide labor demands exceeded the availability of young American men, many of whom were serving overseas. Authorities were rightly reluctant to pay inmates with hard currency, fearing that potential escapees could then better make their way across the country to a port of departure. Instead, the War Department established a savings program by which prisoners would receive the majority of their pay in cash upon repatriation. For daily use, prisoners received coupons rather than paper money or coins. Coupons could be redeemed at the camp canteen for a broad array of items, including art supplies, playing cards, tobacco, newspapers, soap, and sunglasses.<sup>28</sup> At some camps, prisoners could even buy beer in modest quantities.

Prisoners in most camps enjoyed many opportunities for a wide array of recreational and cultural activities. Sports were popular; prisoners often organized full-scale soccer matches on Sunday afternoons. According to Alfred Klein, a POW at Camp Opelika, Alabama, guards and their families would cheer loudly from the sidelines at these weekend matches.<sup>29</sup> Other popular sports included table- and field-tennis, handball, and boxing.<sup>30</sup> Practically every sizable camp featured a prisoner band or vocal group, and many even had orchestras.<sup>31</sup> Fellow prisoners, guards, and even local civilians attended performances by camp musicians. On Friday and Saturday nights, prisoners also performed theatrical pieces, with male prisoners playing all roles,

---

<sup>28</sup> Hermann Jung, *Die deutschen Kriegsgefangenen in amerikanischer Hand*. Volume X/1 of a 22-volume series, Erich Maschke, ed., *Zur Geschichte der deutschen Kriegsgefangenen des zweiten Weltkrieges*. (Munich: Giesecking, 1972), 314-315.

<sup>29</sup> Krammer, *Nazi Prisoners*, 51.

<sup>30</sup> Jung, *Kriegsgefangenen in amerikanischer Hand*, 95.

<sup>31</sup> Gansberg, *Stalag U.S.A.*, 28.



of course. From performances of *Faust* with recorded music, to Polynesian dances complete with men in grass skirts (eliciting hoots and mock wolf-whistles from the audience), many inmates took full advantage of opportunities to express themselves on the stage.<sup>32</sup>

With the permission of major Hollywood film studios, camps frequently screened popular films, along with cartoon and educational shorts. Despite the obvious opportunity for influencing prisoners' attitudes and perceptions through careful selection of films, most of the movies were pure entertainment, with little or no "reeducational" value. Prisoners especially enjoyed crime dramas such as *Lady Scarface* and *Play Girl*, both of which featured female gangsters.<sup>33</sup> Such films, one might argue, could actually have served to foster among the prisoners a negative impression of the United States as a place where lawlessness and criminality were commonplace. Regardless, prisoners cherished the opportunity for a brief diversion from the reality of incarceration. Corporal Friedrich Hohmann, an internee at Fort Custer, Michigan, recalled that films were not only inexpensive, but often in color:

One could go to the cinema frequently, because it only cost 15 cents. You could see a large number of films in color, which was a rarity in Germany at the time. I saw many films...Charles Vidor's *Gilda*, with Rita Hayworth and Glenn Ford, [Howard] Hawks' *To Have and Have Not*, with Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall...etc.<sup>34</sup>

Evidently the films made a lasting impression on Hohmann, who after the war worked for the German Cinematography Archive at Koblenz.<sup>35</sup> Other frequently-screened films, such as Walter Huston's 1930 biopic *Abraham Lincoln* or *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*,<sup>36</sup> dealt with historical and literary topics. War movies such as *Back to Bataan* and *Guadalcanal Diary* were popular,

---

<sup>32</sup> Krammer, *Nazi Prisoners*, 52.

<sup>33</sup> Ron Robin, *The Barbed-Wire College: Reeducating German POWs in the United States During World War II*. (Princeton: University Press, 1995), 110.

<sup>34</sup> Costelle, *Les Prisonniers*, 136.

<sup>35</sup> Costelle, *Les Prisonniers*, 136.

<sup>36</sup> Costelle, *Les Prisonniers*, 136.

even though the protagonists were American rather than German soldiers.<sup>37</sup> After all, the basic “soldierly” virtues of bravery, camaraderie, and sacrifice were themes that Germans and Americans alike could appreciate. War films that depicted recent developments, such as the North Africa campaign, were not without their critics. Lieutenant Werner Wappler, at Camp Como, Mississippi, took issue with one particular film:

One evening we saw *5 Graves to Cairo*...and Erich von Stroheim played Rommel. But there was little truth [in the film], it was a Rommel that never existed...Rommel would have never cracked his whip like a woman!<sup>38</sup>

While most prisoners relished their opportunities to see popular films, especially when they featured beautiful Hollywood starlets, Hans Werner Richter viewed them with disdain:

One evening, I went to the cinema on board [the ship returning POWs to Europe]. There was a film with Jane Russell, who was most famous for her beautiful bosom. The American guards hissed, howled, and threw anything they could find at the screen. And the Germans, like [the Americans], threw things too...it was on the verge of bestiality. [It represented] everything I've always detested. I saw [in their behavior] the anti-Semitic displays [from Nazi Germany]. It was absolutely abject...but I remained silent.<sup>39</sup>

Despite his participation in a key aspect of the reeducation program as an editor of *Der Ruf*, a prisoner-produced newspaper circulated to camps nationwide, Richter never overcame his reluctance to accept without question American ideals or culture, a theme that appears again and again in his writings, as will be discussed later in this study.

Prisoners also enjoyed ample opportunity for reading and study. Larger camps offered prisoners the opportunity to take courses for college credit to be applied toward German universities upon the inmates' repatriation. Using the Swiss as intermediates, the U.S. State Department had made an arrangement with the Nazi government by which prisoners could also

---

<sup>37</sup> Gansberg, *Stalag U.S.A.*, 80.

<sup>38</sup> Costelle, *Les Prisonniers*, 137.

<sup>39</sup> Costelle, *Les Prisonniers*, 233.

attain high-school diplomas and teaching certificates while in American POW camps.<sup>40</sup> Many camps offered a wide array of courses; at Camp Shelby, Mississippi, for example, prisoners could choose from such diverse topics as English, French, German, world history, biology, auto mechanics, and many others.<sup>41</sup> Some locations, including Camp Florence, Arizona, even offered courses in Hebrew, particularly ironic considering prevailing negative attitudes toward Jews among many Germans thanks to a combination of historic anti-Semitism and years of Nazi propaganda.<sup>42</sup> English language courses were by far the most attractive to prisoners, with enrollment often doubling that of the next-most popular courses, which usually involved German history and literature.<sup>43</sup> Facing an indeterminate period of captivity, prisoners likely sought to improve their English to facilitate better relations with their captors (and perhaps make escape more feasible). Most camp classes were taught on-location by prisoners themselves. These “prisoner-professors” often had lived in the United States previously, or had extensive university experience. Fourteen American universities offered correspondence courses to prisoners, providing inmates with more advanced course options. Reinhold Pabel, for example, took a Persian language course from the University of Chicago in this manner.<sup>44</sup> Other participating universities included the University of California at Berkeley, the University of Texas at Austin, and the University of Wisconsin at Madison.<sup>45</sup>

Camp libraries contained numerous works, in German or English, on a broad array of subjects. Books were often donated by charitable organizations such as the International Red Cross or the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA), although some restrictions did apply.

---

<sup>40</sup> Gansberg, *Stalag U.S.A.*, 28.

<sup>41</sup> Gansberg, *Stalag U.S.A.*, 29.

<sup>42</sup> Gansberg, *Stalag U.S.A.*, 30.

<sup>43</sup> Jung, *Kriegsgefangenen in amerikanischer Hand*, 103-104.

<sup>44</sup> Reinhold Pabel, *Enemies are Human*. (Philadelphia: John C. Winston, 1930), 159.

<sup>45</sup> Jung, *Kriegsgefangenen in amerikanischer Hand*, 109.

Works designated too “nationalistic” or “anti-Semitic” were removed from collections, for example. The often-vast array of books in camp libraries could serve either as reading assignments for those taking courses, or for leisure reading among the general inmate population. These collections were diverse; a Red Cross delegation to Camp Fannin, Texas, reported that the camp library contained 650 novels and collections of short stories, 600 works on philosophy and religion, 150 “adventure” or pulp novels, 200 “classics,” and 350 educational guides.<sup>46</sup>

Prisoners also had access to American periodicals, including newspapers such as the *New York Times* and the *Chicago Tribune*, as well as popular magazines including *Time* and *Life*.<sup>47</sup> Some camps, including Camp McCain, Mississippi, even offered more specialized publications such as *Popular Mechanics* and *Science Digest*.<sup>48</sup> Some newspapers were available in daily editions, but many were only provided in weekly or even less frequent installments. While most prisoners were grateful to have access to news of the outside world, the most ardent Nazis dismissed American newspapers as instruments of propaganda, refusing to believe reports about major German defeats or the increasingly devastated state of many German cities.

### **Nazis and Anti-Nazis**

Upon arrival in the camps, many prisoners had mixed feelings about the circumstances in which they found themselves. On one hand, food and opportunities for recreation were plentiful, and prisoners were most often far more comfortable than they had been on the front lines. On the other hand, prisoners often had to contend with a hostile and potentially deadly atmosphere of suspicion and accusation, driven by a small but vocal cadre of hard-core Nazi captives who were determined to maintain among their fellow POWs not only camp discipline, but devotion to

---

<sup>46</sup> Jung, *Kriegsgefangenen in amerikanischer Hand*, 110.

<sup>47</sup> Jung, *Kriegsgefangenen in amerikanischer Hand*, 112.

<sup>48</sup> Jung, *Kriegsgefangenen in amerikanischer Hand*, 113.

Hitler and eventual victory. As one prisoner remarked, “I quickly discovered there was more political freedom in the German army than in an American prison camp.”<sup>49</sup>

In 1943, the first prisoners to arrive in large numbers were members of Rommel’s *Afrika Korps*. At the time, the war’s eventual outcome was still very much in doubt, and most of these soldiers fully expected German victory. As such, these early prisoners’ responses to their generous treatment by American captors were much different than those of later POWs. One anti-Nazi émigré, Heinz Pächter, who left Nazi Germany for the United States in 1933, observed of Rommel’s men that:

The prisoners instantly thought that [the good treatment by U.S. captors] was a sign of weakness. They weren’t transported in animal wagons, they were given white bread...therefore, they thought, “if you give us bread, it’s only to coax and corrupt us. If you treat us well, it’s only because you’re afraid you’ll lose the war.”<sup>50</sup>

Most members of the *Afrika Korps* believed that the generous rations and decent quarters provided by American authorities indicated that the United States did not have the proper resolve or “toughness” to win the war. Such attitudes bordered on full-blown arrogance, as prisoners would often boast of Germany’s impending victory. One even remarked that “when Germany wins the war, [good treatment by American authorities] will be a point in [America’s] favor.”<sup>51</sup> Not all members of the *Afrika Korps* were dedicated Nazis, however. Carl Amery, twenty-one years old when captured in Tunisia, lamented that the first thing he noticed upon arrival at Fort Hood, Texas, was that:

[it was a situation] favorable to the Nazis within the camp...since the Americans adhered nervously to the Geneva Convention, they allowed the creation of a hierarchy that paralleled that of [the German military]...the upper ranks, full of fanatical Nazis, quickly concerned themselves with the political side of things.<sup>52</sup>

---

<sup>49</sup> Carlson, *Each Other’s Prisoners*, 155.

<sup>50</sup> Costelle, *Les Prisonniers*, 28.

<sup>51</sup> Costelle, *Les Prisonniers*, 28.

<sup>52</sup> Costelle, *Les Prisonniers*, 29.

Hans Werner Richter recalled his arrival in camp in his semi-autobiographical novel *Die Geschlagenen* through his proxy character Gühler:

...the camp prisoners stood on either side of the street...no word of acknowledgement, no sign of joy, no sound at all came from their ranks.  
“Deserter!” Gühler heard a person nearby whisper. He looked with astonishment into the hostile faces but remained silent.  
...“Traitor,” those around them whispered. “Deserters! Cowards!”  
...“All of them are from the Afrika Korps,” Pips said behind him.  
...“What a wonderful reception,” Buchwald said, “all of them appear to be Nazis.”<sup>53</sup>

From the beginning of the United States’ accommodation of German POWs, battle lines were drawn between Nazis and anti-Nazis. Those prisoners who saw themselves as dedicated Nazis were determined to enforce rigid discipline among the general population of inmates, even to the point of conducting “executions” of those POWs who were believed to be collaborating with Americans or promoting defeatism. Camp Nazis often hurled accusations and threats at any prisoner that dared even suggest that Germany was losing the war. Werner Baecker of the *Afrika Korps* recalled an incident in which he received veiled threats for reporting factual information about the progress of the war:

After meals, I was charged with providing a summary of [the day’s news]. One evening, I said that the Americans had landed on Sicily. There was a palpable silence. Afterwards, a young inmate came over...and said “you know very well that you’re a traitor.” Astonished, I said “why?” [He said], “because you give information that isn’t true.” After that, I gave up the job of reporting the news...[those that replaced me] “knew” the “truth”: the reconquest of Stalingrad, invasion of London, etc.<sup>54</sup>

Such incidents were common, and many prisoners later recalled similar stories of intimidation and persuasion. Some prisoners faced more serious accusations and threats, which often resulted in summary prisoner tribunals and death sentences by which “traitors” were either murdered or forced to commit suicide, as will be discussed shortly.

---

<sup>53</sup> Hans Werner Richter, *Die Geschlagenen*. (Munich: Kurt Desch, 1949), 295-296.

<sup>54</sup> Costelle, *Les Prisonniers*, 30.

American authorities struggled to distinguish Nazis and anti-Nazis among the overwhelming numbers of prisoners that poured into the United States beginning in 1943. As early as 18 February 1943, U.S. officials were planning to separate German prisoners based on political views, as the War Department issued a written order to identify and send anti-Nazi POWs to three specially designated camps: Fort Devens, Massachusetts, Camp Campbell, Kentucky, and Camp McCain, Mississippi.<sup>55</sup> The problem, of course, was that this directive assumed that anti-Nazis would be easy to identify because they would likely be eager to cooperate with authorities, perhaps even volunteering themselves to aid in intelligence gathering. In reality, very few anti-Nazis were so easily identifiable, as many were intimidated into silence by the ardent and vocal Nazis among them. In addition, U.S. authorities often assumed that anyone who was not an avowed anti-Nazi was, therefore, a Nazi. In a series of transfer orders out of Camp Ruston, Louisiana, one of the largest anti-Nazi camps with a population of nearly 4,500 prisoners at its peak, “troublemakers” were classified as Nazis on various grounds, including attempting to escape and, ironically enough, expressing communist views. Horst Blumenburg, who escaped on 24 July 1945 and was recaptured roughly a week later on August 3, was described as having “communist views,” but was subsequently labeled a “Nazi.” Another prisoner, Rolf Wickbold, was also labeled a “Nazi” after he attempted to escape in December 1945. When asked why he had tried to escape, he claimed to be “afraid of being sent back to France [for hard labor]” a legitimate and troubling prospect for many POWs who wanted simply to return to their families in Germany. These and other, similar prisoners were sent to Camp Alva, Oklahoma, a specialized camp intended to house the most vocal, dedicated Nazis.<sup>56</sup> American authorities rarely bothered with the intricacies of German political attitudes. They

---

<sup>55</sup> Krammer, *Nazi Prisoners*, 174.

<sup>56</sup> Various transfer orders, various dates. Camp Ruston Collection, Prescott Memorial Library, Louisiana Tech University. Box M-326, box 2, folders 9-11.

chose order over accurate distinctions among prisoners, and therefore most troublemakers were simply labeled “Nazis,” regardless of their actual views.

The initial failure of American authorities to segregate properly Nazi and anti-Nazi prisoners resulted in a slew of incidents in camps across the country. So-called Nazi “courts of honor” frequently held makeshift tribunals in which individuals would be accused and summarily convicted of any number of offences ranging from acknowledging Allied successes to outright betrayal of the Führer and the Fatherland. Karl P. from Camp Trinidad, Colorado, reported that:

The [Nazi] adjutant is the most influential and the most obviously prominent party official...the adjutant at Trinidad [ordered] that two officers be excluded from the camp community and that the others “not only beat them, but beat them to death.”<sup>57</sup>

In *Die Geschlagenen*, Richter includes an incident in which a young soldier, Pips, is beaten severely for making a joke about Hitler. In an interview with Daniel Costelle, Richter acknowledged that the character Pips was based on a real person, and recalls that he and his fellow anti-Nazis at Camp Ellis, Illinois, lived in constant fear:

The terror was ongoing. We, the anti-Nazis, often did not sleep at night...it would’ve been pointless [to tell the Americans what happened], and would have resulted only in reprisals against us...For the Americans, it was very simple...we were all German soldiers, anti-Nazis or not.<sup>58</sup>

Incidents of politically-motivated beatings and murders within the camps increased dramatically in late 1943 and early 1944, as more and more prisoners from the Italian campaign, including Richter and Alfred Andersch, found themselves in U.S. prison camps. The American media began to notice the incidents, drawing public attention to the situation in many camps. For example, on 14 March 1944, the *New York Times* reported that a prisoner, Werner Dreschler, had been found hanged in a bathroom at Camp Papago, Arizona, only six hours after his arrival

---

<sup>57</sup> Gansberg, *Stalag U.S.A.*, 81.

<sup>58</sup> Costelle, *Les Prisonniers*, 40.



there.<sup>59</sup> Such discoveries were not uncommon, but U.S. camp authorities were initially reluctant to disrupt the German command structure by investigating the murders. While some prisoners would be tried and executed for murdering their fellow inmates, many escaped punishment because no one was willing to provide information due to fear of reprisals.

Because of the the increase in murders, the War Department resolved in early 1944 to deal more seriously with the issue of Nazi domination within the camps. First, camp authorities intensified their efforts to distinguish between Nazis and anti-Nazis, sending many of the former to Camp Alva and the latter to any of several anti-Nazi camps. Reluctantly, camp authorities offered transfers for prisoners on the basis of personal safety, an offer that many accepted, as Willibald Bergmann from Camp Sheridan, Illinois, described:

Five or six prisoners went to see the commanding officer [and] demanded to be transferred [because] they didn't dare return to their barracks. The Americans did, in fact, send them to an anti-Nazi camp, but they were not happy about it...to them, the anti-Nazis were a special breed, who were always opposed to everything. [The Americans said]: "In a Nazi camp, there is order and discipline-no problems..."<sup>60</sup>

Indeed, American officials often preferred rigid Nazi discipline within the camps, because officers devoted to Hitler and the party typically maintained order more efficiently. As fellow military men, many American guards and officials tended to view anti-Nazis with contempt, viewing them as disloyal deserters who were taking advantage of the situation to escape the authority of their superiors.<sup>61</sup>

There were, however, exceptions to the standard treatment of anti-Nazi prisoners. Prisoners whom the War Department believed were of particular use to the war effort received special consideration. This policy especially applied to intellectuals, many of whom would find themselves later participating in the clandestine reeducation program. Franz Wischnewski

---

<sup>59</sup> Costelle, *Les Prisonniers*, 40.

<sup>60</sup> Krammer, *Nazi Prisoners*, 176.

<sup>61</sup> Krammer, *Nazi Prisoners*, 176.

recalled that after three weeks of interrogation at Norfolk, he and several others were placed on a train to Camp Ruston. There Wischnewski encountered Alfred Andersh. Unlike the former, who was forced like the other “anti-Nazi small fry” to eat K-rations in their seats, Andersch “was allowed in the Dining Car, where he was served by Blacks.”<sup>62</sup> As we’ll see, Andersch had indeed made quite an impression on his captors by virtue of his remarkable journey into American hands and his responses during interrogation, but his case was exceptional, even among avowed anti-Nazi prisoners.

### **Attitudes toward American Society**

During captivity, prisoners were exposed to many aspects of American society. From working side-by-side with agricultural laborers, to receiving instruction in democracy in various reeducation courses, prisoners had ample opportunity to learn about their captors. Some developed such an admiration for the United States that they did not want to leave after the war. A few even managed to escape and remain at large for years. Even those who did intend to return home came to appreciate certain aspects of American life. Karl-Heinz Hackbarth at Camp Custer, Michigan, enjoyed learning about the “marvelous events of the American past.”<sup>63</sup> Face-to-face encounters had an even more powerful effect on prisoners’ impressions. Guenther Oswald noted the vast and highly visible differences between life in Nazi Germany and the United States:

Growing up under the Nazis we were brainwashed. We considered it perfectly all right to sacrifice ourselves—even our lives—for the fatherland. I began to change my attitude toward Hitler and National Socialism when I went out on labor details from Camp Trinidad, Colorado, and met the common American people. They were friendly and open and didn’t hesitate to express themselves. They were not filled with hatred toward us. We were somehow just a bunch of boys who got caught. In Nazi Germany, we would never have been allowed to talk and act the way Americans did.<sup>64</sup>

---

<sup>62</sup> Krammer, *Nazi Prisoners*, 177.

<sup>63</sup> Carlson, *Each Other’s Prisoners*, 26.

<sup>64</sup> Carlson, *Each Other’s Prisoners*, 101.

For Oswald, American society represented the ideal; from his perspective, Americans were free to express themselves publicly, and bore no ill will toward their captives. This was a far cry from Nazi propaganda that often depicted enemy populations in highly derogatory ways, encouraging (though sometimes unsuccessfully) attitudes of racial and national superiority. One encounter in particular was especially memorable for Oswald:

A...pleasant farmer promised to take us to his home if we would sing some German songs for his grandmother. They were Germans who had emigrated to Russia—what we call *Volgadeutsche*—and then later fled Russia to come to the United States. We sang, the old lady cried, and we got lots of food and cigarettes.<sup>65</sup>

Elmer Beck, also at Fort Custer, was struck by the social mobility in American society:

I ran the PX...as a result I had good relations with one of the sergeants, and he sometimes took me outside the camp...this allowed me to see something of normal American life, and I liked what I saw. It was a very different life than I was accustomed to growing up in Germany. [Germany] had a much more rigid class structure. Once you were born into it, you had few opportunities to change your position. I could see that the American society was much more open, and I liked that. I liked it so well that when I came home in 1946, I said to my wife, "If we get a chance to go to the U.S., we should try it."<sup>66</sup>

Despite his admiration for American society, Beck was critical of American restrictions on fraternization and propaganda efforts to shape prisoners' political views:

The anti-fraternization regulation was very foolish. The Americans considered all of us Nazis, although most of us were not political-only soldiers. Toward the end, the Americans also [like the Nazis] wanted us to think a certain way—to reject our traditional way of life and especially National Socialism. But no one likes to be propagandized. The Americans should have realized they would have gained more by introducing us to normal, everyday life than by *telling* us how much better things were in the U.S. than in Germany.

That's why I disliked *Der Ruf*. It was a very disturbing paper for many of us. I know it was written by Germans, but it was filled with lots of propaganda.<sup>67</sup>

The growing frustration among many prisoners over the widespread American policy of treating all prisoners as Nazis in need of reeducation would later appear in occupied Germany, when

---

<sup>65</sup> Carlson, *Each Other's Prisoners*, 104.

<sup>66</sup> Carlson, *Each Other's Prisoners*, 113.

<sup>67</sup> Costelle, *Les Prisonniers*, 113-114.

American authorities sought to “denazify” the entire population in their zone. For many returning POWs, the gap between American democratic ideals, as promoted in courses taught in many camps, and the actual treatment of prisoners and German civilians under occupation, was a powerful source of resentment and hostility.

Even those who worked closely with American authorities were not immune from rough treatment. Luca Felix Müller, who worked as part of the editorial staff of *Der Ruf* at Fort Kearney, Rhode Island, was disappointed at his treatment on board the ship transporting him back to Europe:

If we were going to our bunks or to work chipping off the rust or even to eat, we had to double-step. And whoever did not double-step received a smart kick in the backside from the guards. We were not prepared for this kind of treatment after being taught about democracy and freedom in the reeducation programs at Forts Kearney and Getty. But this was the military, and to them we were simply ordinary POWs...that’s how the military treats people. But this treatment affected my attitude toward Western democracies, and also toward the totalitarian systems of the USSR and the DDR, and it will stay with me for the rest of my life.<sup>68</sup>

Being treated like an “ordinary” prisoner after contributing to the reeducation program was surely a rude awakening for individuals like Müller, who learned that in some circumstances there was a significant divide between American democratic ideals and reality. After repatriation, Alfred Andersch and Hans Werner Richter would both become increasingly frustrated with U.S. occupation policies that severely restricted public expression and many other aspects of public life in postwar Germany, as will be discussed in Chapter 5.

### **The Labor Program**

The Geneva Convention allowed captor nations to require prisoners to work, with a series of caveats. As mentioned above, officers were exempt from mandatory labor, although they could opt to work for extra income. In addition, the Convention set limits on the number of

---

<sup>68</sup> Carlson, *Each Other’s Prisoners*, 170-171.

hours prisoners could work, mandating that prisoners could only work hours comparable to those worked by civilians in the same industry.<sup>69</sup> Perhaps most importantly, Article 31 of the Convention stipulated that prisoners could not be required under any circumstances to work in industries that contributed directly to the war effort.<sup>70</sup> Therefore, prisoner labor in factories producing war materiel was expressly forbidden, as was any other form of labor seen to relate directly to the war. On 10 January 1943, the War Department issued a directive stating that

...any work outside the combat zones not having a direct relation with war operations and not involving the manufacture or transportation of arms or munitions and not...beyond the particular prisoner's physical capacity...is allowable and desirable.<sup>71</sup>

The statement obviously left ample room for interpretation, so that anything that was not expressly forbidden was allowable. The absence of millions of young men from factories and fields had created a desperate need for domestic labor. While women responded in large numbers, providing much-needed labor in factories producing munitions and military vehicles, there remained a significant dearth in many industries, including logging and cotton production. Thus the War Department sought to make the most of the hundreds of thousands of enemy prisoners across the United States by using them to compensate for labor shortages caused by the war.

Authorities classified labor in two categories: work performed inside the camps, and work outside them.<sup>72</sup> Labor inside the camps involved a wide array of tasks. The 14 September 1944 prisoner roster at Camp Shelby, Mississippi, demonstrates that prisoners performed chores and jobs ranging from mosquito control and bugling to mowing, car washing, and shoe repair.<sup>73</sup>

---

<sup>69</sup> Krammer, *Nazi Prisoners*, 80.

<sup>70</sup> Costelle, *Les Prisonniers*, 108.

<sup>71</sup> Jung, *Kriegsgefangenen in amerikanischer Hand*, 164.

<sup>72</sup> Costelle, *Les Prisonniers*, 111.

<sup>73</sup> Krammer, *Nazi Prisoners*, 82-83.

Labor inside the camps was usually straightforward and cordial, and involved few concerns over security because the prisoners were still within the confines of camp enclosures.

By mid-1943, however, the labor situation in the United States reached a critical juncture that forced authorities to begin contracting prisoners to work for various employers outside the camps. Employers utilizing prisoner labor would pay the federal government at rates commensurate with those earned by civilian workers, and the army in turn would pay prisoners up to 80 cents a day in coupons redeemable at camp canteens.<sup>74</sup> To avoid clashes with labor unions and criticism from the media, the War Department stipulated that employers could only hire prisoners in a particular industry if there were insufficient numbers of available civilians. These measures ensured that prisoners would only be used where absolutely necessary, and that they would not take jobs from American workers.

Prisoners found themselves working in lumber and textile mills, cotton and tobacco fields, and many other industries not related directly to the war effort. Typically, prisoners would be transported in trucks each morning to the labor site, where they would provide a full day's labor of eight to ten hours. They were allowed breaks, including lunches provided by their employers, and were returned each evening to their camps. There were relatively few escape attempts, and relations between guards and prisoners were usually cordial to the extent that guards occasionally asked prisoners to hold their guns for them while driving! A powerful bond of trust existed between most prisoners and their guards, as Günter Oswald recalled:

We...had civilian clothes, and we would tell the guards, "Turn around for a minute. We're going for a little walk, but we'll be back by 10 o'clock." And we were...we had given our word and under our code of honor that was that.<sup>75</sup>

---

<sup>74</sup> Gansberg, *Stalag U.S.A.*, 33.

<sup>75</sup> Carlson, *Each Other's Prisoners*, 104.

The kindness of their employers and other Americans made a lasting impression on the prisoners. Walter F. from Camp Hearne, Texas, worked on a nearby farm for a Mr. Miller:

[Miller's] neighbor [Mrs Snyder] had a daughter who was an absolute darling. Again and again, she would bring me baskets of fruit or sweets. We would talk. I wanted desperately to stay in Texas...<sup>76</sup>

Other prisoners encountered kindness even if they had escaped and were being sought by the authorities. One prisoner who escaped from Camp Stark, New Hampshire, ran into "Mr. Mayhew and his son," to whom he admitted he was an escaped prisoner. While the prisoner chatted leisurely with Mr. Mayhew, the latter's son called the police, who found the escapee still conversing amiably with his new American friend.<sup>77</sup>

Not all Americans responded favorably to German prisoners. Many American officers insisted on the strict maintenance of German drill, even if some prisoners were reluctant. As Tilman Kiwe at Camp Alva recalled:

I entered the camp commander's office, my hat under my arm. He started to howl: "Is that how you salute your superior officers in Germany? I demand you salute me exactly as you would one of your German superior officers! Out!"

"Fine," I thought, "I'll back out and come in again with my arm raised."

But he started howling again: "...and the Heil Hitler!"

So I went again, to enter for the third time, this time raising my arm, clicking my heels, and yelling "Heil Hitler!"<sup>78</sup>

Such behavior convinced some POWs that U.S. authorities were less interested in "democratization" than in maintaining military discipline. Some civilians lashed out at the POWs as well. While waiting with thirty POWs for a bus that would transport them from Camp Brady, Texas to Camp Polk, Louisiana, former Lieutenant William Arthur Ward recalled a particularly jarring incident:

---

<sup>76</sup> Costelle, *Les Prisonniers*, 120.

<sup>77</sup> Allen V. Koop, *Stark Decency: German Prisoners of War in a New England Village*. (Hannover, NH: University Press of New England, 1988), 52.

<sup>78</sup> Krammer, *Nazi Prisoners*, 166.

While waiting...I bought cokes for all the guards and POWs. To my shock, the woman behind the counter at the general store went wild; she yelled and cursed, accused me of sympathy for the enemy, and damn near physically hit me. It was an unnerving experience.<sup>79</sup>

Other times, prisoners encountered hostility from wounded American soldiers, but in many cases they responded not with reciprocal aggression, but understanding. Karl-Heinz Hackbarth recalled incidents at the camp hospital at Fort Custer:

There were wounded American soldiers in the camp hospital, and one of them hit a prisoner with his crutch and another drove his wheelchair into several of the POWs. It was a reaction and I could understand it. We were healthy looking, and these American boys were all shot up.<sup>80</sup>

The general tendency on both sides was toward sympathy and mutual understanding. While some, including hardcore Nazis and Americans wounded in combat, continued to bear hostile feelings, relations were generally cordial between Americans and Germans.

One particularly surprising aspect of prisoner labor both inside and outside camps was their observations of race relations in the United States. Despite the anti-Semitic rhetoric espoused by the Nazis throughout most of the prisoners' young lives, they were frequently astonished and even troubled by the treatment of African-Americans and other minorities, many of whom worked alongside German prisoners in cotton and tobacco fields. While interned at Camp Roswell, New Mexico, Hans Gurn noted that:

There was a plumber who worked in the camp. His name was Gutierrez [and he was] Mexican, with an eighth of Indian blood. He was a very gentle character. When he was at the barber, he had to stand quietly in the corner without moving and wait until all the whites were finished because he was "colored." You know, these things confused us...<sup>81</sup>

Josef K. from Camp Shelby worked in a pulpwood mill, where the owner placed him in charge of black workers. The owner liked Josef so much that he offered to help him and his family

---

<sup>79</sup> Krammer, *Nazi Prisoners*, 45.

<sup>80</sup> Carlson, *Each Other's Prisoners*, 23.

<sup>81</sup> Costelle, *Les Prisonniers*, 116.



immigrate to the United States after the war. Josef decided against this, however, largely due to the way his black co-workers were treated. After witnessing a boss slapping a black worker who had lost his leg at the mill, Josef recalled that “At that moment I was so upset that I decided this was not the land for me...[I could not] live in a place where the Negro population was treated so poorly.”<sup>82</sup> Hein Severloh at Camp McCain worked in neighboring cotton fields and was appalled at the treatment of African-Americans:

It was terribly hot, and we had to bend over all day. We had nothing to drink...There were a great number of Blacks on the plantation. They required us to gather 100 lbs. of cotton a day; but of the Blacks, they demanded two or three times more...For them it was worse than for us. And you have to see how they lived. Their farms: very ugly, very primitive. These people were so exploited...<sup>83</sup>

Many prisoners shared these individuals’ astonishment at the plight of American minorities, and there are abundant examples of such observations among former POWs. German POWs often sympathized with black and Hispanic laborers whose working conditions were often worse than their own. Some prisoners even praised American Jews for their kindness: one prisoner remembered that “those who helped us the most...were the Jews...ah, the Jews and the Blacks [were most friendly to us.]”<sup>84</sup> The issue of race discrimination would later be a problem for the War Department when it implemented a program to reeducate prisoners and promote democracy, because the frequently-negative treatment of minorities undermined popular notions of equality and individual liberty that were often featured as central elements of the American system.

The entire labor venture turned out to be highly profitable for the American government. Because the prisoners’ share of the profits, mandated by the Geneva Convention, was far lower than prevailing civilian wages, the difference went into the U.S. Treasury. In 1944, the United States made \$100 million dollars in net profit from POW labor, and it realized similar profits for

---

<sup>82</sup> Gansberg, *Stalag U.S.A.*, 34.

<sup>83</sup> Krammer, *Nazi Prisoners*, 92-93.

<sup>84</sup> Krammer, *Nazi Prisoners*, 93.

the duration of the prisoner labor program.<sup>85</sup> In essence, prisoner labor was a self-supporting venture that benefited the United States financially and materially. As mentioned above, prisoners could use their wage coupons to purchase any manner of “luxury” goods at camp canteens, and extra income was kept in savings accounts, to be redeemed to prisoners upon their repatriation to Germany.

### **Escape**

With the arrival of the first German captives in November 1942, the War Department was highly concerned about the possibility of escaped prisoners wreaking havoc throughout the United States.<sup>86</sup> Accordingly, camps were constructed with security as a primary concern. Using high fences, guard towers armed with heavy machine guns, and attack dogs, U.S. authorities hoped to prevent their worst fears from materializing. As noted above, camps were also built most often in remote, rural areas far from major industrial or urban sites in order to minimize escapees’ options for causing trouble. Despite the War Department’s fears that escaped prisoners could somehow support the German war effort from afar, only one percent of the German prisoners even attempted to escape, and the worst crime any escapee committed was car theft.<sup>87</sup> As Josef Krumbachner at Camp Como, Mississippi, remembered:

Some of us thought it foolish to escape from a place where we were enjoying relative freedom and good care to return to a Germany where death, hunger, and other dangers were still the rule of the day.<sup>88</sup>

Most prisoners realized that escape would bring uncertainty and punishment, if recaptured. Few were willing to give up good and plentiful food, a warm bed, and safety for the uncertainty of

---

<sup>85</sup> Gansberg, *Stalag U.S.A.*, 33.

<sup>86</sup> Krammer, *Nazi Prisoners*, 114.

<sup>87</sup> Gansberg, *Stalag U.S.A.*, 44.

<sup>88</sup> Carlson, *Each Other’s Prisoners*, 128.

attempting to make one's way across a vast foreign land where an escapee's often-limited or non-existent English would hinder their progress and identify them as escaped POWs.

Despite the various reasons for not attempting to escape, some daring individuals concocted elaborate schemes to reach the outside world. Many such schemes could only be described as misguided. Krumbachner remembered that a couple of fellow prisoners tried to assemble a makeshift collapsible boat out of old raincoats, which they planned to use to float down the Mississippi river. They were recaptured after two days.<sup>89</sup> Another pair managed to escape and board a bus, but accidentally sat in the "colored" section, alarming their fellow passengers that something was amiss.<sup>90</sup> Similarly, another escapee greeted a group of African-Americans and asked them for information, drawing suspicion from white onlookers.<sup>91</sup> Two prisoners in Texas attempted to disguise themselves as Boy Scouts, claiming they were heading to a convention in Mexico. Their bus driver, suspicious of the two tall, muscular men with strange accents, stopped and reported them to the local police.<sup>92</sup> Even when a prisoner's English was passable (foreign accents were not uncommon in the United States, after all), a lack of familiarity with American culture could quickly give him away.

While guards and local authorities usually managed to recapture escapees within 48 hours, some evaded capture for much longer. Reinhold Pabel decided to escape from Camp Washington, Illinois upon learning that prisoners would be forced to work in Britain and France before finally returning to Germany.<sup>93</sup> Pabel escaped on 9 September 1945 and managed to establish a new life for himself as a bookseller in Chicago under the alias "Phil Brick." He married, had children, and lived as a regular American citizen until 9 March 1953, when

---

<sup>89</sup> Carlson, *Each Other's Prisoners*, 151-152.

<sup>90</sup> Costelle, *Les Prisonniers*, 148.

<sup>91</sup> Carlson, *Each Other's Prisoners*, 152.

<sup>92</sup> Krammer, *Nazi Prisoners*, 132-133.

<sup>93</sup> Pabel, *Enemies are Human*, 163.

authorities finally identified and recaptured him. Pabel was deported to Germany, but reapplied for a visa and returned to his family in Chicago in 1954.<sup>94</sup> One prisoner, Georg Gaertner, remained at large under several aliases from 21 September 1945 until 12 September 1985, a span of almost exactly forty years. Gaertner, a pre-war regional tennis and skiing champion and veteran of Rommel's Afrika Korps, began plotting to escape upon hearing that prisoners would be repatriated to their home towns. Because his town, Schweidnitz, was within the Soviet occupation zone, Gaertner feared he would be deported to a Siberian labor camp, or worse.<sup>95</sup> Not only did Gaertner manage to escape, but using his fluency in English he was able to establish a new life for himself in the United States in which he worked a variety of jobs including tennis and skiing instructor, rubbing elbows at times with celebrities such as Robert Stack, Lloyd Bridges, and tennis star Bjorn Borg. Gaertner married, and his wife and children were unaware of his secret past. After decades of wondering when the FBI would finally locate him, Gaertner decided to come forward in 1985 by contacting historian Arnold Krammer after reading the latter's book on German POWs.

### **Reeducation**

Until early 1944, the consensus among high-ranking U.S. government officials, including President Franklin Roosevelt, was that no effort should be made to distinguish between Nazis and ordinary Germans, either among prisoners or during the increasingly likely occupation to follow the war. Accordingly, many officials, including Allen Guillion, Provost Marshal General when the first German prisoners were arriving, believed that any attempt to target prisoners for "reeducation" or "de-Nazification" would accomplish nothing more than to legitimize Nazi

---

<sup>94</sup> Pabel, *Enemies are Human*, 247.

<sup>95</sup> Georg Gaertner, with Arnold Krammer, *Hitler's Last Soldier in America*. (New York: Stein and Day, 1985), 25.

indoctrination of American GIs in German prison camps.<sup>96</sup> When Major General Arthur L. Lerch became PMG in April 1944, he brought a new enthusiasm for reeducation that would determine the direction of American efforts to influence German POWs throughout the United States. Lerch believed that the United States should take advantage of the opportunity to instill appreciation and admiration for American democracy among prisoners in order to develop a core of “trustworthy” Germans who could fill important positions and spread democratic ideals upon repatriation. Because the Geneva Convention forbade indoctrination of enemy POWs, the program would by necessity be covert until German surrender.

The PMG created a Special Project Division (SPD) to coordinate efforts and manage resources that included, among other items, American university professors and German prisoners who were demonstrably anti-Nazi. The director of the project was Lt. Colonel Edward Davison, a naturalized citizen born in Scotland. Davison was also an intellectual, having taught at several universities across the United States, including the University of Miami and the University of Colorado.<sup>97</sup> Davison chose Captain Walter Schoenstedt, a German expatriate and novelist, as his right-hand man and “curriculum director” of reeducation. Together, the two intellectuals would largely determine the character and direction of the program. In *The Barbed Wire College*, Ron Robin criticizes the “intellectual” nature of the program as misguided and ineffective. One of Robin’s primary complaints is that Davison and Schoenstedt chose a staff packed with fellow intellectuals who believed in the power of humanism and liberal arts to guide individuals toward a more democratic world view. Indeed, Davison and Schoenstedt chose as Assistant Executive Officers (AEOs) civilian and military academics including Harvard dean and English professor Howard Mumford Jones, University of Chicago professor of philosophy T.V.

---

<sup>96</sup> Robin, *Barbed-Wire College*, 22.

<sup>97</sup> Robin, *The Barbed-Wire College*, 43.

Smith, German intellectual historian Henry Ehrmann, and Captain William Moulton, an assistant professor at Cornell.<sup>98</sup>

Reeducation was to take place in several phases. The most mundane aspect of reeducation simply involved controlling prisoners' access to reading material by making available in camp libraries books and periodicals that conveyed positive views of democracy. Ehrmann was placed in charge of reviewing and selecting German-language books for prisoners' use.<sup>99</sup> Davison charged Schoenstedt with overseeing the production of a POW newspaper, *Der Ruf*. At the so-called "Idea Factory" at Fort Kearney, Rhode Island, a staff consisting exclusively of anti-Nazi prisoners including Curt Vinz, Alfred Andersch, and Hans Werner Richter contributed to *Der Ruf*, writing articles on a wide variety of subjects ranging from democracy to literature and theatre. Despite the fact that *Der Ruf* sold so many copies that each issue had a larger print run than the last, Robin argues that it contained "ideas...hewed in the Groves of Academe" that failed to "[cater] to a broad common denominator."<sup>100</sup> The final phase of reeducation was a broad and rapid effort to make a final impression on prisoners preparing for repatriation. Over 20,000 prisoners, selected from camps across the United States, passed through Fort Eustis, Virginia, where they participated in a rapid six-day course that involved a series of lectures and discussions on topics such as "The American Constitution," "The Democratic Way of Life," and "Democratic Traditions in Germany."<sup>101</sup> This final phase of reeducation began many months after the war had ended, with the first six-day cycle beginning on 4 January 1946. Davison intended this program to prepare a core group of prisoners to take leading roles in Germany upon repatriation, with the additional and overly optimistic hope that

---

<sup>98</sup> Robin, *The Barbed-Wire College*, 54.

<sup>99</sup> Robin, *The Barbed-Wire College*, 51.

<sup>100</sup> Robin, *The Barbed-Wire College*, 57-58.

<sup>101</sup> Arthur L. Smith, *The War for the German Mind: Re-educating Hitler's Soldiers*. (Providence, RI: Berghahn Books, 1996), 99.

they would help spread American ideals throughout German society. In reality, the program at Fort Eustis was far too rushed and inefficient, as many prisoners were transferred there too early and thus forced to wait for weeks before they could participate in courses. However, despite Robin's complete dismissal of the entire reeducation program, some prisoners recalled Eustis favorably. Karl W. said that thanks to Eustis his "political thinking was fundamentally influenced toward democracy."<sup>102</sup> American journalist Quentin Reynolds observed that the prisoners at Eustis differed significantly from popular images of the goose-stepping, solemn, Hitler-heiling German soldier:

These hands once heiled Hitler...But gradually I noticed something different about these Germans at Fort Eustis. Their eyes were clear—not sullen, they laughed at one another's jokes; there was nothing furtive about them...damn it all, they were different.<sup>103</sup>

Another graduate of Eustis, Otto P., claimed that he "did not need schooling because I was already a democrat," suggesting that reeducation was ultimately a case of "preaching to the choir," because most selected prisoners had already demonstrated anti-Nazi attitudes.<sup>104</sup> In the final issue of *Der Ruf*, Davison summarized the overall objective of the project, asking prisoners if they were "strong enough to seize the opportunity offered to you here, to put it to use in Germany?"<sup>105</sup> He further exhorted prisoners to work actively to change Germany's political direction, a clear and succinct declaration of the reeducation program's ultimate goal. While the program ultimately influenced only a fraction of the overall prisoner population, one cannot deny that it was an important aspect of the prisoner of war experience that represented a comprehensive if sometimes misguided effort to create a core of repatriated Germans as a vanguard of democracy in postwar Germany.

---

<sup>102</sup> Smith, *War for the German Mind*, 100.

<sup>103</sup> Smith, *War for the German Mind*, 101.

<sup>104</sup> Smith, *War for the German Mind*, 101.

<sup>105</sup> Edward Davison, "Für den Frieden," *Der Ruf*, April 1 1946, 1.

According to Robin, Jones' "beliefs in German redemption...grounded in a very positive assessment of nineteenth-century German intellectual accomplishments" helped determine the direction of reeducation, a direction that Robin believes was misguided.<sup>106</sup> Robin criticizes German expatriate Ehrmann for his insistence on the notion that German nationalism was a product of the "military-industrial oligarchy" that had "distorted" German culture for its own aggressive purposes.<sup>107</sup> Others, including Smith, shared "faulty" attitudes toward reeducation. Smith argued that the program should not be "tribalist" (i.e., nationalist) in nature. Instead, he maintained that reeducation should acknowledge and emphasize "the common touch of nature that makes us all kin" and avoid substituting a "superior" view of the American system that might alienate prisoners.<sup>108</sup> Characteristic of his hypercritical view of the project, Robin also criticizes the fact that the SPD staff, comprising a vast majority of men, had a "manifest aversion toward the presence of women colleagues."<sup>109</sup> In fact, the SPD relegated the two women on the staff to clerical positions despite their academic qualifications. Marie Louis Actin, who held a PhD from the University of Munich, served the project as a stenographer, and Ida Marie Owens, who had studied extensively in Germany, performed secretarial duties. One might counter, however, that the staff's attitudes were no different than those in society at large during the 1940s, at a time in which most occupations were dominated by men, and women were often confined to positions as secretaries, nurses, and other traditionally "female" occupations.

### **Repatriation**

After Germany surrendered on 8 May 1945, prisoners were hopeful that they would be rapidly returned to their home country. Instead, the only immediate effect of surrender was a

---

<sup>106</sup> Robin, *The Barbed-Wire College*, 51.

<sup>107</sup> Robin, *The Barbed-Wire College*, 52.

<sup>108</sup> Robin, *The Barbed-Wire College*, 53-54.

<sup>109</sup> Robin, *The Barbed-Wire College*, 57.



drastic reduction in rations for camp inmates, because U.S. authorities no longer needed to fear German retribution against American POWs. As Georg Gaertner recalled:

The end of the war meant that the United States would soon have its captured soldiers back from enemy hands...Our treatment in the United States would no longer affect the safety of American POWs in German hands. We knew it and, to our growing apprehension, we knew that the guards knew it. There was an increasingly unfriendly aura between us...<sup>110</sup>

Reinhold Pabel also noticed a stark change in American attitudes and treatment of prisoners:

After May 7, 1945 all noncoms in [Camp Ellis, Illinois] were told to “volunteer” for work-or else...we noncoms who refused to be pushed into “volunteering” were separated from the rest of the POWs and put on a special diet consisting mainly of herring and milk. This was pretty tough on me as I am allergic to herring.<sup>111</sup>

Repatriation would not be immediate, as the Allies had agreed in 1944 on several terms that would loosely determine their policies for returning prisoners to their countries of origin.

Among other principal decisions, they agreed to wait until the war with Japan was finished, and until the defeated nations needed them for rebuilding purposes.<sup>112</sup> In reality, the Allies were hardly in agreement on the issue of repatriation. Soviet plans for German POWs were ambiguous at best, and numerous prisoners found themselves captive into the mid-1950s. The British were unsure how to go about repatriating their POWs, so the War Department decided to establish its own policy.

In July 1945, General Blackshear Bryan became Provost Marshal General. He had served previously as Assistant PMG under Lerch, and had been involved with the management of POWs since 1942. Bryan had very clear ideas about repatriating POWs, which he believed should be executed as quickly as possible. In May 1945, as he was preparing to take over the role of PMG, he issued a statement in which he insisted that “not one American should be

---

<sup>110</sup>Gaertner, *Hitler's Last Soldier in America*, 21.

<sup>111</sup>Pabel, *Enemies are Human*, 163.

<sup>112</sup>Krammer, *Nazi Prisoners*, 228.

without work because of a prisoner,” a clear reference to the fact that large numbers of German POWs were continuing to serve as laborers in a variety of industries.<sup>113</sup> Labor leaders, veterans’ organizations, and outspoken congressmen added their voices to the call for a quick return of prisoners to Europe, primarily for the benefit of returning soldiers who would soon be seeking civilian employment. On the other hand, the newly established American Military Government in occupied Germany sought to delay repatriation, fearing that hundreds of thousands of returning soldiers would further destabilize an already desperate situation characterized by chronic shortages and general misery.

Unbeknownst to the prisoners or the general public, the U.S. War Department had already decided in November 1944 to provide prisoners to Britain and France for labor purposes in lieu of returning them directly to Germany after the war. The majority would be sent to France, as the U.S. government hoped to foster better relations with a relatively new ally that was to play an important role in occupied Germany. In total, 1.3 million German prisoners were to be transferred to France from camps located both in the United States and Europe.<sup>114</sup> Conditions in French camps were often difficult. Meager rations and harsh treatment were the norm, no doubt due to the lengthy and despised German occupation of France. Gaertner, who served as a translator for his fellow prisoners at Camp Deming, New Mexico, recalled that “groans rippled through the crowd,” when he read the news aloud in September 1945.<sup>115</sup> For Gaertner, the more disturbing news was that prisoners were to be returned to their prewar hometowns, meaning that Gaertner, whose hometown was now in the Soviet occupation zone, faced the undesirable prospect of falling into the hands of the Russians. During the latter stages of the war, the Russians had gained a fearsome reputation for brutal treatment of German

---

<sup>113</sup> Costelle, *Les Prisonniers*, 236-237.

<sup>114</sup> Krammer, *Nazi Prisoners*, 239.

<sup>115</sup> Gaertner, *Hitler’s Last Soldier in America*, 24.

soldiers and civilians, partly due to the equally harsh conduct of the *Wehrmacht* during Operation Barbarossa in 1941. A few prisoners leapt overboard from ships returning them to Europe to escape falling into Russian hands, and Gaertner, who claims he had never before considered escaping, constructed an elaborate plan and escaped Camp Deming just a few weeks after the announcement.

Even those prisoners who had helped with the reeducation project were not exempt from this process. While the editors of *Der Ruf* managed to bypass the labor camps in Britain and France, they nonetheless found themselves quickly in conflict with U.S. authorities in Germany. In an interview with Daniel Costelle, Hans Werner Richter recalled an incident at a camp in Bavaria that indicated strongly the already-widening gap between many German intellectuals and U.S. policies:

...we [the last editors of *Der Ruf*] gathered in a semi-circle around an American commandant sent specially from Frankfurt to request that we continue to work for [U.S. authorities]. We all stood there, silent...without responding. The American commandant...offered us all positions [working with occupation authorities]. Even more disturbing, after each proposition he said “one meal more, one meal more...one more meal if you accept!” That truly [sealed our decision]...we all refused, and were each sent on our way...without knowing where we were going.<sup>116</sup>

As will be discussed in detail later, Richter’s animosity toward U.S. authorities stemmed directly from the notion of “collective guilt,” which he believed was particularly insulting in light of his reluctant but willing “collaboration” with American reeducation efforts. In fact, one of the primary themes in *Die Geschlagenen*, his most famous novel, is the notion that Americans were completely ignorant of the distinctions among German prisoners, who were all treated as “Nazis” despite their individual attitudes. In reality, Richter had received special treatment in the United States by virtue of his open status as an “anti-Nazi,” indicating perhaps that his later criticisms resulted from his dissatisfaction with the repatriation process. Despite his disdain for the U.S.

---

<sup>116</sup> Costelle, *Les Prisonniers*, 236.

occupation, Richter hastily snuck back into western Germany after sneaking into the Soviet occupation zone to see his parents in Bansin. While some of the communist acquaintances of his youth (both he and Andersch had been active communists when the Nazis took power) even offered him a variety of positions working in tandem with the Soviets, he quickly decided to “crawl under the barbed wire” and return to the West. While critical of the U.S. occupation, Richter evidently preferred it to the prospect of living under Soviet rule. As we will see later, Richter and Andersch were often quick to criticize any number of individuals or governments, but often failed to present any viable alternatives.

## CHAPTER 3

### ALFRED ANDERSCH AND HANS WERNER RICHTER

On 1 March 1945, the first issue of *Der Ruf* appeared in POW camps throughout the United States. Many camps requested additional copies, as camp cantinas often struggled or failed to meet demand for the publication, which cost five cents per issue. Earlier American fears of retaliatory treatment of American POWs in German *Stalags* had largely abated as events in Europe demonstrated increasingly that the war would soon result in an Allied victory. Accordingly, Lt. Col. Edward Davison and Capt. Walter Schoenstedt believed the time was right for an open attempt to promote American democratic values to the hundreds of thousands of German prisoners in U.S. camps. This newspaper would be edited and written by a select group of POWs, under the supervision of Schoenstedt. Among the editorial staff, led by Curt Vinz, a conservative Catholic who had pre-war publishing experience, were two individuals who would later found a second version of *Der Ruf* in occupied Germany and then go on to help form the influential literary circle Group 47: Alfred Andersch and Hans Werner Richter.<sup>1</sup> After the war, both would claim that their experiences as soldiers and POWs uniquely qualified them to be leading voices in a new Germany, and at least initially, the second *Der Ruf* was intended to carry on the ideals first promoted in the POW paper of the same name. The next two chapters will examine the early lives of Andersch and Richter and the history of the first *Der Ruf*, while considering several important questions. Did Andersch and Richter truly believe in the

---

<sup>1</sup> Sources vary when giving credit for the founding of Group 47; many works, including Elizabeth Welt Trahan, *Gruppe 47: Ein Querschnitt*, Reinhard Lettau, *Die Gruppe 47: Bericht, Kritik, Polemik*, and Wilfred van der Will, "The Agenda of Re-education," in Parkes, White, eds., *The Gruppe 47 Fifty Years On*, name Richter as the primary founder of the circle by virtue of his organizational role in sending out invitations and serving as moderator during meetings. Other sources, including Raymond Furness and Malcom Humble, eds., *A Companion to Twentieth-Century German Literature*, name Walter Kolbenhoff, a fellow POW and contributor to *Der Ruf*, as a co-founder with Richter. However credit is distributed, Andersch and especially Richter were active participants in the group's formation and development.

American values promoted by the newspaper, or was their participation due more to opportunism? Were Ron Robin's accusations of "intellectual elitism" against Davison, Schoenstedt, and *Der Ruf's* editorial staff accurate, or did the paper have a broader appeal than he claims? How did U.S. Army supervisors affect the content and scope of the paper? We will consider these and other issues at length in seeking to understand the first phase of the literary careers of Andersch and Richter.

### Alfred Andersch

Alfred Andersch was born on 4 February 1914 in Munich to Hedwig and Alfred Andersch. His mother was of Czech descent and a needle-maker, and his father was a small-time businessman who dabbled in a number of interests, including operating an antique shop.<sup>2</sup> In *Die Kirschen der Freiheit*, his autobiographical story of his early life and desertion from the *Wehrmacht*, Andersch recalled that his father, who served in the First World War, was highly nationalistic:

He returned home, as a hero not only defeated but dishonored as well. From that moment forward, he led a half-military existence in groups such as the *Reichskriegsflagge* or *Deutschlands Erneuerung*...again and again he went forth, only to return defeated. I still remember a morning [in 1923] shortly after the tumult of the Hitler-Putsch, when he returned home after a brief period under arrest. He was from that point forward an unconditional supporter of General [Erich von] Ludendorff.<sup>3</sup>

Andersch's father often subjected his family to nationalistic and anti-Semitic diatribes. The author recalled that he spent a great deal of time out of the house in his youth, in order to avoid listening to his father's "speeches" on nationalistic politics, travelling often by bicycle to neighboring villages.<sup>4</sup> By his own admission, Andersch was a poor student; in the 1920s he attended the prestigious Wittelsbacher Gymnasium, following in his older brother Rudolf's

---

<sup>2</sup> Stephan Reinhardt, *Alfred Andersch: Eine Biographie*. (Zürich: Diogenes, 1990), 15-17.

<sup>3</sup> Alfred Andersch, *Die Kirschen der Freiheit*. (Zürich: Diogenes, 1971), 15.

<sup>4</sup> Andersch, *Kirschen der Freiheit*, 16-19.

footsteps. Interestingly, the director of the school was none other than Gebhard Himmler, the father of Heinrich, infamous leader of the SS under Hitler. In his novella *Der Vater eines Mörders*, first published posthumously in 1980, Andersch recalled the day he was expelled from Wittelsbacher Gymnasium in May 1928 due to an argument with Himmler during a Greek lesson. In the story, “Franz Kien” (Andersch’s proxy)<sup>5</sup> is in Greek class when Headmaster Himmler entered to criticize the teacher for the students’ poor grades. Himmler then selected several students, including Kien/Andersch, to provide on-the-spot conjugations. When Kien/Andersch failed spectacularly in his attempt, the headmaster castigated him in front of the class for failing to live up to his (Andersch’s) father’s expectations. To add to the humiliation, Himmler revealed to the class that Andersch’s school fees had been waived due to his father’s meritorious military service, despite the son’s poor academic record. Having worked himself into an angry frenzy, Himmler decided to expel Andersch as unfit for an education in the gymnasium. In the novella’s afterword, Andersch calls the story that of a “boy who does not want to learn” rather than an attempt to understand Heinrich Himmler or Nazism through his own encounter with the elder Himmler.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, Andersch rarely refers to the younger Himmler in the story, except to mention the estrangement between father and son due to the latter’s membership in the Nazi party.

In both *Die Kirschen der Freiheit* and *Der Vater eines Mörders*, Andersch reveals an observable respect for front-line soldiers. In the former, the author expressed a note of sympathy

---

<sup>5</sup> In the afterword to *Der Vater eines Mörders*, Andersch explains that he established the character Franz Kien as his “other self” in order to allow for some literary leeway in reporting the essence, if not the literal facts, of what he experienced. Thus incidents involving other students could be amalgamated into a single scene, according to the author. Andersch insisted, however, that all of Kien’s thoughts and experiences differed “not a hair’s breadth” from his own.

<sup>6</sup> Alfred Andersch, *Der Vater eines Mörders*. (Zurich: Diogenes, 1982), 136.

for his father, indicating his belief that the latter's views were an unfortunate by-product of the wartime experience:

When one was among those who stormed Hartmannsweilerkopf, one became incapable of understanding that important historical decisions are not made by those who observe enemy positions through binoculars.<sup>7</sup>

Andersch believed that politicians, not soldiers, ultimately dictated the course of history, and that his father therefore was sadly misguided in his belief that membership in postwar veterans' nationalist organizations could help effect drastic social and political change. In *Der Vater eines Mörders*, Andersch suggested that the elder Himmler, who did not serve in the Great War, was jealous or even afraid of the author's father, who had received the Iron Cross First Class for his service. After telling his parents about his expulsion, Andersch's father suggested that Himmler, who had asked the younger Andersch about his father's failing health, only did so because of the elder Andersch's Iron Cross. Andersch offered his analysis of his father's suggestion:

Could be [the case.] The pencil-pushers at the base were secretly scared of the front-line soldiers; somehow they feared the front-liners would one day settle accounts with them, which was why they pretended to be their buddies and asked after their health. Yes, there was some truth in it; on the other hand, envy was involved as well. No doubt the Head, too, was envious of Father's Iron Cross First Class.<sup>8</sup>

This passage, written in 1979, suggests a connection with Andersch's claims in the second version of *Der Ruf* that rank-and-file soldiers' experiences were more legitimate than those of the "pencil-pushers" back home. This concept was central in Andersch and Richter's arguments that soldiers like themselves were not only the legitimate representatives of a new German culture, but also guiltless for the crimes of Nazism as well. In any case, after his expulsion Andersch

---

<sup>7</sup> Andersch, *Kirschen der Freiheit*, 15.

<sup>8</sup> Andersch, *Vater eines Mörders*, 123.



attended the Alte Realgymnasium of Munich, where he completed his secondary education free of any obligation to study Greek.<sup>9</sup>

Desperate to follow a path different from that of his father or of the rigid discipline of classical education, Andersch became increasingly interested in radical leftist politics. In 1930, he joined the youth wing of the German Communist Party, the *Kommunistische Jugendverband* (KJV).<sup>10</sup> During his father's illness, the young man had read works by Lenin and Upton Sinclair, as well as the *Arbeiter-Illustrierte-Zeitung* (AIZ), a weekly communist newspaper. For Andersch, communism represented a rejection of his past, and an entry into an exciting new existence:

I entered the realm of communism with the tense delight of one who first sets foot upon a virgin continent. For me it was something absolutely new and different, and I smelled the wild fragrance of life that helped liberate me from my middle-class existence. The word "revolution" fascinated me...I leapt from the nationalist doctrines of my father to socialist thinking: of love for humanity, of freedom for the oppressed, of internationalism, and of military defeatism.<sup>11</sup>

Andersch's fascination with abandoning one's circumstances for another situation would be a recurring theme throughout his writings. From his membership in the KJV, to his desertion in 1944, to his relocation to Switzerland in 1958, Andersch seems to have viewed his own experiences as existential rejections of circumstances at a particular time. Here, he understood his membership in the Communist Party as a rejection of his middle-class origins and, by extension, the nationalist views of his father. His frequent need to oppose prevailing opinions did not prevent him from accommodating himself to the Nazi regime, a fact that calls into question his claims to moral authority in the second *Der Ruf*.

---

<sup>9</sup> Reinhardt, *Andersch*, 28.

<sup>10</sup> Reinhardt, *Andersch*, 33.

<sup>11</sup> Andersch, *Kirschen der Freiheit*, 23.

On 27 February 1933, less than a month after Hitler had become Chancellor, a fire engulfed the Reichstag building in Berlin. Police apprehended a single suspect, Marinus van der Lubbe, an unemployed Dutch communist, whom the Nazis claimed was part of a larger communist plot to destabilize and overthrow Hitler's new government. Taking advantage of public panic, the Reichstag passed the Reichstag Fire Decree and the Enabling Act in March 1933. The former suspended most civil liberties and granted police widespread powers to arrest or take into "protective custody" any individual suspected of anti-Nazi activities.<sup>12</sup> The Enabling Act went further by granting Hitler full executive and legislative authority, bypassing the need for the Reichstag to approve prospective legislation. As primary targets of Nazi efforts to eliminate potential political opposition, many communists soon found themselves under threat of arrest and detention.

Andersch was arrested on the morning of 10 March 1933. After several days in police custody, he was transferred to the Dachau concentration camp, where he spent over a month before his mother managed to secure his release.<sup>13</sup> During his internment, Andersch remained loyal to the Communist Party, holding long discussions with fellow communist prisoner Artur Müller, who recalled of the former:

I believe...from what I heard from Andersch, that he was not one of those who turned away [from the party], who wanted to know nothing more [about it], or no longer felt obligated to it.<sup>14</sup>

Andersch also experienced hints of future Nazi atrocities. He recalled the arrival of around one hundred Jewish prisoners, two of whom were summarily shot, supposedly for attempting to escape. One evening, two prisoners were pulled aside to carry water, but shortly after leaving

---

<sup>12</sup> Robert Gellately, *Backing Hitler: Consent and Coercion in Nazi Germany*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 35.

<sup>13</sup> Bernhard Jendricke, *Alfred Andersch: Mit Selbstzeugnissen und Bilddokumenten*. (Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch, 1988), 27.

<sup>14</sup> Jendricke, *Alfred Andersch*, 27.

with the SS man who selected them for the duty, shots rang out. The following morning at roll call, Andersch and the others were told that prisoners Goldstein and Binswaner were “shot while escaping.” Despite this incident, Andersch claimed that during his stay at Dachau, he had “never been afraid.”<sup>15</sup> At the end of April, Andersch’s mother managed to secure his release by “laying siege” to the Gestapo with his father’s records of military service, which evidently led to an amnesty for the young communist.<sup>16</sup>

Andersch was arrested again on 9 September 1933 in connection with a police raid of a communist printer, among whose documents they discovered his name.<sup>17</sup> He was held at the police station in Munich, where he contemplated his fate:

I was gripped by fear of a kind that I never experienced during my first imprisonment. Around me were twenty or thirty people, mostly quiet. A pair of them had been brought over from Dachau to be interrogated. They didn’t say anything about the camp when I asked them how it was now. One asked me: “are you coming [to Dachau] for the second time?” I nodded, and he said “you’re in for it, then!” I moved away from the others, because I didn’t want to speak to anyone.<sup>18</sup>

Andersch also admitted that he had lost all sense of confidence and resistance in the face of his fears, and that he would have told his interrogators anything they wanted to know. Luckily for him, the official who questioned him believed Andersch’s claim that he had no association with the raided press, and released him. From that point forward, Andersch abandoned his devotion to the communists. He claimed that he knew, on the day he was released, that his “activities for the Communist Party were at an end.”<sup>19</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> Andersch, *Kirschen der Freiheit*, 43.

<sup>16</sup> Andersch, *Kirschen der Freiheit*, 43.

<sup>17</sup> Jendricke, *Alfred Andersch*, 28.

<sup>18</sup> Andersch, *Kirschen der Freiheit*, 40-41.

<sup>19</sup> Reinhardt, *Andersch*, 50-51.

In his brilliant 1997 lecture on Andersch,<sup>20</sup> W.G. Sebald offered a powerful, vitriolic criticism of the author's life and career, suggesting that his subject's personal ambitions overrode any genuine convictions he may have held throughout his life.<sup>21</sup> Indeed, Sebald's essay sheds a great deal of critical light on Andersch's activities in the years between his release from prison in September 1933 and his desertion on 7 June 1944. While the author's biographers, including Reinhardt and Schütz, tend to obscure or minimalize certain contradictions in Andersch's life, Sebald confronts them directly. Sebald's essay is far from objective, but the issues he addresses are sufficiently noteworthy to merit some discussion.

Sebald claims that Andersch's failure to emigrate after his imprisonment indicated a willingness to accommodate himself to prevailing circumstances. According to Andersch, none of his young communist associates had ever considered the possibility of leaving the country: "The thought of escaping to a foreign country, as absurd as it may sound, never even crossed our minds."<sup>22</sup> Instead, Andersch subscribed to the notion of "inner emigration," a phrase first coined by the author Frank Thiess. Thiess claimed that opposing the Nazis from within Germany (albeit only within one's own conscience) was preferable to watching events from "the theater boxes and orchestra seats of abroad."<sup>23</sup> Thiess' primary opponent on the subject of inner emigration was Thomas Mann, who claimed that all books published in Germany between 1933 and 1945

---

<sup>20</sup> The lecture, entitled "Der Schriftsteller Alfred Andersch," was included in a compilation of Sebald's lectures entitled *Luftkrieg und Literatur*. In the English translation of the compilation, *On the Natural History of Destruction*, translator Anthea Bell retitled Sebald's lecture on Andersch "Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: On Alfred Andersch," a title perhaps more indicative of the author's intentions than the original title.

<sup>21</sup> W.G. Sebald, "Der Schriftsteller Alfred Andersch." In W.G. Sebald, *Luftkrieg und Literatur*. (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 2001), 111-147.

<sup>22</sup> Andersch, *Kirschen der Freiheit*, 39.

<sup>23</sup> Stuart Parkes, *Writers and Politics in Germany, 1945-2008*. (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2009), 18.

possessed a “stench of blood and shame.”<sup>24</sup> Many others entered the debate, arguing the various merits of exile (Thomas Mann, Stephan Zweig) versus “inner emigration” (Thiess, Gottfried Benn, Ernst Jünger, Andersch, Richter, and many others). For Mann, all who accommodated themselves to the Nazi regime, especially those who continued publishing after 1933, were unequivocally tarnished by association. Thiess, as well as our subjects, argued that their experiences from the “inside” were more genuine than those of exiles, rendering those who remained in Germany while “internally” opposing the Nazis the true voices of German culture.

Sebald sided firmly with Mann on the issue of “inner emigration.” The author interpreted Andersch’s failure to move abroad, especially when he had been offered several chances to go to Switzerland in the late 1930s, as an example of “adapting to the prevailing circumstances, a process that deeply compromised him.”<sup>25</sup> Indeed, Andersch’s actions between 1933 and 1944 cast a great deal of doubt on his later claims that he had always deeply opposed the Nazi regime. We have already seen that under threat of further imprisonment or worse, he chose to abandon completely his communist activities. Compare his actions in the matter to those of Kurt Schumacher, who spent almost the entirety of the war in concentration camps for his socialist views. When faced with a choice between his convictions and severe consequences, Andersch did what most people in Germany had done: he tried to endure a difficult situation by making as few waves as possible.

In 1934, Andersch went to work for a publishing house owned by Julius Lehmann, a supporter of the Nazis. According to the author’s official biographer, Stephan Reinhardt, Andersch was first exposed to anti-Semitism in this period. Reinhardt claims that the publishing house was a “hotbed of racism,” and mentions that other notable figures, including Arno

---

<sup>24</sup> Parkes, *Writers and Politics in Germany*, 19.

<sup>25</sup> Sebald, “Der Schriftsteller Alfred Andersch.” 121.

Schmidt, also worked unenthusiastically for Nazi-approved publishing firms.<sup>26</sup> Andersch himself wrote little about this period, devoting only a handful of pages to his experiences between 1933 and 1945 in *Die Kirschen der Freiheit*, where he claimed that technology had rendered “traditional Nineteenth-century resistance” impossible, therefore necessitating that he “[respond] to the totalitarian state with total introversion.”<sup>27</sup> Andersch provides no details about his working environment, perhaps hoping to distance himself from potential associations with a racist publisher in a period (early 1950s) during which he was attempting to make a name for himself as an author. While Andersch maintained that he had no choice in the matter, Sebald noted that he could just as easily have taken a job as a gardener, given the former’s oft-repeated proclivity for taking nature walks.<sup>28</sup>

The most glaring omission in Andersch’s recollections is the complete absence of any mention of his first wife, Angelika Albert. According to Reinhardt, Andersch married Albert, who was half-Jewish, on 15 May 1935 in order to protect her from the consequences of the Nuremberg Laws, which forbade marriage between Jews and non-Jews in Germany.<sup>29</sup> The problem with the previous claim is that the laws were put into effect in September 1935, four months after Andersch’s marriage to Angelika. Reinhardt concedes that Albert’s upper-class background (her father Eugen was a successful businessman) provided Andersch a means of entry into the highest levels of society in Munich, but never questions the notion that the author’s primary motive was altruistic.<sup>30</sup> Sebald took exception to Reinhardt’s claims, however, noting that beginning in February 1942, Andersch began pressing for a divorce, granted eventually on 6

---

<sup>26</sup> Reinhardt, *Andersch*, 58.

<sup>27</sup> Andersch, *Kirschen der Freiheit*, 46.

<sup>28</sup> Sebald, “Der Schriftsteller Alfred Andersch.” 121.

<sup>29</sup> Reinhardt, *Andersch*, 59.

<sup>30</sup> Reinhardt, *Andersch*, 57.

March 1943.<sup>31</sup> Had the author truly wanted to protect her, he certainly would not have sought a divorce that would expose her to extreme danger. The example of Victor Klemperer comes to mind, as the former professor and eyewitness to the Nazi regime most certainly owed his life to his non-Jewish wife's refusal to divorce him. Bernhard Jendricke claims that Angelika played a crucial role in obtaining for Andersch a position at the Lehmann publishing house, which may further indicate an ulterior motive for the author's marriage.<sup>32</sup>

Andersch had been diligently seeking membership in the *Reichsschrifttumskammer*, a prerequisite for authors seeking to publish in Nazi Germany, and the author certainly would have had no hope of gaining membership while married to a half-Jewish woman. As he sought to distance himself from his wife, Andersch developed a relationship with Gisela Groneuer, an artist on such good terms with the Nazis that she had held several exhibitions both in and outside Germany.<sup>33</sup> Andersch and Groneuer had their first child, Michael, in 1940, while he was still married to Angelika.<sup>34</sup> While one hesitates to label his relationship with Groneuer as one purely motivated by opportunism, one must at least entertain the possibility given the available facts. Regarding the matter of his older brother's divorce, Andersch's brother Martin claimed that while his sibling had experienced a "deep moral conflict" over the issue of divorcing Angelika, ultimately Andersch's own "personal development" was more important to him.<sup>35</sup> Evidence of Andersch's actual motives is limited, especially because he practically ignored the issue in his writings, but it seems likely that his own determination to become a famous writer rendered him willing to do anything to accomplish his goal, including conforming to Nazi expectations. As

---

<sup>31</sup> Sebald, "Der Schriftsteller Alfred Andersch." 122-123.

<sup>32</sup> Angelika Albert's father Eugen was a respected businessman in Munich, and her older brother Fritz worked at Lehmann. This combination likely accounts for Andersch's employment at a "racist" publishing house despite his wife's status as a "half-Jew."

<sup>33</sup> Sebald, "Der Schriftsteller Alfred Andersch." 123-124.

<sup>34</sup> Jendricke, *Andersch*, 36.

<sup>35</sup> Reinhardt, *Andersch*, 82.

Sebald noted, the contradictions surrounding Andersch's first marriage cast a great deal of doubt on his claims to have been deeply and internally opposed to the Nazis throughout Hitler's reign. The fact that the author almost never spoke or wrote about Angelika Albert indicates that Andersch himself recognized that his divorce might represent a potential stain on the anti-Nazi reputation he had established for himself in captivity and after the war.

Soon the "inner emigrant" found himself drafted into the Wehrmacht, which would ultimately prove his means of escape from Nazi Germany. Andersch served two tours of duty, one at a post on the upper Rhine in 1940 during the German invasion of France, and the other beginning in 1943 when he was deployed to Italy. During his first tour, Andersch recalled that he ruled out the possibility of desertion as "impossible" because even if one were to desert, it would be to an army whose "defeat was assured."<sup>36</sup> Sebald once again seized upon Andersch's revelation by claiming that the latter's statement was a clear indication of the author's opportunistic inclinations, because he seemingly had little compulsion to desert while Germany was winning. After his explanation for not deserting in 1940, Andersch confesses that he had "gone so far to the dogs that he believed a German victory was possible."<sup>37</sup> Andersch's admissions reveal that he had not only dismissed the possibility of desertion, and thus fighting for a government and cause he did not support, but he had also "consigned" himself to a German victory.

In early 1941, Andersch was released from military service due to a general order to demobilize former concentration-camp inmates. According to Reinhardt, the reluctant soldier wasted no time in appealing to his commanding officer for a release due to his previous

---

<sup>36</sup> Andersch, *Kirschen der Freiheit*, 90.

<sup>37</sup> Andersch, *Kirschen der Freiheit*, 90.



incarceration at Dachau.<sup>38</sup> In the interim between his two periods of military service, Andersch worked as a clerk at J.G. Mouson & Co., a cosmetics company, where he remained until he received his second call-up at the end of 1943.<sup>39</sup>

Were Andersch's words of resignation during his first tour of duty proof of his desire to belong to the winning side? Perhaps his recollection of the events and thoughts surrounding his 1944 desertion in Italy will shed more light on the issue. Andersch's future colleague Hans Werner Richter often drew a distinction between fighting for the Nazis and fighting for one's comrades. In fact, in his semi-autobiographical novel *Die Geschlagenen*, Richter recounts refusing to provide any helpful information to his captors out of loyalty to his fellow soldiers, who might have been endangered by information on unit positions and other data. However, Andersch had no such reservations:

Should I not desert for [my comrades'] sakes? Should I remain with the group out of a sense of camaraderie? It was laughable. They were making it easy for me to depart...I knew that they were running toward annihilation. I knew that I would not share in their annihilation: I would either make it through [the situation] or find a unique destruction of my own.<sup>40</sup>

Where he had once been unwilling to desert *to* a losing side (France), Andersch decided in June 1944 to desert *from* a German army facing impending defeat. Note the existentialist character of Andersch's internal considerations; his insistence on experiencing either success or defeat by virtue of his own personal decision, rather than that of his military commanders or government, remind us that the author was long an admirer of existentialist thought as found in the works of Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus. Andersch's later engagement with existentialist writers such as Sartre and Camus led him to retrospectively label his decision in 1944 as an existentialist rejection of convention, a choice that "gave my life meaning" and had long been the "axle

---

<sup>38</sup> Reinhardt, *Andersch*, 73.

<sup>39</sup> Jendricke, *Andersch*, 37-39.

<sup>40</sup> Andersch, *Kirschen der Freiheit*, 66.

around which the wheel of my existence revolved.”<sup>41</sup> Whether Andersch truly followed the above thought processes at the time is doubtful, as he had eight years between his desertion and the writing of *Die Kirschen der Freiheit* to reflect upon the issue. While he was familiar with the writings of Søren Kierkegaard, who is usually considered a proto-existentialist, there is little evidence of Andersch’s engagement with contemporary existentialist literature prior to 1944. His reflections in *Die Kirschen der Freiheit* are, therefore, those of one who has spent many subsequent hours considering the meaning and consequences of a particularly significant action, not those of a soldier simply afraid to die in a meaningless, losing struggle.

On 6 June 1944, Andersch wandered away from his unit under the pretense of needing to repair his bicycle. His unit was in Monte Romano, not far from American lines, and Andersch believed that his opportunity had come to surrender to the opposing side. After meandering around the Italian countryside for a day, Andersch surrendered to the 51<sup>st</sup> Regiment of the 5<sup>th</sup> U.S. Army, under the command of General Mark Clark.<sup>42</sup> Shortly thereafter, Andersch and other captives were taken to a site where they were ordered to dig large graves, where they deposited bodies that had been lying around “for weeks.” After several weeks of being moved around, Andersch wrote to his mother on 6 July 1944 that “it is going quite well for me,” and assured her that he would return soon.<sup>43</sup> The second week of August, Andersch embarked on a vessel transporting prisoners of war to the United States, where he would find himself designated a “special” prisoner due to his anti-Nazi views and intellectual nature.<sup>44</sup>

---

<sup>41</sup> Andersch, *Kirschen der Freiheit*, 71.

<sup>42</sup> Reinhardt, *Andersch*, 103-105.

<sup>43</sup> Alfred Andersch, letter to Hedwig Andersch, 6 July 1944. In Winfried Stephan, ed., *Alfred Andersch: "...einmal wirklich leben": Ein Tagebuch in Briefen an Hedwig Andersch 1943-1975*. (Zurich: Diogenes, 1986), 42-43.

<sup>44</sup> Reinhardt, *Andersch*, 108.

## Hans Werner Richter

Hans Werner Richter was born on 12 November, 1908 in Bansin auf Usedom, in what is now Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, to a fishing family. Few details of his early life are available, but French literary scholar Jérôme Vaillant, who interviewed Richter in 1974, provides several valuable facts about the author's experiences. In the mid-1920s, he worked as a book dealer.<sup>45</sup> Like Andersch, Richter evidently became interested in literature and writing from a young age, perhaps as a consequence of his early experience in the book trade. His engagements as a book dealer brought him to Berlin in 1928, where he witnessed first-hand the political confrontations threatening to destroy the Weimar Republic. Richter aligned himself with the party that he believed the "most revolutionary": the KPD. Displaying perhaps those traits of leadership and charisma that would later characterize Richter's involvement in *Der Ruf* and the formation of Group 47, the future author quickly became a party functionary and a frequent speaker at political rallies.<sup>46</sup> Richter was, however, a Trotskyist, and was thus expelled from the KPD in 1932 as German communists sought closer ties with the Soviet Union, from where Trotsky had been exiled in 1929 following a power struggle with Stalin.<sup>47</sup> After Hitler became Chancellor in 1933, Richter fled to Paris, where he had several communist and socialist friends. Richter quickly tired of Paris, and returned to Berlin the following year. Like Andersch during the Nazi period, Richter worked for a series of publishers in the late 1930s. In early 1940, the Gestapo arrested Richter, accusing him of taking part in an illegal underground pacifist movement.

---

<sup>45</sup> Jérôme Vaillant, *Der Ruf: Eine Zeitschrift zwischen Illusion und Anpassung*. (Munich: K.G. Saur, 1978), 15.

<sup>46</sup> Vaillant, *Der Ruf*, 16.

<sup>47</sup> Wilfried van der Will, "The Agenda of Re-education and the Contributors of *Der Ruf*." In Stuart Parkes and John J. White, eds., *The Gruppe 47 Fifty Years On: A Re-Appraisal of its Literary and Political Significance*. (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1999), 8.

Finding little evidence to confirm his role in the movement despite his likely involvement, the Gestapo released him, but in doing so arranged for him to be conscripted in April 1940.<sup>48</sup>

Richter's semi-autobiographical novel *Die Geschlagenen* provides a powerful, if partially fictionalized, account of the events surrounding his capture. Unlike Andersch, Richter was not designated a "special prisoner" upon capture. For this reason, there are no available official records of his capture or interrogations, forcing us to rely on his own recollections, or more accurately, recreations, in *Die Geschlagenen*. The author has never denied that the thoughts and actions of his protagonist Gähler are anything other than his own, and practically every event in the narrative corresponds to the known facts. The novel was published in 1949, and met with a largely positive critical reception as a story not only about war, but about the inner struggles of an anti-Nazi who still feels loyalty toward his fellow soldiers. The book's dedication reveals Richter's belief that one could fight for one's comrades while remaining internally opposed to the Nazi government:

To my four brothers, who were both opponents and soldiers of this war, who were forced to fight for a system that they despised and who never betrayed themselves, their country, or their beliefs.<sup>49</sup>

Unlike Andersch, who denied that military service had any meaning beyond its effect on his personal development, Richter believed one could fight bravely for one's country and comrades regardless of who happened to control the government. In the story, Gähler and his company become embroiled in heavy combat with American forces at Monte Cassino. The narrative first describes the events surrounding Richter's capture on 12 November 1943, following several days

---

<sup>48</sup> Thomas Diecks, "Hans Werner Richter." In *Neue Deutsche Biographie* 21 (2003). Accessed at <[http://www.deutsche-biographie.de/artikelNDB\\_pnd118600451.html](http://www.deutsche-biographie.de/artikelNDB_pnd118600451.html)> on 22 September 2010.

<sup>49</sup> Richter, *Die Geschlagenen*, forward.

of sustained artillery bombardment.<sup>50</sup> Whereas Andersch had deserted before facing heavy combat, by his own admission partly out of fear, Richter remained with his comrades during the shelling until they were surrounded by American soldiers. If his account in the novel is to be believed, he and his fellow soldiers had grown so weary that they eagerly awaited the arrival of American GIs to take them into custody:

“The war is over,” said Gähler.  
Maeder just stared at him. Gähler took a bottle [of beer] and opened it.  
“Yep,” he said, “for us the war is over.”  
“Say that again,” said Maeder.  
“We’re all going to be prisoners in a couple of hours,” Gähler replied.  
“I came up here for this?” [they were positioned in a hole on a mountain]  
“That’s how it looks, my friend.”  
[Maeder] took a bottle and tapped it against Grundemann’s. “Prost,” he said.  
“To the birthday boy,” answered Grundemann.<sup>51</sup>

Several hours later, the soldiers were captured. As further evidence of the story’s autobiographical character, the above passage has Gähler’s comrades toasting him on his birthday, 12 November, the same as Richter’s. Richter recalled being optimistic about the prospect of spending the remainder of the war behind barbed wire, having Gähler assure his fellow captives that “over there we’ll live in personal freedom even behind barbed wire.” Of course, the author’s hopes would later be dashed by the presence of dedicated Nazis within American POW camps, an issue that dominates the latter part of the novel.

Throughout his life, Richter remained unapologetic for his military service or his failure to emigrate from Germany, and several scenes in *Die Geschlagenen* reflect his views. In the following passages, Richter recounts his first interrogation. Many of Gähler’s responses might best be understood as explanations of Richter’s personal behavior during the Nazi period, rather

---

<sup>50</sup> Volker Wehdeking, *Der Nullpunkt. Über die Konstituierung der deutschen Nachkriegsliteratur (1945 - 1948) in den amerikanischen Kriegsgefangenenlagern*. (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1971), 15.

<sup>51</sup> Richter, *Die Geschlagenen*, 196.

than exact reproductions of what was actually said in the interrogation. In fact, they seem to take on the character of a classical *apologia*, with the interrogator serving as a straw man offering questions and challenges to Richter's position, only for Gähler to refute them. Regardless of whether the conversations took place as described in the novel, the scene reveals a great deal about Richter's self-perception. In the following exchange, after being asked by the interrogator why he had claimed that Germany would lose the war, Gähler explains the difference between Germans and Nazis:

"Hitler will lose the war. It is Hitler's war, not Germany's."  
The interrogator, who had been standing by the window when he asked the question, quickly turned toward him. "Aren't they the same thing?"  
"No," answered Gähler, "they aren't the same."  
"For you, maybe!"  
"For me and for many of us."<sup>52</sup>

The American interrogator demonstrates ignorance by assuming that all Germans are Nazis, and Gähler/Richter is quick to correct him. Richter uses this exchange to build toward the notion that one can be a German patriot without being a Nazi. The dialogue continues, as Richter addresses the question of emigration:

[Interrogator:] "Why didn't you emigrate?"  
"That would have been cowardly(!)." Gähler...heard the interrogator pacing around behind him. He continued: "I was away for half a year, in Paris, because I had to be. Then I returned. One must fight one's enemy in his own country."  
"That's ridiculous," the interrogator said.  
"Maybe," Gähler replied, "but we had to try it."<sup>53</sup>

More remarkably, Richter claims that those who did emigrate were "cowardly," an assertion evidently intended to justify his remaining in the country despite Hitler and Nazism. Richter would often claim that the experiences of those who remained and suffered as soldiers and POWs were more legitimate than those who, like Thomas Mann, Bertolt Brecht, and many

---

<sup>52</sup> Richter, *Die Geschlagenen*, 221.

<sup>53</sup> Richter, *Die Geschlagenen*, 221-222.

others, emigrated to escape Nazi persecution. His stance in the novel is, therefore, unsurprising, despite the use of the accusatory word “cowardly.”

The dialogue then shifts toward the question of loyalty to one’s comrades. The interrogator begins pressing Gähler for information about troop positions, causing the protagonist to react with near-indignation:

[Interrogator:] “Can you tell me where your positions are?”

“No,” said Gähler.

“Why not?”

“I’m not an artillery officer.”

“You are opposed to the Nazis, right?”

“No Nazis are up there, only my comrades.”

“You’d be helping end the war.”

“No,” said Gähler slowly. He stood up and continued, “war has its own rules. Every position that I give away to you means thirty to forty hits on my comrades, who might still have a chance to come out of this alive.”<sup>54</sup>

The notion that none of the average soldiers were Nazis is one that Richter and Andersch had first promoted in the second version of *Der Ruf*, published from Munich under their leadership from August 1946 until April 1947. Of course, the notion is unrealistic, but Richter’s assertion represents an attempt to remind readers that many among the rank-and-file were simply following orders, perhaps as a justification as to why he and others like him did not act on their internal opposition to Hitler. To say, however, that “none” of his comrades were Nazis, might indicate that Richter was referring specifically to his particular unit, rather than to the army as a whole. Gähler, and therefore Richter as well, represents in part a study in contrasts, as he not only argued that he had always been opposed to Hitler, but that he remained loyal to his comrades who were fighting a war for the dictator. Where Andersch deserted unapologetically from a war in which he had no interest, Richter continued to insist, even in 1949 and afterwards,

---

<sup>54</sup> Richter, *Die Geschlagenen*, 225.

that his service in the army was justified because he fought for his comrades, rather than for Hitler.

Another indication of the impressionistic, rather than completely factual, nature of the scene appears when the interrogator asks Richter to fight on the side of the Allies. Certainly, there were many German and Austrian émigrés among U.S. forces, including Klaus Mann (son of Thomas), Hans Habe, Stefan Heym (later to become one of the most famous authors in the DDR), and Walter Schoenstedt. These men shared one feature in common: they had emigrated before the outbreak of war, and therefore had never taken up arms against the United States or its allies. While the government had secretly considered enlisting German POWs to fight the Japanese after the war in Europe had ended, the prospect was dismissed as unrealistic because it would entail giving former POWs the same rights and benefits as American soldiers. Dismissed in the planning stages, the plan to invite POWs to enlist was never implemented. Not only did the U.S. Army not ask its captives to fight for the Allies, but there were several instances of POWs volunteering for military service after viewing atrocity films that convinced them of the validity of the Allied cause and being unequivocally rejected. However, many donated money earned from labor projects in lieu of being allowed to serve in the U.S. Army.<sup>55</sup> In response to the offer, Gähler replied:

“I am a socialist and a German. For me, there is only one possibility: to implement my ideas in my own country. But not *against* my country. Not for foreign interests.”<sup>56</sup>

Given the dubious historical veracity of the exchange, we must conclude that he included the passage to distance himself from potential accusations of collaboration stemming from his later participation in *Der Ruf*. Richter’s national pride is evident in the passage, a further indication of his belief that one can betray one’s nation politically while remaining loyal militarily. Wilfred

---

<sup>55</sup> Krammer, *Nazi Prisoners of War*, 217.

<sup>56</sup> Richter, *Die Geschlagenen*, 226.



van der Will argued that Richter's stubborn devotion to the "magical" notion of comradeship was not unlike Hitler's endless rhetoric about the *Volksgemeinschaft*, the national community bound by racial and historical ties.<sup>57</sup> The comparison assumes too much; devotion to one's comrades stems from a concrete, tangible situation, whereas Hitler's *Volksgemeinschaft* is more abstract. Regardless, Richter clearly wrestled with the problem of reconciling his loyalty to comrades with his hatred of Hitler, as was evident in his assertion above that there were "no Nazis, only comrades" among his fellow soldiers. Richter's beliefs would soon be tested when he found himself in Camp Ellis, Illinois, where he quickly discovered that there were, in fact, many dedicated Nazis among his fellow prisoners.

### **Andersch and Anti-Nazism**

U.S. officials were keen to determine whether Andersch might be of some special use to the Allied war effort. The earliest available documentation of interrogation results can be found in his Basic Personnel Record, a standardized form used by American intelligence officers to catalog "special" prisoners. Several items from Andersch's record are of interest. On the first page of the document, which lists basic information such as height, weight, hometown, and date of capture, Andersch's spouse is listed as "Angelica [sic] Andersch," the half-Jewish woman he divorced in 1943.<sup>58</sup> As mentioned above, the issues surrounding Andersch's first marriage are among the most perplexing and mysterious in the author's life. He did not address the issue in his writings, and seemingly wanted to ignore his first marriage entirely. It is, therefore, unusual that he named her as his spouse under interrogation. Andersch also elaborated further, claiming that he was dismissed from the German army in 1941 because of his wife's racial status, and

---

<sup>57</sup> van der Will, "The Agenda of Re-education and the Contributors of *Der Ruf*," 6.

<sup>58</sup> Alfred Andersch, Basic Personnel Record, 1944. Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs. Archives II, United States National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD. Group 165, Box 442.

furthermore noted that he could not have been a member of the Nazi Party on account of his wife. Was Andersch trying to gain sympathy from his captors by reclaiming his half-Jewish wife? The fact that he deliberately misrepresented his marital status suggests an intention to place himself in better standing with American authorities. Complicating the issue further is the fact that in his letters home, Andersch occasionally asked his mother to send greetings to Angelika. For example, in a letter from 6 July 1944, when he was still awaiting transportation to the United States, Andersch asked his mother to send his birthday greetings to Angelika and their daughter, Susanne.<sup>59</sup> His references to Angelika are few, however, in relation to his frequent questions about his future wife Gisela's status, a clear indication of where his romantic feelings lay. Perhaps the entire business of divorce was simply an affair of the heart in which Andersch fell in love with another woman, but that still would not explain why he listed Angelika as his spouse over a year after their divorce.

When he arrived in the United States, Andersch was soon transported to Fort Meade, Maryland, where he underwent a series of interrogations in early September 1944. Authorities recognized quickly that Andersch might be useful to the war effort, as reflected in the notes in his personnel file, which noted that he "should be able to give us information conc. [sic] psychological and political conditions in Germany." The same file also described Andersch as "talkative, sincere, [and] intelligent" and noted that he was an "AN," or anti-Nazi who wanted to be in an anti-Nazi camp.<sup>60</sup> Fort Meade was the primary interrogation center for German "prisoners of interest" within the United States, and served as a gateway to other camps. At Meade, the vast majority of prisoners presented themselves as anti-Nazis, and U.S. authorities subjected them to rigorous interrogation and observation in hopes of determining whether or not

---

<sup>59</sup> Alfred Andersch, letter to Hedwig Andersch, 6 July 1944. In Stephan, ed., *Alfred Andersch: "...einmal wirklich leben,"* 42.

<sup>60</sup> Alfred Andersch, Basic Personnel Record, 1944. Group 165, Box 442.

their convictions were genuine. One's interrogations would, of course, determine his ultimate destination in the archipelago of camps located throughout the United States.

While the actual interrogation transcripts are unavailable, there are numerous transcripts of so-called "room conversations," in essence eavesdropped conversations he had with fellow captives both before and after interrogation at Fort Meade. Nearly all of Andersch's recorded conversations were with a fellow prisoner called "Balcerkiewicz," who spoke with a Berlin accent according to the reports. These reports reveal less than one might wish about Andersch's true feelings and motives, but they do confirm his anti-Nazi convictions as genuine. In a conversation from 11 September 1944 that includes the approximate time of the conversation, Andersch and Balcerkiewicz displayed their confusion about the ultimate purpose of their incarceration at Meade, as well as suspicion toward their captors:

1400: B. comes into room and they discuss matters. They wonder why they are here and suspect something phony, amongst others suspect microphones. Wonder whether the camp is in accordance with the Geneva Convention.

A. feels that the morale of the front line troops in Omorio [where he was captured] was not as good due to bad leadership. Further away from the front morale was much better.<sup>61</sup>

Not only did Andersch and his cellmate suspect that the Americans were eavesdropping, but they even theorized that their captors were using microphones to spy on them. Notice that the American observer was particularly interested in Andersch's comments about German morale, a natural concern given that American authorities were actively seeking to end the war as quickly as possible. An hour later, Andersch and Balcerkiewicz continued their discussion:

1500: A. thinks there must be a very good reason why they were conveyed to this camp in a closed automobile.

They both express anti-Nazi opinions and make fun about [sic] Goebbels.<sup>62</sup>

---

<sup>61</sup> Room Conversation Report, Andersch and Balcerkiewicz, 11 September 1944. Group 165, Box 442.

<sup>62</sup> Room Conversation Report, Andersch and Balcerkiewicz, 11 September 1944. Group 165, Box 442.

Andersch and his cellmate were clearly confused about American intentions, but the observer noted with seeming satisfaction that the men appeared to be anti-Nazis, as first noted in Andersch's personnel file. The fact that observers worked meticulously to determine further whether an individual was truly anti-Nazi, as they might have claimed, or if they were attempting to gain favor by claiming it falsely reveals an ongoing concern to discover "hidden" Nazis among professed anti-Nazi prisoners.

According to the reports, Andersch seemed genuinely impressed by the United States and its intentions toward Germany. This would contrast sharply with the author's opinions after returning to Germany, but they reveal his optimism despite the situation in which he had found himself:

7.30: A. comes back from interrogation, says "it went ok"...repeats some of the statements he made, and I.O. [interrogating officer]'s answers. Seems to enjoy the prospect of going to an A.N. camp. Says: "Those who show National Socialist tendencies will go to Russia, [while] the others will remain in America."<sup>63</sup>

This statement reveals Andersch's belief that his anti-Nazi status would protect him from being sent to Russia, a frightening prospect for any German soldier in late 1944. He continued, noting that he had openly proclaimed his opposition to the Soviet Union:

A: They are concerned about the possibility that Guerilla units...will form in Germany. I told them they shouldn't worry about it.

B: Yeah, that's unlikely...

A. Discusses the future government of Germany, repeats I.O.'s statement on this subject, seems very impressed by his idea of splitting Germany into provinces having representatives in a Senate.

"I made no secret about the fact that I am absolutely opposed to Russia..."<sup>64</sup>

---

<sup>63</sup> Room Conversation Report, Andersch and Balcerkiewicz, 14 September 1944. Group 165, Box 442.

<sup>64</sup> Room Conversation Report, Andersch and Balcerkiewicz, 14 September 1944. Group 165, Box 442.

Andersch, believing that Nazi prisoners would be sent to Russia, perhaps wanted to ensure that he would not be among their number by asserting his opposition to Stalinist Russia. He may have thought the distinction especially important, given his communist background.

Andersch remained highly interested in art and literature during the interrogations, as revealed in the room conversation report from 13 September. Of particular interest is the fact that the future author proudly claimed to have met Thomas Mann:

B. "There are some who have already left [the camp]...hopefully I'll hear something tomorrow morning, and hopefully we can remain together."

A. "If I were able to contact Thomas Mann...perhaps he could help me. I met him at a reading of Shakespeare." Says he writes poetry himself.

Talk about art.

A. Says that art and literature "limped behind" in Nazi Germany, being only a tool...for Nazis, suffering particularly from being cut off from the world. Says that younger generation doesn't know anything about men like [Russian novelist Fyodor] Dostoyevski [sic], [French author André] Gide, or [American novelist] Thomas Wolfe.<sup>65</sup>

Andersch's comment about the possibility of Thomas Mann helping improve his conditions appears little more than an attempt to impress his cellmate with the fact that the former had once met the latter. Surely Andersch did not expect that a man he met in passing would or could do anything about his complaints, which chiefly involved a lack of reading material. Andersch's comments also reveal that he believed himself much more intellectual than his peers, who had been hindered by Nazi censorship. This conviction would resurface in the second version of *Der Ruf*, where Andersch and Richter sought to establish themselves as the vanguard of a new, postwar German literary tradition.

On 22 September, Major Howard Smith issued an order to transfer Andersch and fourteen other prisoners from Fort Meade to Camp Ruston, Louisiana. The order specifies that the prisoners listed were all "classified as anti-Nazi" and that they should all be quartered with

---

<sup>65</sup> Room Conversation Report, Andersch and Balcerkiewicz, 13 September 1944. Group 165, Box 442.

other anti-Nazi prisoners.<sup>66</sup> Camp Ruston was one of the largest anti-Nazi camps in the United States, and was a common destination for those who, like Andersch, had staunchly maintained their opposition to Hitler's government. Andersch arrived there by train in early October, having seen a great deal of the United States on the way. In his 1971 semi-autobiographical story "Festschrift für Captain Fleischer," Andersch's proxy stand-in, Fritz Kien, experiences the journey from Meade to Ruston, paralleling that of the author. The title figure, Captain Fleischer, was a doctor of Jewish origin who helped treat one of Kien/Andersch's fellow prisoners for pneumonia. The prisoner in question, Ferks, was the "only one who came to Sunday morning reveille wearing his German uniform jacket," and was thus ostracized by the largely anti-Nazi camp population.<sup>67</sup> The irony, of course, is that Ferks and Fleischer developed an unspoken bond, with Fleischer hoping to keep his patient's spirits up by spending a great deal of time talking about various topics. The story serves both as a travelogue, with Andersch describing the passing scenery of the American landscape as seen from his train ("the dry flat lands of Louisiana...[perfect for] the long walks that Franz Kien loved), and a recollection of one episode during the author's stay at Camp Ruston.

While at Ruston, Andersch wrote three letters to his mother, the last surviving letters from his time in the United States. He appears to have been not only content, but actively proud to have seen much of the vast land that held him prisoner. In his letter from 8 October, he told her that he had already traveled through a "large part" of the United States, and in his 12 December letter, he described the sights he had seen in the U.S. as "colossal," and seemed

---

<sup>66</sup> POW transfer order, 22 September 1944. Camp Ruston Collection, Prescott Memorial Library, Louisiana Tech University. Box M-326, box 1, folder 15.

<sup>67</sup> Alfred Andersch, "Festschrift für Captain Fleischer." In Gerd Haffmans, ed., *Das Alfred Andersch Lesebuch*. (Zurich: Diogenes, 1979), 68.

particularly enamored of the Mississippi River.<sup>68</sup> In these three letters, Andersch also appears to have been extremely concerned about Gisela's fate. He asked his mother about his future wife's status on several occasions, and even complained in his 17 October letter that "it was idiotic" that he had not received a letter from Gisela, because he had asked his mother to pass his letters along. While he was extremely concerned about Gisela, he only mentioned Angelika and their daughter Susanne once, when he wrote that he hoped that all was well with his mother and with them. The fact that Andersch demonstrated at least some concern for his ex-wife may have been a product of his affection for their daughter, but the fact remains that he ignored her existence after returning to Germany. He may have been keen to obscure the fact that he had chosen to divorce her around the time he applied for entry to the *Reichsschrifttumskammer*, information that puts Andersch in an unfavorable light.

On 30 April 1945, the Office of the Provost Marshal General (PMG) issued an order to Camp Ruston for the transfer of 65 prisoners, including Andersch, to Fort Devens, Massachusetts.<sup>69</sup> From there, Andersch was sent to Fort Kearney, Rhode Island. By virtue of his demonstrated intelligence and willingness to aid his captors, Andersch had been chosen by Lt. Colonel Edward Davison and Captain Walter Schoenstedt to take part in a special project intended to promote democracy to the general POW population. The project, based at Fort Kearney, was a newspaper, written and edited by "special" POWs like Andersch who had demonstrated their opposition to Nazism and their support for democratic ideals. The paper, of course, was the first version of *Der Ruf*.

---

<sup>68</sup> Alfred Andersch, letters to Hedwig Andersch, 8 October and 12 December 1944. Stephan, ed., *Alfred Andersch: "...einmal wirklich leben,"* 44-47.

<sup>69</sup> POW transfer order, 30 April 1945. Camp Ruston Collection, Prescott Memorial Library, Louisiana Tech University. Box M-326, box 1, folder 15.

## Richter among Nazis

Hans Werner Richter arrived at Camp Ellis, Illinois in the spring of 1944. Unlike Camp Ruston, where Andersch was interned until his selection for the Idea Factory, the collection of special prisoners who produced *Der Ruf* and other propaganda material, Camp Ellis was not a dedicated anti-Nazi camp. The camp had begun receiving prisoners on 29 August 1943, and became one of the largest POW camps with a population once reaching nearly 3,000 prisoners.<sup>70</sup> Accordingly, many of the prisoners interned there were from the Afrika Corps, captured before the tide of war had turned fully against Hitler and thus still fully devoted to the Nazi government and the belief that Germany would emerge victorious. Andersch faced little if any hostility from his fellow prisoners, because he was placed among like-minded individuals who had openly expressed their disdain for the Nazi regime and demonstrated a complete willingness to cooperate with their captors. As discussed above, Richter had maintained his loyalty to Germany and his comrades while simultaneously denouncing Hitler. As an unrepentant patriot who had refused to cooperate by providing information of strategic value to his interrogators, Richter would be placed in the general prisoner population, where he witnessed first-hand Nazi brutality within the camps.

As with his interrogations, the only source of information about Richter's experiences at Camp Ellis come from the author's own recollections, most notably in *Die Geschlagenen*. In the novel, he recounts the journey, noting with some amazement the sheer vastness of the American landscape and the presence of big automobiles at nearly every house he saw.<sup>71</sup> Just before they embarked for the United States, Richter and his friends had speculated about life as prisoners in America, settling ultimately on a positive outlook:

---

<sup>70</sup> Marjorie Rich Bordner, *From Cornfields to Marching Feet: Camp Ellis, Illinois*. (Dallas: Curtis Media, 1993), 36-37.

<sup>71</sup> Richter, *Die Geschlagenen*, 293-294.



“Tomorrow we’re heading out,” Gähler said to Santo.  
Santo looked at him with joyous eyes and tossed him a couple of cigarettes.  
“I think I’ll be going too. Things will be better for us in America.”  
“No more Nazis and the freedom to do what you want.”  
“And finally you can read whatever you want,” said Santo, “and you can say anything you want, can you imagine it?”<sup>72</sup>

The high expectations expressed by Gähler/Richter and his fellow captive could hardly have been met by the real circumstances at POW camps in the United States. Upon arrival at Ellis, Richter and his comrades heard the awaiting ranks of POWs accuse them of being “deserters, traitors, [and] cowards.”<sup>73</sup> They soon discovered that *Wehrmacht* discipline was being maintained, with a restored chain of command, morning musters in uniform, marching in formation, and mass singing of the “Horst Wessel” song, a popular Nazi anthem written by a young man who died fighting against the German Communist Party (KPD) in 1930.

Richter’s portrayal of the situation at Ellis reflects a bitter disappointment with his circumstances. Beatings of “traitorous” prisoners by dedicated Nazis occurred on numerous occasions, while the American staff remained seemingly oblivious to the internal ideological struggles among the German captives. As discussed in Chapter 2, most camp officials chose order and discipline over any concern for terrorized POWs, and generally allowed the German chain-of-command to function as it would have back home. After a particularly brutal incident in which his friend Pips was beaten severely for making a joke about Hitler, Gähler/Richter met with the camp commandant in a futile attempt to have something done about the ongoing terror tactics of Nazi prisoners:

“I can’t help you,” said the Major, “you are under the jurisdiction of the Geneva Convention...”  
“But it’s murder and terror, Major.”  
“There’s no terror in my camp.”  
“But they all beat him together, I saw it with my own eyes.”

---

<sup>72</sup> Richter, *Die Geschlagenen*, 262.

<sup>73</sup> Richter, *Die Geschlagenen*, 296.

“He’s in the hospital?”

“Yes sir, Major.”

The Major picked up the telephone. They heard him talking. He shrugged his shoulders and yelled something into the receiver. Then he set it down.

“At the hospital they say he was injured playing soccer.”

“That’s not true.”

“But it’s your own doctor who said so.”<sup>74</sup>

The prisoners went back-and-forth with the Major, arguing that the doctor and even Pips himself refused to admit what really happened because they feared for their lives, but the commandant remained unconvinced that their claims were true. Richter then has Gähler express his frustration at the Americans’ policy of collective guilt and failure to recognize the ideological differences among prisoners:

“They don’t understand us,” said Gähler, “they will never understand us. For them we are all German soldiers and all the same. They can’t understand the entire system, because they don’t know the power of terror, because they don’t know the meaning of fear.”<sup>75</sup>

This statement may accurately reflect Richter’s thoughts at the time, but they may also be partly a product of his frustrations with American occupation authorities during and after his participation in the second *Der Ruf*. During the occupation, American authorities continued to insist on treating Germans according to the concept of “collective guilt,” which held that all Germans needed to confront the Nazi past and atone accordingly. In his masterful series of lectures on the issue of collective guilt, Karl Jaspers maintained that all Germans should, in fact, acknowledge at least some level of guilt, if for no reason other than membership in the collective. Richter, however, disagreed strongly with the notion of collective guilt, a particularly difficult stance given the apparent pride he felt regarding his military service.

Richter recalled an interrogation at Camp Ellis in which he once again displayed a great deal of obstinacy toward the I.O., Captain Smith:

---

<sup>74</sup> Richter, *Die Geschlagenen*, 341-342.

<sup>75</sup> Richter, *Die Geschlagenen*, 345.

“Were you in the Party?”  
“No,” said Gähler.  
“So you weren’t in the Party?”  
“No.”  
“Were you ever in a Party organization?”  
“No.”  
“Are you a National Socialist?”  
“I am a soldier, and do what’s required of me.”  
“Whom do you serve?”  
“Everyone.”  
“That’s not an answer. I asked you if you’re a National Socialist.”  
“I am a soldier,” Gähler said slowly, “as required by the state.”  
“What does that mean?”  
“It means order, discipline, acceptable behavior, silence, and avoiding troublemaking.”  
“So you refuse to answer the question?”  
“Yes,” said Gähler.  
“You can go.”<sup>76</sup>

Gähler’s refusal to answer the question once again reflects the author’s insistence that being a loyal soldier did not equate to Nazism, although one wonders why he refused specifically to confirm or deny whether he was a National Socialist. Certainly Richter could be said to have been a socialist and a proud German, but did he believe that those concepts were accurately represented in the term “National Socialism?” Without further information, it is difficult to resolve this question, but it does demonstrate a great deal of ambiguity on Richter’s part. Later, as co-editor of the second *Der Ruf*, he would be accused of nationalism by American authorities, but Richter’s sentiments seem based more on patriotic pride in and devotion to his country rather than any interest in National Socialism.

By virtue of his demonstrated intelligence and experience working with books, Richter was appointed head of the camp library several months after arriving at Camp Ellis. During the summer of 1944, he taught courses on German literary history to his fellow prisoners. Evidently, he was most interested in the works of Twentieth-century authors such as Thomas Mann, and his courses reflected this. In September 1944, Richter began editing the local camp newspaper, *Die*

---

<sup>76</sup> Richter, *Die Geschlagenen*, 363-364.

*Lagerstimme*, and in this capacity he attracted the attention of Davison and Schoenstedt, who felt that the Camp Ellis POW paper stood out among many other, much more poorly-written and -managed publications. In September 1945, a year after he began working on *Die Lagerstimme*, Richter was recruited to the staff of *Der Ruf*, where he would serve as editor until April 1946.<sup>77</sup> According to the author, he was unenthusiastic about the prospect of reeducation. In the final pages of *Die Geschlagenen*, one of Gähler's fellow prisoners remarks sarcastically that "we're all going to be democrats now" in response to the postwar announcement of the reeducation program by which prisoners hoped to secure a more expedient return home.<sup>78</sup> Richter later claimed that he became an editor of *Der Ruf* "against my will," a seemingly contradictory assertion.<sup>79</sup> Arthur Smith supposes that Richter sought to counter what he saw as the paper's anti-German bias by taking the position. Failing this explanation, Smith argues, ego or flattery may explain Richter's tenure as editor from September 1945 to April 1946.<sup>80</sup> Whatever the case may have been, Richter clearly sought later to distance himself from the paper by claiming that he was "forced" to work on it. Did *Der Ruf* display an anti-German bias? Was it, as Ron Robin argues, a worthless exercise in intellectual arrogance? To explore these and other issues, we must now turn our attention toward the paper itself.

---

<sup>77</sup> Wehdeking, *Der Nullpunkt*, 16.

<sup>78</sup> Richter, *Die Geschlagenen*, 458.

<sup>79</sup> Hans Werner Richter, "Wie entstand und was war die Gruppe 47?," in Hans A. Neunzig, ed., *Hans Werner Richter und die Gruppe 47*. (Munich: Nymphenburger, 1979), 44.

<sup>80</sup> Smith, *War for the German Mind*, 85.

## CHAPTER 4

### *DER RUF*: THE CALL GOES OUT

*Der Ruf* was one of several major initiatives of Lt. Col. Edward Davison's Special Projects Division (SPD) intended to promote American ideals to German POWs in the United States. Provost Marshal General Arthur L. Lerch, whose office had established the SPD, believed that the United States should take advantage of the fact that nearly 400,000 Germans were being held captive in America by seeking to "re-educate" them in American democratic ideals. To this end, Davison and Schoenstedt suggested the creation of a POW newspaper that would be written by a select group of prisoners who had demonstrated anti-Nazi attitudes and literary talent. This paper would be made available at all camp canteens for five cents, and would be much more polished in its format and presentation than the slew of local camp papers, which were often hand-written and full of grammatical and factual errors. Along with the first prisoners selected for the assignment, a group that included Curt Vinz and Gustav René Hocke, Davison and Schoenstedt decided on *Der Ruf* ("The Call") as the paper's title, because they intended it to symbolize the "call" for POWs to rethink their attitudes and misconceptions, and to embrace democratic ideals.<sup>1</sup> As Chief of the Programs Branch, Schoenstedt had been entrusted with the responsibility of overseeing the staff and production of *Der Ruf*. Schoenstedt himself was a German exile, a former Communist who fled his homeland in 1933. He would have ultimate authority over content, while selected prisoners would produce the articles. The paper had been in development since late 1944, and prisoner involvement began in January 1945 under the leadership of Vinz and Hocke, respectively the paper's first manager and chief editor. The first issue appeared in a print run of 11,000 copies on 1 March 1945, with its circulation

---

<sup>1</sup> Smith, *War for the German Mind*, 82.

eventually reaching 75,000 per issue.<sup>2</sup> The paper ran for 26 issues, the last of which appeared on 1 April 1946, as the prisoner-staff was preparing for repatriation.

Many of the articles in *Der Ruf* were written anonymously or under pseudonyms. Andersch, who joined the staff in April 1945 and served as literary editor, contributed under the names “F.A.,” “Anton Windisch,” “Thomas Grading,” and “AA.”<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately, Hans Werner Richter, who joined the staff in September 1945, served only as editor.<sup>4</sup> He did not attach his name to any articles, and evidently worked only as a redactor, rather than a contributor. This limits our ability to analyze his participation in the project beyond his own personal recollections. Nonetheless, Richter’s memories reveal significant facets of his personality and attitude toward the notions of reeducation and collective guilt, as will be discussed later. Because Andersch and Richter are the primary subjects of the present study, our analysis of *Der Ruf*’s content will focus most closely on Andersch’s contributions, due to the absence of writings from Richter. We will, however, address other pertinent articles that reveal important information about its contributors’ intentions, as well as those of their American overseers.

Ron Robin, in his excellent *The Barbed-Wire College*, argues that the entire *Der Ruf* project was a failure because it reflected the elite intellectual interests of its overseers and contributors rather than the concerns of the rank-and-file POWs. I have obtained several reports on prisoner reactions to the paper that suggest a much more diverse range of responses than Robin claims. It is true that many articles were highly intellectual in nature and that many individuals rejected the paper as propaganda. However, prisoners’ reactions often demonstrated gratitude for the availability of a “well-written” paper that offered articles on an array of subjects

---

<sup>2</sup> Smith, *War for the German Mind*, 82.

<sup>3</sup> Reinhardt, *Andersch*, 119.

<sup>4</sup> Richter, “Wie entstand und was war die Gruppe 47?,” 44.

ranging from the war to American culture. An analysis of *Der Ruf* must consider the validity of Robin's argument.

The first issue of *Der Ruf* appeared on 1 March 1945, and featured a front-page article entitled "Der Ruf an den deutschen Kriegsgefangenen in Amerika." The article, written by Gustav René Hocke under the pseudonym "Julian Ritter," served as an introduction to the paper's purpose and content. From the opening sentence, which exclaimed "The German prisoners of war in America now have their own newspaper!," the article sought to convince its potential readers that the paper was written by fellow prisoners who shared their comrades' concerns over events back home, while promising to provide news as well as articles dealing with a broad array of topics that included "literature, art, theater, film, and sport."<sup>5</sup> Indeed, the first issue included "Zur Lage in Europa," an article on the Yalta agreement and the war's progress in various parts of the world, a full page of news snippets from Germany, and a two-page spread of pieces on American culture and economy. The eighth and final page contained a collection of excerpts from POW papers across the country, ranging from a report about the camp soccer champions at Fort Carson, Colorado to a blurb about a camp performance of Stravinsky.<sup>6</sup> The articles in the first issue covered a broad array of topics, although Ron Robin argues that the lack of a substantial sports section or any light or humorous material rendered the paper "irrelevant" to most prisoners.<sup>7</sup> Although the paper was advertised as bi-monthly, the second issue would not appear until 1 April.

On 17 March 1945, during the interim between the first and second issues of *Der Ruf*, Schoenstedt issued a general memorandum to Davison in which he deemed his pet project a

---

<sup>5</sup> Julian Ritter (Gustav René Hocke), "Der Ruf an den deutschen Kriegsgefangenen in Amerika." *Der Ruf*, n. 1, 1 March 1945, 1.

<sup>6</sup> "Lagerstimmen," *Der Ruf*, n. 1, 1 March 1945, 8.

<sup>7</sup> Robin, *The Barbed-Wire College*, 77.

success. In the lengthy communication, the Chief of the Programs Branch reiterated the paper's objectives:

- a. To create a prisoner of war magazine for the broadest audience possible,
- b. To provide exact news of all important military and political events,
- c. To print news from the homeland, good reading material and entertainment in order to:
  - 1) Foster realistic thought and constructive interests and feeling,
  - 2) To avoid stirring up political emotions or injuring national pride,
  - 3) To satisfy the desire for real cultural expression among the prisoners and to reflect their point of view as far as possible,
  - 4) To give prisoners moral support and open a larger intellectual horizon for their benefit,
  - 5) To make prisoners conscious of the tasks which await them in the future,
- d. To create and print the best German newspaper (in content and form) of our time.<sup>8</sup>

Davison and Schoenstedt clashed several times over the seemingly conflicting aims of appealing to the “broadest audience possible” and widening prisoners’ “intellectual horizon[s].” In fact, in a communication from 2 February 1945, Davison told Schoenstedt that the first draft of the first issue was “ponderous, overworded, and even a little stilted.” He further suggested that “we shouldn’t let *Der Ruf* be too literary or philosophic,” in order to allow broader accessibility.<sup>9</sup> Accordingly, Schoenstedt’s report over a month later sought to justify the paper’s intellectual character. More often than not, Schoenstedt defended the intellectual interests of the paper’s editors by claiming that covering trivial events or interests would cause readers to take the paper less seriously.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, many articles in *Der Ruf* might best be categorized as intellectual or even “ponderous,” but did the paper truly fail to resonate with more than a mere fraction of the POW population? Before examining documented prisoner reactions, we must first survey several other matters leading up to Germany’s surrender and its aftermath.

---

<sup>8</sup> Capt. Walter Schoenstedt, Memorandum on Prisoner of War Newspaper, 17 March 1945. Records of the Office of the Provost Marshal General. Archives II, United States National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD. Group 389, Box 1597.

<sup>9</sup> Lt. Col. Edward Davison, “Attached Editorial for *Der Ruf*,” 2 February 1945. Group 389, Box 1616.

<sup>10</sup> Robin, *The Barbed-Wire College*, 78.



The second issue, published 1 April 1945, featured a front-page article entitled “Verlorene Jahre?” (“Lost Years?”). The piece was unsigned, a common trait of many articles in *Der Ruf*. The article encouraged prisoners to help rebuild their homeland upon return:

One day, we will return to our homeland. Then they will ask us, what we did during our time as prisoners. Will you say: “I never allowed my spirits to get down. I’m here, and I can do it. What will we do first?” Or will you stand aside and let the others work...to rebuild your homeland?<sup>11</sup>

This sort of “call” could be found often in *Der Ruf*, reflecting not only the propagandistic nature of the paper but the idealism of its editors and contributors. As will be discussed in Chapter 5, individuals such as Vinz, Hocke, and Andersch believed strongly that they would play an important role in rebuilding Germany, a belief evident even in the pages of *Der Ruf*’s first edition.

The second issue closely followed the first in format and structure, with sections providing news about the war, as well as the situation in Germany. The paper included the usual section on the United States, which in this issue entailed a city profile of San Francisco, a brief biography of Andrew Jackson, and a short blurb explaining the use of the donkey and elephant as mascots by the Democratic and Republican parties, respectively. The final page printed letters from prisoners in various camps. The letters’ authors offered praise for the paper alongside general items of interest from their camps. Naturally, all of the printed opinions of *Der Ruf* were positive, as Schoenstedt would hardly have wanted disparaging comments to be made available to the prisoners. As will be discussed shortly, he also was careful to depict responses to *Der Ruf* in a positive light when reporting to Davison.

In “Die produktiven Kräfte” (“The Productive Forces”) in issue three (15 April 1945) the anonymous author discussed the “coming peace,” suggesting that after the war, Germany would

---

<sup>11</sup> “Verlorene Jahre?” *Der Ruf*, n. 2, 1 April 1945, 1.

be a situation similar to its condition after the Napoleonic Wars. Foreshadowing similar arguments found in the second *Der Ruf*, the article argued that Europe could only rebuild by seeking economic unity:

...today the organizational barriers to European economic unity have been lifted. Only in this manner can Europe's decimated and exhausted productive capacity be utilized without danger, friction, unproductivity, or conflict...The united economy will be a vital part of Europe's destiny.<sup>12</sup>

This article's prose is dense and confusing, supporting Ron Robin's description of the paper's tone as "often ponderous."<sup>13</sup> Numerous other articles mirror the overly intellectual character of this piece, which likely failed to resonate with the average prisoner, as Robin argues.

While the lead articles and literary sections often reflected the intellectual interests of *Der Ruf*'s editors and overseers, much of the other material was more accessible. The regular sections on world news, Germany, and POW camps might be considered lighter reading than the often-convoluted or dense featured articles. Robin dismisses these sections as "agonizingly short on substance," maintaining that the entire paper was essentially an exercise in futility due to the intellectual leanings of its supervisor and editors.<sup>14</sup> True, the material found beyond the paper's front pages often dwelled on seemingly trivial subject matter such as railroads in the United States (issue 4), but we should not rule out the possibility of *Der Ruf*'s appeal to some portion of the prisoner population simply because many of its articles were supposedly "beyond" the average soldier's interests.

### **Prisoner Reactions to *Der Ruf***

In his 17 March memorandum to Davison, Schoenstedt noted that there were a few reports concerning prisoners' reactions to the first issue of *Der Ruf*. However, he only mentions

---

<sup>12</sup> "Die produktiven Kräfte," *Der Ruf*, n. 3, 15 April 1945, 1.

<sup>13</sup> Robin, *The Barbed-Wire College*, 79.

<sup>14</sup> Robin, *The Barbed-Wire College*, 77.

one such report, issued by Lt. Col. A.J. Lamoureaux, who claimed that the paper fell between “Leftist groups” and “extremely pro-Nazi groups,” and thus should “offend neither extreme.”<sup>15</sup> Clearly Schoenstedt had hoped to show *Der Ruf* in a positive light to his superior by suggesting that the paper would appeal to everyone, but his optimistic portrayal was not without cause. A 13 March survey of prisoner reactions indicated widespread enthusiasm for *Der Ruf* in most camps, excepting those such as Camp Sheridan, Illinois, where prisoners called the paper “American propaganda.”<sup>16</sup> There were, however, already indications that *Der Ruf* had not been well-received in certain places. A 16 March 1945 report from Camp McCain, Mississippi claimed that prisoners who worked in the camp canteen reacted with “distrust in the paper.”<sup>17</sup> A second report from McCain, on 28 March, noted that POW company leaders had bought all copies of *Der Ruf* and burned them.<sup>18</sup> Camp McCain had a large Nazi population, which explains the attempt to prevent other prisoners from reading a paper they regarded as propaganda. Hans Werner Richter recalled similar episodes at Camp Ellis, where “many prisoners” burned copies of the paper at least into the summer of 1945.<sup>19</sup> Like Camp McCain, there were many devoted Nazis at Camp Ellis, as depicted in *Die Geschlagenen*. In other camps, reactions were more positive. In his report, Schoenstedt provided a list of camps that had ordered an increased allotment for the second issue, which would appear on 1 April. Some only requested fifty or less additional copies, but some, including Fort Devens, Massachusetts (from 300 to 1000), Camp Hearne, Texas (from 150 to 800), and Camp Perry, Ohio (from 110 to 320) had asked for significant increases, a possible indication of positive receptions for *Der Ruf* in

---

<sup>15</sup> Capt. Walter Schoenstedt, Memorandum on Prisoner of War Newspaper, 17 March 1945. Group 389, Box 1597.

<sup>16</sup> Survey of Prisoner reactions to *Der Ruf*, 13 March 1945. Group 389, Box 1597.

<sup>17</sup> Report from Camp McCain, 16 March 1945. Group 389, Box 1597.

<sup>18</sup> Report on Prisoner reactions to *Der Ruf* from Camp McCain, MS, 28 March 1945. Group 389, Box 1597.

<sup>19</sup> Richter, “Wie entstand und was war die Gruppe 47?,” 43.

those camps. Certainly neither McCain nor Ellis were on the list, but can we accept orders for increased circulation as evidence of positive reception at the camps listed above? Subsequent reports regarding circulation and reception suggest that *Der Ruf* gained steadily in popularity in many non-Nazi camps.

In a report from 24 May 1945, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Frederic W. Handschy noted that the paper sold very well outside of dedicated Nazi camps, where prisoners remained “apathetic” toward the publication.<sup>20</sup> A 9 April report from Camp Breckenridge, Kentucky, requested more copies, noting that the “first mistrust” of the paper had been removed.<sup>21</sup> A circulation report from 18 May showed that 7,871 copies of the most recent issue had been distributed, and that requests had been received for increases totaling 24,093 copies across all camps.<sup>22</sup> In a July 1945 compilation of readers’ comments on *Der Ruf*, presumably gathered from letters to the editorial staff (the staff encouraged reader responses and provided an address in each issue), Jakob Strassel at Fort Jackson, South Carolina offered glowing words of praise for the paper, claiming that it provided valuable information about events back in Europe. Furthermore, Strassel requested an increase in circulation:

Furthermore, I am sorry to say that we do not receive enough copies of *Der Ruf*. Perhaps this hint will suffice—unless technical or other reasons impede an increase of copies.<sup>23</sup>

Strassel’s response offers qualitative confirmation that the requests for increased circulation were at least partly driven by prisoner demand. In the same report, another prisoner, Walter Matysiak at Camp Aliceville, Alabama, echoed Strassel’s sentiments while confirming Nazi hostility toward the paper:

---

<sup>20</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Frederic W. Handschy, Report on Prisoner Reactions to *Der Ruf*, 24 May 1945. Group 389, Box 1597.

<sup>21</sup> Sgt. Robert Michel, Report from Camp Breckenridge, 9 April 1945. Group 389, Box 1597.

<sup>22</sup> Report on Circulation, 18 May 1945. Group 389, Box 1597.

<sup>23</sup> “Readers’ Comments on *Der Ruf*,” July 1945. Group 389, Box 1597.

Only now that we are separated from the Nazi camp proper and are forming our own labor company can we read *Der Ruf* without danger. The paper has already found many friends but the number of copies available is too small so that many comrades must go without.<sup>24</sup>

These comments indicate an enthusiasm, at least among some prisoners, for *Der Ruf*. Such enthusiasm may account in part for the paper's steady increase in circulation, but there is one other factor worth mentioning: Germany had surrendered on 8 May 1945, bringing the war in Europe to an end. While many hardcore Nazis experienced a period of ideological inertia during which they refused to believe reports of Hitler's suicide or German defeat, many underwent a relatively rapid transformation into supporters of the American cause. As mentioned above, many prisoners were genuinely shocked and dismayed after viewing atrocity films, and several publicly renounced their allegiance to Nazism.<sup>25</sup> Others volunteered for the reeducation program at Fort Eustis, hoping for a quick return home. Richter mentions this rapid change in the final pages of *Die Geschlagenen*:

[Konz:] "Everyone's already signed up for [the reeducation lectures]. They're all taking part in hopes of going home."  
[Gühler:] "The Nazis too?"  
"They were the first to sign up."<sup>26</sup>

Despite attempts to screen those who took part in the mass reeducation program, some formerly dedicated Nazis did manage to sneak into Fort Eustis, although such instances were few and far between.

*Der Ruf* appears to have grown in popularity from issue to issue, leading eventually to a circulation of 75,000 copies. Doubtlessly there had been great deal of opposition to the paper, but with numerous reports of sellouts and requests for additional copies, one must conclude that the paper was not entirely "irrelevant" to its intended audience. Perhaps a qualitative

---

<sup>24</sup> "Readers' Comments on *Der Ruf*," July 1945. Group 389, Box 1597.

<sup>25</sup> Krammer, *Nazi Prisoners of War*, 217.

<sup>26</sup> Richter, *Die Geschlagenen*, 458.

investigation of individual responses to *Der Ruf* will shed more light on the issue. SPD reports between May and October 1945 show a wide range of opinions among prisoners regarding the paper's content. The reports were compiled from letters to the editorial staff in order to gauge the paper's success, and considering the inclusion of numerous negative reactions, there appears to have been little bias in their presentation. Where noted, I will include the individual's rank to demonstrate that opinions were shared across different categories of soldiers. Of course, holding the rank of officer did not make one an intellectual and neither might one be un-intellectual simply by holding the rank of private. Rank seemingly had little effect on one's reaction to *Der Ruf*.

The May 1945 report on reader responses indicates a generally positive reaction among readers, although not without indications that many others reacted negatively. There are several examples of prisoners who praised the paper's content and writing. Private Herbert Diedler, in Camp Cooke, California, claimed that he:

...read *Der Ruf* from the first issue with satisfaction and great sympathy...What I welcome in *Der Ruf* is the objective, reasonable, and unsparing judgement [sic] about the events of the last years, the frank description of the present situation, the wise preparation for the things which the physical and spiritual reconstruction of our homeland will demand of us and last, not least, the clearness and beauty of the German language, which characterizes most articles.<sup>27</sup>

Not only did Diedler praise the paper's content, but he also complimented it for being well-written. Captain Ernst Harnau at Camp Concordia, Kansas, offered similar praise:

I read [*Der Ruf*] since the publication started and welcome its ideas-as many other fellow-prisoners do...*Der Ruf* intercedes in favor of our obligation and aim: The reconstruction of a really free Germany, willing to co-operate peacefully with all nations. Therefore *Der Ruf* is on the right track, since it is the medium of speech of all reasonable, intelligent, and decent fellow-prisoners in the camps of America. It is the only newspaper of that size to reach everybody beyond the sphere of individual camps.<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>27</sup> "Readers' Comments on *Der Ruf*," May 1945. Group 389, Box 1597.

<sup>28</sup> "Readers' Comments on *Der Ruf*," May 1945. Group 389, Box 1597.

Note that Harnau mentioned “intelligent” prisoners, perhaps an acknowledgement of the paper’s intellectual bent. He continued by asking for more copies at Concordia, indicating a broader interest there:

We circulate [the paper] by exchanging it and handing it over to others. *Der Ruf* must reach every single POW camp in the U.S.A. Every new issue displayed at our canteens is sold out in no time. Please send us more copies—many fellow-prisoners have still to do without them.<sup>29</sup>

As an officer, Harnau could not have been considered a rank-and-file prisoner. Regardless, his request for additional copies suggests that the paper was very much in demand at Camp Concordia not only among officers but enlisted men as well.

Not all reactions in the May report were unreservedly positive. H. Schiwy at Camp Westoverfield, Massachusetts, while “enthused” about *Der Ruf*, requested a “detailed explanation of the present political events in Europe.”<sup>30</sup> Most issues did provide news about the war and events in Europe, but such information was sometimes sporadic, perhaps leading Schiwy to ask for more coverage. Other responses mentioned ongoing rejection of the paper among fellow prisoners. For example, Corporal Alfred Walther of Camp Swift, Texas, claimed that the paper had “met with great approval in our camp,” but that “probably the majority” had rejected *Der Ruf*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Gerhard Flaeming of Camp Concordia claimed that the paper had “raised much dust” in his camp, because “defenders of a misunderstood ‘attitude’” tried to intimidate people who wanted to read it. The solution for those interested in the paper was to read it in secret in order to avoid reprisals from camp Nazis. Corporal Herbert Walter at Camp Stockton claimed that the paper had “gained its supporters” despite the fact that it could only be purchased “under difficult circumstances” until after the war had ended. Notice that in all three accounts, the opposition to the paper was ideological, rather than stylistic.

---

<sup>29</sup> “Readers’ Comments on *Der Ruf*,” May 1945. Group 389, Box 1597.

<sup>30</sup> “Readers’ Comments on *Der Ruf*,” May 1945. Group 389, Box 1597.

Some responses were hostile. Issue 6, a special edition in May 1945 that covered the end of the war, seems to have been particularly inflammatory. Sgt. Gustav von der Heyde at Camp Hearne, Texas took particular exception to a caption under a picture from the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor that said “Hitler also declared war on the United States,” responding:

I wonder if you can't lie any better. What about lend-lease, the troop contingent of the U.S.A. on the British Isles and finally the commencement of hostilities by America. Nothing but atrocious distortion of facts, continuous lies, scrawling of a gang of mud-slingers, that is my judgement [sic] of the newspaper of German prisoners of war in the U.S.A. —*Der Ruf*.<sup>31</sup>

Navy Corporal Moritz Vauck at Fort Bliss, Texas echoed von der Heyde's sentiments, claiming in response to several captioned pictures of Hitler that “you can leave out those ironical captions to pictures of Hitler, because you are not authorized to do such things.”<sup>32</sup> Perhaps Vauck was referring to the famous (and often misinterpreted) 1940 picture of Hitler “dancing a jig” upon learning of France's defeat. The caption actually refers to Hitler's “victory dance,” which Vauck may have found offensive. Both of these negative responses indicate an ongoing adherence to Nazi ideology. Von der Heyde seemingly refused to believe that Germany had indeed declared war on the United States following the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor, and Vauck evidently felt that the editors of *Der Ruf* were not allowed to caption pictures of Hitler due to a lingering reverence for the departed Führer.

The July report provides further evidence of widespread approval and acceptance of *Der Ruf*. There are no negative responses in this or subsequent reports, indicating either that the officials compiling them chose only to include positive responses, or that the overall number of negative responses had declined. Remember that these reports were compiled from letters written to the editorial staff, so we must entertain the possibility that few who opposed the

---

<sup>31</sup> “Readers' Comments on *Der Ruf*,” May 1945. Group 389, Box 1597.

<sup>32</sup> “Readers' Comments on *Der Ruf*,” May 1945. Group 389, Box 1597.



paper's content ever bothered to write about it. Meanwhile, there was an abundance of positive responses. Helmut Reiser of Camp Wheller Georgia wrote that "*Der Ruf* is our favorite reading; with impatience we are waiting for each issue in our camp." Sgt. August Giesecking at Camp Fort Benning, Georgia, praised the paper's quality while noting its scarcity:

With great interest I have been reading the special edition and other issues of *Der Ruf*. The newspaper is excellent not only as to its contents but also typographically, and I can only regret that I have not been able to get hold of all copies so far. With much skill, *Der Ruf* endeavors to reply to the many questions of our comrades, and to straighten out their sometimes distorted views.<sup>33</sup>

Once again, a respondent mentioned the paper's scarcity. As noted above, the paper's circulation increased steadily from an initial run of 11,000 copies, which likely accounts for Giesecking's difficulties in obtaining all of the paper's back issues. As in previous examples, Giesecking praised the paper not only for its content, but for its presentation as well. Pfc. Bruno Wittmann from Camp Hood, Texas saw *Der Ruf* as a source of inspiration:

It is with great interest that I wait for every copy of your paper which has already given me much confidence and courage. It is the organ of our opinion, representing our interests, in fact, it is the newspaper of the POWs in America. What I like most in it is the truth, even if sometimes a bitter truth. But the eyes of many have now been opened.<sup>34</sup>

Wittman's claim that the paper was "representing our interests" contradicts Robin's claim that the paper only dealt with the average prisoner's concerns "in passing only."<sup>35</sup> Lt. Col. Herwig Weber praised the staff's efforts to describe America beyond the barbed wire surrounding the POW camps, describing the task of conveying "new impressions" of the United States to German prisoners as difficult but "necessary."<sup>36</sup>

Schoenstedt and his superiors, evidently pleased at *Der Ruf*'s rising circulation due to increasing demand, seem to have abandoned efforts to monitor responses toward the paper after

---

<sup>33</sup> "Readers' Comments on *Der Ruf*," May 1945. Group 389, Box 1597.

<sup>34</sup> "Readers' Comments on *Der Ruf*," May 1945. Group 389, Box 1597.

<sup>35</sup> Robin, *The Barbed-Wire College*, 77.

<sup>36</sup> "Readers' Comments on *Der Ruf*," May 1945. Group 389, Box 1597.

October 1945. The final report covers the months of September and October, and includes only positive responses. Most of the responses echo sentiments expressed in positive examples from the May and July reports, but for the sake of completeness, here are a few examples. Hans Ziegler of Camp Holabird, Maryland wrote that:

I have read the newspaper *Der Ruf* with great interest. For many fellow-prisoners of this camp, it has become a mile-stone in the reconstruction of a Germany which was plunged into disaster by National Socialism.<sup>37</sup>

Pfc. Anselm Stockmar at Camp Livingston, Louisiana:

When I saw *Der Ruf* for the first time, I was very happy about its standard. It is sustained by sincerity, love of truth, nobility and consciousness of responsibility. The true German spirit, suppressed for a long time, is wonderfully presented.<sup>38</sup>

Corporal Alois Tausch of Camp Carson, Colorado:

I welcome our prisoner of war newspaper which does its part in helping many fellow-prisoners to use their knowledge at home. May art thus flourish in future Germany. My best wishes and good luck to *Der Ruf*.<sup>39</sup>

This particular report also included comments from Thomas Mann, who had been sent issues for review. Mann praised *Der Ruf* as a “sound, well-written, highly informative and educational” publication of extremely high material quality. In light of the series of reports, one must conclude that while many, including hardcore Nazis, remained opposed to *Der Ruf*, the paper found a receptive and enthusiastic audience that eagerly awaited and purchased each successive issue. While there must certainly have been many prisoners who remained apathetic due to the paper’s intellectual tendencies, the quantitative evidence regarding circulation as well as the qualitative samples above suggest that *Der Ruf* resonated far better with German POWs than Ron Robin claims.

---

<sup>37</sup> “Readers’ Comments on *Der Ruf*,” May 1945. Group 389, Box 1597.

<sup>38</sup> “Readers’ Comments on *Der Ruf*,” May 1945. Group 389, Box 1597.

<sup>39</sup> “Readers’ Comments on *Der Ruf*,” May 1945. Group 389, Box 1597.

## Andersch's Contributions

For most of his tenure at *Der Ruf*, Andersch edited the literary section, contributing his own work far less often than his colleagues Curt Vinz and Gustav René Hocke. Only a few articles in *Der Ruf* can be directly attributed to Andersch, but their contents reveal further evidence of his literary interests and perspective. The first of these was a short story entitled “Die Mäusemutter” (“The Mother Mouse”) in issue three on 15 April 1945. Andersch had submitted the story and other writings to the editorial staff while at Camp Ruston, probably in hopes of being asked to take part in paper’s production. In this story written by “AA,” Frank, a farm laborer in Kentucky, searches for mice and rats among his employer’s corn. Normally, he killed those he found, but upon finding a mother mouse and her babies, he hesitated and ultimately chose to leave them alone. Andersch posits that people inherently fear taking a mother’s life, even that of an animal, because scenes like that encountered by Frank call to mind images of the Madonna and child. Having offered the possibility, the author then rejected the religious explanation in favor of a more practical one: Frank simply feared that the blood he “wanted to shed” would get on him. In conclusion, Andersch offered a quote from Proverbs 1:7, along with his own extrapolation:

“The beginning of all wisdom is the fear of the Lord.” But note: only the beginning. The road from fear to reverence is a very long one.<sup>40</sup>

There are several ways to interpret the story. Certainly there are pacifist overtones, as Andersch seemingly encourages a reverence for all life, even that of a mouse. Such sentiment provided a marked contrast to the backdrop of warfare in Europe over the previous six years. The story might also be understood as a veiled reference to the circumstances of captivity. By drawing a distinction between fear and reverence, and claiming that Frank’s choice not to kill the mouse

---

<sup>40</sup> Alfred Andersch, “Die Mäusemutter.” *Der Ruf*, n. 3, 15 April 1945, 4.

was a practical, rather than moral decision, Andersch appears to suggest that while he and his fellow captives must presently submit to the authority of a “lord,” the path to full, willing acceptance of American values and democracy will be a long one.

The author’s first article as a *Der Ruf* staff member appeared in issue five on 15 May 1945, shortly after his arrival at Fort Kearney. The article, entitled “Abschied von Rom,” describes a brief journey through Rome as the author and his fellow prisoners were being transported south, away from Oriolo, where Andersch had been captured. Writing under his own name, Andersch recalled homemade signs on houses in every village with slogans such as “Cheers to Churchill and Roosevelt,” while Italians yelled insults at the German captives. The rest of the brief article contrasts the beauty and atmosphere of Rome with the author’s own circumstances as a prisoner. Evidently, several roads were blocked, forcing the driver of the prisoner truck to follow a circuitous route that passed many of the city’s plazas and landmarks. Andersch had long been fascinated by Italy, which would later provide the setting for his 1960 novel *Die Rote*, and his descriptions of Rome were therefore highly romantic:

[Because of the driver’s irregular path] I saw once again the buildings and places from my memories of two springs spent in the city...the small bar on the corner of the Piazza Venezia and the [Via del] Corso was still there. I could feel the taste of the white, ice-cold, bittersweet vermouth wine that I drank there, when exhausted by my meanderings through the city. I thought about the dark hair and deep tenderness of the woman, the great, serious woman who was my companion there. Everything was so secure and peaceful with her at the time, that the entire city had become like a peaceful, humming, sunny room decorated with such “furniture” as its churches, palaces, fountains, stairs, and gardens.<sup>41</sup>

The scene depicted above has the character of a romantic daydream, a pleasant memory of days gone by. Doubtlessly the anonymous woman to whom Andersch refers here was his ex-wife Angelika, whom he first met in Rome during the winter of 1933-1934.<sup>42</sup> Recall that during his

---

<sup>41</sup> Alfred Andersch, “Abschied von Rom.” *Der Ruf*, n. 5, 15 May 1945, 2.

<sup>42</sup> Jendricke, *Alfred Andersch*, 33.

captivity, the author had briefly “reclaimed” her, listing her as his spouse in his official file. Perhaps his experiences in and around Rome had revived feelings once buried or abandoned, although in his letters home he inquired frequently about Gisela’s situation while rarely mentioning his former spouse.

Andersch’s admiration for Rome is clear in the article’s conclusion, where he described the city’s many landmarks as “shrines that house the soul of Europe.”<sup>43</sup> Such sentiment indicated Andersch’s already-formed belief that artistic beauty was the true core of European culture, a feeling that he would later emphasize in writings from the second *Der Ruf* onward. For Andersch, to affix one’s attention to art in its various expressions (painting, architecture, and, of course, literature, among many others) was to achieve a higher understanding of the world. In the second *Der Ruf*, Andersch would often insist that artists should spearhead the creation of a new German and, by extension European, society and culture, as will be discussed in Chapter 5.

First appearing on 15 June 1945, issue seven contained three separate pieces by Andersch. The first was a brief epitaph for the German poet Stefan George, who died in exile at Locarno in Switzerland in December 1933. The piece, entitled “Ein Mahner” (“An Admonisher”), praises George’s calls for “renewal,” a claim that Andersch does not clarify, perhaps assuming that his audience would understand the reference. In his last major work, *Das neue Reich*, George called for a new society that would be ruled by an artistic, intellectual aristocracy, evoking comparison with Plato’s *Republic*. This concept surely resonated well with Andersch’s belief in the leading roles of art and artists in shaping a society’s fortunes. While acknowledging that George’s work was popular among the Nazis, Andersch claims that they perverted the former’s “great vision” with their “falsified reality.” As evidence, the author noted the fact that George, disgusted with the Nazis’ interpretation of his call for a “new Empire,” fled

---

<sup>43</sup> Andersch, “Abschied von Rom.” *Der Ruf*, n. 5, 15 May 1945, 2.

into exile, never to “trod the soil of Germany again.”<sup>44</sup> Indeed, George was perturbed by the Nazis’ enthusiasm for his writings, preferring instead the friendship of individuals such as Claus and Berthold von Stauffenberg, two participants in the 20 July 1944 plot to assassinate Hitler. According to Joachim Fest, who has written extensively about the Stauffenberg plot, Claus often quoted excerpts from George’s *Der Widerchrist* (“The Antichrist”) to his fellow conspirators, no doubt due to the poem’s vivid depiction of masses in thrall to a miraculous yet sinister leader whose reign will ultimately end in ruin.<sup>45</sup> This brief piece reveals Andersch’s admiration of George not only for the latter’s call for an intellectual aristocracy, but for his refusal to associate himself with his Nazi admirers as well.

Andersch’s second item in issue seven was a short story entitled “Fräulein Christine.” The title character is a young woman who anxiously ponders the fate of her beloved, Werner Rott, shortly after Hitler became chancellor. A somewhat scattered portrait of her beloved emerges in the narrative until one realizes that the absent Rott shared several traits with Andersch, giving the entire piece an autobiographical aura. As with his stories about Franz Kien, here Andersch indulged his proclivity for creating literary stand-ins for himself. Rott, like Andersch, had held an important position in the “youth movement,” although the author’s particular political persuasion (communist) remained unidentified, perhaps due to censorship. Perhaps more fantastic was Andersch’s claim that his fictional stand-in was a writer whose “excellent” works displayed “full linguistic strength and spiritual originality,” according to Christine’s scholarly father. This description once again reveals Andersch’s literary ambitions, as he has characters reacting to Rott’s writings in the same way he hoped people would react to his own. For the author who claimed that he would one day be “greater than Thomas Mann,”

---

<sup>44</sup> “FA” (Alfred Andersch), “Ein Mahner.” *Der Ruf*, n. 7, 15 June 1945, 4.

<sup>45</sup> Joachim Fest, *Plotting Hitler’s Death: The Story of the German Resistance*, trans. Bruce Little. (New York: Henry Holt, 1997), 216.

according to his colleague Richter, one is unsurprised to find the characters in his story heaping unmitigated praise upon his literary stand-in. In the story's conclusion, there is an allusion to Andersch's imprisonment at Dachau. When Christine phones Rott's mother, hoping to invite her beloved to an evening walk, she is told that he was arrested and has been imprisoned for the past two days, a clear parallel to Andersch's arrest shortly after the Nazis took power.<sup>46</sup> The story is more about Christine's fascination with Rott than any sort of political discussion of issues stemming from the Nazi assumption of power, but through the lens of the former's fascination with her beloved, we see hints of Andersch's self-perception as a brilliant author waiting for his opportunity to shine. Perhaps this story is one of many that Robin argues failed to resonate with the average prisoner. When they refer to specific articles, prisoner reactions almost always address those writings that deal with political issues rather than the creative literary fare found in the last few pages of each issue of *Der Ruf*, an indication that the paper's more artistic offerings were far less appealing to readers than articles dealing with contemporary political and material concerns.

Andersch's final offering in issue seven appeared in the paper's section on American society and culture. In "Die neuen Dichter Amerikas" ("America's New Poets") Andersch surveyed contemporary American authors, including Thomas Wolfe, Thornton Wilder, John Steinbeck, and Ernest Hemingway. The article contains little of interest beyond Andersch's lists of authors and their major works, but he does indicate his preference for realism. The author praised John Steinbeck in particular for his ability to "render visible" the "value and dignity of life" in works such as *Of Mice and Men* and *The Grapes of Wrath*. According to Andersch, such works:

---

<sup>46</sup> Anton Windig (Alfred Andersch), "Fräulein Christine." *Der Ruf*, n. 7, 15 June 1945, 6.

...do not present easy solutions to the burning questions of our time, but rather they simply allow the difficulty and complexity to exist [in their pages].<sup>47</sup>

Andersch's admiration for Steinbeck and other realists would shape his own work, including his most famous novel *Sansibar oder der letzte Grund* ("Zanzibar, or the Last Reason"). Seldom in Andersch's writings can one find elements of the fantastic or supernatural as seen in fellow Group 47 alumnus Günter Grass' *Die Blechtrommel* ("The Tin Drum") or in Mann's *Doktor Faustus*. Hans Werner Richter's own work would take on a realist character as well, so perhaps he and Andersch's shared preference for realism accounted for their mutual affinity.

In the 1 July issue, Andersch wrote a brief article commemorating Thomas Mann's seventieth birthday on 6 June 1945. The author clearly admired his subject, whom he described as the world's "greatest living writer and humanist." As in his previous article, Andersch praised those traits in Mann that he sought to develop in his own writing:

The German people probably never fully understood Thomas Mann. He presented them with the marvelous gift of his language, with that style of ideal precision and clear description, which rule as spiritual lights over the fullness of his artistic intuition. [But they] did not like the sharpness and clarity of these lights.<sup>48</sup>

Andersch continued to praise Mann, concluding that:

We can only assume that the disproportion[ately low] success of his works in the German-speaking world [can be attributed] to the German "illness" of the last few years, constituting the deep inner tragedy of his life. What we know for sure is that we owe a debt to [Mann]: not through declamations of our admiration and love, but through the adoption of a very simple stance. [This stance] will be achieved through [reading] *Buddenbrooks*, *Der Zauberberg*, the *Joseftrilogie*, and [Mann's] political essays. In this way we can achieve the mentality that he once promoted at the end of a speech at the University of Munich, when he said we must learn how to read again.<sup>49</sup>

Though Andersch's argument here is at times confusing, he evidently believed that Germans had heretofore failed to appreciate Mann because of their "illness," a seeming allusion to Nazism as

---

<sup>47</sup> Alfred Andersch, "Die neuen Dichter Amerikas." *Der Ruf*, n. 7, 15 June 1945, 7.

<sup>48</sup> FA (Alfred Andersch), "Thomas Mann." *Der Ruf*, n. 8, 1 July 1945, 4.

<sup>49</sup> FA (Alfred Andersch), "Thomas Mann." *Der Ruf*, n. 8, 1 July 1945, 4.



well as other associated “-isms” such as nationalism and racism. Andersch’s broad assumption that Germans had failed to fully appreciate Mann reflects the author’s intellectual arrogance. For Andersch, the solution appears to have been a widespread, open-minded revisiting of Mann’s famous works, which would help Germans “learn how to read again” and abandon the destructive ideologies of the past twelve years. In other words, art would show an “ill” people the way forward, a sentiment we will continue to observe in Andersch’s early writings. Again, one doubts very seriously whether this piece would have resonated with more than a few like-minded intellectual prisoners, as the article’s content was far removed from average German POWs’ daily concerns about the developing situation in postwar Germany.

“Deutsche Jugend wohin?” (“Where to, German Youth?,” n. 9, 15 July 1945) was Andersch’s first and only political article in the first *Der Ruf*. In many ways, the article foreshadowed his writings in the postwar paper of the same name. In this front-page piece, Andersch clarified the confusing sentiments from his article on Mann by offering his thoughts on how his generation might best proceed in light of the events of the past twelve years. From the opening paragraph, Andersch’s definition of “German youth” is clear:

Before one can speak of the German youth of our times, one must inquire... who this “youth” is. It is--put briefly--the youth, who has been through the battlefields of Stalingrad, El Alamein, and Cassino, [or] who has withstood the rain of bombs upon Hamburg, Berlin, and Cologne, a youth who has seen death in its many forms.<sup>50</sup>

Andersch identified the soldiers of his generation as almost synonymous with the term “German youth.” He would often assert in the second *Der Ruf* that those who served in the army were the true representatives of his generation, a concept meant at least in part to emphasize the legitimacy of his and others’ experiences as compared to those who emigrated or collaborated.

---

<sup>50</sup> Alfred Andersch, “Deutsche Jugend wohin?” *Der Ruf*, n. 9, 15 July 1945, 1.

The bulk of the article focuses on how the young German generation can overcome the “illness” of Nazism and best prepare itself for the difficult prospect of rebuilding its homeland.

Andersch wrote that there were three “tasks” facing his generation, prerequisites for achieving true democracy in Germany. The first task would be a shift in mentality, a concept that recalls the argument from the author’s piece on Thomas Mann:

Self-education toward moderation, critical thinking, and careful consideration...from [these qualities] the youth must rise above the crimes committed in their name and open a path toward a new and valuable concept of humanity. Never again will they give up independent thought, never will they be led by a leader other than one they elect themselves. The foundation of such an attitude is the belief that a person’s being may not be violated by the state or due to race or class.<sup>51</sup>

In the phrase “committed in their name,” Andersch seemed to distance his generation from the crimes of Nazism. The notion that the average soldier was not accountable for Nazi crimes is one that would appear frequently in the second *Der Ruf*, but clearly Andersch had already developed the concept during his time as a POW. Following the theme of victimization, Andersch argued that the young generation’s second task would be education, because:

Twelve years of an authoritarian regime have left the young generation far behind, their knowledge and development far behind those of previous decades...objective, fundamental knowledge and multifarious education must make up those basic principles...through which rebuilding can be accomplished.<sup>52</sup>

Because its education was stunted by twelve years of Nazism, the young generation could not be held at fault for their failure to develop socially and politically. Through a renewed emphasis on education, Andersch believed his generation could overcome the racism and “narrow” thinking that had led to the “National Socialist catastrophe.”

The final task, the hardest according to Andersch, would be for the “war-youth” to use their experiences, forged through “blood and suffering,” to engage in a “struggle for the soul of

---

<sup>51</sup> Andersch, “Deutsche Jugend wohin?” *Der Ruf*, n. 9, 15 July 1945, 1.

<sup>52</sup> Andersch, “Deutsche Jugend wohin?” *Der Ruf*, n. 9, 15 July 1945, 1.

the future Germany.” The result of this struggle would be a democracy that thrived “economically, socially, and politically.” In Chapter 5, we will examine further Andersch’s vision of postwar Germany. The present article only hints at his vision, which was far more socialist in nature than his contributions as a POW indicate. Of course, in a time when tensions were rising between the United States and the Soviet Union, Schoenstedt could hardly allow pro-socialist sentiments to infiltrate his paper, despite the fact that he himself had once been an active communist. Therefore, the emphasis on socialist principles found in Andersch’s contributions to the second *Der Ruf* are notably absent here in favor of more general statements about changing “mentalities” and “self-education.” Likewise absent are calls for European unity, a theme that would appear frequently in his early writings in occupied Germany. Given his socialist background, Andersch had likely already formulated the ideas he expressed in the second *Der Ruf*, but was unable to incorporate them into “Deutsche Jugend wohin?” due to his circumstances. The author’s tenure at Fort Kearney was fast approaching its end, as he and his fellow prisoner-editors had been growing increasingly frustrated with their situation.

### **The Petition**

On 28 June 1945, the prisoner-editors of *Der Ruf* wrote a signed petition addressed to the Provost Marshal General, Maj. Gen. Arthur Lerch. The staff presented this petition, signed by Vinz, Hocke, Andersch, and others, to their superiors following the completion of work on the tenth issue, which would be published on 1 August. This document is particularly valuable because there is scant information about internal disputes between the staff and overseers of *Der Ruf*. The petition lists a series of grievances, most of them related to the staff’s desire to return home as soon as possible. According to the staff, they were exhausted from producing the paper under less-than-favorable conditions:

After these ten issues it becomes evident that for psychological and objective reasons *Der Ruf* cannot maintain its old standard of quality and liveliness behind barbed wire. After six months of this experiment the impossibility of editing the newspaper in complete isolation from the exterior world for a longer period becomes obvious. The mental energy and will-power being exhausted, the members of the staff even with the best of their intentions and enthusiasm they have for their own work are unable to continue under the present conditions.<sup>53</sup>

The appeal indicates that the prisoner-editors were chafing under continued imprisonment, despite their obvious willingness to cooperate in one of the SPD's primary projects. The staff believed that, having done their part, they should be placed at the front of the queue to return to Germany:

...the staff of *Der Ruf* begs the Provost Marshal General to be released and sent back to Germany as soon as the first German cooperative Prisoners of War will be shipped home from America. Being convinced to have proved their loyal cooperation and reliability by editing the first ten issues, the present team would consider their release a full acknowledgment of the work done and regard the mission completed...Each member of *Der Ruf* pledges himself to act in their different professions according to the ideals promoted by *Der Ruf*: Humanity, Reason and Democracy.<sup>54</sup>

Understandably, the staff cited their contributions as a valid reason for sending them home sooner than other prisoners. The two examples above indicate the staff's frustration with their continued incarceration, a frustration that was common among fellow prisoners across the United States, especially after the war ended and many were anxious to return home to discover the fates of their loved ones.

The staff attached a two-page addendum to the petition entitled "Plans and Wishes of *Der Ruf*," in which they offered two possibilities for the continuation of the paper that would allow them to be released from custody. The first possibility foreshadowed the later creation of an independent *Der Ruf* in the American Zone of Occupation in Germany:

---

<sup>53</sup> Petition of *Der Ruf*'s staff to the Provost Marshal General, 28 June 1945. Group 389, Box 1598.

<sup>54</sup> Petition of *Der Ruf*'s staff to the Provost Marshal General, 28 June 1945. Group 389, Box 1598.

[We suggest] transfer to Germany. Thereat publication of *Der Ruf* as before or as a weekly paper for the German population in the American zone of occupation and for the German prisoners of War interned by the Americans in Europe as well as in the U.S.A...

Premises: Since there is proof that a newspaper cannot be edited behind barbed wire in the long run, it should be decided to release the staff of *Der Ruf* from captivity. They would pledge themselves to work loyally and cooperatively for the idea of democracy as up to now, as a free contracting party.

Those members of the staff of *Der Ruf* whose homes are not in the American zone of occupation should be granted the right to settle down in the American zone with their families and their property, so that they may perform the mental work as free citizens on a healthy foundation.<sup>55</sup>

The staff hoped that their suggestion of moving *Der Ruf* to Germany would not only allow them release from captivity, but also to be reunited with their families in the American Zone. Their pledge to continue to work “for the idea of democracy” seems intended to convince their captors of their continuing devotion to the SPD’s goal of reeducating Germans in democratic values, and that the staff would perpetuate those values in occupied Germany. As we will see in Chapter 5, Vinz, Andersch, and Richter would set out to do those very things. The staff seemed moved as much by a desire to return home quickly as by a commitment to transfer their paper to their homeland. Indeed, the suggestion of transferring the paper’s operations to Germany comes across as a none-too-subtle means of securing an early return home rather than any genuine desire to continue working on *Der Ruf*.

One possible source of the staff’s urgent desire to return home was the fact that on 15 June the Office of the PMG had publicly acknowledged the existence of the reeducation program, which had begun at Forts Getty and Weatherill, Rhode Island in May 1945. Under the direction of Harvard professor Howard Mumford Jones, the reeducation program rushed selected anti-Nazi applicants from across the United States through a 60-day cycle of courses intended to provide a basic understanding of American history, government, law, and culture. German

---

<sup>55</sup> Petition of *Der Ruf*’s staff to the Provost Marshal General, 28 June 1945. Group 389, Box 1598.

history was also part of the curriculum, with an emphasis on the “positive” aspects of German culture throughout the centuries, which included achievement in literature, art, and music.<sup>56</sup>

POWs were encouraged to apply for reeducation as a means of securing a faster repatriation than the general prisoner population. As the reeducation program began accommodating thousands of students, the staff of *Der Ruf* surely grew frustrated, believing themselves most deserving of early repatriation by virtue of their contributions to the paper.

The second suggested possibility was the recruitment and employment of a new staff that would continue producing *Der Ruf*, while the original staff would be released to the American Zone in Germany, where they could perhaps aid in the production of a new paper there. Once again, the end result of the staff’s suggestion would be repatriation as soon as possible, another indication of the prisoner-editors’ understandable primary objective of returning home. According to Major W.B. Gemmill’s 11 August report on the situation at Fort Kearny, Schoenstedt took the matter under serious consideration. According to Gemmill, Hocke served as the prisoner-editors’ spokesman at a conference with Schoenstedt on 7 August, where he explained that the staff could not adequately describe American society in *Der Ruf* while behind barbed wire, where they had no opportunity to interact with American civilians. Gemmill reported that Schoenstedt chastised *Der Ruf*’s staff for the petition, but promised to consider their concerns as soon as an equally “good” staff could be assembled. Schoenstedt did not explicitly promise them early repatriation, but according to Gemmill he strongly implied as much. Indeed, Schoenstedt had already been recruiting new staff members, among them Hans Werner Richter, who would arrive at Kearney in September. Meanwhile, Andersch and others were granted their wishes to be removed from the paper. Vinz and Hocke were among the first scheduled for repatriation due to their leading roles at the paper, but Schoenstedt convinced the latter to remain

---

<sup>56</sup> Krammer, *Nazi Prisoners of War*, 219.

on the staff until issue seventeen, when Hans Werner Richter became the chief editor.<sup>57</sup>

Evidently, Schoenstedt retained Hocke in order to smooth the transition to a new editorial staff.

Andersch was transferred from Kearney to Fort Getty on 25 August, and embarked for Germany on 28 October. Schoenstedt evidently did not believe Andersch essential to the paper's continued success, and one piece of evidence suggests the two were on less than friendly terms. Although the author himself said almost nothing about the issue, Hermann Jung provided a possible indication of animosity between Andersch and Schoenstedt in his *Die Deutschen Kriegsgefangenen in amerikanischer Hand*, where he quoted the following from an "anonymous" member of *Der Ruf*'s editorial staff:

Schoenstedt was a not-unknown communist author during the Weimar period. It was said of him in a recent publication in the DDR that he had later "alienated himself from the workers' movement." At any rate, during the period of *Der Ruf* he followed, if not openly, the communist-Russian line...[but] he was in complete agreement with the American line on the issue of the collective guilt of the German people and the terms of the Potsdam Agreement. On cultural-literary questions and others, we had stubborn arguments that led to threats to place both R [likely Hans Werner Richter] and myself in penal camps. In any case, Schoenstedt followed a policy of disallowing anything in *Der Ruf* that was not in complete agreement with contemporary American and Russian views. At the same time--at least in the time I was there--we successfully prevented [printing] anything we could not [stand behind.]<sup>58</sup>

This anonymous individual was almost certainly Alfred Andersch. Given his future friendship with Richter, whom he names above, and his stark opposition to the notion of collective guilt, Andersch was likely the source of the quote. Schoenstedt's supposed threats to send him and Richter both to penal camps recall their removal as editors of the second *Der Ruf* by the U.S. Information Control Division in part for their strong criticisms of American occupation policy. If this recollection is to be believed, Andersch and Schoenstedt may have engaged in several heated arguments about the paper's content and focus, not surprising given the former's

---

<sup>57</sup> Hermann Jung, *Die Deutschen Kriegsgefangenen in amerikanischer Hand, USA*. (Munich: Giesecking, 1972), 224.

<sup>58</sup> Hermann Jung, *Die Deutschen Kriegsgefangenen*, 224.

argumentative nature evident in later writings. One must not, however, discount the possibility that Andersch was attempting to paint himself in a less “collaborative” light several decades after his participation in *Der Ruf*.

### **Richter at the Helm**

The second “phase” of *Der Ruf* began with issue 11 on 15 August 1945. For the rest of its run, the paper retained its regular sections, including the pages on current events, American culture, Germany, art and culture, and reports from camps across the U.S, with few alterations to its content. From issue 17, Hans Werner Richter served as head of the editorial staff, having first come to Fort Kearney in September 1945. According to Richter, he protested repeatedly his selection as a member of the paper’s staff:

Against my will I became editor of a paper whose tendencies I rejected. I tried to resist, I explained again and again, that I should be allowed to return to Germany, but to no avail. The machine of the American military camp hierarchy continued relentlessly, like every military apparatus.<sup>59</sup>

Despite his apparent objections, Richter remained in his position as lead editor until the paper was discontinued in March 1946 because most German prisoners had already or would soon be repatriated. Like Andersch, Richter often disagreed with his overseers, but evidently those disagreements were not serious enough to warrant his removal as chief editor. Why, then, did he continue to serve as chief editor of *Der Ruf*, especially when many of his fellow prisoners were being repatriated? Richter offered a series of explanations that should provide insight to his motives.

In *Die Geschlagenen*, Richter wrestled with the apparent contradiction of opposing Nazism while serving faithfully in the *Wehrmacht*. As explained in the novel, Richter ultimately identified with his defeated countrymen, regardless of his feelings toward the Nazi regime.

---

<sup>59</sup> Richter, “Wie entstand und was war die Gruppe 47?,” 45.



During his time at Fort Kearney, the author developed a sense of purpose that would inspire his writings and actions both during and after his captivity. As he explained:

...in those days [at Fort Kearney] it finally dawned on me that I was also one of the defeated. If I wanted to do something about developments in Germany, then I could represent the interests of the losers. In other words: we must fashion our own [concepts,] under the circumstances of opposition to the occupying powers.<sup>60</sup>

Why, after months in captivity, did Richter realize only during his time at Kearney that he was “also one of the defeated?” Perhaps the author had internally distanced himself from his defeated comrades by virtue of his inner opposition to Nazism? Another possibility is that being under the strict guidance of *Der Ruf*'s supervisors was a stark and daily reminder that he, even as an “anti-Nazi,” would continue to be treated as one of the “losers.” Without further clarification from Richter, one finds it difficult to explain fully his unusual claim. Regardless, this passage, written many years after the fact, suggests that Richter set out rebelliously to use *Der Ruf* to challenge popular American portrayals of Germany. He continued:

I had accepted that we could only act from our knowledge and experience of the Third Reich...the outrage brought about by [the situation at] Fort Kearney was not the only cause of my realization. Still more [important was the] knowledge that I was once again subject to a dictatorial apparatus whose orders I had to bend.<sup>61</sup>

Here Richter is not entirely clear about whether he is describing the circumstances surrounding either the first or second version of *Der Ruf*, although his sentiments apply similarly to both. In both publications, Richter set out intentionally to contradict or challenge the official notion of collective guilt by “bending” official guidelines for publication. In another bold declaration, Richter claimed to his German readers that:

In the months following the dismissal of the first editorial staff, we wrote against collective guilt, [even though] we were officially not allowed to do so...it led to a contentious standoff with the American press officers, most of them German emigrants, and finally came to threats of putting us in penal camps. We gave way to this pressure,

---

<sup>60</sup> Richter, “Wie entstand und was war die Gruppe 47?,” 45.

<sup>61</sup> Richter, “Wie entstand und was war die Gruppe 47?,” 45-46.

while we hid our reservations and criticism in general-interest content, until we were sent back to Germany in early 1946.<sup>62</sup>

Like Andersch, Richter noted that debates between the prisoner-editors and the paper's supervisors became so heated that the staff were threatened with deportation to penal camps. This may be an exaggeration, but the separate stories corroborate. According to Richter, he and his staff conducted a subtle campaign to contradict official American views, biding their time until they could return to Germany, where the author would begin the struggle anew in the second *Der Ruf*. Were Richter's statements empty bravado, meant to convince readers in 1979 that he had never cooperated with American authorities, and that the spirit of opposition in the second *Der Ruf* had its origins in its original namesake? A survey of relevant issues and articles from *Der Ruf* may reveal whether Richter truly managed to wage a campaign against collective guilt in the paper's pages.

In issue 11, *Der Ruf* ran a reprint of Richter's recent editorial from *Die Lagerstimme*, the POW newspaper at Camp Ellis. This article is likely the one that attracted the attention of the staff and supervisors of the paper, leading to the author's transfer to Fort Kearney. Few, if any, copies of *Die Lagerstimme* or any other local camp papers are available archivally, making this reprinted article particularly important when seeking to understand Richter's views at the time. In the article, "Ost und West: Die ausgleichende Aufgabe Mitteleuropas" ("East and West: Central Europe's Compensatory Situation"), Richter describes Germany's contemporary situation, stuck between two great powers, each representing drastically different ideologies. After suggesting, correctly as it turned out, that the emerging rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union would create a political and ideological rift between East and West, Richter claimed that this new "fragmentation" would be a "deadly sword thrust" that would make

---

<sup>62</sup> Richter, "Wie entstand und was war die Gruppe 47?," 46-47.

Germany the principal battleground in a potential and perhaps unavoidable future conflict. The author was particularly concerned about each side's attempts to vilify the other to Germans in hopes of gaining a strategic advantage in Europe. What, then, was Richter's solution to this problem?

For us, it is bitterly necessary that we not allow ourselves to be dragged into a defensive position against either East or West. We should rather work toward an untrodden and objective viewpoint. We should always try to see things as they are. We should forge a separate path between the anti-Bolshevist and anti-democratic views, and reexamine everything from our own perspective, and only our own perspective.

We want to become neither Americans nor Russians, and no one demands that of us. We want to remain German. Just as the citizens of every nation that has found itself in a time of need, it is also our wish to be treated in the same way.<sup>63</sup>

The argument here foreshadows Richter's later opposition to the Allied occupation of Germany, which he often criticized in the second *Der Ruf*. Richter recognized the developing Cold War division of Europe and, possibly, Germany itself. He believed strongly that his country should work to forge its own, neutral path that would prevent it from being drawn into future conflicts. As he would do in the second version of the paper, Richter here presumes to speak for all Germans, utilizing frequently the pronouns "we" and "us." Given his views in the present article, his apparent resistance to joining *Der Ruf* makes sense; as an advocate of ideological neutrality, Richter did not wish to be seen to promote American democracy as part of the paper's staff.

His apparent rejection of both Bolshevism and American-style democracy (he describes both as "propaganda") is particularly surprising not because it differs from Richter's usual views, but rather because his article was printed in *Der Ruf*, whose objective was to introduce and promote American democracy to its readers. Until issue 12, Schoenstedt and his staff were surprisingly tolerant of articles that did not completely agree with the official American notion of

---

<sup>63</sup> Hans Werner Richter, "Ost und West: Die ausgleichende Aufgabe Mitteleuropas." *Der Ruf*, n. 12, 1 September 1945, 2.

collective guilt. There are several interesting examples from the issues immediately following the departure of the paper's original staff.<sup>64</sup>

On the front page of issue 11 (15 August 1945), a small blurb entitled "Die Schuld der Diktatoren" ("The Dictators' Guilt") implied that dictators such as Hitler and Mussolini were solely responsible for the present catastrophe:

It became evident that Hitler and Mussolini, often working against each other without any thought toward the true interests of their people, ruined the peace efforts of 1939 and 1940 with their ambition and lack of moderation in order to start a war in which they hoped to achieve eternal fame.<sup>65</sup>

Rather than asking Germans (or Italians) to accept a degree of responsibility for Nazism (or Fascism), the brief piece transfers all blame to the dictators who acted against the "true interests" of their people. In the same issue, on the page devoted to news from Germany in a regular section entitled "Das andere Deutschland" ("The Other Germany"), the anonymous author first noted that "many millions" stood in opposition to Nazism in Germany before claiming that:

*Chicago Sun* [viewed] the thesis of collective guilt as one loaded with National Socialist elements, because they see that it might inflict its wrongs on the general public. The paper understands that it is dangerous to take this theory seriously. [The theory] confirms only Goebbels' propaganda, [which as] everybody knows, stated that the Allies planned to annihilate completely the German people.<sup>66</sup>

The article appeals to a notable American paper to support the legitimacy of its argument that the notion of collective guilt was similar to Goebbels' claims that the war had become, in its final stages, one of "annihilation." In the article's last sentence, the author drew a distinction between the average German and "the guilty," whom all "decent" Germans wanted to see punished severely. By claiming that most Germans wanted to see the guilty punished, and that even a

---

<sup>64</sup> After the tenth issue.

<sup>65</sup> "Die Schuld der Diktatoren." *Der Ruf*, n. 11, 15 August 1945, 1.

<sup>66</sup> "Das Andere Deutschland." *Der Ruf*, n. 11, 15 August 1945, 5.

prominent American newspaper saw the flaws in the concept of collective guilt, the article attempted to dismiss the notion as grossly misguided and even dangerous.

In issue 12, *Der Ruf* reprinted a recent article by historian Friedrich Meinecke that had appeared in the American-run *Münchener Zeitung*. The article, entitled “Zur Selbstbesinnung: Die Schuld des Regimes” (To Self-Contemplation: The Guilt of the Regime”), claims that the Nazi regime was completely responsible for the recent catastrophe of World War II. Meinecke argued that the “senseless shedding of German blood” was the result of Hitler and the Nazis’ ability to use terror to eliminate the possibility of resistance. Acting thusly, the regime managed to “allow our cities to be destroyed” and “send millions of combatants and noncombatants to their deaths.” The author argued that the war generation should put its faith in a new German youth that:

...wanted once again to be in our churches, and not just to listen to Bach and Beethoven in them. They want to go back to all the altars of our nobler past, to Kant and Goethe, to Dürer and Thoma. Many are the paths by which one might [draw closer] to the divine and eternal, and the German spirit helped reveal this multitude of ways to the Western world. Now we must try a new path. Perhaps our mission in the Christian West is not yet exhausted!<sup>67</sup>

By referring to towering figures such as the philosopher Immanuel Kant, the “German Shakespeare” Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Renaissance artist Albrecht Dürer, and Hans Thoma, painter of religious and rural motifs, Meinecke drew attention to the richness of German culture and away from recent, destructive events. Using religion as his focal point, the author claimed that German culture had been at the forefront of European culture for centuries, whether in music, philosophy, poetry, prose, or art. Meinecke, who elaborated on these issues in his 1946 book *Die deutsche Katastrophe*, saw little continuity between the Nazi regime and the majority of German history. The printing of this particular piece seemingly reflected the editors’

---

<sup>67</sup> Friedrich Meinecke, “Zur Selbstbesinnung: Die Schuld des Regimes.” *Der Ruf*, n. 12, 1 September 1945, 3.

opposition to the notion of collective guilt, because Meinecke's article appears to confirm that Hitler and the Nazis alone were responsible for the German "catastrophe," and neither the average German nor German culture can be blamed. A third article in issue 12, entitled "Bestrafung der Schuldigen" ("Punishment of the Guilty") and printed in the page devoted to Germany, further emphasized that average, upstanding Germans were guiltless for Nazism. After mentioning again that those who opposed the Nazis either actively or passively in Germany numbered in the "millions," the anonymous author discussed the upcoming trial at Nuremberg against the leading figures of the Nazi regime, noting that the "truly guilty" should be punished severely for their crimes.<sup>68</sup> As seen in these examples, the authors challenged overtly the notion of collective guilt throughout issues 11 and 12, just after the first editorial staff departed. From issue 13 forward, however, there would be little mention of collective guilt, indicating, as Richter recalled, a tightening of restrictions on the new editorial staff.

Despite Richter's claim that he and others "hid" their arguments against collective guilt during the remainder of *Der Ruf's* run, those arguments are either so well-hidden that one cannot hope to locate them, or they simply are not present at all. This would lead one to conclude that Richter's claims were as much bravado as actual fact. From issue 13 onward, one continues to find the typical news articles on postwar circumstances in Europe, literature, the situation in Germany, and interest stories about American society and culture. Few of these articles reveal further information about the editors' views beyond what has already been established. One article, from issue 21 (15 January 1946), is particularly intriguing. "Sozialer Humanismus," written anonymously, argued that socialism should be combined with freedom in the postwar world to ensure that another catastrophic war will not happen. The author praised British Prime Minister Clement Attlee's speech to the U.S. Congress on 13 November 1945, in which he

---

<sup>68</sup> "Bestrafung der Schuldigen." *Der Ruf*, n. 12, 1 September 1945, 5.

emphasized the importance of a planned economy, which would prevent unrestrained capitalist exploitation, while continuing to maintain a pluralist political system in which individual freedoms are protected. This article is particularly noteworthy because both Andersch and Richter called repeatedly for “socialist humanism” as the founding principle of a new German society in their contributions to the second *Der Ruf*. Although the article lists no author, the structure and content suggests strongly that it was written by Hans Werner Richter, who from issue 17 was the chief editor of the paper. The following quote expresses sentiments that would appear frequently in Andersch and Richter’s postwar publication:

The combination of socialism and freedom must remain in place. European socialism has taught that only a comprehensive and balanced society can prevent disasters such as those caused by “the dictator,” since the individual, not only in his economic, but also in his moral and religious capacity, stands, instead of “systems,” at the beginning and end of all politics, all human creations and fortunes.<sup>69</sup>

Thus the author, presumably Richter, rejects the subordination of individual interests to the state, as witnessed in Stalinist Russia. As will be discussed in Chapter 5, this combination of socialist economic principles with individual rights and liberties would be a central theme in both Richter’s and Andersch’s writings in the second *Der Ruf*.

There is little official documentation regarding the second phase of *Der Ruf*. Perhaps SPD officials’ attention was diverted to the ongoing reeducation program at Forts Getty and Weatherill, which began shortly after the war in Europe ended. The paper’s circulation remained around 75,000 copies per issue, indicating that the paper’s popularity had declined little, but as Richter noted, the paper’s supervisors seemingly forbade mention of the issue of collective guilt, which did not appear in the paper at all after issue 12. Just as the end of the war had brought a reduction in prisoner rations, partly due to ongoing accusations of “prisoner coddling” among the American media and public, the war’s conclusion had also emboldened American authorities in

---

<sup>69</sup> “Sozialer Humanismus.” *Der Ruf*, n. 21, 15 January 1946, 2.

their efforts to eliminate Nazism in U.S. POW camps. In fact, a series of reports on POW newspapers from around the country reveal that a large number of papers formerly classified as “Nazi” were listed as “democratic” in reports from May 1945 onward. This represents a comprehensive effort to weed out Nazism. This effort was no longer constrained by concerns about mistreatment of American prisoners in German camps, concerns that had also prevented a reduction in rations until after 8 May 1945. Similarly, Davison, Schoenstedt, and their subordinates seemingly wished to eliminate any possible accusation of nationalism against *Der Ruf* by enforcing more stringent restrictions on permissible topics. Again, documentation regarding the paper during this period is scant, but the restrictions discussed by Richter and evident in the absence of any mention of collective guilt correspond well to other measures taken after the war ended.

### **Farewell to *Der Ruf***

The final issue of *Der Ruf*, number 26, appeared on 1 April 1946. On the front page was the article “Goodbye to *Der Ruf*: An die Schriftleitung des Rufs,” written by Schoenstedt. In the article, Schoenstedt thanked the editorial staff for their contributions, which he summarized in glowing terms:

You have never blamed the German people [for the war and the suffering it caused], and we have never compelled you to do this in your articles. But, you did look the truth in the eye as far as real conditions went and you helped prepare 375,000 German prisoners for the enormous task which stands before all of us. These prisoners are for this reason also better off than the Germans at home because through *Der Ruf* and through other means they were in a position to observe and to learn that democracy is not only a system and a form of government but a manner of living. Through your efforts they were in a position to cast a look backwards upon the past and to glimpse the prospect of a future better life... You didn't tell them that the future will be here tomorrow but you have emphasized that it depended upon them themselves to build up the future and that they in order to live in peace must as citizens of this world take a position of the future.<sup>70</sup>

---

<sup>70</sup> Walter Schoenstedt, “Goodbye to *Der Ruf*: An die Schriftleitung des Rufs,” *Der Ruf*, n. 26, 1 April 1946, 1.



Schoenstedt's comments were overly hopeful; one doubts that more than a third of the 375,000 he mentions even read *Der Ruf*, much less were "prepared" by it to help rebuild Germany. His speech does, however, reveal his belief that the paper was a meaningful accomplishment whose success he hoped to convey to his staff and to its remaining readers who were anxiously awaiting their impending repatriation. Schoenstedt himself acknowledged regretfully that the staff had been prevented from printing as much news about Germany as they would have liked, because of the need to convey the suffering throughout Europe and the world as a consequence of the war. While the paper had featured news from Germany in every issue, such news was usually limited to a single page, while multiple pages were devoted to other global issues related to the war. This fact confirms Ron Robin's criticism that the paper failed to meet adequately prisoners' thirst for news from home, but the paper's circulation was hardly affected by the brevity of its section on Germany.

Despite his complaints and cynicism, Richter found his time in the United States tolerable, claiming that "being a prisoner in America was not bad. You could put up with it—there were films, a library, [and] always a small camp newspaper. Kearney was even more generous."<sup>71</sup> On 10 March, Davison and the new PMG, Brigadier Gen. B.M. Bryan, issued a certificate confirming Richter's status as a "former prisoner of war who has demonstrated that he fully believes in the democratic way of life and who has a true understanding of the United Nations' war and peace aims."<sup>72</sup> Those words are ironic in light of Richter's powerful criticisms of Allied policy, but the certification was intended to validate his status as a "special" prisoner and to confirm his repatriation. According to Richter's recollection, he embarked for Europe in

---

<sup>71</sup> Dan Stets, "The Spirit of Kearney: The Project in Rhode Island that Shaped Postwar Germany." In *Providence Sunday Journal*, 18 July 1982, 8.

<sup>72</sup> B.M. Bryan and Edward Davison, Certification for Hans Richter, 10 March 1946. Group 389, Box 1598.

early April 1946 aboard one of the so-called “victory” cargo ships, mass-produced during the war. Ideologically, he claimed that at the time he and his friends’ views fell somewhere between Nazis who refused to accept German defeat and the victors’ “false, even dangerous collective guilt and reeducation policies.”<sup>73</sup> This may be another example of Richter attempting to distance himself from the notion that he collaborated willingly with American authorities, but even if he did genuinely hold such views at the time, he hid them well enough to receive a glowing recommendation in his 10 March repatriation certification.

### **Conclusion**

Although it was more widely popular that Ron Robin’s study suggests, *Der Ruf* was often overly intellectual in its offerings, surely a consequence of the intellectual bent of its editors and supervisors. Both Alfred Andersch and Hans Werner Richter contributed actively to the paper’s production, and therefore seemed at least tacitly to approve of American ideals. After Richter arrived in Germany, he first sought and found his wife before journeying illegally into the Soviet occupation zone to check on his parents in Bansin, an excursion that would inspire one of his early contributions to the second version of *Der Ruf*. In July 1946, Richter traveled to Munich at the invitation of Walter Koblenhoff, a former co-editor at Fort Kearney. According to Richter, he first met Alfred Andersch aboard the train bound for Munich, and the two became fast friends. Despite having both worked on *Der Ruf* at Fort Kearney, they narrowly missed each other because Andersch left the project in August 1945, roughly a month before Richter’s arrival in September. Their experiences were remarkably similar, and the two held similar views, not only in their opposition to collective guilt and reeducation, but also in their belief that Germany should be rebuilt on socialist principles while retaining a respect for individual liberty. Both were quite optimistic about Germany’s future, perhaps partly due to their generally positive

---

<sup>73</sup> Richter, “Wie entstand und was war die Gruppe 47?,” 50.

experiences at Fort Kearney, despite occasional clashes with their supervisors. Schoenstedt and his superiors had certainly done little to discourage such optimism, with their seemingly genuine belief that returning POWs would play a vital role in the rebuilding of Germany. Because they were “special” prisoners, it was only natural that both Andersch and Richter would assume that they would be particularly important to the spiritual, cultural, and physical reconstruction of their country. This sentiment would be a central concept in the creation of the second *Der Ruf*. With the help of Curt Vinz, another *Der Ruf* alumnus who had obtained a publishing license, Andersch and Richter would become co-editors of the second *Der Ruf*, seemingly unbound by the restrictions of its original namesake. Of course, the United States’ Information Control Division did in fact establish a series of requirements and restrictions for publication, but Andersch and Richter would push U.S. officials’ tolerance to the very limit and beyond, resulting ultimately in their dismissal from their paper.

The question remains: did Andersch and Richter genuinely believe in the mission of the first *Der Ruf*? According to their own recollections, limited as they are, neither man ever fully believed in American policies, despite their lengthy participation in the project. Of course, we must consider that Andersch and especially Richter sought later to distance themselves from potential accusations of collaboration, which may have damaged their reputations as prominent figures in postwar German literature. Another possibility is that they “played along” in order to remain at Fort Kearney, where they were under much less strict observation and discipline than that found in a regular camp. Given the evidence, the most likely explanation is that both Andersch and Richter had embraced elements of American democracy, especially regarding individual liberties (a central theme in the second *Der Ruf*), but later abandoned their attachment due to the perceived failure of the U.S. occupation government to follow its own ideals because

it did not accord Germans the same degree of freedom enjoyed by American citizens. We must now turn to this process of disillusionment with the occupying powers and especially the United States, a process most evident in the increasingly critical character of the authors' articles in the second *Der Ruf*.

## CHAPTER 5

### OCCUPATION, OPTIMISM, AND OPPOSITION: ANDERSCH, RICHTER, AND THE SECOND VERSION OF *DER RUF*

On 4 April, 1947, the Information Control Division (ICD), the office charged with managing propaganda and censorship in the U.S. occupation zone in Germany, effectively ended the production of the second version of *Der Ruf*, removing its driving forces, the publisher/editors Alfred Andersch and Hans Werner Richter. The publication, appearing bi-monthly since 15 August 1946, lingered for nearly two more years under the leadership of Erich Kuby, but its ideological and political focus had been completely altered. The official reason for the ICD's action against *Der Ruf* was that the paper violated prohibitions against "nationalist" publications; many of the authors' writings could indeed be construed as nationalistic despite their ongoing calls for European unity. Andersch, Richter, and their fellow contributors dreamt of a new Europe, born from the ashes and rubble of World War II. The authors certainly directed criticisms at a variety of targets, including U.S. occupation policy, but the overall tone of the second *Der Ruf* might best be described either as "optimistic pessimism" or "pessimistic optimism," depending on one's tendency to view the proverbial glass either as half-full or half-empty. Both men saw Germany's total defeat not only as a great calamity for the German people, but also as an opportunity to forge a new Europe based on humanist and socialist principles, a Europe that would abandon nationalism, militarism, and the many other "-isms" that had seemingly been at the heart of conflict after conflict in European history. However, the cautious optimism they had developed while working at the Idea Factory as POWs would soon face a serious challenge as each man grew increasingly impatient with the policies of the occupying powers, especially the United States.

During *Der Ruf*'s brief run, the authors developed precise ideas about the nature of the German calamity, their country's future prospects, and their generation's role in rebuilding Germany both materially and culturally. The eventual removal of the authors from their posts at the journal led directly to their organization of Group 47, a literary circle that would include among its members such giants of postwar German literature as Günter Grass and Heinrich Böll. Those affiliated with the group largely believed themselves to be the new representative voices of German culture. Most believed that the catastrophic consequences of Nazism had stripped the "tainted" older generation of artists and intellectuals of their right to represent German culture. Instead, members of Group 47 believed that the wartime experiences of Andersch and Richter's generation justified the young authors' claim to be the new leading literary voices after the so-called *Stunde Null*, the "Zero Hour" of defeat that represented for our subjects a complete break with the past. This chapter will examine the history and content of the second *Der Ruf*, focusing particularly on selected contributions from Andersch and Richter as co-editors of its first sixteen issues (15 August 1946-1 April 1947), in order better to understand and explain this particularly important phase in the authors' development as self-appointed representatives of postwar literature.

### **Return from Exile**

In "The Scouring of the Shire," the penultimate chapter of *The Return of the King*, the final installment in J.R.R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, the protagonists return home after a lengthy journey to save their world. They find that, in their absence, circumstances there had changed significantly. The evil wizard Saruman and his lackeys had "occupied" their homeland, the Shire, and were exploiting it and its people for their own nefarious purposes. The heroes, having also been changed by their experiences over the course of a lengthy and dangerous quest,

use their recently-acquired skills for warfare and leadership to rally their fellow hobbits and eliminate the interlopers. One of them, Sam Gamgee, even goes on to become a recognized leader of the community when he is elected mayor. Like Tolkien's fictional heroes, Andersch and Richter would return from a lengthy absence to find their homeland in a state far removed from the condition in which they left it. Certainly they had read numerous reports of the widespread devastation in Germany, just as the hobbits had heard rumors and hints of trouble back home during their journey, but firsthand encounters with devastated cities and demoralized citizens would convince the authors that they should use their wartime experiences as soldiers, POWs, and silent opponents of the Nazi regime to speak for the German people and help lead them out of the abyss in which they found themselves in 1945.

On 28 October, 1945 in Boston, Alfred Andersch boarded the *Samuel Moody*, an American troop transport.<sup>1</sup> The ship's destination was Le Havre, a port city in northern France, but unlike so many of his fellow POWs, who were forced to provide labor for rebuilding projects there, Andersch would board a train bound for Germany almost immediately upon arrival. Like others who had either taken part in the production of *Der Ruf* or contributed to the reeducation program at Fort Getty, Andersch had been designated a "selected citizen of Germany," a status that allowed him special travel privileges.<sup>2</sup> On 16 November, he arrived in Frankfurt, where U.S. Army officials issued him his official release papers, along with 40 marks and two days' worth of ration coupons. On his discharge card, the ever-ambitious former POW listed his occupation as "writer," some years before he would sell his first book.<sup>3</sup> Andersch's contributions to *Der Ruf* had convinced him that he had both the desire and talent to be a professional author, and he possessed no shortage of confidence.

---

<sup>1</sup> Reinhardt, *Alfred Andersch*, 125.

<sup>2</sup> Reinhardt, *Alfred Andersch*, 129.

<sup>3</sup> Reinhardt, *Alfred Andersch*, 126.

After a brief stay in Wuppertal with the family of his future wife, artist Gisela Groneuer, Andersch returned to his hometown of Munich, where U.S. officials asked him to contribute to *Die Neue Zeitung*, the official publication of the American occupation zone. Under the supervision of Hans Habe, a Jewish journalist forced to flee Germany upon Hitler's accession to power, *Die Neue Zeitung* promoted to Germans in the U.S. occupation zone the so-called three D's: Democratization, Denazification, and Decentralization.<sup>4</sup> The prevailing assumption in *Die Neue Zeitung* and the many other components of U.S. occupation policy was the notion of collective guilt. Germans would be forced to acknowledge and atone for Nazism, regardless of their individual views or circumstances during the war. As someone who had both suffered directly from the Nazi regime's policies through his three-month imprisonment at Dachau in 1933 and seemingly affirmed his anti-Nazi status with his desertion from the *Wehrmacht* in 1944, Andersch understandably took exception to the notion of collective guilt or communal responsibility for Nazism. By early 1946, alongside fellow former POWs and contributors to *Der Ruf* Walter Kolbenhoff and Curt Vinz, Andersch began to plan for a new journal, independent of U.S. influence or involvement.

In April 1946, Hans Werner Richter returned to Germany.<sup>5</sup> In July, he arrived in Munich, where Andersch and his colleagues were busy discussing the particulars of the journal they hoped to publish in the near future. While Andersch usually got along with his other colleagues, he shared a particularly strong connection with Richter. Certainly the two shared similar political ideologies, each man dreaming of the fairly unrealistic goal of a unified European democratic socialist political and economic system. In addition, and perhaps more importantly, they shared similar experiences before and during the Nazi period. Both Andersch

---

<sup>4</sup> Bernhard Jendricke, *Alfred Andersch*. (Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch, 1988), 50.

<sup>5</sup> Jendricke, *Alfred Andersch*, 53.



and Richter had been active members of socialist movements prior to the Nazi assumption of power in 1933, both had worked as book sellers, both served in the *Wehrmacht* and were captured by U.S. forces in Italy, and of course they both were selected, at different times, to contribute to *Der Ruf* at Fort Kearney.<sup>6</sup> By the time Richter arrived in Munich, Andersch and the others had decided against the latter's initial proposal for their journal's title, which would have been "Die Verlorene Generation: Kritische Blätter für junge Menschen" ("The Lost Generation: Critical Paper for Young People"). Andersch, Vinz, and others believed the title was too negative, implying that there could be no redemption for their "lost" generation. Instead, in a meeting between Andersch and Vinz in early April 1946, the two decided to borrow the title of their POW newspaper, and thus the second version of *Der Ruf* was born.<sup>7</sup>

### **The ICD**

The ICD evolved out of the wartime Psychological Warfare Division, which used radio broadcasts and propaganda leaflets to undermine the morale of German soldiers. Its intended purpose was to oversee and filter German culture to remove all traces of Nazism while promoting democratic ideals. Practically all expressions of culture, from the printed word to film to theatre, fell under the scrutiny of the ICD's operatives. The ICD, under the leadership of General Robert A. McClure, was initially under the authority of the U.S. Forces, European Theater (USFET), but reported to the Office of Military Government-U.S. Zone (OMGUS) from 15 February 1946 onwards.<sup>8</sup> During occupation, all prospective publishers of printed material in the American zone were required to obtain a license from the ICD. This restriction would theoretically allow the ICD to control the public's access to news by only allowing "acceptable"

---

<sup>6</sup> Reinhardt, *Alfred Andersch*, 133.

<sup>7</sup> Reinhardt, *Alfred Andersch*, 132.

<sup>8</sup> Rebecca Boehling, "The Role of Culture in American Relations with Europe: The Case of the United States' Occupation of Germany." In *Diplomatic History*, v. 23 issue 1, Winter 1999, 58.

publications to circulate. As early as late May 1945, select documented anti-Nazis were allowed to publicly express themselves through speeches and contributions to official German-language papers produced and circulated by the U.S. Army, and by the end of June, a handful of permits had been issued for German-produced newspapers.<sup>9</sup> By the end of the year, dozens of licenses had been issued to a broad array of applicants. By encouraging the publication of a wide variety of opinions from various individuals as well as social, political, and religious groups, the ICD believed it could prevent a single faction from dominating culture while simultaneously promoting American pluralism.<sup>10</sup> By mid-1946, 29 Social Democrats and 3 Communists had been issued licenses, a clear indication of the openness of ICD policy at that time.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, Curt Vinz had little difficulty obtaining a license to print *Der Ruf*. Vinz and his colleagues had proven themselves useful to the U.S. during the war, and thus would be allowed to publish their new journal freely after completing four lengthy questionnaires and an extensive background check to vet their anti-communist credentials.<sup>12</sup>

### **The Manifesto**

As co-editors of the journal, Andersch and Richter usually worked together out of offices located in two rooms in a house in Munich.<sup>13</sup> After months of preparation, the first issue was published on 15 August 1946 with a print run of 35,000 copies.<sup>14</sup> The journal's subtitle was "Unabhängige Blätter für die junge Generation" ("Independent Paper for the Young Generation"), a description meant to distinguish the publication from *Die Neue Zeitung* and other

---

<sup>9</sup> Earl F. Ziemke, *The U.S. Army in the Occupation of Germany, 1944-1946*. (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 1990), 368.

<sup>10</sup> Ziemke, *U.S. Army in the Occupation of Germany*, 370-371.

<sup>11</sup> Cara Sol Goldstein, "A Strategic Failure," *Military Review*, March-April 2008, 59.

<sup>12</sup> Edward C. Breitenkamp, *The U.S. Information Control Division and its Effect on German Publishers and Writers 1945 to 1949*. (Grand Forks, ND: University Station, 1953), 40.

<sup>13</sup> Reinhardt, *Alfred Andersch*, 134.

<sup>14</sup> Reinhardt, *Alfred Andersch*, 134.

official occupation newspapers by making potential readers aware that this new publication was independent and therefore not an instrument of the occupation regime. The lead article, entitled “Das junge Europa formt sein Gesicht” (“The Face of Young Europe Takes Shape”), and written by Andersch, served as an introductory manifesto both for the journal and for the new literary movement its founders hoped to establish. In this piece, Andersch argued that Europe must move toward unity, abandoning the various divisive ideologies and systems of the past. As was so often the case with Andersch, the author believed that the primary leaders of this movement must be artists and intellectuals, whose “spirit is the spirit of action.”<sup>15</sup>

One of Andersch’s primary concerns in the article was to explain and elaborate on a concept that he calls “socialist humanism.” The author believed that this particular ideology would be the basis for European unity in the wake of devastating conflict:

Socialist—that means in this instance, that the youth of Europe will be leftist, if they are concerned with society’s problems. They seek economic justice and know that it can only be made possible through socialism. Only through real socialism, not through “social reform”...on the left, one’s spirit stands firm in cultural open-mindedness, rejection of national and racial prejudices, and a contempt for provincial conservatism.<sup>16</sup>

Andersch returns frequently to the theme of rejecting past attitudes, as do Richter and their other colleagues. “Social reform,” which presumably included various measures intended to address social problems such as unemployment, homelessness, or a lack of educational opportunities, was not sufficient for Andersch. His insistence that socialism will be an essential component of “economic justice” implies that European unity will only be possible through the widespread adoption and implementation of more radical socialist policies, which would not only remove or greatly reduce the gap between rich and poor as well as eliminate nationalism and racism.

---

<sup>15</sup> Alfred Andersch, “Das junge Europa formt sein Gesicht,” *Der Ruf*, n. 1, 15 August 1946. In *Der Ruf: Eine Auswahl*, (Munich: Nymphenburger, 1976), 20.

<sup>16</sup> Andersch, “Das junge Europa,” 20.

But what did Andersch mean when he wrote of “socialism”? The author supported economic centralization, believing that government ownership of production would eliminate what he saw as “capitalist excess,” exploitation of the working classes driven by an amoral desire to maximize profits. The Nazis certainly could not have been considered full-fledged free-market capitalists, but their destruction of trade unions and leftist parties in the early 1930s convinced many, including Andersch, that Nazism was at least partly a product of unrestrained capitalism. As discussed in Chapter 3, Andersch had spent several months in Dachau due to his communist affiliations, surely a traumatic experience that continued to resonate with the author in 1946. Scholars have long debated the issue of industrial complicity in Nazi Germany, fueled by revelations that firms such as IG Farben utilized slave labor during the war. Andersch and Richter firmly believed in 1946 that big business had been a key component of Hitler’s success and power, and that a centralized, public-owned, planned economy would ensure that greedy, immoral capitalists could not exploit the public. The author’s concept of socialism rests on the notion that socialist economic measures would be balanced with humanist principles. A strong belief in human rights and individual liberty, ideas that may stem partly from his time in the United States, would ensure that a new socialist state would not become a Stalinist dictatorship.

Certainly Andersch’s expectations of a new socialist Europe were overly idealistic, and perhaps colored by hopes that the occupying powers, especially the United States, with its emphasis on individual liberty and democracy, would allow Germans a great amount of leeway in rebuilding their political, social, and economic institutions in a united homeland. These hopes were not based on a practical analysis of the situation, but rather seem founded on what Alexander and Margarete Mitscherlich referred to as an “attitude based on an illusion,” an illusion that meant Germans after 1945 collectively failed to recognize fully the chain of events

that had resulted in the country's division and occupation by nations with opposing ideologies.<sup>17</sup> Of course, in the political realities of 1946, when the Cold War was emerging from the ashes of the wartime alliance between the Anglo-American democracies and the Soviet Union, the likelihood of American authorities supporting or allowing the creation of a socialist system, however defined, was extremely small, but we must remember that Andersch's sentiments were built on an emotional, rather than practical understanding of the situation.

Despite his prewar communist ties, Andersch was no orthodox Marxist. In fact, he argued that the new Europe should temper socialism in the economic sphere with humanist principles. Humanism, according to Andersch, was bound closely to a belief in freedom, both personal and collective:

The youth of Europe are humanist in their inexhaustible hunger for freedom. Humanism means a recognition of individual dignity and freedom—no more and no less. They will be ready to leave the [conventional] camp of socialism, in which individual freedom is surrendered to that old orthodox Marxism, which postulates the deterministic role of the economy in the lives of individuals and denies free will...[Europe's youth] will fanatically lead the fight against all enemies of freedom.<sup>18</sup>

These passages provide a sense of the complexity of Andersch's vision for a new Europe. Socialist principles would be used to ensure economic equality, while a foundation of humanism would guarantee the individual freedoms that were obviously lacking in Stalin's Russia. In these excerpts, one sees the influences both of Andersch's pre-war communism and of his time spent engaged with and espousing American principles of individual liberty as a POW. Andersch's hopes are overly idealistic, but they reflect the belief among him and his colleagues that the great catastrophe of World War II presented an opportunity to forge a new and better future. Far from the accusation of "nihilism," if anything Andersch might be criticized for unrealistically

---

<sup>17</sup> Alexander and Margarete Mitscherlich, *The Inability to Mourn: Principles of Collective Behavior*, trans. Beverly R. Placzek. (New York: Grove, 1975), 5.

<sup>18</sup> Andersch, "Das junge Europa," 20-21.

idealistic views, though he was by no means alone in such convictions. For example, Kurt Schumacher, a socialist politician and eventual leader of the SPD who had suffered tremendously under Nazi rule, also believed quite strongly that the war had given Germany a valuable opportunity to rebuild its social and political institutions from scratch. Many among the German public evidently felt the same, as Schumacher was only narrowly edged out by Konrad Adenauer in the first postwar elections in 1949, and then only due to the alliance between Adenauer's CDU and the Christian Social Union (CSU) of Bavaria.<sup>19</sup>

Many others who might be counted among the "intellectual resistance" in Europe expressed sentiments similar to those of Andersch. French politician and resistance fighter Léon Blum declared as early as 1941 his belief in the creation of an "equal federation of free nations" in Europe.<sup>20</sup> Italian resistance fighter Altiero Spinelli, also writing in 1941, believed, like Andersch, Schumacher, and many others, that the war was the catalyst that would lead to European unity:

The collapse of most European states under the German war machine has already reduced most peoples of the Continent to a common fate...Attitudes are already much more favorable toward a new, federative European order. The brutal experiences of the last decade have opened the eyes of the unbelievers.<sup>21</sup>

French intellectual Joseph Rovin believed strongly in the possibility of closer Franco-German understanding, despite the fact that he spent the last year of the war incarcerated at Dachau. Like Schumacher, Rovin's suffering at the hands of the Nazis did not diminish his hopes for a better future.<sup>22</sup> Perhaps on some level, these individuals as well as the masses *needed* to believe that restoration was possible, that a new and better Europe might arise from the ashes of World War

---

<sup>19</sup> For further discussion on Schumacher, see the section "Other Voices" near the end of this chapter.

<sup>20</sup> James D. Wilkinson, *The Intellectual Resistance in Europe*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), 173.

<sup>21</sup> Wilkinson, *The Intellectual Resistance in Europe*, 174.

<sup>22</sup> Wilkinson, *The Intellectual Resistance in Europe*, 175.

II. With little else to hope for amidst the rubble and ruin, the only seeming alternative would be to give oneself over to despair. Let us remember that Andersch and Richter's initial postwar optimism was by no means unique, although it is our present concern.

The underlying assumption among the Allies was that Germans were collectively guilty for Nazism. As early as 7 May 1945, the Americans had begun using questionnaires known as *Fragebogen* to determine an individual's political, economic, or even emotional ties to the Nazi regime in an attempt to "denazify" the German population by weeding out the most ardent supporters of and contributors to the old order. The *Fragebogen* contained over 100 questions, many of which dealt not with political views but personal information such as income, distinguishing features, and whether one's sleep patterns had been disrupted by Allied bombing.<sup>23</sup> Many Germans were frustrated and insulted by the mandatory questionnaires, which were distributed throughout the U.S. occupation zone to a broad array of citizens ranging from a thirteen-year-old girl in Munich to former concentration camp inmates.<sup>24</sup> One woman, Ruth Friedrich, asked if one was "supposed to commit perjury because one has a bad memory," when forced to note how she voted in 1932 as well as the bank and post office account numbers of her close relations.<sup>25</sup> In response to a question asking whether the subject had *ever* hoped for a German victory, Margret Boveri argued that in any other country, hoping for defeat would be considered treason.<sup>26</sup> Other questions attempted to discern whether individuals were of noble ancestry (presumably a sign of complicity in Hitler's regime, at least according to U.S.

---

<sup>23</sup> Giles MacDonogh, *After the Reich: The Brutal History of the Allied Occupation*. (New York: Basic, 2009), 345.

<sup>24</sup> MacDonogh, *After the Reich*, 345.

<sup>25</sup> MacDonogh, *After the Reich*, 345.

<sup>26</sup> MacDonogh, *After the Reich*, 346.

authorities),<sup>27</sup> had belonged to any sort of student organization, or had even the most remote trace of military tendencies (one question asked if the applicant had “played with toy soldiers as a child”).<sup>28</sup> In the process of seeking out “hidden” Nazis in Germany, American authorities offended the sensibilities of many average Germans who resented being treated uniformly as potential Nazi sympathizers.<sup>29</sup> The *Fragebogen* was mandatory; refusal to complete the questionnaire meant exclusion from work, restriction of rations, and the possibility of being declared a war criminal.<sup>30</sup> Therefore, submitting to the often frustrating and humiliating process of denazification was a prerequisite for getting on with one’s life, a clear indication that the Americans believed that practically every individual German was a potential enemy in the immediate postwar years. Alfred Grosser described the process as the creation of a “social class consisting of the ‘denazified.’”<sup>31</sup> Indeed, the process could be quite cynical, as many “economically useful Nazis” were quickly absolved due to their technical expertise in various economic and industrial areas, while many teachers were summarily removed from their posts regardless of their actual affiliation or role in Nazi affairs.<sup>32</sup> Many individuals in a broad variety of occupations were even subject to “automatic” arrest, irrespective of actual evidence or lack thereof of wrongdoing.<sup>33</sup> Between 1945 and 1948, over 100,000 people had been imprisoned as “Nazis” through denazification, although most would be released by the end of the decade as the

---

<sup>27</sup> This despite the fact that many of those who participated in the failed 20 July 1944 attempt on Hitler’s life were, in fact, from the old Prussian Junker class.

<sup>28</sup> MacDonogh, *After the Reich*, 347.

<sup>29</sup> Perhaps the most famous opponent of the *Fragebogen* was the author Ernst von Salomon, a former *Freikorps* member and accomplice in the 1922 murder of Walter Rathenau. Salomon’s 1951 book *Der Fragebogen* offered satirical responses to the survey’s questions. If the book’s impressive sales and reprints are any indication, Salomon’s satire resonated strongly with many Germans in the decades following its publication.

<sup>30</sup> MacDonogh, *After the Reich*, 348.

<sup>31</sup> Alfred Grosser, *Germany in Our Time: A Political History of the Postwar Years*, trans. Paul Stephenson. (New York: Praeger, 1971), 46.

<sup>32</sup> Grosser, *Germany in Our Time*, 46.

<sup>33</sup> Grosser, *Germany in Our Time*, 43.



U.S. sought to build a stronger diplomatic relationship with Konrad Adenauer's new Federal Republic of Germany (BRD).

Andersch offered a stark and provocative criticism of the United States' policies of denazification and reeducation that foreshadowed future, more elaborate criticisms in later issues of *Der Ruf*. A grave analogy emerged in the author's discussion about possible ways to "build bridges" between disparate components of postwar society, which include Allied soldiers, European resistance fighters, returning German soldiers, former concentration camp inmates, and former members of the Hitler Youth. According to Andersch, Allied reeducation policies were comparable to those of the Nazis:

[One means of building a bridge] is on everyone's lips today. It's called "reeducation." Not a pretty word. In any case it's no more attractive than the National Socialist word "retraining"...can young people, who incessantly faced death for six years, once again be made subjects of an education program? Should education and instruction be placed alongside experiences in which one's very existence was constantly at risk?<sup>34</sup>

Despite his own participation in the POW reeducation program while incarcerated in the United States, Andersch vehemently denies the value of any efforts to "reeducate" or "denazify" the German people. For Andersch, reeducation and denazification as promoted and utilized by the United States were tantamount to a blanket equation of Germans with Nazism. As suggested above, he believed that only experience could bring change to postwar Germany, and he thus argued that reeducation would only be possible if the best teachers and artists come to the country and only if cultural development is based on deep personal experience rather than formal instruction.<sup>35</sup>

Andersch's argument here might be best explained by a concept from Randall Collins' essay "Social Movements and the Focus of Emotional Attention." According to Collins, social

---

<sup>34</sup> Andersch, "Das junge Europa," 22.

<sup>35</sup> Andersch, "Das junge Europa," 22-23.

movements require a rival and opposite movement in order to define themselves and appeal emotionally to their members. In other words, one cannot become fully emotionally invested in a particular movement's viewpoint unless there is an opposing view that helps to polarize that individual.<sup>36</sup> By directing his criticisms at one particularly frustrating aspect of occupation policy, Andersch seemingly attempted to appeal to his readers on an *emotional*, rather than *practical* level.

Andersch further emphasized the importance of the POW experience in a later article, "Die Kriegsgefangenen-Licht und Schatten. Eine Bilanz" ("The Prisoners of War: Light and Shadow") from issue 5 (15 October 1946). While much of the article is a summary of the phases of captivity during the war, one passage in particular refers to the reeducation program and indicates the author's dissatisfaction with American efforts to "democratize" German POWs:

After the surrender, the first small group of prisoners (in total around 26,000 men) were given the opportunity to be educated at one particular camp.<sup>37</sup> There was a small team of American officers, with many German immigrants among them, that had been devoted to this purpose for years...Did the high levels [of government] in Washington know in advance [that] they would soon withdraw support for their wish to inculcate German POWs in democratic "propaganda"? Namely, in early 1946 when they transferred the majority of the POWs of whom we speak back to Europe to work for England and France [as forced laborers].<sup>38</sup>

Andersch believed that the Americans had betrayed their own democratic principles by sending many reeducated prisoners to England and especially France as forced laborers. These sentiments are consistent with his earlier criticisms of reeducation in "Das junge Europa formt

---

<sup>36</sup> Randall Collins, "Social Movements and the Focus of Emotional Attention." In Jeff Goodwin, James M. Jasper, and Francesca Polletta, eds., *Passionate Politics: Emotions and Social Movements*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 36-37.

<sup>37</sup> Andersch does not specify the camp, but here he presumably means Fort Getty, Rhode Island, where the bulk of official reeducation took place. Some prisoners were, however, sent to Fort Eustis, Virginia as part of the reeducation program.

<sup>38</sup> Alfred Andersch, "Die Kriegsgefangenen-Licht und Schatten." *Der Ruf*, n. 5, 15 October 1946. In Hans Schwab-Felisch, ed., *Der Ruf: Eine deutsche Nachkriegszeitung*. (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch, 1962), 67.

sein Gesicht,” although he did allow the possibility that the decision to send POWs to England and France was not premeditated but rather a product of circumstance. While the tone of his early articles was primarily optimistic, he clearly bore resentment for the reeducation process, probably due in no small part to the aforementioned situation. As will be seen later, this kernel of frustration with the United States would grow significantly over the course of Andersch’s contributions to *Der Ruf*.

Andersch’s repeated insistence that young artists must lead the way for a new Germany reveals as much about his personal ambitions as his political philosophy or emotional state. As discussed in Chapter 3, Andersch had long sought to become a famous writer, and now he was in a position that offered an opportunity to establish himself (and, by extension, his colleagues) as a leading voice of the postwar generation. Evidence of Andersch’s personal ambitions lurks among his bold statements about the young generation and the postwar situation in Germany. According to the author, émigrés should lead the young postwar generation. He mentions that there are numerous German exiles in the United States, Spain, and elsewhere that have gained valuable experience that will benefit their homeland’s efforts to establish a new political and social direction. While he did not directly mention himself, he strongly implied that American-style democracy would provide a conceptual example for Germany, rendering those such as himself, who spent time in the United States promoting democracy to fellow POWs, invaluable. As will be discussed later, Andersch’s experiences and attitudes were not as unique as he suggested in this and later articles.

In his conclusion, Andersch continued to claim that he and his colleagues were best suited to lead and represent the young generation. In doing so, he made a powerful statement regarding collective guilt:

Since this young German generation, the men and women between 18 and 35 years of age, [are] separated from the older generation through the fact that they do not have to answer for Hitler and [are] separated from the younger generation [those under 18] by their frontline and POW experiences...they will accomplish the transition to a new Europe with passionate speed.<sup>39</sup>

This passage reveals several important elements in Andersch's worldview. By attempting to absolve his generation of responsibility for Hitler and the Nazis, he unequivocally assigned the blame to the previous generation. This recalls Mitscherlich's argument that Germans tended to blame Hitler (for our purposes, we might extend the analogy to the Nazi leadership or even Andersch's "older generation") for the many crimes that took place under Nazi rule as a means of defense against "real guilt."<sup>40</sup> By failing to acknowledge that Hitler and the Nazis were at one time extremely popular, there results a collective reappropriation of blame. Andersch rarely mentioned organizations such as the Hitler Youth, further obscuring any question of his generation's guilt. Under the leadership of Baldur von Schirach, millions of young Germans received steady doses of Nazi indoctrination that promoted the slogan found over the entrance to one Hitler Youth center: "We were born to die for Germany."<sup>41</sup> Certainly some young Germans took these nationalist teachings with a proverbial grain of salt, but many others, including many youths who fought in *Volksstürmer*, the last-gasp militias formed near the end of the war to fight invading Allied troops, believed quite strongly in Nazism and the Führer.

One such individual, Alfons Heck, a mere 17 years old in 1945, recalled being absolutely determined to die in battle for his homeland and his Führer, convinced that the Nazi cause was righteous. In a particularly powerful admission, Heck recalled that after hearing Hitler speak at

---

<sup>39</sup> Andersch, "Das junge Europa," 22.

<sup>40</sup> Mitscherlich, *The Inability to Mourn*, 17.

<sup>41</sup> Joachim Fest, *The Face of the Third Reich: Portraits of the Nazi Leadership*, trans. Michael Bullock. (New York: Pantheon, 1970), 234.

the 1938 Nuremberg Party Rally, he “belonged to Adolf Hitler body and soul.”<sup>42</sup> Bernhard Wicki’s 1959 film *Die Brücke*, based on an autobiographical novel of the same name by Manfred Gregor, depicted a group of sixteen-year-old boys who fought valiantly to defend a bridge against advancing American soldiers in the final days of World War II. While conceived as an anti-war film that displayed the pointless loss of life during the war, many critics noted that audiences responded to the film in a way the director did not intend. One, Klaus Norbert Scheffler, published on 30 December 1959 in *Deutsche Woche* an open and highly critical letter to the director in which he claimed that, far from reflecting somberly about the pointlessness of war, young moviegoers reveled in the bravery of their onscreen counterparts, an accusation that reflected an ongoing fear of the resurgence of nationalist or even Nazi ideology. In *Nazism and German Society 1933-1945*, edited by David F. Crew, the contributors demonstrate that, for a variety of reasons ranging from improvement of material conditions to ideological conviction, the Nazis and Hitler especially enjoyed a great deal of popular support in many segments of society, including young factory workers made to feel like valuable contributors to the “healthy German state.”<sup>43</sup>

These examples demonstrate the dubiousness of the author’s bold claim. Did Andersch truly believe that his generation was in no way responsible for Nazism, or were there ulterior motives? We must recognize that Andersch’s emotional experiences, which led to his self-perception as a victim of Nazism, truly convinced him that his generation could not possibly be held responsible for the war or for Nazi crimes. Doubtless Andersch never had any love for Hitler, but his blanket denial of responsibility for his entire generation represented a powerful and angry emotional response against Allied assumptions of collective guilt.

---

<sup>42</sup> Alfons Heck, *A Child of Hitler: Germany in the Days when God wore a Swastika*. (New York: Bantam, 1985), 28.

<sup>43</sup> David F. Crew, ed., *Nazism and German Society 1933-1945*. (London: Routledge, 1994).

Presumably, the author failed to recognize that his angry reaction to collective guilt was equally “collective” in his sweeping assumptions about the “18 to 35” generation. Andersch’s explicit mention of the POW experience as a prerequisite for individuals who will help build the “new Europe” not only further reinforced the claim that he and like-minded individuals should be the leading voices of a new Germany, but seemingly further absolved his generation by portraying it as the victim of its elders’ folly. Andersch’s personal ambitions may account for the fact that his description of the “young generation” almost always resembled his own experiences. Naturally, this belief that their generation was not responsible for Nazism would contribute to both Andersch and Richter’s growing frustration with the Allied occupation, which through its policies held that all Germans were responsible for Nazism and therefore in need of rehabilitation.

In “Das junge Europa formt sein Gesicht,” the most widely known article from the second *Der Ruf*, one finds little of the nihilism that the ICD later accused the authors of promoting. There was, however, a hint of nationalism in the following assertion:

In no case can young Germany separate itself from young Europe. It will also not tread slowly and reluctantly behind [the rest of Europe]...because young Europe cannot exist without young Germany.<sup>44</sup>

The claim asserted Germany’s vital importance to Europe as a whole, an argument that Andersch and Richter would revisit in later articles. However, the statement was in accordance with the authors’ broader desire for European unity, and therefore would be difficult to construe as strictly “nationalist” in nature. Indeed, one could hardly imagine a rebuilt Europe *without* Germany occupying a central role; in this sense, we might understand Andersch’s assertions on the matter simply as a factual recognition of his homeland’s central economic and political importance to the continent.

---

<sup>44</sup> Andersch, “*Das junge Europa*,” 25.

Two other early articles from *Der Ruf* echo Andersch's sentiments here. Andersch's "Der grüne Tisch" ("The Green Table") from issue 3 (15 September 1946) reminded readers that Germany's current state was not a democracy, but a military regime. The author called for Germany's younger generation to work together to build a new political tradition, one that will lead to true democracy.<sup>45</sup> In "Deutschland—Brücke zwischen Ost und West" ("Germany: Bridge between East and West," issue 4, 1 October 1946), Richter reiterated Andersch's arguments from "Das junge Europa..." claiming that Germany must not only rebuild using a combination of democratic and socialist principles, but that it must also serve as a guarantor of peace in Europe, a neutral nation uncommitted to either East or West.<sup>46</sup> Both articles repeated Andersch's insistence on Germany's central importance to future European peace and stability.

### **The Question of Accountability**

While denazification sought to identify minor officials and supporters of the Nazi regime, the high-profile figures underwent very public and often controversial trials. While several leading Nazis, including Adolf Hitler, Joseph Goebbels, and Heinrich Himmler, managed to commit suicide before they could be captured (Hitler and Goebbels) or brought to trial (Himmler), many key figures in Hitler's government, including Reich Marshal and head of the *Luftwaffe* Hermann Göring, director of munitions production and architect Albert Speer, former deputy *Führer* Rudolf Hess, Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop, Hitler Youth leader Baldur von Schirach, as well as two high-ranking military men, Admiral Karl Dönitz and Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel were tried at the most famous postwar trials at Nuremberg. The trials

---

<sup>45</sup> Alfred Andersch, "Der grüne Tisch." *Der Ruf*, n. 3, 15 September 1946. In Hans Schwab-Felisch, ed., *Der Ruf: Eine deutsche Nachkriegszeit*. (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch, 1962), 42-46.

<sup>46</sup> Hans Werner Richter, "Deutschland—Brücke zwischen Ost und West." *Der Ruf*, n. 4, 1 October 1946. In Hans Schwab-Felisch, ed., *Der Ruf: Eine deutsche Nachkriegszeit*. (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch, 1962), 46-49.

began on 20 November 1945, and lasted until 1 October 1946, when sentences were pronounced.<sup>47</sup> As the first issue of *Der Ruf* was being prepared for publication, the Nuremberg trials were concluding, and Andersch felt compelled to address the issues raised in the trials. In his second article in the first issue of *Der Ruf*, entitled “Notwendige Aussage zum Nürnberger Prozeß” (“A Necessary Statement on the Nuremberg Process”), Andersch considered the issues of both individual and collective accountability for war crimes. As one might expect, the author built on notions from his previous article by continuing to absolve his generation of accountability for much of what took place during the Nazi period.

Andersch begins with a direct appeal to emotion, claiming that hate is a useful and valuable instrument when used and understood properly. As a means of “freeing [oneself] from meaningless brooding and aimless rage,” the hate of Germany’s young generation is a product of “love for our country and our nation.”<sup>48</sup> In other words, the author’s generation has a right to hate, as long as such sentiment is directed at deserving targets. As we will see, these “deserving targets” were the leaders of the older generation that plunged Germany into war according to Andersch. At this stage of *Der Ruf*, Andersch seemed to bear little of the ill will toward the occupation that would characterize both his and Richter’s later articles. The implication here is that the hate discussed in this article was to be focused specifically on members of the older generation who, like the defendants at Nuremberg, could reasonably be held responsible for the Nazi catastrophe. There is nothing in this article that suggests a more general, aimless hatred that could be construed as nihilism. As in his previous article, the binding concept in Andersch’s argument is the notion that his generation, those who fought at “Stalingrad, El Alamein, and

---

<sup>47</sup> Grosser, *Germany in Our Time*, 37.

<sup>48</sup> Alfred Andersch, “Notwendige Aussage zum Nürnberger Prozeß,” *Der Ruf*, n. 1, 15 August 1946. In *Der Ruf: Eine Auswahl*, (Munich: Nymphenburger, 1976), 25.



Cassino,” are not guilty for the “crimes of Dachau and Buchenwald.”<sup>49</sup> This statement reinforces the highly emotional overtones often found in Andersch’s writings.

Andersch overlooked most of the more spectacular and interesting characters at Nuremberg, such as the featured and highly vocal defendant Göring or the charming and contrite Speer. As will be discussed later, Richter spent an entire article in a subsequent issue discussing Göring and the air marshal’s decision to take his own life before he could be executed, but in the present article Andersch focused exclusively on Dönitz and Keitel, the two military figures at the trial. His purpose: to demonstrate that the average soldier could not be blamed for the actions of the German high command or government, and to argue that the young generation’s “hatred” was justified. While he remained ambivalent about the legitimacy of the trials, Andersch’s powerful conviction that Keitel and Dönitz were the true criminals, who robbed Germany of its “honor,” suggests an implicit approval of the proceedings.

Andersch believed that the war not only resulted in devastated cities and a miserable population, but also destroyed the “honor” of the German people. While the First World War had provided an opportunity for an “honorable defeat,” Andersch’s generation had developed a hatred for their elders, because

With the knowledge that the latest defeat was in no way honorable, hatred is on the rise. Here both the cause and necessity of hatred becomes clear: the criminals’ destruction of the honor of the German nation has become the axis of the wheel of hate. No other causes are needed; [lost honor] is enough for the young generation to dip into the white heat of rage.<sup>50</sup>

For Andersch, the hatred promoted by the Nazis led to devastation, while any contempt on the part of the young generation for its elders was justified. Here we observe a hint of nationalism in Andersch’s writings, as he decried the “destruction” of German honor. We must not read too

---

<sup>49</sup> Alfred Andersch, “Notwendige Aussage,” 26.

<sup>50</sup> Alfred Andersch, “Notwendige Aussage,” 27.

much into this highly emotional response, as the author, like many of his fellow Germans, was frustrated with the international stigma that resulted from the ghastlier Nazi crimes. This sentiment would be a recurring theme in Andersch's writings; because the older generation was "responsible" for Nazism, younger authors had a duty to break with the past and forge a "new" literary tradition. As will be discussed in Chapter 6, Andersch's desire to lead literature in an entirely new direction would temper over time, as the author realized gradually that absolute freedom of action in rejecting one's society or its past is more difficult than it appears, and that one cannot fully separate oneself from the context of individual and collective cultural and historical experiences.

In 1946, however, Andersch firmly believed there existed a stark division between the common soldier, those young men of the author's generation, and the leaders of the government and military under Nazi rule. In the following passage, we see echoes of Andersch's own personal experience as a soldier and deserter:

Every single individual has...truly experienced the hate caused by betrayed honor. The soldier, who stands before an Allied officer and engages in a discussion on the founding principles of human rights and the treatment of [his] fellow man, is forced to become more taciturn. The young officer who, when asked about the crimes of the German leadership, can only reply with a brief "I know nothing!"...The deserter, whose political knowledge led him into the most extraordinary moral and personal conflict of his life. Even the so-called General Field Marshal Keitel briefly had such an experience. When the English prosecutor [at Nuremberg] laid a number of incriminating documents in front of him, Keitel replied: "If the German army had known about [the crimes], it would have put things right." But he *did* know about [the crimes].<sup>51</sup>

Andersch did not elaborate here on the theme of silence and denial among his generation, but according to his earlier claims that average soldiers bore no responsibility for Nazism, the implication here is that due to their lost honor, the typical individuals mentioned above remain silent out of a sense of shame. Here Andersch is unclear: if the average soldiers listed above

---

<sup>51</sup> Alfred Andersch, "Notwendige Aussage," 27.

were free of guilt for Nazi crimes, of what exactly should they be ashamed? Perhaps he believed they were being forcefully and wrongfully “shamed” by the victorious Allies. Andersch clearly believed that Keitel was guilty, but the general used arguments similar to the author’s when asked about the army’s responsibility for Nazi aggression and war crimes. Keitel, whose testimony at Nuremberg began on 3 April 1946,<sup>52</sup> admitted some culpability for Nazi crimes in his role as commander-in-chief of the Wehrmacht, although he often assigned the blame to the political leadership of the Reich. Such diversion of guilt was evident in the following exchange between Keitel and his defense lawyer, Otto Nelte, concerning the charge of waging a war of aggression:

**Nelte:** ...So that we can understand each other, and that you can give your answers correctly, we must be quite clear as to what is meant by war of aggression. Will you tell us your views on that subject?

**Keitel:** As a soldier, I must say that the term "War of Aggression" as used here is meaningless as far as I am concerned; we learned how to conduct actions of attack, actions of defense, and actions of retreat. However, according to my own personal feelings as a military man, the concept "war of aggression" is a purely political concept and not a military one. I mean that if the Wehrmacht and the soldier are a tool of the politicians, they are not qualified in my opinion to decide or to judge whether these military operations did or did not constitute a war of aggression. I think I can summarize my views by saying that military officers should not have authority to decide this question and are not in a position to do so; and that these decisions are not the task of the soldier, but solely that of the statesman.<sup>53</sup>

In this testimony, Keitel’s claim that the army and its soldiers were simply “tool[s] of the politicians,” echoes Andersch’s own claim that his generation of young soldiers, whether they fought bravely or deserted like himself, were rightfully angry at bearing the shame for actions for which they bore no responsibility. Keitel was attempting to distance himself from Hitler, Göring, Himmler, and others who could be more directly linked to the numerous nationalist and racial aims and actions of the Nazi state, just as Andersch tried to establish a great divide

---

<sup>52</sup> International Military Tribunal, *Nuremberg Trial Proceedings*, v. 10, p. 468. Accessed at <<http://avalon.law.yale.edu/imt/04-03-46.asp#keitel1>> on 10 August 2010.

<sup>53</sup> IMT, *Nuremberg Trial Proceedings*, v. 10, 499.

between the high command and the rank-and-file. In spite of both men's claims, in many instances the Wehrmacht was in fact responsible for war crimes as defined by the Allies. Though perhaps not as frequently or as systematically as the SS, the army certainly took part in its fair share of atrocities, especially during Operation Barbarossa in Russia, when both enemy soldiers and civilians were subject to summary killings. Of course, neither Andersch nor Richter ever served on the eastern front, so the former perhaps did not fully realize the extent of army atrocities when writing in 1946.

For Keitel, the issue was pragmatic and seemingly unburdened by emotion. The army was simply a "tool," so how could they be connected to concepts like "war of aggression" since the decision to begin a war rested ultimately with the Reich's political, rather than military, leaders. At its basic level, the issue brought forth in Andersch's article appears to represent a two-phase "passing of the buck," from Andersch to Keitel, and from Keitel to political leaders such as Hitler, Göring, and Goebbels. The weight of ongoing revelations of Nazi atrocities was so great in 1946, that individuals as different as Andersch and Keitel used similar arguments to distance themselves from the "true" criminals. In the wake of Nazi defeat, perhaps this trend reflects a broader tendency, not only in Germany but among humans more generally, to absolve oneself of responsibility by blaming others. In his postwar series of lectures at the University of Heidelberg, Karl Jaspers famously noted that "a conscience which proclaims itself not guilty is superficial. By its very conduct such self-righteousness breeds future wars."<sup>54</sup>

So how could Germany regain its honor, stolen by the "General-criminals" who were responsible for the catastrophe and "disgrace" of World War II and who, according to Andersch,

---

<sup>54</sup> Karl Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, trans. E.B. Ashton. (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000), 47.

had written the “last chapter” in the history of military dominance of German politics?<sup>55</sup> The author claimed that Germany would regain its honor when the “General-criminals are stripped of their honor in the minds and consciousness of young Germany.”<sup>56</sup> In other words, the young generation must reject the tradition of revering and honoring great military leaders, another feature of German culture that Andersch believed was no longer valid in light of the Nazi catastrophe.

Who, then, should take the place of those once-revered military figures? Looking back to “Das junge Europa formt sein Gesicht,” the answer appears to have been clear for Andersch: artists like him would be the new sources of leadership and objects of reverence. While the author’s words were almost certainly genuine, one must always remember that Andersch was eager to promote himself and advance his career and public notoriety whenever possible. In his memoirs about Group 47, Richter recalled an episode in which Andersch made a particularly bold claim:

Once, in the beginning, when we were co-publishers of *Der Ruf*, [Andersch] said, in front of a group of our co-workers and friends, that he would not only equal Thomas Mann but surpass him...no one said a word, and Fred alone failed to realize the awkwardness of the silence, because he probably took it as a sign of approval.<sup>57</sup>

Andersch’s ambitions were evident to his close associates as well as in his writings, despite his attempts to disguise them in broad statements about the “young generation.” While Richter considered Andersch a close friend and fellow believer in a new and brighter future, he could not help but recognize his colleague’s near-obsessive desire to achieve great fame and success as a writer. Andersch’s personal ambitions would continue to appear throughout his writings, as will be shown later, but we must also allow that he, like many Germans, looked to cultural traditions

---

<sup>55</sup> Alfred Andersch, “Notwendige Aussage,” 28.

<sup>56</sup> Alfred Andersch, “Notwendige Aussage,” 28.

<sup>57</sup> Hans Werner Richter, *Im Etablissement der Schmetterlinge: Einundzwanzig Portraits aus der Gruppe 47*. (Munich: Carl Hanser, 1986), 29.

as an anchor of sorts after their military and political structures had been completely destroyed.

In his *The German Catastrophe*, Friedrich Meinecke provided an argument quite similar to

Andersch's call for artists to help forge a new German tradition:

The work of Bismarck's era has been destroyed through our own fault, and we must go back beyond its ruins to seek out the ways of Goethe's era. The heights of the Goethe period and of the highly gifted generation living in it were reached by many individual men, bound together merely in small circles by ties of friendship. They strove for and to a large degree realized the ideal of a personal and wholly individual culture. This culture was thought of as having at the same time a universal human meaning and content.<sup>58</sup>

Meinecke also called for art and culture to occupy a central role in the rebuilding of German society, but unlike Andersch, he believed that contemporary Germans should *embrace* rather than *reject* past cultural traditions. As we will see in Andersch's essay "Deutsche Literatur in der Entscheidung," discussed in Chapter 6, the author seemingly had little use for German literature produced before 1930, with a few exceptions.

On 1 October 1946, the judges of the International Military Tribunal pronounced sentences for the twenty-two defendants. One-by-one, the men learned their fates as British judge Sir Geoffrey Lawrence read aloud the official decisions.<sup>59</sup> While some were either acquitted or given prison terms, Keitel and Reichsmarshal Hermann Göring were among those condemned to die for their crimes. The death sentences were to be carried out on 16 October, and despite the appeals of both Göring and Keitel to be executed by firing squad, all those condemned would die by hanging. Partly in protest of the means of execution, and partly to rob the victors of the pleasure of killing him themselves, Göring committed suicide the night before by taking cyanide that had been smuggled to him either in a fountain pen or a jar of skin cream,

---

<sup>58</sup> Friedrich Meinecke, *The German Catastrophe: Reflections and Recollections*, trans. Sidney B. Fay. (Boston: Beacon, 1963), 115.

<sup>59</sup> MacDonogh, *After the Reich*, 449.

depending on whose account one chooses to believe.<sup>60</sup> A month later, Richter responded with a brief but powerful article entitled “Zyankali” (“Cyanide”) in issue 7 of *Der Ruf*, which appeared on 15 November 1946.

In “Zyankali,” Richter noted that many Germans had actually lauded Göring’s action, a situation that the author found quite troubling:

[Although] the silent ruins remind us of [the old leadership], and that they should remain [in the past,] now a highly bizarre fairy tale has emerged among us. That Reich Marshal, so they say, played a trick on the victors and thus accomplished a truly heroic act. Five minutes before twelve, right under the noses of his judges, he delivered himself from the dust of this awful world and into the world of his heroic ancestors in Valhalla.<sup>61</sup>

The circumstances surrounding the Reich Marshal’s death clearly struck a nerve in Richter, and the fact that some actually praised Göring for putting one over on his would-be executioners only exacerbated the author’s anger and frustration, leading him to question the very definition of a “hero” in postwar Germany:

We don’t ask ourselves what the assembled heroes [in Valhalla] would like to say about this cyanide business, we only ask if our contemporary concept of heroism has gone so far to the dogs that heroism is only possible through cyanide dust. How would the entire *Nibelungenlied* have changed, if during the climax, old Hagen had suddenly reached into his back pocket and used a small dose of cyanide to dismiss the vengeful Krimhild:<sup>62</sup> “The battle is lost. I’m taking cyanide!” Surely such [a scene] would do little to recommend the epic.<sup>63</sup>

Appealing to a medieval epic popularized in more recent times by Richard Wagner and film director Fritz Lang, Richter demonstrated the absurdity of viewing Göring’s suicide as a heroic act. While many leaders of the regime that had plunged Germany into catastrophe had

---

<sup>60</sup> Grosser, *Germany in Our Time*, 38.

<sup>61</sup> Hans Werner Richter, “Zyankali,” *Der Ruf*, n. 7, 15 November 1946. In *Der Ruf: Eine Auswahl*, (Munich: Nymphenburger, 1976), 163.

<sup>62</sup> The *Nibelungenlied* (Song of the Nibelungs) was a medieval Germanic epic drawing from pre-Christian Germanic heroic traditions and mythos. In the tale’s climax, the avenging heroine Krimhild confronts Hagen, who murdered both her husband and her son. Hagen refuses to tell her what he had done with the treasure he had stolen, so she decapitates him.

<sup>63</sup> Richter, “Zyankali,” 163.

committed suicide to avoid answering for their crimes, during the war common soldiers faced the firing squad for attempting to desert and escape. Others, like Göring, who drove his Mercedes-Benz when surrendering to the Allies, rushed to surrender to British or American forces, hoping for favorable treatment.<sup>64</sup>

Richter often attempted to divorce the bravery and courage of the rank-and-file from the “criminal” behavior of Nazi leaders, as was evident in the dedication of his early novel, *Die Geschlagenen* to his “four brothers, who were both opponents and soldiers of the war, who hated but were forced to fight for the [Nazi] system, and who never betrayed themselves, their beliefs, or their country.”<sup>65</sup> For Richter, the ones who truly deserved to be remembered were those who fought bravely for their comrades, despite suffering under a repressive regime. Richter’s appeal to his and his brothers’ statuses as “both opponents and soldiers of the war” calls to mind Alexander Mitscherlich’s theory that participants in the war often subconsciously transferred themselves into the role of victim, resulting in an “externalization” of “evil.”<sup>66</sup> By emphasizing the idea that average soldiers were all victims, Richter diverts all negative emotion toward “criminals” such as Göring and away from the self, where reflection on one’s participation could lead easily to melancholy and depression.

As he did with Göring, Richter refused to recognize himself or his fellow soldiers as heroes. He did, however, establish a clear distinction between the Nazi political leadership and those who fought and died on the battlefield. Following his tendency to reject common soldiers’ accountability for Nazism, Richter concluded “Zyankali” by once again painting himself and his fellow soldiers as unmitigated victims of the Nazi regime:

---

<sup>64</sup> MacDonogh, *After the Reich*, 437.

<sup>65</sup> Richter, *Die Geschlagenen*, 5.

<sup>66</sup> Mitscherlich, *The Inability to Mourn*, 45-46.



We don't believe in fairy tales and legends, we don't believe in heroes and heroic ancestors and especially not in "cyanide heroes." All too often we saw Death on the battlefields of our time. [Death] was always nakedly present. He never laughed, neither heroically or artistically. He wore no decorations [like our leaders]. He alone was undefeatable. He had no cyanide for us.<sup>67</sup>

This evocative passage at once rejected the very notion of "heroism" in light of Nazism and its consequences while inviting sympathy for the soldiers who fought and perished in the course of Hitler's war. Such a distinction, whether intentional or not, helped further legitimate *Der Ruf's* goal of breaking with the past while offering a new way forward. In order to do so, its contributors needed to establish that their closets were free of skeletons, and that the burden of accountability for Nazism lay firmly with those who, like Göring, perished in the wake of the regime's demise.

### **Richter's Vision**

Richter addressed the divide between the younger and older generations in Germany in "Warum schweigt die junge Generation?" ("Why is the Young Generation Silent?") from the second issue, published on 1 September 1946. Due to a paper shortage, the second issue had a print run of only 20,000 copies, down from 35,000 for the first edition.<sup>68</sup> Like Andersch, Richter argued that the young generation, through its experiences of Nazism and the war, was uniquely positioned to take a leading role in postwar Germany. Richter maintained that the young generation had kept largely silent in terms of political activity after the war because of its struggle to come to terms with the older generation's "Olympian silence" during twelve years of Nazi rule.<sup>69</sup> The challenge for Richter's generation was to overcome the older generation's concept of society, with its nationalistic, capitalistic, and often racial concepts by creating a new

---

<sup>67</sup> Richter, "Zyankali," 164.

<sup>68</sup> Reinhardt, *Alfred Andersch*, 134.

<sup>69</sup> Hans Werner Richter, "Warum schweigt der junge Generation?" *Der Ruf*, n. 2, 1 September 1946. In *Der Ruf: Eine Auswahl*, (Munich: Nymphenburger, 1976), 62.

society based on equality and human rights. Ever the optimist, Richter saw the war as an opportunity, because it had invalidated and destroyed the old order and provided a new, freer environment for his generation to prosper:

The young generation has dismissed their experiences of “propaganda” freedom [the Nazi version of the ideal German society]. Because of [official restrictions] experienced during that time, the young generation has heretofore remained silent. However, with the growing experience of true freedom, one day they will begin to talk and work [toward a better society].<sup>70</sup>

Drawing from his communist past, Richter further defined his vision of the young generation and its role in establishing a radically different society in his article “Die Wandlungen des Sozialismus-und die junge Generation,” which appeared in issue six on 1 November 1946. In this article, Richter develops his idea of a new socialist society. Speaking of the young generation as one monolithic entity, much like his colleague Andersch, Richter claimed that “they” knew that

...socialism has become for them a vital question. They know that there can be no reorganization of Germany or Europe without large-scale socialist measures or economic planning.<sup>71</sup>

Here Richter reinforced one of the primary themes in *Der Ruf*: that a new Europe must be founded on socialist principles and that the young generation will play a crucial role in realizing it.

But how, exactly, should this new socialism have operated? Surely not in the same manner as Stalin’s Soviet Union, with its rigid and often deadly collectivizations and purges intended to create a communist utopia. In a travelogue recounting a journey into the Soviet occupation zone printed in *Der Ruf*’s first two issues, Richter made several key observations that led him to conclude that socialism as understood and implemented by the Soviets was inherently

---

<sup>70</sup> Richter, “Warum schweigt der junge Generation?” 65.

<sup>71</sup> Hans Werner Richter, “Die Wandlungen des Sozialismus-und die junge Generation,” *Der Ruf*, n. 6, 1 November 1946. In *Der Ruf: Eine Auswahl*, (Munich: Nymphenburger, 1976), 135.

repressive and undesirable. While attending a dance, the author noticed that nearly all of the men there were Russian. Indeed, the combination of a brutal retaliatory policy toward the Germans and a widespread system of eastward deportations to fill labor needs elsewhere meant that there were even fewer young men in the SBZ (*Sowjetbesetzungszone*) than in the western occupation zones, where many young men, including Richter, had returned from captivity.<sup>72</sup> In the SBZ, the Soviets rounded up thousands of young men for a variety of difficult and often dangerous labor projects, including working in uranium mines located in the Erzgebirge, while many POWs slaved away in Russian labor camps until as late as 1955, when Chancellor Konrad Adenauer negotiated their releases.<sup>73</sup> On Richter's return journey, he and a fellow traveler encountered a farmer who offered to help them cross the border back into the American zone. In the following exchange, the author provided a sense of personal circumstances in the Soviet zone:

He brought us into a barn. "You must wait until midnight, and then I'll lead you across the border. It's only a thousand meters from here. Do you have schnapps?"  
"No," we answered, "only money."  
"Money," he said, "what use does one have these days for money?"  
We waited, ate and slept a little. Outside it became nighttime. At ten o'clock, he came back. "No go. The Russians have grown suspicious. Eight years' prison for every inhabitant that is caught leading [people] across the border. You must go alone."<sup>74</sup>

Upon returning, Richter mused about the dual fates of the Eastern and Western occupation zones, recognizing that Germany had a "C-section" dividing it in light of rising Cold War tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union. Richter did not view the circumstances in either part of Germany as ideal, although those in the West were preferable:

---

<sup>72</sup> MacDonogh, *After the Reich*, 213.

<sup>73</sup> MacDonogh, *After the Reich*, 213.

<sup>74</sup> Hans Werner Richter, "Wo sollen wir landen, wo treiben wir hin...?: Skizzen von einer Reise in die östliche Zone," *Der Ruf*, ns. 1-2, 15 August-1 September 1946. In *Der Ruf: Eine Auswahl*, (Munich: Nymphenburger, 1976), 44-45.

What is happening [in the Eastern zone] resembles a cold revolution, a forced transformation of all existing living conditions, education, economy, social stratification, indeed, the entire structure of human society. What's happening here appears to be a restoration, a repetition of what was once existed, the restoration of a legalist state like that which existed before 1933...over there, the proletariat Germany, here, what remains of the bourgeoisie.<sup>75</sup>

Richter quickly realized that the forced changes taking place in the Soviet zone were not a true revolution, not in the sense that he and his colleagues hoped for. Of course, his comparison of the Western zones to pre-1933 Germany was far from positive. The Weimar Republic, Germany's first attempt at western-style democracy, was notoriously unstable and particularly weak in the face of challenges from Hitler's vocal but initially minor political party. One sees in the analogy the roots of a growing frustration with and opposition to U.S. policies that in 1946 Richter and his peers believed intended to restore Germany to what was, for them, its less-than-desirable pre-1933 state. In an article from issue 7 entitled "Parteipolitik und Weltanschauung" ("Party Politics and Worldviews"), Richter elaborated on the comparison by claiming that pre-1933 politics in Germany were too-often dominated by ideology rather than genuine, tangible concerns, and that postwar German politics should respond directly to the concerns of reality, unbound by ideological dogma.<sup>76</sup>

Richter believed that a balance could be achieved between socialist principles of economic and social equality and key western concepts such as democracy and individual freedom. Of course, Richter was not the first to marry socialism and democracy, as various movements throughout Europe and the United States had managed to do so as early as the late Nineteenth Century. He did, however, seek to adapt the concepts to the circumstances of

---

<sup>75</sup> Richter, "Wo sollen wir landen," 46.

<sup>76</sup> Hans Werner Richter, "Parteipolitik und Weltanschauung." *Der Ruf*, n. 7, 15 November 1946. In Hans Schwab-Felisch, ed., *Der Ruf: Eine deutsche Nachkriegszeitung*. (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch, 1962), 83-88.

postwar Germany, following closely after Andersch's call for "socialist humanism." According to the author, his generation's experiences were inextricably linked to socialism:

Here, at this turning point of ideas, the desires of a young [man] from a generation returning home from war and imprisonment merge with a changing socialism...[this individual] struggles to achieve a theoretical synthesis between individual freedom and socialist restraints on the economy, drawing from his experiences [he] searches for a practical path leading away from the inevitably bureaucratic suffocation of an absolutely planned society and toward an elastic social order in which socialist planning can be combined with individual freedoms.<sup>77</sup>

Like Andersch, Richter defined his generation according to his own experiences as a soldier and POW, and argued that those who endured those circumstances were poised to help forge a new postwar society. His broad definition fails to account for the diverse range of experiences among Germans during the war, and reflects perhaps the emotional impact of the war and captivity on the author: because he endured a particularly difficult situation, he projected his subjective experience into broader generalizations about the "young generation" that he hoped would build a new and radically different Germany.

Richter dismissed Soviet communism as a "bureaucratic suffocation," a further indication of his disdain for orthodox Marxism. Richter also believed that there could be no true recovery, no cure for his people's ongoing dearth of daily necessities, without the implementation of a socialist system. He rejected western-style capitalism as an equally ineffective means of curing society's ills:

For [our returning youth], the accumulation of capital is a nebulous concept from a foreign time. Possessions are things like shoes, which he does not have, empty beds, and the food he desires. He is hungry and wants to satisfy his hunger. He wants to live and wants to satisfy his addiction to life. He knows that hunger can only be satisfied when the economy is reorganized [through socialist planning,] and that he can only find life when the planned economy, this new order, does not take away one's freedom.<sup>78</sup>

---

<sup>77</sup> Richter, "Die Wandlungen des Sozialismus," 137-138.

<sup>78</sup> Richter, "Die Wandlungen des Sozialismus," 138.

Thus Richter rejected both Soviet-style communism as well as western free-market capitalism as effective means of rebuilding Germany's economy and redressing the ongoing misery he saw everywhere in 1946. His focus on the issue of hunger was due undoubtedly to ongoing food shortages that had resulted in ongoing malnutrition for Germans in all four occupation zones. Of course, Richter could not have predicted the rapidity with which Germany's economy would eventually recover, but these idealistic musings reveal a wellspring of hope hidden among the rubble of the past. Both Richter and Andersch genuinely believed that there existed a silver lining in the devastation of their homeland, an opportunity to build a more equal and just society. As will be seen in later articles, neither man was completely divorced from reality, and despite their many idealistic, theoretical musings, both recognized the realities around them. In part, their growing frustration with occupation policies resulted from increasingly obvious signs that the new Germany would not develop in the way they had hoped.

### **On Art**

Richter and especially Andersch believed that artists would be the leading members of a new postwar society, so it is unsurprising that both wrote articles about art and artists. Despite his disagreement with the purpose and content of *Die Neue Zeitung*, the official publication of the American occupation zone, Andersch highly respected the periodical's editor, Erich Kästner. Kästner had been a vocal opponent of nationalism and militarism before the Nazis took power in 1933, and accordingly Hitler's government banned his writings. In "Fabian wird positiv" (Fabian becomes Positive"), Andersch praised Kästner and his 1931 novel *Fabian: Die Geschichte eines Moralisten*.

In his introduction, Andersch applauded Kästner while offering subtle criticism of *Die Neue Zeitung*'s overseers, among whom were Hans Habe and Major Hans Wallenberg, a German who emigrated in 1937:<sup>79</sup>

The immense success of this American paper for the German people is due in no small part to [Kästner]. One is disappointed, however, when two or three issues appear without a single article or even a couple of remarks from him. One avidly reads his articles, with their clear diction...and their tendency to get straight to the point. One praises the wisdom of the American officers who are generous enough to allow an unconditionally German heart to speak out in their organ.<sup>80</sup>

Andersch's barely-concealed distaste for the American-controlled publication was clear when he "praised" *Die Neue Zeitung*'s overseers for "allowing" Kästner to speak out immediately after complaining that the paper rarely included articles from its editor. By describing the U.S.-sponsored publication as an "organ," the author implied that it was serving as the official mouthpiece of American policy. There had been a long history of political parties using official "organs" to promote their views, as was evident during the electoral struggles of the 1920s, in which every major party, from the SPD to the Nazis, had their own regular publications, including many unique regional versions.<sup>81</sup> Andersch did, however, begrudgingly acknowledge the paper's widespread success in the American zone, where by 1947 it was selling an average 800,000 copies per issue, dwarfing *Der Ruf*'s circulation, which at its height in early 1947 ran only 50,000 copies.<sup>82</sup>

As for Kästner, Andersch had nothing but positive things to say about his former superior. For Andersch, the author who believed "reactionary nationalism was a greater evil than the Treaty of Versailles" provided an inspirational model for the post-World War II generation in

---

<sup>79</sup> MacDonogh, *After the Reich*, 213.

<sup>80</sup> Alfred Andersch, "Fabian wird positiv," *Der Ruf*, n. 3, 15 September 1946. In *Der Ruf: Eine Auswahl*, (Munich: Nymphenburger, 1976), 96.

<sup>81</sup> William Sheridan Allen, *The Nazi Seizure of Power: The Experience of a Single German Town 1930-1935*. (New York: New Viewpoints, 1973), 21.

<sup>82</sup> MacDonogh, *After the Reich*, 106.

the titular character of his novel *Fabian*.<sup>83</sup> Andersch praised the recent “urgent” reissue of Kästner’s novel:

Because [the book] is the history of a young man after the First World War, a young man without illusions or hope, it is especially instructive for us, the young generation after the devastating Second World War. We can see ourselves in Fabian, in his disillusionment, in his compulsion to say “no” to everything and everyone, because everything that he sees and experiences is dirty and commonplace.<sup>84</sup>

On the surface, Andersch’s analogy represents yet another attempt to describe and define his generation, this time through comparison to the post-World War I generation as represented by the character Fabian. There is, however, another element that reveals a fundamental concept underlying Andersch’s personal and literary philosophy, a concept that would appear again and again throughout his body of work: the need to reject convention. Recall *Die Kirschen der Freiheit*, in which Andersch justified his desertion by suggesting that it was an existentialist rejection of expectations, driven by his own personal fears. Despite his oft-expressed belief that a new literary tradition was necessary to the development of postwar German culture, this article demonstrates that Andersch saw similarities between his generation and that of World War I, in that both shared a sense of disillusionment and despair. Notable figures such as Ernst Jünger, Walter Flex, Ernst Würche, and Karl Mannheim wrestled with issues similar to those addressed by Andersch and Richter in *Der Ruf* and beyond.<sup>85</sup> Among other themes, one finds many instances of generational conflict in interwar literary discourse, as many young Germans in the 1920s held the older generation responsible for the senseless slaughter of the First World War. Ironically, this post-World War I generation was precisely the target of many of Andersch and Richter’s criticisms for plunging *them* into a devastating conflict. Despite Andersch’s sympathies with the post-World War I generation, his sentiments were selective at best, because

---

<sup>83</sup> Andersch, “Fabian wird positiv,” 97.

<sup>84</sup> Andersch, “Fabian wird positiv,” 98.

<sup>85</sup> Robert Wohl, *The Generation of 1914*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 1979), 83.



his most ardent criticisms were most often directed at the generation that “allowed” Hitler to attain power. In nearly all of his major works, Andersch explored the theme of saying “no” to social expectations and unfavorable circumstances, usually in the form of fleeing a particular situation, as will be discussed in Chapter 6. In some ways, his personal life also followed this pattern; not only did he desert his unit during the war, but he also “fled” Germany when he relocated to Switzerland in 1958.<sup>86</sup>

In his conclusion, Andersch’s personal aspirations appeared once again when he claimed that his generation needed a new “Fabian” to serve as a model of attitude and behavior.<sup>87</sup> Describing the state of contemporary German literature as full of “mystic dilettantes” and clichés, Andersch claimed that his country’s literary culture had “gone to the dogs.”<sup>88</sup> What, then, was the solution to this seemingly pitiable state? Andersch exclaimed that German literature “needs a new Erich Kästner!” A cynical reading of this article might suggest that the entire exercise of praising Kästner was simply Andersch’s means of setting himself up as the implied successor to the object of his admiration. Considering the numerous other examples of his obsessive ambition to become a great author, one must at least allow the possibility.

Richter also devoted an article specifically to the role of art in postwar Germany. In “Zum Thema des Abgründigen auf der Bühne unserer Zeit,” Richter discussed actor/director/author Axel von Ambesser’s play *Das Abgründige in Herrn Gerstenberg*, performed for the first time in 1946 at the Münchner Kammerspielen. Like Andersch in his article on Kästner, Richter used Ambesser’s piece to illustrate several points about the meaning and direction of art in post-Nazi society.

---

<sup>86</sup> Jendricke, *Alfred Andersch*, 77.

<sup>87</sup> Andersch, “Fabian wird positiv,” 99.

<sup>88</sup> Andersch, “Fabian wird positiv,” 99.

The play itself is a typical middle-class interpersonal drama, involving affairs and marriage proposals among several of its leading characters. Richter saw the play as evidence that classical Naturalism in art is no longer valid. To establish a contrast with the petit-bourgeois nature of Ambesser's play, Richter described his own scene, featuring a crippled, uniformed soldier with two amputated legs sitting in a wheelchair on a street corner, who

...holds his cap in his hand and asks passers-by to spare a little something for him. Behind him sits the bizarre backdrop of a ruined landscape. That is the true face of our times. Today thousands of such cripples wander the streets that cross our ruined country...here is the abyss in which we live.<sup>89</sup>

This passage paints a strongly pessimistic picture of Germany in 1946, one that would certainly have resonated with many of those living in its largely ruined cities, usually without enough to eat from day to day. The specific images of amputated veterans recalls the artwork of Georg Grosz and Otto Dix, post-World War I artists whose work often featured disfigured veterans of the Great War. Richter believed that older forms of art had no meaning after 1945:

The Naturalism of yesterday is dead. It had been ill for a long time. It was finally killed by nights of bombing and battlefields. What now emerges is experience. The experience of danger and the visibly grey reality of our chaotic times. In people's experience of these real circumstances one finds all the elements of drama. Dramatic realism—that is for us the confessions of people about their [own experiences]...<sup>90</sup>

Richter then claimed that the “literary and theatrical tragedy of our time” was that artists such as Ambesser continually looked to the past, ignoring contemporary reality.<sup>91</sup> For Richter, such tendencies were irresponsible, because they seemed to seek escape from the monumental task of rebuilding German culture after Nazism. The sentiments expressed in this article represent the fundamental philosophy of the writers that would comprise Group 47: While older works of literature and art might have had artistic merit, they were no longer relevant in light of the Nazi

---

<sup>89</sup> Hans Werner Richter, “Zum Thema des Abgründigen auf der Bühne unserer Zeit,” *Der Ruf*, n. 8, 1 December 1946. In *Der Ruf: Eine Auswahl*, (Munich: Nymphenburger, 1976), 190.

<sup>90</sup> Richter, “Zum Thema des Abgründigen,” 191.

<sup>91</sup> Richter, “Zum Thema des Abgründigen,” 192.

catastrophe. Writers like Richter and Andersch believed they had an inescapable responsibility to use their experiences as soldiers and anti-Nazis to confront the past directly, providing a greater understanding of recent history or perhaps even a type of catharsis to their readers.

In “Wagner Redivivus?” (“Wagner Revived?”) Andersch offered his own criticism of an older artistic form: that of the Wagnerian musical drama. The article was a response to a recent performance of Richard Wagner’s *Tristan und Isolde* in Hamburg, in the British Zone. Andersch claimed that despite being an admirer of music, he never understood Wagner’s appeal. Wagner’s operas were characterized by emotional intensity, heroic, often larger-than-life characters, and medieval settings, elements far removed from the new literary direction Andersch hoped to lead. Wagner was one of Hitler’s favorite composers, and was therefore anathema to those who, like Andersch, sought to break with the Nazi past. Andersch implausibly explained away the popularity of the performance in Hamburg by claiming that Hamburgers went in large numbers to see *Tristan und Isolde* because they were “nastily disposed” toward the only alternative, *Peter Grimes*, an opera by English composer Benjamin Britten.<sup>92</sup> Andersch contrasted his native Munich with Hamburg by claiming that Munich’s residents were individualist and conservative, and did not subscribe to the grand romantic visions of a Wagner or a Hitler. This claim is unusual, especially when Andersch himself admitted that in 1932 during a paper shortage, he noticed that all of the old posters he gathered throughout Munich were advertisements for Wagner’s operas.<sup>93</sup> Wagner’s most prominent patron was King Ludwig II of Bavaria, and his operas were regularly performed in Munich and Bayreuth, to the north. Furthermore, the only reason that Wagner’s operas were not performed in Munich in the years immediately following the war was because the Americans had banned them, believing Wagner to be a sort of proto-

---

<sup>92</sup> Alfred Andersch, “Wagner Redivivus?” *Der Ruf*, n. 10, 1 January 1947. In *Der Ruf: Eine Auswahl*, (Munich: Nymphenburger, 1976), 207.

<sup>93</sup> Andersch, “Wagner Redivivus?” 205.

Nazi.<sup>94</sup> For these reasons, Andersch's attempt to explain away the success of *Tristan und Isolde* in Hamburg fails, because Wagner *was* popular in Munich, and any performance of his operas there would surely have seen success similar to those in Hamburg, if not for the U.S. ban. Despite his arguments' weaknesses, Andersch continued to promote his belief in casting aside old works that have been invalidated in favor of a new cultural direction. In Chapter 6, we will continue to explore our subjects' efforts to forge a new literary tradition.

### **Beyond Idealism**

As the rift between the wartime allies broadened, western authorities also took steps to set up elections involving candidates who had been carefully vetted to establish the "cleanliness" of their backgrounds. In September 1945, the western allies officially lifted their ban on political parties, allowing the formation of the two giants of postwar German politics, the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and the Social Democratic Party (SPD).<sup>95</sup> The conservative CDU had its roots in the pre-Nazi Catholic Center Party, and appealed broadly to both liberal and conservative middle-class voters.<sup>96</sup> Konrad Adenauer, former mayor of Cologne and victim of persecution during the Nazi period, emerged as the leader of the CDU, while Kurt Schumacher, a pre-Nazi member of the SPD who had spent over ten years in concentration camps, became leader of the newly-reconstituted SPD, which drew much of its support from working-class voters.<sup>97</sup> Although the parties seemed evenly matched in the beginning, British and especially American authorities increasingly favored Adenauer, a Catholic Rhinelander from Bonn who supported the creation of a federal state made up of numerous *Länder* and the complete

---

<sup>94</sup> MacDonogh, *After the Reich*, 353.

<sup>95</sup> MacDonogh, *After the Reich*, 262.

<sup>96</sup> Hagen Schulze, *Germany: A New History*, trans. Deborah Lucas Schneider. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 290-291.

<sup>97</sup> Mary Fulbrook, *A Concise History of Germany*. (Cambridge: University Press, 1999), 208.

renunciation of German claims to Prussian lands that currently belonged to Poland.<sup>98</sup>

Schumacher, on the other hand, was a Prussian Protestant who favored a strong central government and publicly rejected the concept of collective guilt, which had been a fundamental principle of Allied occupation policy toward the German people.<sup>99</sup> In a closely-contested election in 1949, Adenauer became Chancellor of the newly-created Federal Republic of Germany, and would preside over a series of political, economic, and cultural successes during his fourteen years in office.<sup>100</sup> According to Hermann Glaser, Adenauer was successful because he did not “want to bear the burden of a mourning period.”<sup>101</sup> Indeed, Adenauer insisted on the necessity of German rearmament, and of a strict anti-communist policy that quickly abandoned German atonement for past crimes in favor of drawing ideologically closer to its new western allies, particularly the United States.

If one were only allowed to read the more idealistic writings from *Der Ruf*, one might develop the impression that our subjects were becoming increasingly divorced from reality. Both men recognized, however, that emerging Cold War political considerations were beginning to play an increasingly important role in the rebuilding process. Both men, Richter more so than Andersch, chose to align themselves with the SPD, which theoretically combined socialist economic policies with belief in democratic ideals. In a series of articles dealing with emerging political issues, the authors provided a set of pragmatic analyses of socialism’s chances in postwar Germany, revealing among other things the authors’ mounting frustrations with the occupying powers.

---

<sup>98</sup> Richard Hiscocks, *The Adenauer Era: Germany’s miraculous post-war renaissance and the man who created it*. (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1966), 22-23.

<sup>99</sup> MacDonogh, *After the Reich*, 267.

<sup>100</sup> Manfred Götemaker, *Kleine Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*. (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2002), 48-49.

<sup>101</sup> Hermann Glaser, *The Rubble Years: The Cultural Roots of Postwar Germany 1945-1948*. (New York: Paragon House, 1986), 99.

In “Die Chance der SPD,” written by Richter and published on 15 November 1946, the author examined the Social Democratic Party’s future prospects a mere two months after it was officially reconstituted. Having seen initial successes in local elections in Berlin, in September the party held a conference in Cologne during which its leaders attempted to define their political program. Richter explained the ramifications of the meeting, which should “presently draw the attention of all young socialists”:

[The conference has shown] that the SPD wants to become more than the usual “world view” party, the kind of party that we believe will lead German democracy into a new fiasco, if we allow them to be elected. In the [SPD] party platform from Cologne, one saw many viewpoints represented, viewpoints that were consolidated into demands which, used correctly, can be incorporated into a plan of action for the German Left, a Left that will grow and draw its collective strength not only from the elite members of workers’ movements, but also from...the middle class and—last but not least—the scattered German intellectuals.<sup>102</sup>

Thus the new German Left would be a broad movement that incorporated not only the working class, the traditional base of socialist support, but the middle class as well. As for the party’s “demands,” they were what one might expect from a social democratic party:

[The SPD platform] demands a fair distribution of [economic burdens], the socialization of basic manufacturing industries, the energy industry, transportation, and banks, [as well as] agricultural reform, the reorganization of wages and prices, fair pensions, and the equal distribution of food between cities and rural areas.<sup>103</sup>

All of these demands would be accomplished, according to Kurt Schumacher, through the creation of a strong central government, something that the Allies and the CDU wanted to avoid at all costs, having recently brought an end to an overcentralized regime.<sup>104</sup>

Despite his idealism, Richter knew very well that the SPD’s prospects for political success and, hopefully, the future implementation of socialist elements into the German

---

<sup>102</sup> Hans Werner Richter, “Die Chance der SPD,” *Der Ruf*, n. 7, 15 November 1946. In *Der Ruf: Eine Auswahl*, (Munich: Nymphenburger, 1976), 151.

<sup>103</sup> Richter, “Die Chance der SPD,” 151.

<sup>104</sup> Hiscocks, *The Adenauer Era*, 22-23.

economy, rested heavily on Allied attitudes toward socialism. Recall that the Americans in particular believed that their denazification process should result in transforming “good” Germans into American-style democrats. Thus American authorities tended to support Adenauer’s CDU, whose political views were more closely related to those of the United States. The SPD was not without its own powerful supporters, however. The British government, controlled by the leftist Labour Party, provided Schumacher with transportation, lodging, and an armed escort when he traveled to Berlin to meet with SPD representatives there in February 1946.<sup>105</sup> Despite this and other instances of British support, Schumacher chafed under Allied occupation in a manner similar to Richter, one of several prominent intellectuals who supported the SPD. As mentioned above, Schumacher rejected the notion of collective guilt as an absolute insult to individuals who, like himself, suffered at the hands of the Nazis. In a letter to Hans Vogel, a pre-Nazi SPD politician, Schumacher argued that under no circumstances should the Allies even consider forcing those who resisted the Nazis to admit to any sort of “guilt,” via denazification questionnaires or other methods.<sup>106</sup>

In “Grundlagen einer deutschen Opposition” (“Foundations of a German Opposition”) from issue 8, Andersch reminded readers of the necessity of opposing parties within a functioning democracy. Arguing against the totalitarian desire for absolute “order” in society, order that precluded the possibility of dissent or ideological divergence, the author claimed that opposing parties were “carriers of freedom” who “played a dialectic role” by actively opposing the ruling regime.<sup>107</sup> Such opposition would, therefore, provide a balance to the majority party

---

<sup>105</sup> MacDonogh, *After the Reich*, 266.

<sup>106</sup> Peter Merseburger, *Der schwierige Deutsche, Kurt Schumacher: Eine Biographie*. (Munich: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1995), 224.

<sup>107</sup> Alfred Andersch, “Grundlagen einer deutschen Opposition,” *Der Ruf*, n. 8, 1 December 1946. In Hans Schwab-Felisch, ed., *Der Ruf: Eine deutsche Nachkriegszeitung*. (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch, 1962), 98.

and theoretically guarantee that the latter could not rule unilaterally. The notion that a strong political opposition was a guarantor of continuing freedom would help form the basis of intellectual support for the SPD, beginning especially in the late 1950s as Adenauer pursued German rearmament.

In issue 15, published 15 March 1947, Alfred Andersch offered an analysis of the global state of socialism in “Die sozialistische Situation: Versuch einer synthetischen Kritik” (“The Socialist Situation: Search for a Critical Synthesis”). Through these observations, the author arrived at a series of pragmatic conclusions far removed from his earlier, more idealistic claims that artists would lead the way and that the young generation would be completely responsible for transforming postwar Germany. Many important events had occurred since “Das junge Europa formt sein Gesicht,” and those changes were reflected in Andersch’s observations. At the beginning of the article, Andersch defined socialism as the “dry task of nationalizing the means of production,” and proceeded with his survey:

In England, a socialist party, the Labour Party, is in control of the entire bourgeois democratic government...in France, the Communist Party is the strongest in the country...in Italy the communists and socialists have formed equally strong mass parties...<sup>108</sup>

Indeed, after World War II the future of socialism in Europe looked exceptionally bright, giving Andersch and like-minded Germans cause for optimism. On 26 July 1945, Clement Attlee’s Labour Party won an impressive 400 seats in Parliament, while Churchill’s Conservatives only managed 200 seats.<sup>109</sup> The new Prime Minister set about implementing various socialist measures, including the nationalization of the Bank of England in 1945 and the gas industry in 1948, and the National Health Service Act of 1946, which provided government-funded

---

<sup>108</sup> Alfred Andersch, “Die sozialistische Situation: Versuch einer synthetischen Kritik,” *Der Ruf*, n. 15, 15 March 1947. In *Der Ruf: Eine Auswahl*, (Munich: Nymphenburger, 1976), 270-271.

<sup>109</sup> Peter Clarke, *Hope and Glory: Britain 1900-2000*. (New York: Penguin, 2004), 216.



healthcare to all citizens.<sup>110</sup> Despite its many problems, the Labour Party demonstrated the viability of a large-scale political party with a socialist platform. Throughout the postwar era, the Labour Party would vie with the Conservatives for control of Parliament, with each enjoying periods of success. In France, however, the government took several steps to exclude communists from power while at the same time marginalizing the presence and influence of socialist parties. Although, as Andersch noted, the French Communist Party (PCF) had enjoyed early postwar electoral successes and a vast increase in its membership, the party was officially expelled from Paul Ramadier's coalition government in May 1947.<sup>111</sup> The move was intended to ensure receipt of Marshall Plan aid, as many in the U.S. government, including Undersecretary of State Dean Acheson, believed that the PCF would spearhead a communist takeover of France. Within western democracies, Cold War realities meant limitations intended to prevent communists from gaining any meaningful power or influence in government.

In the United States, Andersch observed a shift to the right among both major political parties, beginning after Roosevelt's death in April 1945.<sup>112</sup> The author believed that this general move toward conservatism would necessitate the emergence of a third viable national party, which would naturally be socialist. Eight years before it took place, Andersch predicted the union of the American Federation of Labor (AFL) and the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO). However, he believed the merger would result in the creation of national socialist party that would become a major force in American politics, led most likely by Henry A. Wallace, who had served as Vice President during Roosevelt's third term.<sup>113</sup> Indeed Wallace, who advocated nationalized health care, détente with the Soviet Union, and ending segregation,

---

<sup>110</sup> Clarke, *Hope and Glory*, 225.

<sup>111</sup> Gordon Wright, *France in Modern Times*. (New York: Norton, 1987), 411.

<sup>112</sup> Andersch, "Die sozialistische Situation," 271.

<sup>113</sup> Andersch, "Die sozialistische Situation," 271.

would run for President in 1948 on the Progressive Party ticket. The Progressives were not, however, the viable third party that Andersch predicted, and failed to carry a single state in the election. Anti-communism bordering on paranoia was pervasive in practically all levels of American society, and few were willing to support a candidate who was friendly to communism and who promoted radical social reform. This pervasive anti-communism was likely an underlying factor in the ICD's removal of Andersch and Richter from *Der Ruf*, despite official accusations of "nationalism" and "nihilism."<sup>114</sup>

As for socialism in Germany, Andersch saw German political circumstances as an extension of Cold War divisions:

In Germany the socialist and communist parties have been newly constituted. The SPD has appeared in its older form...[while] the communists have formed the SED, under whose banner the demand for socialist unity has been issued. Both parties have gained strength through the respective support of West and East, and now irreconcilably struggle against each other. The current political situation in Germany resembles that of 1932. Fundamental changes in the socialist situation [here], [changes] that have already appeared in other countries, have not yet materialized.<sup>115</sup>

The author's comparison of the contemporary state of socialism to that of 1932 indicated his frustration with ongoing divisions within socialist circles in Germany. This recalls one of Andersch's primary complaints about the left's reaction to the Nazis, particularly the failure of the SPD and KPD in the early 1930s to form a united front.<sup>116</sup> The situation in 1947 had been exacerbated by Cold War politics, as the Soviet Union attempted to establish the SED as *the* socialist/communist party by forcing SPD members into the new party of choice. The Muscovites<sup>117</sup> despised the socialists, who had dominated politics in Berlin in the Weimar

---

<sup>114</sup> Goldstein, "A Strategic Failure," 59.

<sup>115</sup> Andersch, "Die sozialistische Situation," 271.

<sup>116</sup> James D. Wilkinson, *The Intellectual Resistance in Europe*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), 166.

<sup>117</sup> The Muscovites were German communists, including future DDR leaders Walter Ulbricht and Erich Honecker, who spent the duration of the Nazi period in Soviet Russia. After the war,

period, and thus completely supported the forced absorption of socialists into the SED.<sup>118</sup> As has been discussed, the SPD was free to operate in the Western zones, but the Allies (the Americans especially) tended to support Adenauer's conservative CDU and worked actively to prevent communist parties from gaining footholds in governments. Despite the fact that there was a widening gap between socialist parties in western Europe and Soviet communism,<sup>119</sup> the widespread association in the West of socialism with Stalin's dictatorship actively hindered socialists as they sought to gain power and influence:

...the present state of the Soviet Union is truly the strongest hindrance to the development of socialism in Europe. Russia renounced the ongoing development of socialist theory through the physical liquidation of Trotsky and Bukharin, [who represented] middle-class [moderation], and thus "freed" itself from the humanistic legacy of bourgeois democracy...now Russia offers a one-man dictatorship and all of the things such a system entails.<sup>120</sup>

Returning to the refrain of "humanist socialism," Andersch insisted that socialism could only succeed if it managed to incorporate important elements of "bourgeois democracy":

[In contrast to the Soviet dictatorship and unrestrained capitalist democracy,] the socialist solution will result from a daring union between revolutionary action and the desire to protect individual rights. The key to [ensuring this balance] lies in promoting the correct economic makeup of the future socialist society. This society will maintain that people, rather than the state, are the basis of material production...<sup>121</sup>

Andersch hoped that the marriage of radically different principles would allow socialism to thrive in Germany and throughout Europe, despite mounting opposition to communism, and, by extension, socialism (the "guilt by association" principle) in the western world. He saw Attlee's Labour government in Britain and Wallace's progressivism in the United States as positive signs

---

the Soviets returned them to Germany, hoping to use them as the core leadership of a new, communist Germany through the SED.

<sup>118</sup> MacDonogh, *After the Reich*, 106.

<sup>119</sup> Andersch, "Die sozialistische Situation," 272.

<sup>120</sup> Andersch, "Die sozialistische Situation," 274-275.

<sup>121</sup> Andersch, "Die sozialistische Situation," 278.

offering hope that his and others' hopes of creating a socialist democracy were "not in vain."<sup>122</sup> Despite his hopes, Andersch would soon learn that the American desire to limit the spread of communism meant U.S. officials were fully willing to use censorship as a weapon against individuals or publications that might be seen as "pro-communist."

### **A Question of Nationalism**

While initially hopeful that the end of the war would bring about a much-needed transformation not only of Germany but of Europe as a whole, Richter and Andersch began to realize that the occupiers would act ultimately according to their own political interests, paying little heed to historical tradition or the contemporary desires of the German people. At Yalta in February 1945, Stalin insisted that the western border of Poland should be extended to the Oder-Neisse rivers, which would form the border with Germany.<sup>123</sup> In July at Potsdam, the Allies confirmed their decision to transfer territories such as Silesia and Pomerania to Poland, despite the presence of millions of German inhabitants.<sup>124</sup> The mere fact that the Poles now owned those formerly German territories was not, in and of itself, a serious problem for Germans who now found themselves under Polish rule. Despite an initially favorable reaction from its German population, glad to be notionally free of Russian rule, the Polish government was determined to remove all traces of the German presence in their country. Along with other Eastern European countries such as Czechoslovakia, Poland systematically expelled its German population, resulting in millions losing their homes and belongings while simultaneously suffering severe, often sadistic, reprisals from Poles and others seeking to benefit from German misfortune. In total, approximately 12 million Germans were expelled from their homes in now-foreign territory, putting further strain on Germany's resources, especially in regard to the food

---

<sup>122</sup> Andersch, "Die sozialistische Situation," 279.

<sup>123</sup> MacDonogh, *After the Reich*, 13.

<sup>124</sup> MacDonogh, *After the Reich*, 177.

supply.<sup>125</sup> Along with the theft of property, beatings and rapes were common, these acts seemingly having been perpetrated out of a desire for revenge against those Germans who supported the Nazi invasions of their countries. While many Poles, Czechs, Romanians, Hungarians, and others no doubt supported the expulsion of Germans and the appropriation of German possessions and territory due to a belief that the Germans were getting what they deserved, the basic fact remains: many in those countries profited directly from the expulsion of Germans, from the Polish government, which gained nearly 25% of Germany's pre-war territory, to individuals who stole from Germans or even moved into houses formerly owned by expellees. Despite protests that highlighted the abuses taking place during the process, both the United States and the Soviet Union reaffirmed their recognition of Poland's western border. During a speech in Stuttgart on 6 September 1946, U.S. Secretary of State James Byrnes publically reiterated America's commitment to the new border, and in October Stalin confirmed his commitment as well. On 1 December 1946, in issue 8 of *Der Ruf*, Richter publicly criticized the Allies' territorial agreements regarding Poland in "Die östliche Grenzfrage" ("The Question of the Eastern Border"). As has been the case with subsequent territorial claims, many, including U.S. occupation authorities, saw the article as an expression of nationalist sentiment.

Richter's article is highly nuanced, involving logical arguments in favor of territorial claims based on historical precedent. It in no way represented a blanket, Hitler-esque demand for the return of *all* lost territories. Regardless, any mention of German territorial claims after 1945 tended to elicit accusations of nationalism or even, more recently, neo-Nazism. Richter argued that certain territories, including Silesia and western Pomerania, should rightly belong to Germany due to various historical, ethnological, and economic considerations, while others should remain with Poland:

---

<sup>125</sup> Grosser, *Germany in Our Time*, 32.

Both [Silesia and western Pomerania] have been independent of Poland since 1157. They were especially settled by Germans, and were both economically and politically the agrarian hinterland of western Germany. The provinces of Posen and eastern Pomerania, on the other hand, have belonged to Poland since 1772. They were largely settled by Poles and are economically linked to Poland. German claims to Posen and east Pomerania are as dubious as Polish claims to Silesia and western Pomerania.<sup>126</sup>

Richter believed that a compromise was theoretically possible, if Germany were to surrender its claims on upper Silesia, Posen, east Pomerania, and east Prussia in exchange for Silesia and west Pomerania. The author continued by arguing that two wrongs could not make a right:

The often-repeated divisions of Poland, most recently in 1939 between Soviet Russia and the Third Reich, which abrogated Polish sovereignty, cannot be made right through a partitioning of Germany. This will only result in a new national misfortune for both peoples.<sup>127</sup>

Richter's argument reveals much about his viewpoint in late 1946. The author believed that Germany had legitimate, historical claims to certain territories, and he provided sound arguments to support his view. Ultimately, one doubts whether Richter truly believed the Allies would reconsider the territorial question; he himself acknowledged that the hands of both the Germans and Poles were tied by the Allies, who had already decided the issue among themselves. He recognized that the unified Europe he and Andersch hoped for would require the settlement of traditional territorial disputes such as that discussed above. Certainly, one might see Richter's argument for German territorial claims as nationalist in character, but given that he provided sound historical bases to support his proposal, we must conclude that the article represented an honest attempt to persuade readers of the vital importance of territorial issues to the creation of lasting peace in Europe.

In issue 13 (15 February 1947), Richter responded directly to accusations of *Der Ruf's* "nationalism" in "Wir verkappten Militaristen" ("We Closet Militarists"). According to the

---

<sup>126</sup> Hans Werner Richter, "Die östliche Grenzfrage," *Der Ruf*, n. 8, 1 December 1946. In *Der Ruf: Eine Auswahl*, (Munich: Nymphenburger, 1976), 179.

<sup>127</sup> Richter, "Die östliche Grenzfrage," 180.

author, many bookstores and newsstands had stopped selling the journal. He mentioned one instance in which a man with “an officer’s face” asked for the latest issue at a bookstore, and was told that it “didn’t exist.”<sup>128</sup> He cited another example in which an old woman was heard remarking that the journal gave one the hope that Germany would “once again be great and powerful,” a nationalist sentiment that Richter believed stemmed from a serious misinterpretation of *Der Ruf*’s message.<sup>129</sup> The author’s response was full of sarcasm, reflecting his frustration with the fact that many seemed to misunderstand the authors’ views:

In quiet hours we [the editors of *Der Ruf*] play with toy soldiers. We indulge in recollections [of the war], we straighten our monocles and talk to each other...in the third person. With the motto “militarism is dead, long live militarism,” we push our toy soldiers across the writing desk, let them fall and the stand up again, put them into battle after battle...have them form defensive formations, demonstrating to ourselves daily that we indeed support people’s freedom, but that we still love above all else heroes and generals and little fresh, happy wars...<sup>130</sup>

Richter’s response reveals his anger at what he saw as a widespread failure to appreciate his paper’s pacifist message. In his essay “A Structural Approach to Social Movement Emotions,” Theodore D. Kemper argues that anger often results from a failure of the “other” to recognize one’s own self-perceived “status,” whatever such a term might entail for an individual. In this instance, those who viewed *Der Ruf* as a nationalist publication had clearly angered Richter because he believed they had misunderstood the meaning and purpose of his paper.<sup>131</sup> Thinking objectively, however, one can understand how certain elements of arguments and ideas in previous articles might be seen as nationalistic. The most obvious example, of course, was “Die östliche Grenzfrage,” which provided compelling if unrealistic arguments for the legitimacy of

---

<sup>128</sup> Hans Werner Richter, “Wir verkappten Militaristen,” *Der Ruf*, n. 13, 15 February 1947. In *Der Ruf: Eine Auswahl*, (Munich: Nymphenburger, 1976), 244.

<sup>129</sup> Richter, “Wir verkappten Militaristen,” 244.

<sup>130</sup> Richter, “Wir verkappten Militaristen,” 243.

<sup>131</sup> Theodore D. Kemper, “A Structural Approach to Social Movement Emotions.” In Goodwin, et al., *Passionate Politics*, 64-65.

German claims on territories lost as a result of the war. Richter's angry response reveals a frustration with the fact that some Germans evidently misinterpreted *Der Ruf*'s message as nationalist.

Richter used vivid imagery to demonstrate that militarism had become anathema not only to himself and his colleagues, but to the majority of Germans as well. Given the widespread disinterest or even outright German opposition to rearmament in the 1950s, Richter's argument seems valid. He claimed that most Germans would oppose even a small ceremonial military detail for parades, much less the creation of a large national army which

...we had already experienced. At first it was one hundred thousand, then five hundred thousand, then two million and in the end, ten million dead, destroyed cities, dismantled industry, divided provinces, millions of refugees, homelessness, hunger, and misery. Does anyone really think us so crazy that we would like to go through all that once more or, more accurately, for the third time, as if it were a favorite game that one cannot stop playing? No, we envy no nation's army, but rather its measure of freedom and independence.<sup>132</sup>

By appealing directly to the consequences of not one, but two world wars, Richter argued against accusations of nationalism or militarism on the grounds that Germans no longer wished to bring more suffering upon themselves. This article reminds us that Richter was in no way a militarist. His logical arguments for German territorial claims in "Die östliche Grenzfrage" never once suggested any sort of violent action as a means of setting things right. His angry response to accusations of nationalism in "Wir verkappten Militaristen" reveal that the author himself was seemingly shocked and offended that readers might draw nationalist messages from *Der Ruf*. As discussed above, there were elements in some articles that could be construed as endorsements of nationalist, German-centric political views, but there is little evidence that Richter himself was a nationalist in the sense that American authorities understood it (i.e., Nazism, other forms of political fanaticism).

---

<sup>132</sup> Richter, "Wir verkappten Militaristen," 246.



## Frustration and Opposition

Beginning with Andersch's "Chaplin und die Geistesfreiheit" in issue 7 (15 November 1946), the co-editors of *Der Ruf* began to shift focus away from wrestling with the past and formulating the theoretical foundations of a new Europe. The underlying socialist principles remained, as did their mutual hope for European unity. However, both began to chafe under ongoing restrictions imposed by the United States and the other occupying powers, and each became increasingly frustrated and disappointed that their initial hopes for a new Europe unified by socialist and humanist principles were giving way to the political interests of their conquerors. Meanwhile, there had been little improvement in material conditions throughout Germany, with people still scrambling to acquire food and other daily necessities. Accordingly, each author became ever bolder in criticizing their occupiers. These criticisms would lead directly to their removal as co-editors of the paper.

On 9 August 1946 in Berlin, 500 Germans, most of them documented anti-Nazis, were allowed to attend a showing of the 1940 Charlie Chaplin film *The Great Dictator*. The film was a spoof of Nazi Germany, with Chaplin playing both the title role of "Adenoid Hynkel" and a Jewish barber who happens to look exactly like the dictator. The two characters become involved in a comedic case of mistaken identity, in which the barber winds up joining a resistance group and, ultimately, giving a speech in place of the dictator. While the film's primary intent was entertainment, Chaplin himself, a dedicated anti-fascist, was increasingly disturbed by the actions of Nazi Germany and hoped to convince Americans of the necessity of intervention at a time when isolationist sentiment prevailed in most levels of society.<sup>133</sup> In addition to Hitler, the film also pokes fun at Goebbels ("Garbitsch"), Mussolini ("Benzio

---

<sup>133</sup> Robert Cole, "Anglo-American Anti-Fascist Film Propaganda in a Time of Neutrality: *The Great Dictator*, 1940," in *Historical Journal of Film, Radio, and Television*, v. 21, n. 2, 2001, 139.

Napolini”), and others.<sup>134</sup> In the film’s climax, the barber, taking the place of the dictator, gives a speech urging humanity to rise up and resist fascism, a plea that no doubt reflected Chaplin’s own views.

The official U.S. Army newspaper, *Stars and Stripes*, claimed afterwards that the film should not be shown broadly to the German public, because the events parodied were too recent for Germans to be able to laugh about them. In his article, Andersch attacked this viewpoint as evidence that the Americans intended to “sell [us] freedom in slices.”<sup>135</sup> He argued that Germans should be allowed to engage their past directly and immediately, without the various filters imposed by ICD censors. Furthermore, he claimed that Germans deserved the opportunity to laugh at Nazism and Hitler through their satirization in Chaplin’s film, and that such opportunity would further the process of spreading concepts of freedom and democracy in Germany. Referring to the concept of democratic reeducation as a “tragicomedy,” Andersch asserted the following:

For the time being we are merely allowed to reflect on our past. The German advisors to our “educators” have decided this...and we [are forced to] bend to this authority. Thunderous laughter in a school is only possible when the teacher dismisses class.<sup>136</sup>

In other words, until they are allowed total freedom to confront the past, whether through historical research, public debate, or viewing films like *The Great Dictator*, Germans will be forced to reflect silently on the past, absorbing the “lessons” from their conquerors without the opportunity to take an active role in understanding and explaining Nazism and its consequences. Andersch’s article was but the first small step in a series of articles increasingly critical of the “repressive” occupation.

---

<sup>134</sup> Cole, “Anglo-American Anti-Fascist Film Propaganda,” 139-140.

<sup>135</sup> Alfred Andersch, “Chaplin und die Geistesfreiheit,” *Der Ruf*, n. 7, 15 November 1946. In *Der Ruf: Eine Auswahl*, (Munich: Nymphenburger, 1976), 166-167.

<sup>136</sup> Andersch, “Chaplin und die Geistesfreiheit,” 167.

“Zwischen Freiheit und Quarantäne” (“Between Freedom and Quarantine”) indicates Richter’s growing frustration with Germany’s prostrate status under Allied occupation. Building on themes from his previous arguments against Allied decisions that determined Germany’s eastern border, Richter offered a powerful criticism of foreign occupation that once again could be interpreted as an expression of nationalism. In the Potsdam Agreement of 1 August 1945, one of the Allies’ stated purposes of occupation was “to prepare for the eventual reconstruction of German political life on a democratic basis and for eventual peaceful cooperation in international life by Germany.”<sup>137</sup> Richter took particular exception to this clause, believing that the realities of occupation precluded any possibility of “cooperation” in working to build a peaceful and democratic Germany.<sup>138</sup> The author looked to the past to support the notion that foreign occupation could not transform a nation or its people:

Foreign occupation is not loved. It never has been in the course of human history. Neither the Prussians, when occupying France [as part of the alliance that defeated Napoleon], nor the French, when occupying Germany [during the Napoleonic wars] were loved. What was true in previous centuries is true today. People have not changed...the soldier of a foreign power who walks the streets of another people, will always be seen by those people as a foreigner...even if a thousand volumes of understanding and friendship bind that soldier to those people. No international concept of a greater human community will [change this]...and furthermore there can be no people, who have found themselves occupied by foreigners, who can refuse [so-called] cooperation with the occupying power [without] risking its existence and its future. This is the current situation for us in Germany.<sup>139</sup>

Richter’s argument represented a growing dissatisfaction with Allied occupation, which had already lasted nearly two years when he wrote the article. Recall from earlier articles his and Andersch’s call for the young German generation to take a leading role in establishing the foundations of a new socialist and democratic Europe. By 1947, it had become clear to the

---

<sup>137</sup> Potsdam Agreement, article 2, paragraph A, clause iv, 1 August 1945. Accessed at <[http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/truman/psources/ps\\_potsdam.html](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/truman/psources/ps_potsdam.html)>

<sup>138</sup> Hans Werner Richter, “Zwischen Freiheit und Quarantäne,” *Der Ruf*, n. 10, 1 January 1947. In *Der Ruf: Eine Auswahl*, (Munich: Nymphenburger, 1976), 194.

<sup>139</sup> Richter, “Zwischen Freiheit und Quarantäne,” 195-196.

editors of *Der Ruf* that the occupying powers had no intentions of setting Germany free to develop independent of Allied interference. While there were certainly nationalist undertones to Richter's argument against occupation, his sentiments were products not of renewed militarism or fascism, but rather of the disappointment of an idealist whose dreams have been delayed indefinitely.

Another factor that influenced both authors' arguments against the occupying powers was the lack of improvements in material conditions in Germany in the two years of occupation. In the winter of 1946-47, approximately 60,000 Germans, most of them elderly, died either from starvation or lack of shelter.<sup>140</sup> Rations distributed by the occupying powers were almost always insufficient to meet the daily caloric needs of the population. Accordingly, a thriving black market developed, relying heavily on a barter system in which cigarettes served most often as common currency. Desperate Germans would use numerous tactics to acquire food and other necessities. Thousands of young women prostituted themselves to foreign soldiers, sometimes many times a day, in exchange for cigarettes or other commodities. Others turned to theft and robbery to make ends meet. Wealthier families were often forced to trade jewelry, furniture, and heirlooms owned for generations in order to acquire often sub-par food such as watery beer or bacon rinds.<sup>141</sup> Although the authors rarely addressed the issues of widespread hunger and basic material misery, opting instead for broad references to the "ruined landscape," they were certainly affected by the ongoing misery around them, a misery that could only be the product of Allied policies that rarely supplied sufficient rations to a starving population. Even General Lucius Clay, head of the American occupation zone, recognized after the devastating winter

---

<sup>140</sup> Petra Goedde, *GIs and Germans: Culture, Gender, and Foreign Relations, 1945-1949*. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 122.

<sup>141</sup> MacDonogh, *After the Reich*, 375.

of '46-47 that a starving population could not possibly be receptive to democracy. He therefore urged Washington to provide more extensive food relief to Germans in the American zone.<sup>142</sup>

Although both he and Andersch repeatedly advocated international cooperation, Richter drew a clear distinction between willing cooperation among equals and dictates imposed by conquerors:

Cooperation, as we understand it, is only possible through open criticism, respect for opposing views, and freedom of [speech and press]. But now, with the growing impoverishment of the German people, [there is a] contradiction. It is the discrepancy between the obedience of the guilty and penitent and the disobedience of a democratic people in full control of their destiny.<sup>143</sup>

For Richter, there could be no true cooperation as long as the occupying powers continued to treat Germans as conquered subjects guilty of Nazism. Richter was particularly angry at what he saw as French arrogance. The French, as “putative victors,” were surpassed only by the Russians (and sometimes only just) in the harshness of their treatment of the German population. They came to their zone as conquerors, despite the fact that they had played little role in Germany’s defeat. Richter argued that the revolutionary slogan “*liberté, égalité, fraternité*” evidently applied only to the French, as was evident in a recent derogatory comparison between British occupation minister John Hynd and SPD leader Kurt Schumacher in the French communist journal *L’Humanité*. The journal suggested that Hynd and Schumacher, who publicly opposed communists, were “two peas in a pod,” so to speak, a particularly galling analogy given Hynd’s public stance that the German steel industry should be dismantled in order to avoid another conflict. In light of his admiration for Schumacher, it is therefore unsurprising that Richter called the comparison a “slap in the face to all Germans,” a reminder that even French leftists

---

<sup>142</sup> Goedde, *GIs and Germans*, 122.

<sup>143</sup> Richter, “Zwischen Freiheit und Quarantäne,” 197.

saw themselves as superior to their German counterparts.<sup>144</sup> Andersch had expressed similar sentiments in his earlier “Die zwei Gesichter des Charles [sic] Bidault” (“The Two Faces of Charles [sic] Bidault”), a stark criticism of the “Janus-like” attitude of Georges Bidault,<sup>145</sup> foreign minister in France’s provisional government. Bidault had claimed to oppose territorial acquisition, supporting instead the idea of “human unity.”<sup>146</sup> Of course, Andersch pointed out the hypocrisy of Bidault’s assertion, as France was not only pursuing territorial aims in Germany but also continued to cling desperately to overseas colonies such as Vietnam and Algeria.

Despite his frustrations, Richter offered hope that Germany would see a light at the end of the proverbial tunnel:

Perhaps as we pass [through] the night that has fallen over Germany, through the winter nights of cold, hunger, and misery, we will see our opportunity. We will survive [these things], because we refuse to give up our belief that one day we will be released from quarantine and win our freedom.<sup>147</sup>

By describing Germany’s contemporary condition as “quarantine” and speaking of eventually winning “freedom,” Richter reinforced what some might interpret as a nationalistic call to action. Richter’s call for a unified Europe undermined, however, any accusation of nationalism, when he wrote that Germans were frustrated with their occupiers

...not out of hostility, but due to disappointment...in light of ruins and spiritual and moral catastrophe any hate-filled thoughts of revenge are absurd. They know that European nationalism is outdated and has no life left. They seek instead a greater Europe...that will emerge out of the narrowness of nation-states into the broader arena of a [single] European state.<sup>148</sup>

---

<sup>144</sup> Richter, “Zwischen Freiheit und Quarantäne,” 198.

<sup>145</sup> Despite its title, the article clearly refers to *Georges*, not *Charles* Bidault. Somehow Andersch became confused about his subject’s first name.

<sup>146</sup> Alfred Andersch, “Die zwei Gesichter des Charles Bidault,” *Der Ruf*, n. 5, 15 October 1946. In Hans Schwab-Felisch, ed., *Der Ruf: Eine deutsche Nachkriegszeitung*. (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch, 1962), 58.

<sup>147</sup> Richter, “Zwischen Freiheit und Quarantäne,” 199.

<sup>148</sup> Richter, “Zwischen Freiheit und Quarantäne,” 197.

Richter presumed to speak for all Germans, a gross overestimation. He did, however, reiterate his own views about European unity, a concept far removed from German nationalism as the occupying nations understood it. If anything, American censors likely interpreted *Der Ruf's* calls for European unity as a pro-communist position, especially given the socialist views of its co-editors. Both Richter and Andersch would continue to air grievances against the occupying powers in the next few issues, as they drew ever closer to their removal.

In “Die versäumte Evolution,” Richter issued a call to action for his generation, urging them not to sit idly by as radical revolutionary idealism increasingly gave way to what he saw as political pragmatism and compromise. The author observed that German history was full of failed revolutions from various segments of society. The Peasants’ Revolt of 1524-25, the “bourgeois” revolutions of 1848, and the attempted communist takeover in 1918 were all examples of abortive attempts to reshape German society. The “counter-revolution” of 1933 had resulted in disaster for Germany, a sort of retrogression or devolution that presented a serious challenge to Richter’s generation.<sup>149</sup> In the early issues of *Der Ruf*, both Richter and Andersch called for the creation of a radically new Europe, a Europe that by January 1947 appeared less and less likely to materialize. Richter argued that while some positive measures were occurring, such as the agricultural reforms in the Russian Zone, the overall trend in the other zones, with their emerging emphases on a rapid reconstruction of the German economy, represented a “delayed Renaissance” for the capitalist bourgeoisie.<sup>150</sup> Richter was convinced that his nation was on the verge of missing another opportunity to effect a radical revolution because proletarian parties had chosen a path of “old principles, petit-bourgeois compromises, dubious radicalism,

---

<sup>149</sup> Hans Werner Richter, “Die versäumte Evolution,” *Der Ruf*, n. 11, 15 January 1947. In *Der Ruf: Eine Auswahl*, (Munich: Nymphenburger, 1976), 213.

<sup>150</sup> Richter, “Die versäumte Evolution,” 216.

and dogmatic dependence on foreign power.”<sup>151</sup> This criticism almost certainly referred to the SPD, which represented itself as a workers’ party but nonetheless depended on the official sanction and sponsorship of the Allies. Richter may also have been referencing the near-disappearance of communists in the western zones in the face of increasingly repressive measures directed against them. Unsurprisingly, Richter concluded that the only hope for realizing a revolutionary new vision of Germany and Europe was his own young, returning generation, a claim he and Andersch had advanced since the very first issue of *Der Ruf*. For Richter, his generation needed to be active in its pursuit of social and political change, because he predicted their failure would lead to a “final catastrophe.”<sup>152</sup>

In the following issue, Andersch suggested a different course of action in his “Aktion oder Passivität?” (“Action or Passivity?”). The author devoted a great deal of space to the question of how Germans should respond to their current circumstances. Richter argued previously for increased activism, but Andersch appeared by early 1947 to have resigned himself to certain realities. Andersch acknowledged that Germans wanted to improve their situation, but admitted that their hands were tied by several obstacles, the most obvious being the occupying powers and their policies that had led to much material and physical misery.<sup>153</sup> The Germans had the “spirit” but not the power to make things better, according to the author. The U.S. occupation government under General Lucius Clay, whom Andersch described as “no friend to Germany,” implemented its plans based on “power and fear” rather than cooperation, resulting in widespread shortages of food and other necessities and the accompanying physical miseries. Perhaps unbeknownst to Andersch, Clay played a vital role in preventing the dismantling of

---

<sup>151</sup> Richter, “Die versäumte Evolution,” 218.

<sup>152</sup> Richter, “Die versäumte Evolution,” 218.

<sup>153</sup> Alfred Andersch, “Aktion oder Passivität?,” *Der Ruf*, n. 12, 1 February 1947. In *Der Ruf: Eine Auswahl*, (Munich: Nymphenburger, 1976), 219.



German industry in the American Zone in May 1946. The general recognized the emerging threat of the Soviet Union and the need for Germany to maintain its industrial capacity.<sup>154</sup>

Although he presented a characteristic criticism of the ongoing occupation, Andersch displayed a sense of resignation when offering a solution to Germany's condition.

Andersch attempted to summarize his solution in a two-word concept: "creative initiative."<sup>155</sup> Believing open criticism to be a hallmark of freedom, Andersch argued that Germans must turn to artistic expression as a means of extracting some good from their current situation. During Germany's "waiting" period of receiving "alms" from its occupiers, the young generation of intellectuals (including himself, of course) should busy itself with considering future possibilities for constitutional government and individual liberation.<sup>156</sup> In so doing, they could weather the proverbial storm of occupation and rise above the hopelessness and misery caused by the military government.<sup>157</sup> Andersch concluded with an appeal to positive thinking:

Let us allow the bad weather to pass over us! Let us hope that it is not the beginning of a flood! And let us alter our attitudes toward it, so that when it has passed, we can heal our wounds without hate!<sup>158</sup>

Andersch's exhortation encouraged not only passive perseverance, but also a conciliatory attitude toward the occupation government. In the question of action or passivity, Andersch decided firmly in favor of the latter. Of course, in the meantime, he urged people to look to intellectuals for guidance, reemphasizing his and others' self-appointed roles as the creators of a new German culture. As he elaborated in a later article, "Spontaneität als Notwendigkeit" ("Spontaneity as Necessity"), Andersch believed that the press, as a leading force in shaping German culture, should enjoy more freedom to be "spontaneous," especially when offering

---

<sup>154</sup> MacDonogh, *After the Reich*, 274.

<sup>155</sup> Andersch, "Aktion oder Passivität?," 219.

<sup>156</sup> Andersch, "Aktion oder Passivität?," 222.

<sup>157</sup> Andersch, "Aktion oder Passivität?," 222.

<sup>158</sup> Andersch, "Aktion oder Passivität?," 222.

criticisms of both internal and external political issues. While the American and British presses enjoyed the ability to publish freely their opinions, including those concerning Germany, the German press continued to be hindered by Allied censorship, hindering Germans' ability to respond to Allied claims in public discourse.<sup>159</sup> "Aktion oder Passivität?," while certainly critical of the occupation, is relatively optimistic in tone and certainly miles away from the ICD's official accusation of "nihilism." Richter's next article, however, would diverge further from Andersch's new turn toward passivity, and mark perhaps the last straw in the eyes of U.S. authorities.

On 9 September 1946, Winston Churchill gave a speech at the University of Zurich in Switzerland in which he called for the creation of a "United States of Europe." Churchill believed that a politically united Europe was essential to the aim of establishing lasting peace and stability on the continent. In the 14<sup>th</sup> issue of *Der Ruf*, Richter discussed Churchill's position on the issue of European unity, a goal that the former and Andersch had promoted from the very beginning. Richter's scathing criticisms of Churchill's proposal for unity almost certainly played some role in his dismissal.

Richter began with a lengthy quote from Victor Hugo's 1871 appeal to the French National Assembly, in which the famous author called for unity between France and Germany, two members of the "same family."<sup>160</sup> Comparing Churchill to Hugo, Richter claimed that the former Prime Minister undermined his own argument by returning to the old "balance of power" refrain. Indeed, Churchill stated in his speech that

---

<sup>159</sup> Alfred Andersch, "Spontaneität als Notwendigkeit," *Der Ruf*, n. 14, 1 March 1947. In Hans Schwab-Felisch, ed., *Der Ruf: Eine deutsche Nachkriegszeitsschrift*. (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch, 1962), 153-159.

<sup>160</sup> Hans Werner Richter, "Churchill und die europäische Einheit," *Der Ruf*, n. 14, 1 March 1947. In *Der Ruf: Eine Auswahl*, (Munich: Nymphenburger, 1976), 256.

We all know that the two world wars through which we have passed arose out of the vain passion of a newly-united Germany to play the dominating part in the world. In this last struggle crimes and massacres have been committed for which there is no parallel since the invasion of the Mongols in the fourteenth century and no equal at any time in human history. The guilty must be punished. Germany must be deprived of the power to rearm and make another aggressive war. But when all this has been done, as it will be done, as it is being done, then there must be an end to retribution.<sup>161</sup>

After reiterating Germany's responsibility for both World Wars, Churchill went on to claim that Britain, France, and a restored Germany would take leading roles in a new united Europe.

Richter's views on this issue are confusing, at best. In his speech, Churchill seemed to advocate a united Europe, a dream that had been at the core of *Der Ruf*'s message since the beginning.

One must conclude that Richter took exception to Churchill's reiterations of German guilt, a conclusion that follows naturally from the author's earlier quasi-nationalist arguments. Richter seemingly believed that there could be no true unity if Germany were to be singled out as an innately aggressive nation that must not be allowed to rearm for fear that it would start another war. This circumstance presumably recalled for the author Allied treatment of Germany after the First World War. Regardless, the important issue here is not Churchill's true intentions, but rather Richter's mistaken understanding of them. The author went on to make bold, sweeping statements that revealed powerful and misguided assumptions about the "young generation" and its desires. Just as German soldiers returned from defeating Napoleon in 1815 hoping for German unity, Richter argued that the returning soldiers of his generation hoped for European unity.<sup>162</sup> Here the author presumed to speak for his entire generation, a gross overstatement at best. His argument rested on the assumption that many people wanted European unity, while the "great powers" (presumably he means the United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union) sought actively to prevent it because such a drastic measure would undermine the postwar

---

<sup>161</sup> Winston Churchill, "Speech to the Academic Youth," 9 September 1946. Archived at <<http://www.europa-web.de/europa/02wwswww/202histo/churchil.htm>>

<sup>162</sup> Richter, "Churchill und die europäische Einheit," 260

balance of power between U.S. and Soviet hegemony.<sup>163</sup> While it was certainly true that Cold War political concerns were beginning increasingly to affect U.S. and Soviet policy, Richter's criticisms of Churchill for advocating what the author believed to be a restoration of the traditional "balance of power" seemingly rested on a misreading of the former Prime Minister's intentions.

Richter reiterated his belief that Europe could only be united through the adoption of socialist principles of economic equality and centralization, but noted that a socialist Europe did not fit into the Western bloc's plans to rebuild Europe in opposition to the Soviet Union. The atomic bomb intensified Western Europeans' desires to align themselves not with countries under Soviet influence, but rather with the United States. Churchill himself remarked that the "free" people of Europe were under the protection of the atom bomb, which was wielded by a nation "which we know will never use it except in the cause of right and freedom."<sup>164</sup> In light of such considerations, Richter's desire for a unified socialist Europe seemed as distant as the historical events referenced in many of his articles. Contrasting sharply with Andersch's appeal for passive endurance, Richter concluded by urging the youth of Europe to overcome the "reactionary tendencies of our times" by building a

...revolutionary movement, a movement that is determined to rise above the rubble of an older world and to realize the words made famous by Victor Hugo: "My revenge is brotherliness. No more borders; the Rhine belongs to all! Let us [form] one republic! Let us build the United States of Europe!"<sup>165</sup>

Once again Richter revisited his call for "revolution" and a new Europe united by socialist and humanist principles. This exhortation is inclusive, however, and little trace of nationalism is to be found here. In light of Cold War realities, Richter's words seem little more than the hopeful

---

<sup>163</sup> Richter, "Churchill und die europäische Einheit," 261

<sup>164</sup> Churchill, "Speech to the Academic Youth."

<sup>165</sup> Richter, "Churchill und die europäische Einheit," 262.

cries of an individual who had yet to realize that he had lost a contest. While Andersch had seemingly accepted that a socialist revolution was not forthcoming and had turned to urging internal intellectual development, Richter had still refused to give up or compromise the dream.

Richter had, however, become noticeably more pessimistic by the publication of “Der totale Friede” (“Total Peace”) in issue 15. In this article, the author mentioned a recent speech by Trygve Lie, General-Secretary of the United Nations, in which the Norwegian spoke of ensuring “total peace” for the entire world. Richter retorted that the only way to ensure “total peace” would be:

...the total demobilization of all nations, the gradual complete disarmament of the world, the destruction of all weapons and weapons factories, [the transformation] of war shipyards...and the establishment of a basic living standard for all people [regardless] of territorial, national, or economic interests.<sup>166</sup>

Richter then went on to criticize the Allied powers, whose representatives had met recently at a “peace conference” in Moscow to discuss issues related to the rebuilding of Germany and Europe. The author claimed that the Allies’ “dictated” terms of rebuilding represented an “evil omen” because the occupying powers were making the same mistakes that had been made at Versailles after World War I. A democracy imposed by the outside was, Richter believed, doomed to failure. Germany had a rich tradition of revolutionary and democratic ideology, and should therefore be allowed to restructure without Allied interference. A new German political and social system developed internally would stand on a much stronger foundation than any possible imposition from outside. Andersch reiterated Richter’s arguments in “Jahrhundert der Furcht?” (“Century of Fear?”), arguing that a divided Germany would only perpetuate conflict because both West and East would continue to treat their zones as ideological puppets. In

---

<sup>166</sup> Hans Werner Richter, “Der totale Friede,” *Der Ruf*, n. 15, 15 March 1947. In Hans Schwab-Felisch, ed., *Der Ruf: Eine deutsche Nachkriegszeitung*. (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch, 1962), 170.

contrast, a united Germany would seek peace above all else, having already suffered from two world wars in less than half a century. Andersch also criticized Harry Truman's 12 March speech in which he put forth the so-called "Truman Doctrine," arguing that the American president was engaging in fear-mongering as a political tactic.<sup>167</sup> Once again, we observe both Andersch's and Richter's frustrations with ongoing Allied interference in the development of postwar Germany, and their criticisms of the Allies had not gone unnoticed.

### Other Voices

We have discussed at great length the views of Andersch and Richter, but how did other contemporary German intellectuals, specifically those who were anti-Nazi and either driven into exile or arrested and imprisoned, address the issues raised in *Der Ruf*? Individuals such as Thomas Mann, Bertolt Brecht, Kurt Schumacher, and Johannes Becher all opposed the Nazis and suffered tremendously for their views. Andersch had spent several months at Dachau, but as we saw in Chapter 3 he still managed to accommodate himself to the regime, even going so far as to apply for admission to the *Reichsschriftstumsammer*, the official Nazi writers' association, because membership was required for publication in Germany.<sup>168</sup> Richter served and fought bravely in Italy, and, unlike Andersch's desertion, only fell into Allied hands after several days of vicious combat. Were our subjects' views unique, due to their experiences as soldiers and POWs? Both were quick to point to those experiences as prerequisites for membership in the "young generation" that would work to forge a new literary tradition and help build a new and better Germany, but were their views radically different from those of Thomas Mann or Bertolt

---

<sup>167</sup> Alfred Andersch, "Jahrhundert der Furcht?," *Der Ruf*, n. 16, 1 April 1947. In Hans Schwab-Felisch, ed., *Der Ruf: Eine deutsche Nachkriegszeitsschrift*. (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch, 1962), 183.

<sup>168</sup> Parkes, *Writers and Politics in Germany*, 18.

Brecht? A comparison of our subjects' views with those of other intellectual exiles will reveal that Andersch and Richter were not as unique as they claimed.

Arguably Germany's most famous author during the Twentieth Century, Thomas Mann was a powerful symbol of opposition to Nazism. Mann believed strongly in German bourgeois humanism and culture, as Germans had been bound, at least until 1871 and certainly for many subsequent decades, more closely by literature and music than by politics. The author was conservative: during World War I he supported Germany's war effort so strongly that he sold his house to buy war bonds.<sup>169</sup> He was, therefore, deeply concerned in the 1920s about the rising tide of political radicalism, most evident in the increasingly visible and vocal Nazi party. Mann himself publicly endorsed the Social Democrats and criticized the Nazis. His antifascist stance did not go unnoticed; in 1932 he received a burned copy of *Buddenbrooks* in the mail, an unsubtle threat of what might happen should he remain in the country in the event of a Nazi assumption of power.<sup>170</sup> When Hitler was handed power on 30 January 1933, Mann and his wife, Katia, were in Switzerland on vacation. Fearing the consequences, he decided not to return to Germany. The Nazis searched his house and confiscated his cars before finally stripping him of his citizenship in 1936.<sup>171</sup> The author lived in Switzerland until 1938, when he moved to the United States, living first in Princeton, New Jersey, before settling ultimately in California.

During his time in exile, Mann remained active in criticizing the Nazis in a variety of forums, including public speeches, radio broadcasts, and various writings, the most famous of which was his epic novel *Doktor Faustus*, first published in 1947. Mann struggled to reconcile

---

<sup>169</sup> Ronald Hayman, *Thomas Mann: A Biography*. (London: Bloomsbury, 1995), 83-85.

<sup>170</sup> Hayman, *Thomas Mann*, 396-399.

<sup>171</sup> Hannelore Mundt, *Understanding Thomas Mann*. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2004), 3.

“his” Germany of artistic refinement and culture with the “barbarism” of his homeland under Nazi rule, as was evident in the following excerpt from his 1935 essay “*Achtung, Europa!*”:

It is truly heartrending to watch the weakness of the older and more cultured world in face of this barbarism, their badly led, bewildered retreat before him [Hitler]... They stoop to the moral and mental level of their deadly foe, adopt his idiotic phraseology, adjust themselves to his pitiable categories of thought, to the malignant stupidity of his whims and propagandist formulas-and never notice in the least what they are doing.<sup>172</sup>

Unlike Andersch and Richter, the core of Mann’s efforts to understand Nazism involved attempting to understand how a people he considered cultured and highly civilized could “stoop” to supporting right-wing radicalism in the form of Hitler. Mann expanded on this theme in *Doktor Faustus*. The protagonist Adrian Leverkühn is a composer who strikes a deal with a demonic figure to achieve artistic brilliance, mirroring the Faustian legend made famous in Germany by Goethe. The composer pays dearly for his temporary success, and Mann intended the novel to mirror what he saw as Germany’s deal with a “devil,” resulting in national catastrophe. Mann came to believe that Germans were artistically brilliant, but inherently irrational in practical matters such as politics. He made this sentiment clear in a speech given at the Library of Congress on 29 May 1945 entitled “Germany and the Germans,” in which he claimed that Germans

have given the western world perhaps not its most beautiful, socially uniting, but certainly its deepest, most significant music, and the world has not withheld its thanks and praise. At the same time it has felt and feels more strongly than ever today that such musicality of soul is paid for dearly in another sphere-the political, the sphere of human companionship.<sup>173</sup>

For Mann Germans, while artistically brilliant, were politically immature and overly ambitious.

Immaturity and ambition were, therefore, largely to blame for the Nazi catastrophe. Mann

---

<sup>172</sup> Thomas Mann, *The Order of the Day: Political Essays and Speeches of Two Decades*, trans. Helen Lowe-Porter. (New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1969), 82.

<sup>173</sup> Thomas Mann, “Germany and the Germans.” Lecture given May 29, 1945. Transcript from *Addresses Delivered at the Library of Congress 1942-1949*. (Washington: Library of Congress, 1963), 51.



pointed to Martin Luther as a prime example, noting that while the monk was a “liberating hero” who “promoted freedom from church doctrine,” Luther “knew nothing of political liberty,” a reference to the religious reformer’s condemnation of the Peasants’ War of 1524-25.<sup>174</sup>

In Mann’s view, the Nazi catastrophe was not the product of inherent militarism or nationalism, but rather the consequence of an inherent emotional irrationality, the same “irrationality” that had produced many great works of literature, philosophy, music, and art. Where Andersch and Richter saw aggressive nationalism, Mann saw misguided idealism. He was no less troubled by those developments, but his task, unlike our subjects, was not to condemn the past, but to understand why “his” Germany of cultural brilliance had turned to extreme nationalism and Nazism as a solution for its ills. Mann was no apologist, and the author recognized that Germany was responsible for World War II and its consequences. On a speaking tour of Germany in 1949, Mann expressed understanding, if not sympathy, for those who resented occupation. Speaking at the Paulskirche in Frankfurt am Main on 18 July, Mann first told the audience that “foreign rule” was better than the “rule of barbarism,” despite the many flaws in the occupation governments. He then explained his stance on the country’s occupation and division:

I know no zones. My visit is for Germany itself, Germany as a whole, and not an occupied territory. Who ought to guarantee and represent the unity of Germany if not an independent writer whose true home, as I have said, is the language, which is free and untouched by occupation?<sup>175</sup>

Indeed, Mann had often asserted that he took refuge in the German language to escape from the deeply-troubling realities of Nazism. Furthermore, he claimed to “represent the unity of Germany” as an exile whose “Germanness” was based on his language rather than his citizenship (he and his wife had become American citizens in 1944). This statement conflicts with our

---

<sup>174</sup> Mann, “Germany and the Germans,” 54.

<sup>175</sup> Hayman, *Thomas Mann*, 563.

subjects' claims that their direct experience of Nazism, living in Germany and then serving in the *Wehrmacht*, made them ideal representatives of German culture. While Mann's views differed significantly from those of Andersch and Richter, there were other individuals whose attitudes were more similar.

Kurt Schumacher is one such individual, especially so given his strong Marxist views not unlike those of Andersch and Richter. As a member of the Social Democratic Party, he was, like many on the left, distressed when Hitler became chancellor on 30 January 1933. He continued to hold out hope that the Nazi regime would be short-lived, even as many of his fellow leftists fled into exile. Schumacher attended the last open session of the Reichstag on 23 March 1933 and voted against the Enabling Act that granted Hitler near-absolute power, indicating the strength of the SPD deputy's convictions in the face of defeat and possible imprisonment.<sup>176</sup> On 6 July, Schumacher was taken into "protective custody," and would spend nearly the entirety of the Nazi period in various concentration camps, suffering tremendous privations as a consequence.

After the war, Schumacher worked to reorganize the SPD, even before the occupying powers had officially sanctioned the creation of political parties. He rose quickly to become the recognized leader of the party, and steered the SPD according to his conviction that a new democratic Germany needed to be built on the premises of socialism. In an unpublished manuscript from 1947 entitled "Warum Sozialdemokratische Partei," Schumacher asserted that the widespread destruction and material misery caused by the war had created a favorable environment for socialism because those who might otherwise have "bourgeois" tendencies had been "proletarized" by the loss of property and ongoing misery.<sup>177</sup> Such sentiment recalls Andersch's and Richter's optimistic claims that the devastation of World War II presented an

---

<sup>176</sup> Lewis J. Edinger, *Kurt Schumacher: A Study in Personality and Political Behavior*. (Stanford, CA: Stanford, 1965), 50-51.

<sup>177</sup> Edinger, *Kurt Schumacher*, 85.

opportunity to build a better, socialist society. Like those authors, Schumacher bitterly rejected the notion of collective guilt as promoted by the Allies. As evidence, he pointed to those who, like himself, had suffered directly at the hands of the Nazis. For Schumacher, the suggestion that all Germans were Nazis was morally repugnant and offensive, because their suffering should have proved that “not all Germans were Nazis, and that there was another Germany besides Nazi Germany.”<sup>178</sup> Like our subjects, Schumacher felt betrayed by Allied occupation policies because he saw himself as a *victim*, rather than an accomplice of the Nazi regime. Of course, Schumacher had a more legitimate grievance against collective guilt than Andersch or especially Richter, as both accommodated themselves to the regime and ended up serving (and in Richter’s case, quite bravely) in the *Wehrmacht*. Where Andersch and Richter had been, at most, passive opponents of the Nazis, both claimed that their experiences as soldiers and POWs had given them the authority to speak for the “young generation.” Similarly, Schumacher played up SPD’s moral mandate in a May 1946 speech to the SPD congress in Hanover:

All the others needed the persuasive power of the war potential and the superiority of the Anglo-Saxon weapons to discover their love of democracy. We [Social Democrats] did not need that; we would be democrats today even if the British and Americans were fascists.<sup>179</sup>

Not only did Schumacher reassert that the SPD occupied the moral high ground, but he also criticized those who accommodated themselves to the Nazi regime only to become devoted democrats after the war. Again, Schumacher’s claims to legitimately represent the interests of the German people in a postwar environment of hopelessness and material misery echo Andersch and Richter’s arguments that their experiences qualified them uniquely to help influence the course of postwar Germany. While the authors’ experiences were no less real or legitimate than Schumacher’s, this brief comparison undermines the authors’ claims that individuals like

---

<sup>178</sup> Edinger, *Kurt Schumacher*, 85.

<sup>179</sup> Edinger, *Kurt Schumacher*, 85.

themselves were “uniquely” prepared to light the path toward a new Germany. Schumacher was from an older generation, was neither a soldier or a POW during World War II, but his experiences had resulted in viewpoints remarkably similar to those of Andersch and Richter.

Like Schumacher, the playwright Bertolt Brecht was a powerful voice of Marxist philosophy during the Weimar era. His Marxist convictions were evident in pieces such as the opera *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* (“Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny”; Brecht wrote the text, Kurt Weill composed the score), first performed in 1930, and the 1932 radio drama *Die Heilige Johanna der Schlachthöfe* (“Saint Joan of the Stockyards”).<sup>180</sup> Both pieces sharply criticized the exploitative and corrupt nature of capitalism, and Brecht thus quickly made enemies of the Nazis, whose nationalist rhetoric decried the internationalist character of Marxist philosophy. The morning after the Reichstag fire, 28 February 1933, Brecht fled to Prague, fearing for his safety as a “confirmed communist” in the eyes of the Berlin police.<sup>181</sup>

The playwright moved frequently over the next several years, staying in countries such as Denmark and Sweden, until he was forced due to the outbreak of war to Finland. He departed Finland for the United States on 12 May 1941, after many months of waiting for an entry visa.<sup>182</sup> He spent the next six years in America, working toward achieving success in both Hollywood and Broadway.<sup>183</sup> The composition, along with fellow communist Hanns Eisler, of the famous *Hollywood Liederbuch* was perhaps his most notable accomplishment in the booming Hollywood film industry. In 1947, he successfully staged his *Life of Galileo* in 1947, first in California and then on Broadway.<sup>184</sup> Unfortunately for Brecht, he was otherwise occupied

---

<sup>180</sup> Völker, *Brecht*, 125.

<sup>181</sup> Völker, *Brecht*, 125.

<sup>182</sup> Völker, *Brecht*, 271.

<sup>183</sup> John Fuegi, *Bertolt Brecht: Chaos, According to Plan*. (Cambridge: University Press, 1987), 89.

<sup>184</sup> Fuegi, *Bertolt Brecht*, 98-99.

defending himself on 30 October 1947 before the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), which accused him of membership in the Communist Party and of “communistic” associations based on extensive files compiled for years by the FBI.<sup>185</sup> Brecht truthfully replied that he had never belonged to any Communist Party, but his accusers remained unconvinced of his innocence. Frustrated at the HUAC’s accusations, he decided to return to Europe, where he eventually made his way to the Russian sector of Berlin, arriving with much fanfare on 22 October 1948.<sup>186</sup> In East Berlin, Brecht became director of his own theatre company, the *Berliner Ensemble*, which would devote itself primarily to staging its leader’s plays.

Brecht’s attitude toward the situation in postwar Germany was not significantly different from the opinions expressed in *Der Ruf*. Like Andersch and Richter, Brecht hoped for German unity and strongly criticized the American and British for their “imperialist” drive for “world domination.”<sup>187</sup> Brecht also criticized the West German government for seeking rearmament, claiming the issue was one of the primary obstacles to reunification.<sup>188</sup> He therefore sought in the final stage of his career to demonstrate the value and appeal of the DDR’s political system, reflected in performances of pieces meant to promote Marxist ideology while criticizing Western policies. One such work, *Herrnburger Bericht*, a choral piece first performed in August 1951 at the Deutsches Theater in Berlin, was inspired by the perceived mistreatment of German young people returning to the Federal Republic from a communist youth rally in Berlin. According to a handful of first-hand accounts, the West German police recorded the names of all the returning youths, treating them as potential dissidents or political criminals.<sup>189</sup> The performance criticized

---

<sup>185</sup> Federal Bureau of Investigation, “Report on Bertolt Brecht,” dated 6 March 1943. Accessed at <<http://foia.fbi.gov/brecht/brecht1a.pdf>>

<sup>186</sup> Völker, *Brecht*, 327.

<sup>187</sup> Völker, *Brecht*, 329.

<sup>188</sup> Völker, *Brecht*, 334.

<sup>189</sup> Völker, *Brecht*, 339.

police and political division, while praising young people who “ignore” the border between East and West, echoing Andersch and Richter’s calls for German unity.

Like those authors, Brecht was initially extremely optimistic about prospects for a better future. He believed that the proletarian struggle in Germany had culminated in the creation of the DDR. On numerous occasions, the playwright expressed his support of the SED’s policies of land reform and for the *Kulturbund*, the official DDR organization for artists. He defended himself against his Western critics, who charged him with “selling out” to the SED in exchange for various privileges, by claiming that “I do not think as I do because I am here [in the DDR], I am here because I think as I do.”<sup>190</sup> Brecht also drew heavy criticism for his March 1953 obituary of Stalin, published in the prominent DDR literary journal *Sinn und Form*. In it, he praised Stalin as the “embodiment” of the hopes of “all who are oppressed throughout the five continents.”<sup>191</sup> Brecht had not moved to the DDR simply because of his privileged status there; he truly believed that communism was the vehicle of human salvation through what he saw as its promotion of internationalism and peace.

Like Andersch and Richter, Brecht’s initial postwar optimism diminished eventually due to a series of frustrating circumstances. In 1951, several of his artist friends found themselves expelled from the party and eventually from the DDR for being too “political” in their art; in other words, they had tried genuinely to explore political issues rather than produce orthodox Soviet propaganda. In response to the workers’ demonstrations on 17 June 1953, Brecht initially voiced his support for the SED, writing letters to Ulbricht and others in which he proclaimed his loyalty to the party and the state. His feelings became more ambiguous, however, as he realized the legitimacy of the workers’ grievances and the SED’s failure to understand fully the needs of

---

<sup>190</sup> Völker, *Brecht*, 339.

<sup>191</sup> Völker, *Brecht*, 354.

the working class. Khrushchev's revelations of Stalin's crimes at the Twentieth Party Congress in February 1956 had a particularly devastating effect on Brecht, who responded by referring to Stalin as a "Führer" in several of his later poems.<sup>192</sup> Like Andersch and Richter, Brecht hoped that the destruction of the war had at the very least paved the way for a better future, but like our subjects he became increasingly frustrated when his dreams of a united, socialist Germany did not materialize.

Having begun with the most conservative voice, Thomas Mann, it is only fitting that we conclude this survey of other German intellectuals with perhaps the most leftist: that of the poet Johannes Becher. A member of the KPD from 1924, Becher became a highly visible voice for communism in Germany both through his own work and as leader of the League of Proletarian-Revolutionary Writers, organized in 1928.<sup>193</sup> The poet was forced to flee Germany in March 1933, just over a month after Hitler became Chancellor. Like Brecht, he lived in a number of locations, including Vienna and Prague, before finally settling in Moscow. During the war, he made frequent appearances on Soviet radio, and even visited German POWs in Russia as part of Soviet efforts to reeducate prisoners using communist ideology.<sup>194</sup> As one of the so-called "Muscovites," the German communists who spent the war in Soviet exile, Becher returned to Germany at the beginning of June 1945 and immediately set about rebuilding the KPD.<sup>195</sup> One of Becher's first actions was to form the Cultural Alliance for the Democratic Renewal of Germany, which he intended to use to unite artists in the four occupation zones. The poet was very enthusiastic about the possibility of rebuilding Germany, and wrote to his wife Lily in

---

<sup>192</sup> Fuegi, *Bertolt Brecht*, 171.

<sup>193</sup> Peter Demetz, *Postwar German Literature: A Critical Introduction*. (New York: Pegasus, 1970), 36.

<sup>194</sup> Robert K. Shirer, "Johannes R. Becher 1891-1958," in Matthias Konzett, ed., *Encyclopedia of German Literature*. (Chicago and London: Fitzroy Dearborn, 2000), 75.

<sup>195</sup> MacDonogh, *After the Reich*, 107.

Moscow that he was “overjoyed” to find singing children and their German-speaking mothers in the streets of Berlin.<sup>196</sup>

Becher’s initial optimism was, however, quickly disappointed. He became increasingly frustrated with Soviet occupation policies that had resulted in the dismantling of German industry. At a convention held by the Cultural Alliance on 21-22 May 1946, Becher called for increased German self-government by questioning whether Soviet reparations policies would lead people to a free and democratic existence. In early October, Becher spoke at a German writers’ congress in the American sector of Berlin, and proclaimed that there could be no peace without German unity.<sup>197</sup> Evidently, the Soviets considered replacing Becher as head of the Cultural Association due to the poet’s attempts to unite writers across occupation zones. In 1947, the Western Allies banned the Cultural Association in their zones, and the organization became yet another victim of the growing Cold War division.<sup>198</sup> Like Andersch and Richter, Becher believed strongly that the end of the war offered an opportunity to create a new, socialist and united Germany, but his hopes were disappointed by political realities of occupation. Despite his disappointments, Becher continued to hope that communist East Germany represented the best opportunity for peace and prosperity in his homeland and the world. These hopes were evident in the second stanza of the DDR national anthem “Auferstanden aus Ruinen,” written in 1949 by Becher and scored by former Brecht collaborator Hanns Eisler:

May joy and peace be bestowed  
on Germany, our fatherland  
All the world seeks peace,  
Let us extend our hands to the people.  
When we are united as brothers,

---

<sup>196</sup> Alexander Behrens, *Johannes R. Becher, eine politische Biographie*. (Cologne: Böhlau, 2003), 225.

<sup>197</sup> MacDonogh, *After the Reich*, 225.

<sup>198</sup> Stephen Parker, Peter Davies, and Matthew Philpotts, *The Modern Restoration: Re-thinking German Literary History 1930-1960*. (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2004), 257-258.



We will smite the enemies of the people.  
Let the light of peace shine,  
So that no mother must  
Weep for her son.<sup>199</sup>

Becher went on to become the East German Minister of Culture in 1953, a position that he attempted to use to encourage the development of literature in the DDR.<sup>200</sup> Despite his position as Minister, his power and influence in DDR literary circles declined gradually until his death in 1958. Despite his misgivings in the 1950s about the DDR's increasingly repressive cultural policies, Becher was made a cultural icon after his death as a "the poet of the socialist nation."<sup>201</sup>

### The End

Until 1947, the ICD was reasonably lenient toward differing opinions, even those that, like our subjects', promoted socialist ideology. The only requirement was that those voicing opinions be confirmed anti-Nazis. Early 1947 saw, however, a shift toward a more focused anti-communist policy, as the rift between the western Allies and the Soviet Union widened. On 12 March, President Harry Truman put forth the Truman Doctrine, which held that the United States had an obligation to support "free people" around the world against those who would cause "political chaos."<sup>202</sup> Truman's immediate objective was to obtain authorization from Congress to provide material support to anti-communists in Greece and Turkey, but the implication was clear: the United States was beginning to represent itself as the leader of the "free world," a position that mandated its support of anti-communists around the globe. Accordingly, the Allied

---

<sup>199</sup> Johannes R. Becher, "Aufstanden aus Ruinen." Accessed at <[http://www.hdg.de/lemo/html/dokumente/Nachkriegsjahre\\_liedtextStaatenhymneDerDDR/index.html](http://www.hdg.de/lemo/html/dokumente/Nachkriegsjahre_liedtextStaatenhymneDerDDR/index.html)>

<sup>200</sup> Michael Rohrwasser, "Johannes R. Becher und die 'Wiedergeburt.'" In Ian Wallace, ed., *Aliens-Uneingebürgerte: German and Austrian Writers in Exile*. (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1994), 43.

<sup>201</sup> Shirer, "Johannes R. Becher," 76.

<sup>202</sup> Harry S. Truman, Speech given to U.S. Congress, 12 March 1947. Archived at <<http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/harrystrumantrumandocctrine.html>>

occupation authorities shifted their focus away from denazification and toward rebuilding Germany's economy (and, by extension, material conditions) quickly in order to prevent its miserable population from turning to communism.<sup>203</sup> The ICD considered the pro-socialist and anti-occupation sentiments expressed throughout *Der Ruf*'s run, most notably by its co-editors Andersch and Richter, to be potentially dangerous or subversive during a period in which the United States was actively working to suppress any and all political views in the press that could be construed as remotely favorable toward communism. Perhaps more importantly, the authors had openly and repeatedly criticized the American occupation, which could have potentially undermined the military government's authority among the German public. The question remains: what were the exact reasons for Andersch and Richter's dismissal? Was it the charges of "nationalism" and "nihilism," their advocacy of socialism, or something else? We have seen numerous examples of sentiments throughout their writings that could be seen as nationalistic, but were those to blame for the ICD's actions, or did the problem stem from the growing rift between the "free" and "communist" worlds? These questions are worth considering in greater detail.

Before considering the array of possible reasons for their dismissal, let us first review the facts surrounding the authors' last month at *Der Ruf*. On 1 March 1947 in issue fourteen, Andersch, using the pseudonym "Gerd Klaass," published a particularly scathing criticism of the Allies in a brief article entitled "Das patriotische Trinkwasser." He evidently expected the article to be controversial, which may account for his use of an alias. Klaass/Andersch began the article with a quote from a speech by Ernest Bevin, the British Foreign Secretary from 1945 to 1951, to Parliament on 7 November 1946. In the quote, Bevin recounted seeing two children sharing water from a well, and claimed that if they could share, so could countries share the world's

---

<sup>203</sup> Boehling, "American Relations with Europe," 59-60.

wealth. Bevin's statement was meant to draw out the irony of what follows, as Klaass/Andersch then described a scene at the train station in Minden, where there was a single water pipe and spigot providing drinking water to thirsty travelers:

When people must wait for a train they must do so in the main hallway, because the waiting rooms are used as [Allied] officers' messes. Hardly a word of complaint is spoken against [the situation]. Such discomfort is found in the shadows of an occupied area. [When one uses] the spigot, water readily flows out. There is even a placard next to it that says "drinking water." But there was another sign [next to it]. Its text [written only in English] contrasts strangely with the other sign. It reads: "The water of this tap must not be used under any circumstances"...to put it bluntly: it is not drinking water.<sup>204</sup>

Here the author emphasizes another feature of German material misery. Germans waiting at the Minden train station had to wait in the main hallway, while British and American soldiers could enjoy the comfort of the waiting rooms. Andersch's use of the Bevin quote in conjunction with his description of unequal conditions in one particular scene seems intended to highlight the Allies' hypocrisy for promoting cooperation while treating Germans as "inferiors." Worse still, the water deemed unfit for consumption by British or American troops was evidently acceptable for Germans who could not read the English sign warning people not to drink. The criticism grew even more pointed in the following passage:

An English train pulled into the station in Minden. The soldiers got out and stretched their legs. The trip had made them thirsty. They found the water pipe disguised as a well-but they saw the [English-language] sign, and did not drink... A passenger train came in...the travelers climbed out. They also stretched their legs. There were children among them. Naturally, they were thirsty. They found the water pipe. "Momma, I'm thirsty..." Above the pipe was a sign reading "drinking water." The mother turned on the spigot and showed her children how to drink using their hands. The children had their fun: not only drinking put playing in the water as well...and they drank until their mother said "now that's enough!"<sup>205</sup>

---

<sup>204</sup> Gerd Klaass (Alfred Andersch), "Das patriotische Trinkwasser." *Der Ruf*, n. 14, 1 March 1947. In Hans Schwab-Felisch, ed., *Der Ruf: Eine deutsche Nachkriegszeitung*. (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch, 1962), 228.

<sup>205</sup> Klaass/Andersch, "Das patriotische Trinkwasser," 228-229.

For Andersch, the flaws of occupation were powerfully evident in the above scenes; the sign warning people not to drink was only in English, therefore the British soldiers did not drink while the thirsty children did consume the suspect water. In the final sentence of the article, the author said that it was apparent that the “undrinkability of the drinking water at the Minden train station made a clear distinction between German children and Allied soldiers.”<sup>206</sup> This article implies that the Allies cared little for the welfare of Germans, because they did not bother to post a German-language warning about the water. The fact that the episode involved children doubtlessly stoked Andersch’s anger, an emotion he hoped in turn to elicit from his readers. This article would be cited in an official reprimand from the ICD.

According to the ICD’s functional program for media control, first circulated in November 1945, “Nazi and militarist material and material promoting disrespect for the Allied powers or criticizing Military Government will not be permitted.”<sup>207</sup> This provision clearly militated against open criticism of the occupation government. Considering the rising tide of criticism against Allied policies in *Der Ruf*, it is therefore unsurprising that ICD authorities took action against the publication. On 11 March, Lt. Colonel Anthony Kleitz, Chief of the ICD in Bavaria, issued a memo to the OMGUS headquarters claiming that two articles in the 14<sup>th</sup> issue of *Der Ruf* had violated Control Instruction Number 3 in the ICD’s policy regarding publishing licenses, and that the publication had been duly punished through a three-month publication limitation of 50,000 copies. According to Control Instruction Number 3, licensees could not publish material that fit any of the following criteria:

- (1) Those which propagate National Socialist or related “Völkisch” ideas including racism and race hatred.

---

<sup>206</sup> Klaass/Andersch, “Das patriotische Trinkwasser,” 229.

<sup>207</sup> ICD Functional Program, November 1945. Records of United States Occupation Headquarters, World War II. Archives II, United States National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD. Group 260, Box 211.

- (2) Those which propagate Fascist or anti-Democratic ideas.
- (3) Those which attempt to create divisions between, or foster disrespect for, the United Nations.
- (4) Those which propagate militaristic ideas, including Germanism and German imperialism.
- (5) Those which can be used to incite riot or disorder or interfere in any way with the process of Military Government.<sup>208</sup>

While Kleitz did not specify which items in particular were to blame for the reprimand, one must conclude that *Der Ruf* was considered in violation of items four and five for its promotion of German self-reliance and development and its ongoing criticisms of the American occupation. The specific offending articles were “Das Patriotische Trinkwasser” and “Unmassgebliche Vorschläge zu einem umfassenden Austauschplan zwecks Rettung der deutschen Kultur” (“Undecisive Suggestions for a Comprehensive Exchange Plan for the Purpose of Rescuing German Culture”) by Walter Maria Guggenheimer, in which the author negatively compared the U.S. occupation zone to Russia just after the Bolshevik Revolution.<sup>209</sup> Both articles could be considered violations of item five from the list above. An unsigned handwritten note attached to Kleitz’s memo claimed that “several issues of *Der Ruf*” confirmed the need for a reprimand without naming specific issues or articles, suggesting that the violations were not limited to the articles mentioned in the memo but rather were evident in numerous issues of the publication.<sup>210</sup> According to Kleitz, no public announcement would be made, and the reprimand would be issued in person. Therefore, this memo and the attached note are seemingly the only physical documentation of action taken against *Der Ruf*. Richter recalled, however, a meeting three days earlier, on 8 March, during which he was first informed of the reprimand. In that meeting between Richter, future editor Erich Kuby, Vinz’s assistant Gerhard

---

<sup>208</sup> ICD, Publishing Control Instructions, no date listed. OMGUS Records, Box 254.

<sup>209</sup> Memo from Lt. Col. Anthony Kleitz to Publication Control Branch, 11 March 1947. OMGUS Records, Box 254.

<sup>210</sup> Handwritten note, author and date unknown, attached to 11 March memo from Lt. Col. Kleitz. OMGUS Records, Group 260, Box 254.

Weiss, and Captain Heinrich Siemler, Senior Publications Control Officer, the latter informed Richter that the aforementioned articles had violated ICD regulations and that printing limitations would be imposed. Siemler also identified as unacceptable a letter from “Rufe an den Ruf,” the section where letters to the editors were published.<sup>211</sup> In the offending letter, the author, “H.S.” from Stuttgart, defended *Der Ruf* against its critics by claiming that there was a significant difference between aggressive nationalism and the hope that one’s country can be allowed to follow its own path, a sentiment often repeated in *Der Ruf*.<sup>212</sup>

Despite the official reprimand, Andersch and Richter remained defiant, refusing to make any changes to issue 15, published on 15 March, only a few days after the ICD’s action. Frustrated by the editors’ refusal to “tone down” the content of *Der Ruf*, the ICD’s censorship office in Munich informed Vinz on 1 April 1947 that Andersch and Richter could not continue to be allowed to contradict publicly the aims of the occupation government.<sup>213</sup> On 4 April, Vinz’s personnel manager Gerhard Weiß informed the co-editors of their removal. He then offered them the opportunity to continue contributing under the new editor, Erich Kuby, which they predictably refused. Despite their hopes that Vinz would hand in his publishing license in a show of solidarity, their colleague proved more than willing to acquiesce to the demands of the ICD.<sup>214</sup> As will be discussed in the following chapter, the authors remained within the German literary scene, with Richter attempting unsuccessfully to found a new journal, “Der Skorpion,” before he and Andersch founded the informal but influential literary circle that came to be known as Group 47.

---

<sup>211</sup> Vaillant, *Der Ruf*, 123.

<sup>212</sup> From “Rufe an den Ruf,” in *Der Ruf*, n. 14, 1 March 1947.

<sup>213</sup> Reinhardt, *Alfred Andersch*, 145.

<sup>214</sup> Reinhardt, *Alfred Andersch*, 145.

Was “nationalism” truly to blame for Andersch and Richter’s removal from *Der Ruf*? Certainly, this chapter has provided numerous examples of articles and opinions by each author that might be interpreted as nationalistic, despite their pacifism and calls for European unity. Hans Habe, a German exile who had returned in an American military uniform as one of the managers of *Die Neue Zeitung*, believed strongly that the authors’ experiences as POWs had negatively affected their ability to understand clearly the issues at stake in postwar Germany. He observed a dichotomous paradox in the editors of *Der Ruf*:

I tried to understand [them]. They were politically untrained, these young Germans...they never reflected over...Hitler’s devilish trick of naming his party “national” and “socialist”: They hated National Socialism, but they still have not yet realized that it is impossible to remain on the “left” while [espousing] nationalism. They noted American nationalism-and forgot what [had just] happened [in Germany]. The majority of young German intellectuals sat behind barbed wire [where] one sees nothing but barbed wire. This shortsightedness frightened me. It is natural that one would hate one’s captors, but I kept waiting on intellectuals to ask themselves how they got put behind barbed wire in the first place. In a letter to Thomas Mann, I voiced my concerns: “These young people hate their fathers. But they hate the enemies of their fathers even more.”<sup>215</sup>

This passage is one of Habe’s only references to *Der Ruf*, but it demonstrates clearly his belief that the POW experience had hindered the intellectual development of individuals such as Andersch and Richter by focusing their animosity toward their captors while ignoring the core question of the mistakes that had led to their incarceration. Habe also called the authors to task over their combination of socialist and seemingly nationalist sentiments by comparing them with Hitler’s National Socialism, a damning analogy for those who, like Andersch and Richter, never sympathized with the Nazis. Of course, many others, including Kurt Schumacher, who once called Konrad Adenauer the “chancellor of the Allies,” also seemingly combined socialist and nationalist views without similar rebuke. Habe’s remark to Mann was particularly powerful, but

---

<sup>215</sup> Hans Habe, *Im Jahre Null: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der deutschen Presse*. (Munich: Kurt Desch, 1966), 120.

was it a valid description of the sentiments expressed by our subjects in the later issues of *Der Ruf*?

By the time of their removal in April 1947, Andersch and Richter had shifted the primary focus of their writings from wrestling with the past to criticizing Allied occupation in the present. Still, simple criticism of the occupying powers should not be equated with nationalism as American authorities understood the term. As we will see, the United States' definition of nationalism was closely linked to Nazism, so that any expression of sympathy for or loyalty to the fallen regime could be construed as "nationalist." In a letter to Henry Ehrmann, an intellectual who had contributed to reeducation efforts in the United States, Curt Vinz wrote of his dismissal of Andersch and Richter:

At the beginning of April I found myself unfortunately compelled to relieve the old editorship of *Der Ruf*, especially Mr. Andersch and Mr. Richter. The reason for this was the development of a direction by *Der Ruf* that the Nymphenburger Verlagshandlung, and certainly I as the license holder, did not wish to follow...In my prearrangements with Mr. Andersch we agreed on a program which, more or less, emerged in the first number: for democracy and national understanding (whereby our efforts sought a synthesis between socialism and humanism to serve as a settlement between East and West), and *against* nationalism and every form of militarism...<sup>216</sup>

Vinz suggested that the apparent nationalist views expressed in the later issues of *Der Ruf* were largely to blame for Andersch's and Richter's dismissals. While neither author would have called for a return to Nazism, their strong calls for German independence from Allied control certainly appeared to some, including Habe and Vinz, to be nationalist in nature. Hermann Glaser agreed that the authors' attacks on the occupying powers, interpreted conveniently by the Americans as "nationalism," were the primary reason for their dismissal.<sup>217</sup> Perhaps the reasoning, dubious as it may have been, was that anyone who was not a supporter of Allied policy was, by default, either a nationalist or a communist?

---

<sup>216</sup> Smith, *War for the German Mind*, 167-168.

<sup>217</sup> Glaser, *The Rubble Years*, 116.



Cara Sol Goldstein claims that the editors of *Der Ruf* were removed due to the increasing anti-communist stance of the U.S. government. Faced with the perceived threat of communist infiltration and the military might of the Soviet Union, western leaders no longer believed it possible to tolerate certain viewpoints. In August 1947, communist and Buchenwald survivor Emil Carlebach was fired as editor of the *Frankfurter Rundschau* for “political beliefs and traits of character” that made him unsuitable to be a “leader of public opinion.”<sup>218</sup> In October, a mere six months after Richter and Andersch were dismissed, General Clay launched Operation Talk Back, a comprehensive propaganda campaign designed to use the German media to counter Soviet propaganda.<sup>219</sup> An ICD communication dated 5 December 1947 included a list of approved anti-communist publications to be distributed with the stated purpose of achieving the “political education” of Germany in the western zones. Such works included *How the Russians Grabbed my Government* by Ferene Nagy, *Behind the Iron Curtain* by Russell Hill, and George Orwell’s *Animal Farm*.<sup>220</sup> An undated document from the same period offered a “recipe for attacking Russians in their Zone” that involved blaming the SED for material shortages in the SBZ, and for its failure to protest the Soviets regarding those conditions.<sup>221</sup> Clearly, US authorities increasingly viewed communism as a serious threat in the western occupation zones, but the question remains: were American anti-communist attitudes to blame for Andersch and Richter’s removal? The evidence indicates that they were not.

The above evidence might suggest that anti-communism contributed to our subjects’ removal, but in actuality there were few examples of anti-communist actions against publishers

---

<sup>218</sup> ICD, Memo regarding Emil Carlebach’s removal, 19 August 1947. OMGUS Records, Box 196.

<sup>219</sup> Goldstein, “A Strategic Failure,” 59.

<sup>220</sup> ICD Memo, 5 December 1947. OMGUS Records, Group 260, Box 244.

<sup>221</sup> “Recipe for Attacking Russians in their Zone,” no date given. OMGUS Records, Group 260, Box 244.

before August 1947, several months after Andersch and Richter were forced out of their positions. In an official ICD summary of “scrutiny actions” against publishers in Bavaria from 26 October 1945 to 23 October 1946, those publications that were punished for ideological reasons, rather than factual inaccuracy or general incompetence (a frequent problem), were almost always accused of militarist or nationalist writings. Here are a few examples:

28 November 1945: *Frankenpost*-for calling Hitler a “strong man” and Eva Braun a “little courageous woman.”

15 December 1945: *Hochland Bote*-for using militaristic expression.

28 January 1946: *Hochland Bote*-for using SS symbol.

16 February 1946: *Passauer Neue Presse*-for unbalanced news presentation and questionable attitude in article on reinstatement of Nazi employees.

23 February 1946: *Sueddeutsche Zeitung*-for underplaying Nuernberg [sic] Trial.

16 March 1946: *Donau Kurier*-for militaristic expressions.

27 August 1946: *Sueddeutsche Zeitung*-for passage in news item construable as anti-Semitism.

3 September 1946: *Suedost Kurier*-for use of SS symbol.<sup>222</sup>

The apparent concern to prevent a resurgence of Nazism or nationalism also meant that the ICD carefully scrutinized the backgrounds of licensees. Any individual found to have sympathized or collaborated with the Nazis was subject to having their license revoked, and official lists of reprimands and punishments reflect this fact. Hans Brey, an SPD councilman in Bamberg, had his license revoked when evidence surfaced that he had published anti-Semitic articles under the Nazis to avoid being shut down. Karl Vetter of the *Mannheimer Morgen* was removed “under suspicion of Nazism.” Helmuth Walter Kinon’s license was withdrawn when it was discovered that he had once applied for membership in the SS, although he never actually joined.

Regardless, Kinon had failed to report this fact on his license application, which required the applicant to note any membership or interaction with the Nazi party. Similarly, Leo Lehnen’s license was withdrawn because he had concealed his active membership in the Nazi party in the

---

<sup>222</sup> ICD, “Scrutiny Action on Bavarian Licensed Press.” 28 October 1946. OMGUS Records, Box 211.

late 1930s.<sup>223</sup> Many other licenses were revoked for basic incompetence or failure to publish, but clearly the primary ideological concern for American authorities was to prevent a resurgence of Nazism or nationalism. Therefore, the action against our subjects does not seem extraordinarily different than any number of other ICD actions against publications and publishers. While Andersch and Richter were certainly not Nazis, their arguments against occupation could have been construed as nationalist. The abundant evidence of concern in the ICD for a resurgence of German nationalism and militarism, when paired with a dearth of anti-communist actions before August 1947, leads us to conclude that the editors' socialist views played little role in their dismissal.

In his biography of Andersch, Erhard Schütz suggests that the reason for the co-editors' removal was Andersch's insistence on European and German unity, specifically his call for East and West to come together for a solution to the "German question" of how best to rebuild the country in "Die Zonen und der Weltfriede" from issue 6 (1 November 1946). Andersch argued that the Allies should work to unite Germany and allow its people to achieve their own "synthesis" of Eastern and Western ideologies, presumably in a form similar to the "socialist humanism" so often discussed by him and Richter. The alternative was potential future conflict with Germany as the principal battleground. Andersch asserted that the leaders of the occupying powers had so far proven incapable of considering a solution that didn't involve stark ideological division.<sup>224</sup> Schütz claimed that such calls for unity conflicted directly with US and western interests, but one must remember that when the article was published, neither side had completely abandoned the possibility of reaching a solution to reunify all four zones of

---

<sup>223</sup> "Penalties for German Licensed Publishers in the U.S. Zone and Berlin Sector," 6 May 1947. OMGUS Records, Box 254.

<sup>224</sup> Alfred Andersch, "Die Zonen und der Weltfriede." *Der Ruf*, n. 6, 15 November 1946. In Hans Schwab-Felisch, ed., *Der Ruf: Eine deutsche Nachkriegszeitung*. (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch, 1962), 79-80.

occupation.<sup>225</sup> Until the promulgation of the Truman Doctrine in March 1947, the Americans and British were open to the prospect of merging their zones, although the French were reluctant, fearing the prospect of yet again being forced to deal with a united, reinvigorated Germany on its eastern border.<sup>226</sup> During his speech in Stuttgart on 6 September 1946, U.S. Secretary of State James Byrnes enumerated the Anglo-American plan to create a neutral and demilitarized Germany, built on premises first put forth in the Potsdam Agreement in July 1945.<sup>227</sup> Ernest Bevin promoted a similar strategy that came to be known, appropriately, as the Bevin Plan. During a speech to the House of Commons on 15 May 1947, Bevin argued for the merging of the American and British zones as the first step toward full reunification with the other zones “as soon as they are ready.”<sup>228</sup> As tensions escalated, however, the Americans and British resigned themselves to the fact that Germany would remain divided, reflected in the Americans’ decision not to extend Marshall Plan aid to the Soviet zone.<sup>229</sup>

While the focus had shifted from full unification in September 1946 to an initial merging of the British and American zones by May 1947, the fact remains that both the British and Americans held out hope for a common solution to the German question even after Andersch and Richter’s removal from *Der Ruf*. Even the Soviets maintained hope that Germany could be reunited, though Stalin’s vision of a reunified Germany differed significantly from that of the Western Allies. Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov agreed with Byrnes that Germany should be demilitarized (for a set period of forty years), but argued that the entire country should be “democratized” in a fashion similar to that of the Soviet zone, where so-called “free” elections

---

<sup>225</sup> Erhard Schütz, *Alfred Andersch*. (Munich: Bech, 1980) 22-23.

<sup>226</sup> Mike Dennis, *The Rise and Fall of the German Democratic Republic 1945-1990*. (New York: Longman, 2000), 44.

<sup>227</sup> Peter Alter, *The German Question and Europe: A History*. (London: Arnold, 2000), 117.

<sup>228</sup> Alter, *The German Question and Europe*, 118-119.

<sup>229</sup> Dennis, *The Rise and Fall of the German Democratic Republic*, 44.

had seen the Stalin-backed SED achieving an increasingly vast majority in the provisional government.<sup>230</sup> Only with the trilateral introduction of the new Deutsche Mark in the Western zones on 20 June 1948 did the British, Americans, and French cross the proverbial Rubicon on the issue of German unity. Stalin's ensuing blockade of West Berlin helped solidify the division between the wartime Allies, and the following year saw the creations of the Federal Republic of Germany, on 23 May, and the German Democratic Republic, on 7 October. Certainly Cold War tensions led to a divided Germany, but Schütz's claim that Andersch's call for German unity was a key factor in his and Richter's dismissal seemingly overlooks the fact that during *Der Ruf*'s run the Allies had not yet passed the point of no return on the so-called "German question." In fact, the Federal Republic remained committed, at least in principle, to the goal of German unification even after 1949.

Heinz Ludwig Arnold claims that "Der Sieg des Opportunismus," Richter's planned lead article for issue 17, which was not actually published, was a primary reason for our subjects' dismissal.<sup>231</sup> In the article, Richter portrayed the contemporary situation in Germany as the "victory of opportunism":

We are living in a political climate in which the victory of opportunism seems to be celebrating its greatest victory...[If] it is convenient to be a democrat, then one becomes a democrat. [If] it is convenient to be a socialist, then one becomes a socialist. But it is not convenient to find a free and new outlook, and thus one adheres to the old ones.<sup>232</sup>

Criticizing once more the Allies' manipulation of postwar Germany, Richter argued that the occupying powers were responsible for a situation in which Germans had few political options,

---

<sup>230</sup> Alter, *The German Question and Europe*, 117.

<sup>231</sup> Heinz Ludwig Arnold, "Der 'Ruf' als Vorläufer der Gruppe 47." In Heinz Ludwig Arnold, ed., *Die Gruppe 47: Ein kritischer Grundriß*. Special volume in the series *Texte und Kritik*. (Munich: Alfred Aumaier, 1980), 21.

<sup>232</sup> Hans Werner Richter, "Der Sieg des Opportunismus." In Hans Schwab-Felisch, ed., *Der Ruf: Eine deutsche Nachkriegszeit*. (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch, 1962), 296.

because the Allies sought instead to use German defeat as an opportunity to promote their own ideologies in their zones. The end result of the situation would be, Richter warned forebodingly, a “second defeat” not only for Germany but for the European working classes as well. This article calls Richter’s communist background to the forefront, as he used terms such as “bourgeois” and “capitalist” liberally in order to paint the occupying Western powers as “reactionaries” in a similar vein to the “extreme radicalism” [read: Nazism] that had prevented the unity and, presumably, victory of the working classes in the years preceding 1933.<sup>233</sup> This article from the cancelled issue 17 of *Der Ruf* was not among those listed in official ICD communications as a cause for the removal of Richter and Andersch, and Arnold, along with Jérôme Vaillant, are the only scholars to mention it thusly. The arguments contained in the article would certainly have been offensive to American censors, but they did not mention it in their internal communications. The possible explanation for this is that they had already accumulated sufficient cause for the authors’ removal, and citing a further example would have merely been redundant. Vaillant cited Richter himself as a source for the information, so perhaps the erstwhile editors were informed verbally of the article’s offensiveness, a fact that would explain the apparent absence of physical evidence. Whatever the explanation, there was little new in the article, other than the explicit portrayal of Allied policy as “opportunism.” Otherwise, Richter simply reiterated the same kinds of criticisms that had already drawn the ire of American censors. Therefore, “Der Sieg des Opportunismus” might best be seen as a secondary cause of the authors’ dismissal, but as we saw above, the ICD had already identified several articles that had violated their publication policies. Richter and Andersch’s ongoing refusals to “tone down” their views or those of their contributors were as much or more to blame for the ICD’s actions than this article alone.

---

<sup>233</sup> Richter, “Der Sieg des Opportunismus,” 293.

Before concluding, one might also ask whether the general German population shared views similar to those of Andersch and Richter. One of the most galling aspects of occupation was the fact that in 1947 the Allies had yet to accord Germany any degree of sovereignty. In a poll from September 1951 asking Germans what the occupying powers' biggest mistake had been, a mere 8 percent listed "denial of sovereignty," one of Andersch and Richter's primary complaints. In the same poll, those surveyed did not seem overly resentful about Allied collective guilt policies, as only 6 percent listed "denazification" as a major mistake.<sup>234</sup> The issue of collective guilt had been a particularly rankling one for Andersch and Richter, as both asserted on numerous occasions that their generation was not accountable for Nazi crimes. The largest number of respondents in the poll (21 percent) listed "decentralization, destruction and suppression of German industry," as the biggest mistake during occupation. While we must keep in mind that this poll was conducted two years after the creation of the West German state, it nonetheless suggests that Andersch and Richter's views were less representative of the German population that they believed.

### **Conclusion**

During Richter and Andersch's brief ten-month run, *Der Ruf* was a vehicle of optimism in the face of an enormous calamity that had befallen the German people, offering the belief that out of the ashes of World War II and Nazism, Germans could not only rebuild their own country but also help create a new Europe, a Europe that would see the end of national borders as well as economic and social injustices, all sources of much conflict and strife throughout the continent's history. From the restricted showing of *The Great Dictator* to Churchill's call for European unity, Andersch and Richter lashed out against developments they believed would ultimately

---

<sup>234</sup> Elisabeth Noelle and Erich Peter Neumann, eds., *The Germans: Public Opinion Polls 1947-1966*. (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1967), 229.

hinder Germany as it sought to rebuild not only its economy and government, but its culture as well. When met with disappointment, their initial optimism in the first issues of *Der Ruf* transitioned into the frustrated criticism that characterized their later articles. As the US was actively seeking to establish itself as an ally and protector of Western Europe, criticisms such as those voiced by our subjects could not have been allowed to continue, especially due to their seemingly nationalistic calls for Germany to be freed to pursue its own political development independent of Allied interference. Although the authors' new "socialist Europe" did not materialize in the manner they hoped or expected, subsequent decades saw not only a rapid improvement in material conditions during the *Wirtschaftswunder* of the 1950s, but also increasing cooperation between the nations of western Europe as West Germany was not only accepted back into the fold but began increasingly to take a leading role in the postwar world. In the following chapter, we will explore the authors' careers after *Der Ruf*, as both continued to expand upon ideas first posited in their short-lived publication while reacting to new political, social, and economic developments in Germany and Europe.



## CHAPTER 6

### GROUP 47 AND BEYOND: AN EXTENDED EPILOGUE

“Let’s go; there’s nothing more for us here.” Alfred Andersch, 4 April 1947.

With the above words, Alfred Andersch and Hans Werner Richter left the meeting in which they had been informed of their removal as co-editors of *Der Ruf*. Afterwards, Andersch declared to Richter: “Let them do what they will. We’ll stand by our own work.”<sup>1</sup> Indeed, the setback they had just suffered would serve not to discourage, but rather to inspire the authors’ efforts to promote literature that engaged the historical and contemporary issues looming over Germany. They would soon unite with other like-minded authors to form Group 47, the circle that launched numerous careers and helped create a new, distinctly “West German” literary tradition, according to Rhys W. Williams. This new literature would be characterized primarily by its obsession with realism and antipathy for theory and ideology.<sup>2</sup> According to James Wilkinson, both men had learned the “value of group solidarity” and the “transforming effect of positive example” while captive in the United States, and sought to use the group to continue to promote their views after they lost their outlet, the second *Der Ruf*, in early April 1947.<sup>3</sup>

There is a wealth of secondary literature dealing both with postwar German literature and Group 47 more specifically. Accordingly, this chapter will not attempt to discuss in detail all facets of German literary developments since 1947, because many of these issues have been dealt with previously by others in far more detail than is possible in a single chapter. More helpful is to concentrate on the careers of Andersch and Richter, focusing especially on those works that deal with issues stemming from the Nazi past. Both men had remained in Germany

---

<sup>1</sup> Richter, “Wie entstand und was war die Gruppe 47?,” 70-71.

<sup>2</sup> Rhys W. Williams, “Inventing West German Literature.” In Stuart Parkes and John J. White, eds., *The Gruppe 47 Fifty Years On: A Re-Appraisal of its Literary and Political Significance*. (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1999), 73.

<sup>3</sup> Wilkinson, *The Intellectual Resistance in Europe*, 181.

during Hitler's reign, and this fact compelled each to devote a great deal of attention in his post-1947 works to his own behavior under totalitarian rule. Both Andersch and Richter published numerous works over the decades between 1947 and their deaths in 1980 and 1993, respectively. Many of those writings continued to address issues first touched upon in *Der Ruf*, as each man sought not only to make sense of the past, but to explore and explain the dual catastrophes of Nazism and World War II. Perhaps even more importantly for the authors, their post-*Ruf* works often sought to reexamine, explain, and even justify their own personal actions and circumstances during the Nazi period.

### **The Group Takes Shape**

In the months following his dismissal from *Der Ruf*, Richter began plotting the creation of another periodical, this time a literary journal called *Der Skorpion*. He hoped that he could secure a license from U.S. authorities for such a publication, because its primary focus would be artistic, rather than political. Political criticism had contributed significantly to *Der Ruf*'s downfall, but a journal occupied with poetry and prose might evade the attention of overzealous American censors. Richter had not abandoned hope of continuing to promote in periodical form a distinctly German process of evaluating the past and forging a new path in the postwar world. He believed literature, rather than the explicit political discussion in *Der Ruf*, would be a more prudent means of delivering political views: "A literary periodical could also [engage in] politics, either explicitly or implicitly."<sup>4</sup> To this end, he sought to gather a circle of like-minded individuals to assist him in the project. Richter wrote to numerous friends and colleagues, inviting them to take part in his new endeavor: Andersch, Walter Kolbenhoff, Günter Eich, Ilse Achinger, Wolfdietrich Schnurre, Gustav René Hocke, and many others received invitations to attend a meeting both to read and discuss their own work and to plan the content, scope, and

---

<sup>4</sup> Richter, "Wie entstand und was war die Gruppe 47?," 72.

format of *Der Skorpion*. On 6 and 7 September 1947, the group met at the house of poet Ilse Schneider-Llengyel in Füssel, a town on the Bannwaldsee. Despite his close association with Richter and later fame as a founding member, Andersch was unable to join this first meeting of what would become Group 47, because he was attending his younger brother Martin's wedding.<sup>5</sup> This initial meeting established the basic format of most future Group 47 gatherings: authors would take turns reading 20-30 minute selections to their assembled colleagues, and after each reading, the group would engage in often-heated criticisms and debates over the merits and shortcomings of each presentation. At most meetings, Richter sat near the reader, and on occasion would curtly inform the presenter that the audience had heard enough.<sup>6</sup> At the first meeting, several authors read their works. Schnurre's brief piece "Das Begräbnis des lieben Gottes" ("The Funeral of beloved God") had the distinction of being Group 47's first reading.<sup>7</sup> The attendees discussed politics and literature late into the early morning hours, and made plans for future gatherings. Richter was pleased with the spirit of debate and open discussion, which he believed carried on the spirit of *Der Ruf* in the assembled authors' "radical" interest in building a "reaction to the absence of criticism under [the Nazis]."<sup>8</sup> In other words, Richter felt that the often confrontational nature of the group's criticisms was necessary to make up for the fact that free criticism was forbidden during the Nazi period. This "radical" spirit of criticism would, ironically, lead to the disintegration of the group due to disagreements over how to

---

<sup>5</sup> Williams, "Inventing West German Literature," 73.

<sup>6</sup> Siegfried Mandel, *Group 47: The Reflected Intellect*. (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1973), 18.

<sup>7</sup> Mandel, *Group 47*, 15.

<sup>8</sup> Richter, "Wie entstand und was war die Gruppe 47?," 82.

respond to the Vietnam War in the late 1960s. Before adjourning, the participants agreed on 1 January 1948 as the tentative debut date for *Der Skorpion*.<sup>9</sup>

Richter clearly intended the group's gatherings to be a vehicle for promoting the participants' works to the German public. From the second meeting onward, reporters were invited to observe and record the proceedings. At that second gathering, on 8-9 November at Hanns Ahrens' house in Ulm, reporters from the American-run *Die Neue Zeitung*, *Die Epoche*, and *Frankfurter Hefte* were present.<sup>10</sup> Increasing numbers of outside observers, including various media representatives, attended subsequent meetings, raising the group's public profile with each gathering. At the Ulm meeting, Hans Georg Brenner, an older member of the group who had translated several of Sartre's works, coined the term "Group 47" in homage to Group 98, a Spanish literary circle formed in 1898. Richter liked the name because it was "unrestrictive" and thus did not represent a particular ideology. It caught on quickly with others, until the name became synonymous with Richter's circle of colleagues.<sup>11</sup>

By far, the most important aspect of the second meeting was the reading of Alfred Andersch's essay "Deutsche Literatur in der Entscheidung" ("German Literature at the Turning Point"). In many ways, the essay served as the group's manifesto, as it represented the majority opinion on the state of German literature in 1947 and its role in the future. In the first of three sections, Andersch examined the role of authors who remained in Germany during the Nazi period. On one hand, the author partially supported Frank Thiess's assertion that only those authors who were "inner emigrants" that remained in Germany under Nazi rule and were

---

<sup>9</sup> Reinhard Lettau, *Die Gruppe 47: Bericht, Kritik, Polemik*. (Berlin: Hermann Luchterhand, 1967), 24.

<sup>10</sup> Lettau, *Die Gruppe 47*, 24.

<sup>11</sup> Richter, "Wie entstand und was war die Gruppe 47?," 82-83.

inwardly opposed to the regime could claim legitimately to represent Germany.<sup>12</sup> However, his assertion came with a caveat. Andersch dismissed all overtly Nazi writing as irrelevant:

There is not one single German writer who accomplished a valid literary achievement by representing National Socialism. They all remain what they were: high propagandists...<sup>13</sup>

Andersch only condemned those who explicitly “represented” Nazi views, exonerating those who, like himself, accommodated themselves to prevailing circumstances while maintaining a supposed inner distance from Nazism. After discussing several individual authors who remained, Andersch summarized:

Our sketch of “inner emigration” has hopefully established its place among the rest of the literature [produced by those who] remained in Germany. To say of [inner emigration] that it implicitly supported the [Nazi] system by remaining [in the country] is absurd; it did a lot in its years-long “little war” against official propaganda to aid the inner decay of the system. Not without reason did the master of this propaganda [presumably Goebbels] see at the end only one foe: the German intellectuals, against whom he directed his irreconcilable hatred.<sup>14</sup>

For Andersch, those who did not explicitly support the Nazis were therefore opponents of them. By exaggerating their role in opposing the Nazis, he excused them from any possible accusation of collaboration. While “exonerating” numerous individuals who continued to write between 1933 and 1945, including Stefan Andres, Wilhelm Schaefer, and, perhaps most surprisingly, Ernst Jünger, the author also intended to excuse himself for failing to emigrate.

Unlike Frank Thiess, Andersch acknowledged that some literature produced in exile was in fact valuable. Chief among those exiles praised by Andersch was Thomas Mann, who was arguably not only one of the most famous German exiles, but the “greatest living German-

---

<sup>12</sup> Thiess claimed that “inner opposition” was preferable to leaving the country, as authors like Mann and Stefan Zweig had done. In response, Mann claimed that all books published in Germany during the Nazi period were completely worthless, bearing a “smell of blood and embarrassment.” Glaser, *The Rubble Years*, 78.

<sup>13</sup> Alfred Andersch. “Deutsche Literatur in der Entscheidung.” In Gerd Haffmans, ed., *Das Alfred Andersch Lesebuch*. (Zurich: Diogenes, 1979), 114-115.

<sup>14</sup> Andersch. “Deutsche Literatur in der Entscheidung,” 121.

language author.”<sup>15</sup> For Andersch, Mann had contributed greatly to German literature by raising its profile abroad. His praise was not without limitations, however, as he suggested that Mann should step aside and allow new authors to take his place:

Just like the old works of Hermann Hesse...and Hermann Broch, [Mann’s work] embodied the trends of humanistic tradition and demonstrated Germany’s place in Atlantic culture...we are standing in the middle of a process of a new change, one that is putting aside the greatness of Thomas Mann, so that he will not shut us out of doors that lead to new [literary] spaces...<sup>16</sup>

Although he acknowledged Mann’s contributions to German literature, Andersch believed that the great author’s time had come and gone, and that the future belonged to himself and his colleagues in Group 47. By 1947, Mann had declared his reluctance to return to Germany even to visit, much less to settle permanently. Andersch’s views on Mann stem from his belief that émigrés needed to return to their homeland in order to play an active role in the development of German literature; otherwise, they would become irrelevant:

[Emigrant authors] can only influence the future development of German literature if they themselves rise up to emigrate. In other words: if they come home.<sup>17</sup>

In his biography of Andersch, Erhard Schütz argues that the author’s admiration of Mann was based on a misunderstanding of the latter’s views. Schütz suggests that Andersch was unfamiliar with Mann’s political writings and speeches, in which he exposed what he saw as tragic flaws in the German character, flaws that included an inherent irrationality, a desire to overcome one’s limitations to achieve greatness.<sup>18</sup> Our subject’s admiration was, therefore, based partly on a misunderstanding of Mann’s character and work. Indeed, Andersch once wrote in his diary that Mann’s work was “masculine and German!,” an assertion that anyone familiar with Mann’s later

---

<sup>15</sup> Andersch. “Deutsche Literatur in der Entscheidung,” 123.

<sup>16</sup> Andersch. “Deutsche Literatur in der Entscheidung,” 124.

<sup>17</sup> Andersch. “Deutsche Literatur in der Entscheidung,” 123.

<sup>18</sup> Illustrated most famously in Mann’s *Doktor Faustus*, his retelling of the Faust legend that served as an allegory for Germany’s “deal with the devil” of Nazism.

writings would find questionable.<sup>19</sup> Andersch had less kind words for many émigré authors, which he grouped into the following categories: those realists who displayed “tendentiousness” or bias, satirists, and proletarian authors. Among the realists he named Heinrich Mann, Arnold Zweig and Johannes Becher. He largely dismissed the realists because he believed their work was propaganda for “freedom, democracy, humanism, and pacifism.”<sup>20</sup> Why might Andersch, who himself was an advocate of such values, have criticized these authors for promoting them in their works? The following passage reveals his belief that the authors listed above violated the basic tenets of realism:

Realistic literature is literature that stems from a love of truth, but the truth always speaks for itself; it has no tendencies and no urgent sermons.<sup>21</sup>

For Andersch, true realism could not explicitly take sides. It must rather allow the facts to speak for themselves. Of course, this was an exceptionally naïve viewpoint. The notion that one could fully cleanse one’s writings of all bias and opinion was, at the very least, unrealistic. Andersch’s writings would be shaped by his own particular “tendencies” and especially by his obsession with the theme of escape, undoubtedly connected to his 1944 desertion. Indeed, Andersch contradicted himself later in the same essay, as we will see shortly. In 1947, however, Andersch saw himself as a realist writer whose works were devoid of ideological tendencies, and in his essay he sought to define himself and his burgeoning career by establishing that the authors named above were not true realists.

Andersch then discussed several satirists, most notably Erich Kästner, the author of *Fabian: Die Geschichte eines Moralisten*. In Andersch’s “Fabian wird Positiv,” which appeared in the third issue of *Der Ruf* on 15 September 1946, he praised Kästner for Fabian’s willingness

---

<sup>19</sup> Schütz, *Alfred Andersch*, 26.

<sup>20</sup> Andersch. “Deutsche Literatur in der Entscheidung,” 124-125.

<sup>21</sup> Andersch. “Deutsche Literatur in der Entscheidung,” 124-125.

to say “no,” that is, to reject any and all aspects of conventional existence. In the later essay, Andersch once again praised Kästner, who, like the former, did not emigrate during the Nazi period, choosing instead to live in Berlin for the duration of the war. Andersch wrote of Kästner that he:

...was a real émigré, even if he remained in Germany. He once called himself an “observer who remained in the country.” We therefore call him that [also], because his *Fabian* represented the beginning of the transition from bare contemporary satire to satirical-surrealistic artwork. This moral nihilism, or more accurately, this nihilistic morality could become very fruitful for a future German literature.<sup>22</sup>

*Fabian* was first published in 1932, before the Nazis came to power, so Andersch’s claim is confusing. Predictably, he excused Kästner for remaining in the country, but he went further by praising him for doing so because his novel was a landmark work of satire. Because the novel was published before the Nazis came to power, one wonders why Andersch tried here to link Kästner’s remaining in the country to the book. Of course, Andersch sought to reiterate that not all authors who remained in Germany during the war should be dismissed as Nazi sympathizers. Such a claim would have excused not only Kästner, but himself as well.

In contrast to his general praise of satirists like Kästner, Andersch criticized what he called “proletarian” authors, among whose number he listed Oscar Maria Graf, Willi Bredel, and Anna Seghers. According to Andersch, such authors’ works were limited by adherence to Marxist doctrine:

What...hinders proletarian literature...is their intellectual connection to the explicatory dogma of social processes [and] their belief in academic methods; [these] bring a danger of dryness. All the talk of the dialectic cannot forget that the dialectical dynamic in humanity is grounded in one’s personal freedom, not in the laws of sociology.<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>22</sup> Andersch. “Deutsche Literatur in der Entscheidung,” 126.

<sup>23</sup> Andersch. “Deutsche Literatur in der Entscheidung,” 127.



According to Rhys W. Williams, Andersch's criticism of "proletarian" literature indicated the author's "antipathy toward the cultural policy in the Soviet zone."<sup>24</sup> This is a fair assessment of Andersch's intent in this section of the essay, and helps complete our understanding of the author's self-perception in 1947. While Andersch certainly had socialist leanings, he rejected Stalinist repression. This was evident in his repeated emphasis in the second *Der Ruf* that socialist economic measures must be tempered by guarantees of individual freedom, and such sentiments are therefore unsurprising here.

For Andersch, literature that uncritically embraced ideology of any kind was inherently untrustworthy, while works that promoted no worldview, but rather depicted the world as it was, were to be promoted and praised. Of course, one wonders if any work, whether fiction or non-fiction, can be truly free of all subjectivity. While he claimed to shy away from overtly ideological art, Andersch nonetheless argued that intellectuals like he and his colleagues should:

...reveal the hypocrisy of those who currently discredit democracy through their policies toward Germany, and [the intellectual] must defend democracy against those who return to their fascist ways because of the regrettable discrepancy between theory and practice.<sup>25</sup>

As in the second *Der Ruf*, Andersch attacked the occupying powers, and presumably the United States in particular, for the restrictions and censorship of an ongoing military occupation.

Ironically, he appeared to contradict his earlier assertions about "unbiased" realistic literature by advocating the use of writing to promote a particular position. The exhortation undermined his earlier endorsement of objectivity, an indication that the author himself did not recognize the contradictions present in the essay. As seen in Chapter 5, the second *Der Ruf* represented above all else a disappointed optimism, as Andersch and Richter both gradually realized that their early hopes for a radical transformation of postwar Germany were impossible in light of postwar

---

<sup>24</sup> Williams, "Inventing West German Literature," 76.

<sup>25</sup> Andersch. "Deutsche Literatur in der Entscheidung," 131.

political realities. Although he did not explicitly say so, “Deutsche Literatur in der Entscheidung” in part represented a continuation of Andersch’s disappointment in the discrepancy between American democracy as promoted in POW camps and the reality of the U.S. occupation. Andersch’s solution to the intellectual’s conundrum of defending democracy to Germans while the occupying powers continued to discredit it was to return once again to a concept first enumerated in his opening article from the first issue of the second *Der Ruf*, “Das junge Europa formt sein Gesicht.” He argued that his generation of authors could succeed in their “liberal struggle” only through “relentless self-criticism”:

Only through such honesty can German writers join together with the intellectual elite of all nations to lead Germany out of isolation. They will inevitably lead Germany into partnerships above all with peoples who have been in a similar historic situation, groups of people who stretch geographically in a great semi-circle between the Blocs of the world powers, from England to China, and who struggle for a socialist synthesis between freedom and social justice. It is almost needless to say that such things are said only of authors who are generally aware of their social relevance. There will still be many who flee into their ivory towers.<sup>26</sup>

Andersch invoked here the very spirit of criticism upon which Group 47 had been founded. As in *Der Ruf*, he insisted furthermore that authors needed to engage actively in helping enact social and political change. And the ideal socio-economic arrangement, as argued in his earlier articles, was a combination of individual freedom with socialist policies that would eliminate economic injustice. The irony of his assertion is that Andersch would become increasingly withdrawn, refusing on several occasions to become politically engaged when asked by fellow Group 47 alums such as Richter or Günter Grass.

Andersch also addressed his continuing interest in existentialism. The author’s understanding of the philosophy rested heavily on his obsession with personal freedom of action. For Andersch, no figure was more representative of existentialism than French author Jean-Paul

---

<sup>26</sup> Andersch. “Deutsche Literatur in der Entscheidung,” 131-132.

Sartre, who argued that choices defined one's existence, and that individuals were ultimately responsible for the consequences of those choices. Andersch understood existentialism as a liberating philosophy, one that justified his series of "escapes": from his marriage, from his military service, and later from Germany itself. As he explained in the essay:

In [existentialism]'s appeal to personal choice, it accords human freedom a central role. Furthermore, as it defines freedom and existence, [reminding us] of the viscosity of an existence without choice, [an existence] that equates with inhumanity and death, [existentialism] takes on the dialectic role of a spiritual movement, one that, to borrow from Marx, does not just interpret, but also changes the world.<sup>27</sup>

For Andersch, the choice itself appeared to be the most important aspect of existentialism. The freedom to choose a particular course of action marked the difference between a meaningful existence and one equated with "inhumanity and death." Throughout his life and career, Andersch often represented his choices as existentialist expressions of freedom. More often than not, the author chose to "escape" from his circumstances, as we will continue to see. Choosing to escape meant, for Andersch, a return to a *tabula rasa*, a clean slate that provided an endless array of new possibilities. In the closing paragraphs of "Deutsche Literatur in der Entscheidung," Andersch quoted Sartre, who claimed that the German invasion of France represented an opportunity to build a new and hopefully better future. Andersch argued that the French author's assertion could easily be applied to Germany's present situation, a claim supported by the preface to Sartre's 1943 play *The Flies*:

Today the Germans have the same problem.<sup>28</sup> For the Germans [as well as for Elektra and Orestes], self-denial is equally unproductive. I do not wish to say that the mistakes of [Germany's] past should disappear from its memory. No. But I am convinced that a willful self-denial will not gain them the pardon that the world can grant them. The only

---

<sup>27</sup> Andersch. "Deutsche Literatur in der Entscheidung," 133.

<sup>28</sup> *The Flies* was a reinterpretation of the Elektra myth, in which Elektra and her brother Orestes seek revenge for the death of their father, Agemmemnon, by slaying their mother and her new husband. The play is rich with Sartre's belief that true freedom is the ability to interpret one's own actions, ascribing meaning to them. Thus Orestes feels no guilt for killing his mother and her husband, because he believed it was the right thing to do.

thing that will help is a total and frank dedication to a future of freedom and [hard] work, a strong will to build this future, and availability of a large number of good-willed people.<sup>29</sup>

Such sentiments understandably resonated with Andersch and his colleagues, who believed that the war had given them an opportunity to rebuild a better Germany, one founded on individual liberty and economic justice, as seen most obviously in the second *Der Ruf*. But Sartre's comments imply an accountability that Andersch himself seemingly failed to acknowledge in his own life and work. For Andersch, the act of escape itself was meaningful, regardless of one's intentions or the ultimate consequences of the action. Andersch later portrayed his desertion as the ultimate existentialist expression, an act bound closely to freedom of choice and a refusal to accept others' (i.e., the Nazis') values as one's own. As discussed in Chapter 3, the author's desertion was likely a case of a soldier fleeing because he did not want to die, rather than a symbolic expression of resistance to the regime or an affirmation of individual freedom of choice.

In "Deutsche Literatur in der Entscheidung," Andersch argued further that the new phase of German literature should deal directly with contemporary issues. It should also, however, avoid the dry dogmatism and ideological determinism of traditional socialist literature. Similarly, it could not retreat into escapism; the truth had to be allowed to speak for itself. Andersch's advocacy of objective realism seems misplaced, especially because he and his approving audience in Ulm were actively seeking to forge a new literary tradition that would directly influence Germany both politically and socially. In his assessment of the German literary situation, Andersch clearly and perhaps predictably favored writing styles similar to his own. Of course, despite Richter and Andersch's advocacy of "realism," there was in reality a

---

<sup>29</sup> Andersch. "Deutsche Literatur in der Entscheidung," 133.

great deal of variety among the authors of Group 47, ranging from Richter's conventional narratives to Grass' often-surreal symbolism to Böll's stream-of-consciousness.<sup>30</sup>

Richter recalled that, while Andersch's essay was representative of the group's understanding of the literary situation in Germany, the latter's reading almost did not take place. Andersch had originally planned to present a work of fiction, but changed his mind because he had heard about the harsh criticisms of readers at the first meeting. According to Richter, Andersch could not understand why a group of friends should be so harshly critical of each other.<sup>31</sup> He then decided to read his essay on literature, perhaps hoping for a less critical response from his audience, which included the Mayor of Ulm, Robert Scholl, father of the famous siblings and "White Rose" founders Sophie and Hans Scholl, who were executed for treason in 1943 after distributing anti-war flyers. Although he generally agreed with Andersch's assessment of the state of German literature, Richter did not particularly like the presentation of theoretical works at the meetings:

[“Deutsche Literatur in der Entscheidung”] was the only essay read [to the group] in those days. I believed that essays led to discussions of principles, and there were more than enough such discussions among others. We didn't want that. They stood in the way of our purpose: creation, form, and new literature.<sup>32</sup>

Despite Richter's misgivings, the essay was well-received by the group and its guests. Heinz Friedrich of *Die Epoche* (Frankfurt am Main) wrote that:

---

<sup>30</sup> As an example of Grass' work, see *Die Blechtrommel* (*The Tin Drum*), a lengthy and highly allegorical novel about a boy who stops aging and can shatter glass with his screams and his experience of the various causes and consequences of Nazism and World War II in his (and Grass') hometown of Danzig. For Böll, see *Billard um halb Zehn* (*Billiards at Half-past Nine*), a novel that ties together three generations of Germans, all connected symbolically and physically to a particular abbey that was built by the grandfather during the Kaiserreich, demolished by the son during Hitler's infamous "slash and burn" retreat orders in early 1945, and rebuilt by the grandson after the war.

<sup>31</sup> Richter, "Wie entstand und was war die Gruppe 47?," 88.

<sup>32</sup> Richter, "Wie entstand und was war die Gruppe 47?," 88.

Even if not everyone can always follow Andersch in his existentialist conclusions—the primary significance of [the essay] to our situation remains undiminished.<sup>33</sup>

While acknowledging that Andersch's arguments were sometimes difficult to follow, Friedrich freely admitted that the essay was a valuable assessment of German literature in 1947. Friedrich Minssen of the *Frankfurter Hefte* did not specifically address Andersch's essay, but he praised the group for its mission of creating new literature, forged through self-criticism and a "spirit of freedom."<sup>34</sup>

At the meeting in Ulm, Richter distributed one hundred sample copies of the proposed first issue of *Der Skorpion*, which he hoped to publish on 1 January 1948. His plans would not, however, come to fruition. In May 1947, Richter sought to acquire a publishing license from American occupation authorities. Unsurprisingly, he was denied. In a meeting that included himself, Andersch, and two American officers, Major Dalsher and Captain Sima, Richter recalled that the officers reminded them of their recent dismissal from *Der Ruf*, and accused them of nihilism.<sup>35</sup> As established in Chapter 5, the primary cause of the authors' dismissal was not nihilism, but rather their stark criticisms of Allied occupation policies. Perhaps the accusation of nihilism stemmed from the pessimistic character of their later articles in *Der Ruf*. Such pessimism was, however, understandable given the disappointment of their initial optimism as Germany's material conditions failed to improve noticeably during the first few years of occupation. Nonetheless, Andersch became so incensed that he stormed out of the meeting, and Richter resolved to find an already-licensed publisher to print *Der Skorpion*.<sup>36</sup> Even as late as November 1947, Richter still held out hope of finding a willing publisher, despite numerous rejections. By handing out preliminary copies of the first issue, perhaps he hoped to attract the

---

<sup>33</sup> Lettau, *Die Gruppe* 47, 27.

<sup>34</sup> Lettau, *Die Gruppe* 47, 30.

<sup>35</sup> Richter, "Wie entstand und was war die Gruppe 47?," 88.

<sup>36</sup> Richter, "Wie entstand und was war die Gruppe 47?," 89.

interest of a prospective publisher. By the end of the year, however, Richter decided to abandon his futile search for a willing publisher for *Der Skorpion*.<sup>37</sup> The growing participation and interest in Group 47 almost certainly played a role in his decision to abandon the periodical. In addition, he had begun work on his first novel, *Die Geschlagenen*, thus devoting himself increasingly to his own literary career.

### **Literature as Explanation**

Even as a founder and the primary discussion leader of Group 47, Richter was not immune to the group's often-harsh and confrontational criticisms. At the group's third meeting, in early April 1948 at Jugenheim, Richter took his turn in the so-called "electric chair," from which he read two chapters of his upcoming first novel to the assembled members of the group. According to the author, everyone listened silently to his reading, after which he invited criticism. He admitted that his colleagues' criticisms of *Die Geschlagenen* were harsh; one unnamed author claimed the novel contained "one cliché after another." Richter maintained, however, that he was no more important than anyone else, and had therefore to submit himself to criticism just as other members had done.<sup>38</sup> The work in question became a best-seller after publication in 1949, as its emphasis on inner emigration seemingly resonated with a public struggling to come to terms with the Nazi past. According to Richter, he returned to Germany after a brief stint in Paris because he wanted to fight Nazism from within. Despite his assertions, there is scant evidence that the author ever took part in any organized resistance to the Nazi regime. Regarding his military service, he argued that he fought not for Hitler, but for his comrades.

---

<sup>37</sup> Heinz Ludwig Arnold, *Die Gruppe 47*. (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 2004), 45.

<sup>38</sup> Richter, "Wie entstand und was war die Gruppe 47?," 90.

In 1952, Andersch published *Die Kirschen der Freiheit*, his own attempt to explain and justify his actions during the war. As discussed in Chapter 3, Andersch portrayed his decision to desert in 1944 as an existentialist expression of individual freedom, though it seems more likely he, like other deserters, simply did not wish to die for a cause he did not believe in. As for his failure to emigrate prior to his induction into the *Wehrmacht*, Andersch explained that after his two terms in Dachau for ties to communist organizations, he simply retreated inward, ignoring the world around him in favor of concentrating on art. In Chapter 3, we discussed both writings as autobiographical recollections of the circumstances surrounding the authors' early lives and responses to Nazism, but perhaps we should briefly consider their justifications in light of postwar circumstances.

In *Die Geschlagenen*, Richter recounted his capture as well as his experiences as a POW at Camp Ellis, Illinois through his proxy, Gähler. Like Richter, Gähler is captured in Italy on his birthday, 12 November 1943. He is then interrogated and brought to Camp Ellis, where he and his fellow "anti-Nazi" prisoners are terrorized by hardcore Nazis looking for any sign of "defeatism" or treason. Throughout the novel, the author asserts again and again that he had no choice but to serve under the Nazis. In the following exchange with an American interrogation officer, Gähler/Richter dismisses the possibility of internal resistance:

[Interrogator:] "Do you believe there is a resistance against Hitler?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"[The German people] only have the choice between a lost war and Hitler. Both are equally catastrophic. So many wish for neither option. A few want to resist. But terror is stronger."

"Do you think we'll have to march into Germany?"

"Yes. The German people are in the same situation as those on the frontlines. In the fires among the rubble, there's always the possibility that one might survive. But no such chance exists when facing a firing squad."

"But many believe in Hitler."

"Many believe in him and many hate him. Belief and hate balance the scales."



“Do you hate him?” asked the interrogator.  
Gühler looked at the interrogator, and then down at the tips of his boots.  
“Yes,” he said.<sup>39</sup>

The choice between defeat and Hitler is confusing, because in a broad sense, choosing Hitler had in fact led to defeat. Perhaps Richter was trying to claim that those who, like himself, fought bravely until capture or death feared losing the war as much as they disliked Hitler, although the wording suggests otherwise. The phrasing above suggests that Germans had to choose between losing the war and continuing to support Hitler. Possibly Richter believed that Germans thought their only hope for avoiding defeat lay with Hitler. If true, then such sentiment might account for his and others’ ongoing participation in the war effort: losing was a less desirable option than Hitler remaining in power. Richter also asserted that terror had cowed the German people into submission, eliminating the possibility of organized resistance. Indeed, episodes of resistance were sporadic, but was this due to state oppression? While acknowledging that some still “believed” in Hitler, the author seems to have minimalized the possibility of widespread popular support for the dictator by emphasizing that Germans both at home and on the front were caught between the proverbial rock and a hard place. Wilfried van der Will argues that there are flaws in Richter’s assertions of loyalty to Germany and his comrades alongside simultaneous claims that he despised Hitler and Nazism. Van der Will insists that Richter willingly “ignores the fact that [Nazi rule] was also widely supported by the fanaticism of conviction” in the novel by attempting to portray the Germans as having been forced into their circumstances.<sup>40</sup> I would argue, however, that Richter’s convictions were genuine; he saw himself both as a German patriot and an anti-Nazi. The flaws in his portrayal are evident, but they reflect his ongoing struggle after the war to come to terms with his failure to emigrate or mount any sort of

---

<sup>39</sup> Richter, *Die Geschlagenen*, 224.

<sup>40</sup> van der Will, “The Agenda of Re-education and the Contributors of *Der Ruf*,” 6.

resistance. To explain that one simply had no choice is easier than to admit that one was simply afraid of the consequences of resistance or that Hitler and the Nazis enjoyed a great deal of popular support until relatively late in the war. Remember the belief, often expressed in *Der Ruf*, that Germans should be allowed to shape the postwar destiny of their nation free of outside interference. The claim that he and most Germans were not accountable for Nazism would theoretically lend weight to Richter's views on the ongoing Allied occupation in 1948, when he wrote the novel. Therefore, we may best understand *Die Geschlagenen* as Richter's attempt to reconcile his anti-Nazism with his failure to emigrate or resist under Nazi rule.

One last feature from *Die Geschlagenen* bears mention. Although we might accept at face value much of what Richter reports, there are periodic indications of his frustration with American authorities. The author's idealism in the early issues of *Der Ruf* suggests that he was at least partly optimistic about Germany's future after his experiences in America, but the present novel was written during a period of great frustration with the U.S. occupation. His growing frustration and criticism was, of course, the primary reason for his and Andersch's dismissals from *Der Ruf* in early 1947. Thus his recollection of events in 1944-1945 as depicted in *Die Geschlagenen* may also have been influenced by his frustration with the United States in 1948. Richter was particularly incensed at what he saw as American officials' failure to separate Nazis from anti-Nazis, which allowed ardent supporters of Hitler to terrorize their fellow captives with beatings and summary executions for such charges as "defeatism" or treason. As discussed in Chapter 2, American camp authorities found prisoners easier to manage by retaining the German military hierarchy among captives. Richter saw this, at least retrospectively in 1948, as a means of "terrorizing" German POWs, as noted in the following exchange with a lieutenant

who was a “Jewish professor” sent to convince the author to take over the camp newspaper and library:

[Professor:] “Are you Gähler?”

“Yes.”

“We liked your lectures [Richter had been teaching courses on various subjects to his fellow prisoners]. You seem like a sensible man.”

Gähler said nothing.

“We would like you to take over the camp newspaper and the library.”

“So I’ve heard.”

“Good. You can request anything you want. We’ll get you everything.”

“Yes,” said Gähler.

“We don’t want any more Nazism. We want a quiet camp whose leadership is in the hands of reasonable people.”

“Why this all of a sudden, lieutenant?”

“What do you mean?”

“No one cared about us until now. Until now we’ve been under terror worse than that in Germany...”

“But you must understand,” said [the lieutenant], “every camp was [run according to] the Geneva Convention. We had no right to forcible intervention. Every intervention here would mean the Nazis could do the same to our prisoners in Germany.”

“So it’s collective responsibility, then,” said Gähler.

“What do you mean?”

“If we desert or surrender, lieutenant, then our relatives in Germany would be punished. They would have to pay the penalty for us.”

“That’s something different.”

“It’s something similar,” said Gähler.<sup>41</sup>

By comparing American motives to German policies of collective punishment, Richter suggested here that the United States treated German prisoners as bad or worse than they had been treated back home. The explanation about concerns over the treatment of American prisoners in Germany lends credibility to Richter’s recollection, because this was in fact a leading influence on the PMG’s decisions on camp management. As discussed in Chapter 2, the United States was extremely careful about maintaining the requirements of the Geneva Convention, which included retaining the prisoners’ military hierarchy. Richter reassigned blame to the Americans for Nazi terror in the camps, and there appears to have been a general disconnect between Richter’s

---

<sup>41</sup> Richter, *Die Geschlagenen*, 434-436.

perceptions and the fact that there were in fact dedicated Nazis both in the *Wehrmacht* and in German society at large. The camp Nazis in the novel are sinister, snarling caricatures whose motives and personalities are vague and unexamined. Even the Americans fall prey to stereotyping, as they are shown to be oblivious to reality and overly married to procedure. The only characters with any depth are Gühler and his comrades from Italy. Even with its sometimes-dubious historical veracity, *Die Geschlagenen* is a powerful document that displays Richter's continuing struggle to come to terms with Nazism, the war, and his and Germany's relationship to both.

Andersch was not plagued by the same doubts and concerns featured in Richter's novel. In *Die Kirschen der Freiheit*, the author explained clearly that he did not at all regret his decision to desert his unit on 6 June 1944. The author read excerpts from the book at the October 1952 meeting of Group 47 in Göttingen, where it was met with widespread approval.<sup>42</sup> Both Rolf Schroers of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* and "J.D.A." from *Die Neue Zeitung* briefly mentioned Andersch's reading of *Die Kirschen der Freiheit* in their reports from the meeting, but neither elaborated on its content beyond vague claims that it was "the most interesting...and meaningful" reading (J.D.A.) and that it "violently took up" the issue of desertion (Schroers).<sup>43</sup> Andersch's recollections reflect his intellectualism, as he attempted to portray himself as somehow more aware than those around him. Where Richter was deeply committed to his comrades, and clearly felt a powerful sense of loyalty to them, if not the Nazi government, Andersch seemed in retrospect to view his fellow soldiers as little more than mesmerized sheep:

...I wondered what kept [my fellow soldiers] together. So together, that they could not come to the realization that they could do something other than remain with the unit. It

---

<sup>42</sup> Williams, "Inventing West German Literature," 78-79.

<sup>43</sup> Lettau, *Die Gruppe 47*, 80-81.

was merely the “remain-in-the-group” mentality, the herd instinct, hammered into them by terror and propaganda...<sup>44</sup>

While he later expressed pity for his comrades, Andersch believed that few were capable of realizing that the oath they had sworn to Adolf Hitler upon induction into the *Wehrmacht* was not binding. He claimed that many former soldiers used the oath as an excuse for not deserting, but Andersch believed the oath itself was false and therefore irrelevant because the consequences of refusing to serve were severe. Perhaps the author intended his lengthy consideration of the nature of the oath to serve as a means of removing any possibility of stigmatization due to his desertion. Or, more likely, he wished to establish complex intellectual reasons for his decision, reasons that set the author apart from the rank-and-file. After arguing that many soldiers did not understand the oath, taken through coercion, he continued to portray his fellow soldiers as either ignorant or confused:

The only ones worthy of taking the oath were the believers who did so in full knowledge of what they were doing. Were there such believers? If so, they were struck with blindness. They took a heavy sin upon themselves...

Whether believers or unbelievers, they were all confused.

Their fathers and grandfathers and the men of all previous generations had sworn the soldier’s oath. In doing so they sank themselves into a powerful, primordial taboo, and they were incapable of understanding the emptiness behind the “holiness” produced by their words...<sup>45</sup>

By portraying soldiers either as blind devotees or confused and ignorant slaves to a false oath, Andersch demonstrated a lack of regard for the rank-and-file’s ability to understand their situation. Of course, we must once again remember that this work was produced over five years after the war ended, and Andersch had spent a great deal of time reflecting on the meaning and significance of his action. Above all else, Andersch’s decision to desert was a simple matter of a young man not wanting to die for a cause he did not support. His attempts to portray it as

---

<sup>44</sup> Andersch, *Kirschen der Freiheit*, 100.

<sup>45</sup> Andersch, *Kirschen der Freiheit*, 103-104.

something more meaningful reflect perhaps a desire to ascribe to himself retroactively a greater sense of purpose and awareness. To explain that the other soldiers were simply “following the herd” is to oversimplify the undoubtedly complex range of motives, fears, and values found among soldiers in the *Wehrmacht* or any other army. Fully aware that his colleagues as well as the public would read his words, Andersch may have wanted to portray himself as an existential visionary rather than a frightened soldier. Despite his praise of realism in “Deutsche Literatur in der Entscheidung,” Andersch was gravitating further toward what he saw as experimental literature, through an engagement with existentialist themes revolving around personal choice and particularly the issue of escape. Despite his declared preference for exploring experimental literary forms, Andersch’s novels and stories remained rather conventional in their narrative structures. Although his works often attempted to embody an existentialist concern with the power of personal choice and individual freedom, usually expressed through flight, the author’s works were not terribly dissimilar to those of Richter or other Group 47 authors in their scope or content. Andersch’s subsequent works continued to engage the issue of escapism, reflecting the author’s ongoing obsession with the theme that came to define much of his professional and personal existence.

### **Beyond Autobiography?**

Andersch busied himself with several activities following his dismissal from *Der Ruf*. Beginning in 1948, he worked for Radio Frankfurt, where he served as an editor. If Andersch saw any contradiction between his dedication to “realism” and artistic freedom and working for a government agency, he never said so in any of his writings. In 1952, he published his memoir *Die Kirschen der Freiheit* to a generally positive critical and public reception. The author’s editorial activities also extended to the largely-literary journal *Texte und Zeichen* beginning in

early 1955.<sup>46</sup> There was a great deal of overlap between Group 47 and *Texte und Zeichen*, as many authors from the group also contributed to the journal, including (of course) Andersch, Böll, Joachim Kaiser, and Martin Walser.<sup>47</sup>

In 1957, ten years after his departure from *Der Ruf*, Andersch published his first novel, *Sansibar oder der letzte Grund*. This novel was his greatest critical and financial success, and greatly enhanced his public profile.<sup>48</sup> The story features an array of diverse characters whose paths intersect in the small port town of Rerik on the Baltic Sea during the fall of 1938. Each character is faced with a difficult situation, and much of the narrative concerns itself with the decisions that they must make to resolve their conflicts. The characters represent several stereotypical situations: Gregor (at least partly a proxy for Andersch) is the young, idealistic communist struggling to decide whether to continue working clandestinely for the socialist underground; Judith is a young Jewish girl seeking escape from Germany; an unnamed boy dreams of escaping from his mundane existence and protective mother to Zanzibar, a place where he believes he can live freely like Huckleberry Finn; Herr Knudsen is an aging fisherman and disillusioned communist; and Reverend Helander is a World War I veteran seeking to smuggle a wooden statue from his church to preserve it from the Nazis' war on "decadent" art. Andersch uses these characters not only to explore the meaning and ramifications of individual agency, but also as a means of explaining his own actions during the Nazi period.

Gregor, the idealistic young communist, serves as a stand-in for Andersch. There are, of course, differences: Andersch had quickly abandoned his communist ties after two terms in Dachau, while Gregor continued to work for the party as late as 1938. Andersch remained in the country under Nazism, while Gregor resolved to escape Germany after completing his mission.

---

<sup>46</sup> Williams, "Inventing West German Literature," 80.

<sup>47</sup> Schütz, *Alfred Andersch*, 32.

<sup>48</sup> Jendricke, *Andersch*, 85.

There are similarities as well, as Gregor wrestles, like Andersch, with his commitment to the party, especially because he was working toward the seemingly hopeless goal of a communist “victory after defeat” in Nazi Germany. He, like Andersch, was resentful that the communists had failed to offer much resistance when Hitler seized power, and ultimately resolved to escape the situation.<sup>49</sup> Andersch resigned himself quickly to communist defeat and “inward retreat”; perhaps he intended to explore through Gregor what may have followed had he remained in the party. Gregor is sent to Rerik to contact Heinrich Knudsen, a fisherman and communist party member who had abandoned all hope in the face of Nazi repression. The party’s plan was to form five-man units in every town in order to distribute propaganda leaflets and write anti-Nazi graffiti, but the former is shocked to learn that Knudsen is the only remaining party member in Rerik. Their initial conversation reveals their mutual apathy:

...“couldn’t we just remain comrades without doing anything?”...“The Others [Nazis] are too strong,” said Knudsen. “Everything we do against them is a screw-up. There’s no point in it. Ask yourself: if they came in right now and grabbed us, would it have been worth it?”

“If we stop doing anything, we’ll cease to exist,” said Gregor. He knew that there was very little enthusiasm behind his words.

Knudsen pointed to his forehead with his finger. “We must continue to exist in here,” he said. “That’s more important than distributing a couple of leaflets or writing slogans on the walls.”<sup>50</sup>

Such sentiments echo Andersch’s defeatism in *Die Kirschen der Freiheit*, in which he admitted abandoning political engagement for internal artistic interests. Both men seemingly recognized the futility of domestic resistance to the Nazis, just as Andersch had done. Perhaps the characters’ resignation was meant to validate the author’s own, to explain to readers that there was little chance of resistance and that his own actions were therefore justified.

---

<sup>49</sup> Alfred Andersch, *Sansibar oder der letzte Grund*. (Zurich: Diogenes, 1970), 24.

<sup>50</sup> Andersch, *Sansibar*, 47-48.



Andersch provided further evidence of his personal internal struggle to justify his actions in the brief but intense relationship between Gregor and Judith, a young Jewish woman from Hamburg looking for passage to Sweden. One recognizes quickly that Judith almost certainly represents Andersch's first wife Angelika Albert. The following scene recalls a comment made by Andersch biographer Stephan Reinhardt, who claimed that Angelika held a powerful, exotic appeal for the author:

A Jew, thought Gregor, she is definitely Jewish. What was she doing here in Rerik? He saw Judith standing among the people watching the Swedish steamboat dock...Gregor immediately recognized that face; it was one of those young Jewish faces, the kind he'd often seen in the [communist] youth league in Berlin and Moscow. This one was a particularly beautiful example of such a face.<sup>51</sup>

Later, after having introduced himself, Gregor offered to secure passage for her to Sweden aboard Knudsen's ship. In the process, he reflected on a former female comrade and lover who had been "purged" by the communists as a supposed fascist. The following comparison of his late comrade to Judith is particularly intriguing given our knowledge of Andersch's personal life:

It was outrageous that he had been unable to help Franziska, but that he should save this stranger. A young woman full of beaming intelligence was gone, and in her place was offered a spoiled, foolish creature, a young bourgeois thing that, half-shocked by the things that had happened to her, knew of nothing else to do but [attempt] a childish seduction, a temptation of hair and a beautiful mouth...<sup>52</sup>

This "spoiled," "young bourgeois" woman cannot help but call to mind Andersch's first wife, whose social status may, as discussed in Chapter 3, have accounted for much of her appeal to the author, along with her "exotic" features. If Andersch was trying to revisit his first marriage through Gregor and Judith, his opinion of his high-society spouse seems to have been less than flattering. Of course, unlike Andersch, Gregor would play the hero in the end, risking much to ensure that Judith could escape. The author must have felt at least some degree of guilt for

---

<sup>51</sup> Andersch, *Sansibar*, 59.

<sup>52</sup> Andersch, *Sansibar*, 114.

divorcing Angelika Albert at a time when such action exposed her to tremendous danger, and his decision to make Gregor a more heroic figure than himself reflects some element of regret in his writing.

According to Peter Demetz, the character of Reverend Helander was inspired by Andersch's father. The character was, as Demetz put it, "Andersch's father as the son wanted him to be."<sup>53</sup> There are certainly several striking similarities: like Alfred Sr., Helander is a decorated World War I veteran, plagued by a leg wound that continued to cause health problems years afterward. Like Andersch senior, Helander is politically conservative. Alongside these similarities, there are differences that support Demetz's assessment of the character. Helander's primary concern in the narrative is to convince Knudsen, the fisherman, to transport a wooden statue of a studying monk from the church in Rerik to a friend in Sweden. The Nazis had demanded that Helander surrender the statue because its sculptor had fallen afoul of the regime, and here the reverend diverges significantly from his assumed inspiration. The reverend had initially supported the Nazis, telling Knudsen in 1933 that "now they've got you [red dogs] by the throat."<sup>54</sup> However, Helander became increasingly frustrated with Hitler's policies and seeming hatred for tradition, as represented by the statue, leading to his decision to defy the government by smuggling the statue out of Germany. Knudsen reluctantly agreed, allowing Helander to perform a final act of defiance when a group of Nazi officials came to collect the statue, only to find it had been removed from the church. When the Nazis entered the parsonage to confront him, Helander shot one of them before they killed him in a hail of bullets. As we saw in Chapter 3, Andersch clearly bore some respect for his father. In *Der Vater eines Mörders* ("The Father of a Murderer"), the author noted with some pride that headmaster Himmler was

---

<sup>53</sup> Peter Demetz, *Postwar German Literature: A Critical Introduction*. (New York: Pegasus, 1970), 181-182.

<sup>54</sup> Andersch, *Sansibar*, 26.

intimidated by the elder Andersch's reputation as a war hero. Demetz's claim that Helander is the person Andersch wanted his father to be, a war veteran who realized the folly of supporting the Nazis, leading ultimately to a bold act of resistance, encapsulates the author's use of the novel's characters to revisit and perhaps reimagine how things might have gone under slightly altered circumstances.

After a series of dramatic events, Gregor agrees to bring Helander's statue to Knudsen's boat for transport to Sweden. Gregor had, however, become infatuated with Judith, and in the process becomes the hero that Andersch perhaps wished he himself had been. When they rendezvous with Knudsen, the fisherman is infuriated to see that Gregor has brought along Judith, whom he insists must be allowed passage to Sweden as well. The gruff sailor initially refuses, because he had secretly intended to dump the statue overboard and return quickly to port to avoid suspicion. Gregor would not take "no" for an answer:

...“she's Jewish, and they're after her. I've only known her for three hours. I met her at the harbor after she tried to leave with the Swedish ship.”

“How nice,” said Knudsen. “Three hours is a long time. You've probably already fallen for her. He said this offhandedly, and in the darkness he couldn't see Gregor's face turn red. “Come,” he said to the boy, “it's high time we get going.”<sup>55</sup>

As Knudsen then tried to leave, Andersch's hero attacked him, knocking him out with several punches. Gregor then tries to send Judith off with the boy, who told them he could sail to Sweden and back on his own. Judith refuses to abandon Knudsen, who upon regaining consciousness agrees to transport both her and the statue. He even offers to allow Gregor to come along as well, but the young man refuses because of his desire for absolute freedom:

More than anything I want to remain alone. I want to escape alone and be alone in the woods, alone like this fellow made of wood [the studying monk], alone so I can read like him, so alone that I can get up and go wherever I want, when I've finished reading.<sup>56</sup>

---

<sup>55</sup> Andersch, *Sansibar*, 137.

<sup>56</sup> Andersch, *Sansibar*, 137.

Thus Gregor chooses a life free of encumbrance by deciding not to go with Judith, a choice that Andersch hints would have led them into a serious romantic relationship. Much like the lonesome cowboy hero in countless westerns, he saved the damsel in distress before riding into the sunset, so to speak. Reinhardt rightly suggests that the entire episode was a product of Andersch's guilt for abandoning his wife at a most dangerous time for her.<sup>57</sup> Perhaps this passage also serves as a justification of sorts, with Andersch suggesting that his own personal freedom of action superseded all other considerations. As in *Die Kirschen der Freiheit*, the author obsesses over the power of choice, maintaining that subjective decisions define one's existence. It is therefore unsurprising that Gregor would, as Andersch did in June 1944, choose to reject obligation (in the form of the Party) and attachment (to Judith) in favor of "freedom" as the author understood it.

There is one other character that appears to be a manifestation of Andersch's own personal experience. Knudsen's apprentice, the unnamed fifteen year old boy, desperately wants to escape the smothering clutches of his over-protective mother by sailing away to adventure in a far-off land like America or Zanzibar. Interspersed among the novel's other scenes are periodic interludes of inner monologues in which the boy dreams of the endless possibilities that may lie beyond the horizon. Like the other characters, the boy is therefore fixated on concepts of freedom and personal choice. He does, however, make an uncharacteristically mature decision at a pivotal moment in the final pages of the story. When he, Knudsen, and Judith arrive in Sweden, the boy is told to stay with the boat while his mentor escorted the girl and the statue to Helander's friend. As soon as his companions depart, the boy leaves the boat and goes wandering through a nearby forest, where he discovers an abandoned cottage. The boy considers remaining there, leaving Knudsen to return on his own to Rerik, where he would come under

---

<sup>57</sup> Reinhardt, *Andersch*, 238.

suspicion because of the boy's disappearance. After spending much of the day dreaming of making his way to other lands and adventure, the boy decided to go back to the boat:

It was quiet...he wasn't tired, and he decided to go back to the beach to see if Knudsen had left. If Knudsen had left, he thought, then I am truly free. He found the path easily...he snuck right up to the water behind undergrowth and a rock, and looked out. The pier lay like a gray band on the black water.

The boy saw that the boat was still there...[he] could see that Knudsen was sitting on the deck, smoking.

The boy didn't look back at the woods as he stepped onto the pier. He sauntered onto the boat, as if nothing had happened.<sup>58</sup>

The boy's actions remain ambiguous in these closing paragraphs of *Sansibar*. Perhaps he was merely frightened at the prospect of sudden freedom or of abandoning his mentor to possible repercussions, or maybe he truly wanted to leave the decision to stay in the hands of Providence by checking to see if Knudsen had left yet. The scene might also serve as another justification of Andersch's own actions. Whatever his motives, the boy chose not to "emigrate," but rather to return with his mentor to Nazi Germany. This serves as a mild parallel to and possible justification for Andersch's decision to remain in Germany during the Nazi period. Andersch may have been suggesting that in some circumstances, remaining in a difficult situation is necessary because of the potential ramifications of escape. Andersch would make an "escape" of his own shortly after the publication of *Sansibar*, an exodus that further distanced him from Richter, who was becoming increasingly active in politics.

### **Richter's Panorama of Victims**

In 1951, two years after the publication of his pseudo-biographical novel *Die Geschlagenen*, Richter published his second novel, *Sie fielen aus Gottes Hand* ("They Fell from God's Hand"). While his first novel had met with great acclaim, winning the 1951 Fontane Prize in literature, this second effort elicited a mixed critical reaction. Certainly the novel's scope was

---

<sup>58</sup> Andersch, *Sansibar*, 158-159.

more ambitious than *Die Geschlagenen*, in which the reader follows the fortunes of one soldier and his immediate acquaintances. In *Sie fielen aus Gottes Hand*, the narrative is set before, during and just after World War II. Richter jumps between thirteen different characters, all of whose paths are ultimately fated to converge in the novel's final pages. Thomas Mann believed the novel attempted to "equalize" morality through its characters' various circumstances, and the *Deutsche Akademie für Sprache und Dichtung* chided not only Richter but Group 47 as a whole for being "reporters" instead of artists.<sup>59</sup> Indeed, the novel mimics the realistic style of the author's earlier work, and attempts to present a panoramic view of intersecting circumstances in which individuals on all sides of the conflict suffer tremendously, often because of their ideological convictions. In this sense, Mann's criticism is understandable, because we are meant to sympathize, for example, with an SS man as well as a displaced Jewish boy, often in back-to-back scenes. Richter's prevailing tone, however, is pacifistic, suggesting that war causes tremendous suffering regardless of one's particular political, ethnic, or cultural distinctions.

Each character in the story represents a different set of difficult circumstances, and Richter treats all of them with a great degree of sympathy. Many characters are portrayed as victims of circumstance. Alexander Lewoll begins the novel as a captain in the Estonian Army, but ends up serving in both the Russian and German armies over the course of the war. Unsurprisingly, Red Army commissars accused him of treason after the war. Anna Gajek is a Czech married to a German, and suffers accordingly during and after the German occupation of Czechoslovakia. This character represents the plight of the *Volksdeutsche* who were expelled from Eastern Europe after the war. Slomon Galperin is a teenage Jewish boy from Warsaw who takes part in the 1943 ghetto uprising there before ultimately arriving at Auschwitz. Naturally, Slomon represents Richter's acknowledgment of Jewish suffering, a topic barely broached in

---

<sup>59</sup> Mandel, *Group 47*, 34.

Group 47's first years. In the following postwar conversation between Slomon and Fanny, a girl he met at Auschwitz, we observe Richter's continued belief in internationalism and rejection of pacifism. Fanny urged him to go to Palestine to aid Jewish efforts there to found the state of Israel, but Slomon felt differently:

"I don't want to go to Israel, Fanny..."

"Why don't you want to go to Israel?" said Fanny as she resumed the conversation.

"You know why."

"I really don't," said Fanny...

"I'm no Maccabean," he said, "you know that, Fanny."

"But Israel is our home," said Fanny, as shades of disappointment appeared on her face.

"Our home, Fanny, our home is everywhere."

"No," she said.

"Yes," said Slomon, "everywhere..."

"Why would you say that, Slomon?"

"I," Sloman swallowed, and a great sadness came over him, "I don't want to fight anymore... What about the Arabs?" he said suddenly. "Don't they believe [Israel] is theirs too?"

"Humph! The Arabs!"

"What if it does belong to them, Fanny?"

"It's not their land," Fanny said, "it belongs to us, and we have to fight for it."

"That's what everyone who starts a war says—Hitler said it too."

"Hitler," said Fanny, "was a criminal."

"Yes," Slomon replied, "but he thought he was right."<sup>60</sup>

Richter's comparison of Jewish nationalism with Nazi aggression is fitting, because it demonstrates that territorial aggression always comes at the expense of other peoples. Slomon would eventually acquiesce to Fanny's insistence that he "fight the good fight" for Israel, but he deserted shortly after he arrived. Like Richter himself, Slomon had become disillusioned with fighting for causes, recognizing that someone always suffers as a result.

Other characters suffer in part because of their ideological devotions. Henry Sturm (a surname chosen for its obvious symbolism)<sup>61</sup> was a young ethnic German nationalist from Luxembourg who enthusiastically joined the SS. While serving in North Africa, Sturm

<sup>60</sup> Hans Werner Richter, *Sie fielen aus Gottes Hand*. (Munich: C. Bertelsmann, 1976), 379-381.

<sup>61</sup> Here in particular Sturm calls to mind *Sturmabteilung* (SA), the Nazis' paramilitary stormtrooper force during the party's rise to power.

mistreated the soldiers under his command, punishing them severely for the slightest hint of disrespect or defeatism. As British troops finally closed in on his position, forcing him to surrender, Sturm struggled internally:

Henry stood up on his stiff and cramped knees. In the current circumstances, he thought of nothing but his own safety. Führer, *Volk*, Fatherland, and the other big words that had inspired him had disappeared. He raised his arms high above his head, and as he stood there, he experienced a sudden feeling of shame. He was ashamed of himself standing there in front of the British soldiers, who were approaching him across the sand with their machine-pistols raised.<sup>62</sup>

Despite his earlier transgressions, Sturm becomes a sympathetic figure, made even more so by the torture he later endured in a French prison camp for SS men, where the last vestiges of his devotion to the Nazi regime were stripped away. It is unlikely that Richter was seeking to rehabilitate dedicated Nazis; instead, he tries to show that Sturm realized the folly of blindly following a particularly aggressive ideology. The author does something similar with Francesco Gerdalles, a Spanish communist who eventually found himself a forced laborer for the Todt Organization. Like Sturm, Gerdalles became disillusioned with ideology:

He, who had wanted to fight against Fascism, was now forced to work for it. They had become Hitler's workers, willing or unwilling hands compelled to contribute to his victory. [His friend] Jorgo had fallen for the French, and Francesco would probably die for the Germans. Spain was far away. It was all equally useless: the death of his sister, who was raped and then shot by the Fascists, the death of his brother José, who fell at the hands of the communists, Jorgo's meaningless fight against the German tanks, and Francesco's fight in Teruel, Barcelona, and Alicante.<sup>63</sup>

Like Henry Sturm, Francesco's ideological devotion had faded away in the face of a series of tribulations. Richter's antipathy for ideological attachment is clear here; recall that one of the founding principles of Group 47 was the avoidance of ideological dogma in favor of depicting reality as it was.

---

<sup>62</sup> Richter, *Sie fielen*, 211.

<sup>63</sup> Richter, *Sie fielen*, 226-227.



We catch glimpses of Richter's attitude toward Americans in a scene during which the Estonian Alexander Lewoll ponders his impending interrogation. The author's opinion seems to have changed little since *Der Ruf*:

To Alexander Lewoll, these Americans seemed like big children, with a penchant for simplification and generalization that made them incapable of understanding the complexities of European political life. How could they understand a life caught between two fronts?<sup>64</sup>

Despite this characterization of Americans as "big children," Richter refrained from making unfavorable comparisons:

...they were now the victors, just as the Russians, then the Germans, then the Russians again had been. He liked them no more or less than any of the others. Victors always appear bigger than they really are.<sup>65</sup>

Richter seems to dismiss the Americans' seemingly overwhelming power and presence, still very much evident during the writing of the novel, as an optical illusion. Indeed, the novel continues to insist again and again that most people are at the mercy of forces beyond their control, and that most ideological devotees come to ruin because of their commitment. This no doubt reflects elements of Richter's own experiences, which saw him go from a dedicated communist to a soldier in Hitler's army to a POW working for Americans hoping to promote democracy to German prisoners. Despite his evident distaste for ideology, especially that of the political variety, Richter would become increasingly politically active during the 1950s.

### **Political Engagement**

Beginning in 1956 Richter took a more active interest in political engagement. Under his continuing leadership, Group 47 began issuing public "resolutions" declaring the members' official stance on various political issues. The first such resolution, the "Erklärung zu ungarischen Revolution" ("Declaration on the Hungarian Revolution"), was issued in 1956 as a

---

<sup>64</sup> Richter, *Sie fielen*, 457.

<sup>65</sup> Richter, *Sie fielen*, 458.

condemnation of the Soviet Union's brutal repression of the Hungarian revolution. Subsequent resolutions condemned, among other things, the German acquisition of nuclear weapons (1958), the French war in Algeria (1960), and Konrad Adenauer's establishment of *Das freie Deutsches Fernsehen*, a television station apparently intended to serve as an instrument of state propaganda (1960).<sup>66</sup> Richter was particularly concerned about the issue of nuclear proliferation, having founded the *Komitee gegen Atomrüstung* ("Committee against Nuclear Armament") in 1958 in addition to his participation in other organizations such as *Kampf dem Atomtod* ("Fight Atomic Death"). The author was by no means alone in his stance against atomic weapons; figures as different as the typically-leftist Heinrich Böll and the conservative Hans Habe also actively supported the cause.<sup>67</sup> During this period, Richter also founded a short-lived literary-political activist group, the *Grünwalder Kreis*, which was to serve as a political counterpart to Group 47. The author wanted ultimately to found numerous circles of artists and intellectuals throughout the country, for the purpose of promoting political freedom and to presumably counter Adenauer's Christian Democratic Union and its ongoing domination of German politics. The circle met from 1956 to 1958, but according to Stuart Parkes, the group quickly disintegrated because they failed to establish a "clear program."<sup>68</sup> The issue of political engagement placed a strain on Richter and Andersch's friendship, as was evident in an exchange of letters between them in early 1956.

In response to Richter's invitation to the first meeting of what would become the *Grünwalder Kreis*, Andersch replied to his friend and colleague in a letter dated 16 January 1955:

---

<sup>66</sup> Arnold, *Die Gruppe 47*, 109.

<sup>67</sup> Parkes, *Writers and Politics in Germany*, 34-35.

<sup>68</sup> Parkes, *Writers and Politics in Germany*, 38.

I received your signed invitation to the conference on 4 and 5 February in Munich. As a precaution, I must say that I don't know if I'll be able to come or not. In principle I would benefit little from this conference. That the SPD would suddenly remember the artistic community seems laughable to me. For ten years they've had the opportunity to [work with us]. And they are only interested in the artists, not the art itself.<sup>69</sup>

Andersch's polite refusal in the first paragraph was betrayed by his derision of the SPD's apparently new interest in gaining the support of artists. Andersch believed that the SPD was only interested in gaining the support of artists due to their notoriety, and not because of a genuine interest in their art. Once again Andersch revealed his elitism through his disdain for an SPD that he believed did not genuinely appreciate art, but rather sought only to take advantage of famous artists for their potential to attract voters or sway opinions. Where Richter sought actively to influence politics, a goal both he and Andersch once supported, the latter had clearly lost interest in taking an active role.

Andersch had, however, overreacted to his friend's invitation, as indicated by Richter's response on 19 January:

Dear Fred,  
My dearest thanks for your letter. Sadly you have misunderstood my invitation. The initiative to hold the upcoming meeting has nothing to do with the SPD--it was my idea. The SPD as a party has nothing to do with it, at most only those social democratic academics, and only then because I need help, namely money. It is not about any party, or art, but rather freedom.<sup>70</sup>

As one might expect, Andersch failed to show at the inaugural meeting of the *Grünwalder Kreis*, but he was more than happy to offer criticism based on a secondhand report in his 13 February letter to Richter:

In the meantime I had a talk with Dr. Eberhard<sup>71</sup> about the conference...Dr. Eberhard is, like myself and many others, a little sad that he cannot belong to a group,

---

<sup>69</sup> Alfred Andersch to Hans Werner Richter, 16 January 1956. In Sabine Cofalla, ed., *Hans Werner Richter: Briefe*. (Munich: Carl Hanser, 1997), 206.

<sup>70</sup> Richter to Andersch, 19 January 1956, *Hans Werner Richter: Briefe*, 206-207.

<sup>71</sup> Fritz Eberhard of the *Süddeutsche Rundfunk*.

that apparently only admits authors [rather than all kinds of artists]. I would also like to convey to you Dr. Eberhard's wish that he at least be included in this circle due to his expertise as a publicist.

...I would like to say something else. As I wrote to Dr. Gerhart, the head of School Radio Stuttgart, who is a staunch supporter of states' rights: "If an unpoetic, but rather constitutional broadside should be necessary to oppose undemocratic machinations—I am available."

...Almost all the people with whom I've spoken are above all united in their conviction that the term "extreme democrats" is a terrible mistake...Dr. Eberhard suggested an alternative, which hit me like a nail in the head: "active democrats." I give you this for your further consideration.<sup>72</sup>

Andersch was moderately sympathetic to the circle's aims, although he was very critical of what he believed was the group's exclusive interest in writers. Perhaps he felt strongly about this due to his ongoing work in radio; at the time, he was employed at the Süddeutscher Rundfunk in Stuttgart. His protest may have been motivated by a sense of camaraderie with his fellow radio employees. Andersch's reference to the term "extreme democrats" stems from an apparent misquote by the only media representative at the meeting, a young reporter from the Deutsche Presse-Agentur (DPA). Andersch evidently thought such a term was too strongly worded because it suggested a fanaticism akin to the Nazism that remained fresh in the German collective memory.

Richter attempted to correct Andersch's misconceptions in his reply on 17 February. In this letter, he not only responded directly to his friend's criticisms of the *Grünwalder Kreis*, but explained the primary objectives of the group as well:

No press was invited, but someone from the DPA snuck in and, without my knowledge, wrote a draft that the entire media went by. [Several] misunderstandings resulted.

...The word "extreme democrats" came from the DPA correspondent. Neither I nor any other persons present used it.

...I personally emphasized that [the group] would not be a circle of writers, but rather of people from all occupations. It will, however, be necessary to maintain a certain exclusivity.

---

<sup>72</sup> Andersch to Richter, 13 February 1956, *Hans Werner Richter: Briefe*, 216-217.

You see then, that your objections are all directed against that young DPA correspondent, whose frivolous account claimed things that did not actually take place.<sup>73</sup>

Here Richter's frustration stemmed mostly from the unwanted presence of a reporter who apparently reported inaccurately on the proceedings. One might imagine, however, a hint of chastisement in his words, as he plainly reminded Andersch that his criticisms were misplaced.

What, then, was the true purpose of the *Grünwalder Kreis*? Richter elaborated following his rebuttal of Andersch's criticisms:

...I very much like the term "active democrats," but we don't use any terms for ourselves; in the future the press will come up with even more names for us.  
...[We are not just concerned] with the Nazis of yesterday or those of tomorrow. We are also trying, through thousands of channels great and small, to gain influence in Bonn... It's still astonishing, that we've suddenly gained the support of people that I hadn't counted on...all the way up to the Minister-president [of Bavaria, Wilhelm Hoegner of the SPD]...and this support has materialized without solicitation...probably because one now has above all the feeling that we in Germany are standing once again in the foyer of Fascism.<sup>74</sup>

Thus Richter established a generalized opposition to fascism as the leading principle of the *Grünwalder Kreis*. The circle would be made up of politically active intellectuals, who would attempt to sway opinions in Bonn and elsewhere in the direction of "democracy," though Richter fails here or elsewhere to define it precisely beyond the contrast with fascism. Certainly he, like Böll and many others, believed that the centralization of political authority in the person of Adenauer had the potential to develop into another version of fascism. Certainly Adenauer's policy of military rearmament and his staunch anti-communism appeared ominously foreboding to Richter and like-minded individuals. Despite his clear opposition to Adenauer's CDU, Richter appeared reluctant to associate the group with the SPD, perhaps hoping to retain a sense of intellectual freedom unencumbered by devotion to a particular party. The sentiments expressed here by Richter recall his and Andersch's often generalized calls in *Der Ruf* for

---

<sup>73</sup> Richter to Andersch, 17 February 1956, *Hans Werner Richter: Briefe*, 217.

<sup>74</sup> Richter to Andersch, 17 February 1956, *Hans Werner Richter: Briefe*, 218.

political restructuring, without committing themselves firmly to a particular group. In that spirit, Richter concluded his letter by urging Andersch to think back to “our good old ‘*Rufs*’” while considering whether to support the former’s latest venture. Andersch would, however, disappoint Richter by abstaining from political involvement, choosing instead to exercise his “existentialist” freedom of choice by emigrating to Switzerland in 1958.

### **Andersch into Exile**

Bernhard Jendricke believes that *Sansibar oder der letzte Grund* offers some explanation for Andersch’s decision to resettle permanently in Switzerland. Jendricke claims that the novel was a “parable” meant to represent the situation in Adenauer’s Germany. He cited Arno Schmidt’s review of the book, which exclaimed that:

[Andersch] means [to depict contemporary] Germany!...and once again for us today the KPD [German Communist Party] is forbidden. Once again, the Jewish cemeteries have been violated. Once again people in uniform walk among us. Furthermore—and one must be honest here—[Ernst] Barlach and expressionism will once again [be labeled] degenerate art! [The novel is] an essential, irrefutable accusation against Germany [that offers] lessons in flight as protest...<sup>75</sup>

Schmidt, a close friend of Andersch, clearly felt that the novel was a thinly-veiled criticism of the political situation in Germany in the mid-1950s. I maintain that *Sansibar*’s primary function was to revisit and perhaps reexplain Andersch and others’ actions during the Third Reich, but there may be some merit to Schmidt’s assessment, especially given the latter’s friendship with the former. If Andersch truly believed that Adenauer’s Federal Republic was becoming a “fascist” state, then his depiction of life under Nazi rule could also serve as an allegory for West Germany in the 1950s. This may, however, be a case of the reader (Schmidt) allowing his own concerns to color his interpretation of a particular work. Regardless, Andersch was in fact growing increasingly frustrated with the Federal Republic’s ongoing efforts to rearm and

---

<sup>75</sup> Jendricke, *Andersch*, 85.

integrate into the western world. This frustration manifested itself in an argumentative encounter on 3 March 1958 with Carlo Schmid, an academic and SPD politician. Stephan Reinhardt claims that Andersch viewed the SPD's willingness to compromise with the CDU through its abandonment of "Marxist ideas" and "emphatic" support of rearmament and western integration<sup>76</sup> as little more than "intellectual betrayal."<sup>77</sup> Andersch evidently told Schmid, whom the former respected as a translator of Baudelaire, that he had "expected more from him." The author went even further, comparing Adenauer to a Neanderthal and criticizing German rearmament.<sup>78</sup> Such vitriolic opposition undoubtedly played a role in his decision to move to Switzerland.

Rhys Williams suggests another possible connection between *Sansibar* and Andersch's decision to emigrate: the novel's success had convinced him that he could be a full-time writer, allowing him to relinquish his job at the radio station and devote himself fully to his own work.<sup>79</sup> The novel had indeed made Andersch famous, and the author believed his success justified his fascination with individual choice and the theme of escape.<sup>80</sup> Indeed, shortly after moving, he began work on his second novel, *Die Rote*, perhaps hoping to duplicate the success of *Sansibar*.

Years afterward, Richter reflected on Andersch's move. He harbored little resentment, but indicated that the earlier connection between them was disappearing at the time of Andersch's resettlement:

It often seemed to me that he reverted back to the beliefs of his youth, to a kind of Marxism, the kind I had long since written off or modified [to suit] me. For him, the Federal Republic was no longer a nation of civil restoration, but rather something like an entryway into a new period of fascism. He believed that he could already detect the smell of the gas ovens of tomorrow. He probably isolated himself too much, [so that] the

---

<sup>76</sup> Codified officially in the Godesberger Program on 15 November 1959.

<sup>77</sup> Reinhardt, *Andersch*, 302.

<sup>78</sup> Reinhardt, *Andersch*, 302.

<sup>79</sup> Williams, "Inventing West German Literature," 81.

<sup>80</sup> Jendricke, *Andersch*, 85.

mountain in Switzerland on which he lived became a full-grown sonic barrier for him. I tried to understand him, but I couldn't anymore.<sup>81</sup>

According to Richter, Andersch had become convinced that the Federal Republic was on the verge of descent back into fascism. This was, perhaps, the reason the author had little interest in joining Richter's *Grünwalder Kreis*: he was already considering flight as a viable response to conditions in Germany. While Richter and many others also feared a revival of fascism in Germany, many remained there in hopes of enacting political change from within. As we have seen in practically every stage of his adult life and literary career, Andersch remained obsessed with the notion of escape. He retreated from his communist convictions into "inner exile" after serving time in Dachau in 1933; he divorced his half-Jewish wife Angelika in 1943, evidently to improve his chances of becoming a famous author; he deserted the *Wehrmacht* in 1944; he explored the complex thought processes that he at least retrospectively experienced as a deserter in *Die Kirschen der Freiheit*; and the central theme of *Sansibar oder der letzte Grund* was the fantasy, realized or not, of escaping one's circumstances. In retrospect, it is unsurprising that on 24 April 1958, he moved permanently to Berzona, Switzerland, along with his wife Gisela, the artist with whom he had become involved in 1943 and married in 1950, and their children. The theme of escape, as we shall see, would continue to appear in his later works.

### *Die Rote*

Andersch's next novel continued the author's fascination, or perhaps obsession, with the notion of escape. First published in 1962, *Die Rote* tells the story of a woman (the titular "redhead"), Franziska, who flees both a dull marriage and an emotionally unfulfilling affair in Germany for what she hopes will be a more exciting existence in Venice, where all of the book's action takes place. The setting reflects Andersch's long-held admiration for Italy, which he had

---

<sup>81</sup> Richter, *Im Etablissement*, 42-43.



first developed in the 1930s during his first trip there, with his first wife Angelika. In Venice, Franziska encounters several characters who, like the protagonists in *Sansibar*, are or have been trying to escape their past or present circumstances.

The various characters encompass a range of situational conflicts, some of which can easily be traced back to the author's own interests and concerns. Franziska, caught between a husband whose idea of affection and attention is to buy her expensive things and a lover who does not actually "love" her, chooses simply to flee the situation rather than seek some other resolution. Her action, which is the catalyst for all that follows in the novel, reflects the author's ongoing fascination with escape as a viable, and perhaps even preferable, means of responding to difficult circumstances. Although the titular character is beset by difficulties that include finding a steady income, she chooses ultimately to stay in Venice. It is impossible not to draw a parallel with Andersch's 1958 move to Switzerland or his 1972 adoption of Swiss citizenship. The author chose to flee what he saw as a renewed "fascism" in Germany for the greener pastures of its southern neighbor. One might ask whether his "retreat" from Germany is consistent with his earlier promotions of existentialism and realism. Certainly Andersch seemed to be taking actions he believed were appropriate, and his flight to Switzerland became for him a "defining" moment in his existence, as he would soon establish a strong relationship with Diogenes Verlag of Zurich, which would publish or re-publish all of his writings. He seemed, however, to have forgotten or abandoned the ideals promoted in "Deutsche Literatur in der Entscheidung," where he argued that German authors should seek through their writings to show people the "truth" and to play a positive role in the rebuilding of German culture. Certainly his works would continue to be sold in Germany, but his symbolic abandonment of his country indicated that he himself

had given up on the goals from *Der Ruf* and “Deutsche Literatur...” to help determine the direction of postwar German society.

Another character, Patrick O’Malley, is haunted by a wartime betrayal. O’Malley was an Englishman with a German mother who had been sent on an intelligence mission to Germany during World War II. He was eventually captured, and forced under torture to reveal the name of his contact, who was promptly shot. His presence in Venice is due to his pursuit of the former Gestapo officer who “forced” him to betray his comrade. Perhaps to enhance the character’s “outsider” persona, Andersch made him homosexual, a detail that rarely plays into the story beyond its ensuring that O’Malley’s relationship with Franziska remains purely platonic. If anything, Andersch represents the character’s sexual orientation as a sign of deceitfulness, having Franziska refer to him frequently as a “little devil.”<sup>82</sup> Indeed, in the novel’s climax, O’Malley reveals that his befriending Franziska was simply part of his plan to lure his adversary Kramer, the former Gestapo officer, into a trap. While she had hoped that this “queer” would be her salvation, having proposed that the two of them sail around the Mediterranean in his boat, he was ultimately no more interested in her desires than her abandoned husband and lover back in Germany.<sup>83</sup>

Perhaps the most fascinating character in *Die Rote* is Kramer, a former Gestapo interrogator seeking to keep his identity secret. The character’s words and thoughts reveal much about the author’s perception of contemporary Germany as he wrote the novel. While pondering the possibility of extradition to Germany should his secret be revealed, Kramer reminded himself that he would be unable to bargain with his prosecutors:

...I could give up a couple of important German names, a couple of big-shots in industry and politics, but they’ll be indifferent. It’s understood in Germany that they know how to

---

<sup>82</sup> Alfred Andersch, *Die Rote*. (Vienna: Buchgemeinschafts-Ausgabe, 1960), 239.

<sup>83</sup> Andersch, *Die Rote*, 130.

keep cases separate and how to cover up evidence. In Germany there's a sharp distinction between the incriminated and the perpetrators, between those indirectly responsible and criminals, and only the criminals are punished.<sup>84</sup>

These words constituted a powerful condemnation of contemporary West Germany, where many former Nazis had been reincorporated into society, some becoming quite successful. Andersch's frustrations mirrored those of other authors, including Heinrich Böll, whose 1963 *Ansichten eines Clowns* featured an angry clown who openly criticized his estranged wife's circle of rich and powerful friends, some of whom were former Nazis. During a conversation in which Kramer warned her not to report him, Franziska experienced an inner revelation about the German character:

Auschwitz and my flight from [her husband] Herbert are similar, in that they both stem from a form of intolerance...and it's true that we both have a common dream: the German dream of cleanliness, abstract cleanliness, of a world from which all dirt, good and evil, has been removed. [And there] is good dirt, dirt from which life emerges, but we dream of a great German cleansing [that disregards] good and evil, we strive for cleanliness instead of true purity.<sup>85</sup>

Here Andersch astonishingly equates Auschwitz with Franziska's decision to flee to Venice.

The author suggests that her (and, by extension, his own) flight was motivated by some kind of desire to escape from the "dirt," just as Auschwitz marked the Nazis' attempt to "purify" Europe of an unwanted and, as evinced in propaganda films such as *Der ewige Jude*, unsanitary presence. In the following paragraph, Andersch distinguishes between the two disparate actions:

"I don't know what O'Malley told you about me," she said, "but the difference between your desire for purity and mine is that I didn't kill anyone to achieve it. I seek purity, but only for myself."<sup>86</sup>

Perhaps this is Andersch's way of explaining his actions, or at least a means of exploring for himself his motivations for emigrating. Despite his physical relocation and earlier assertions that

---

<sup>84</sup> Andersch, *Die Rote*, 197-198.

<sup>85</sup> Andersch, *Die Rote*, 198.

<sup>86</sup> Andersch, *Die Rote*, 198.

he had given up on Germany as “hopelessly fascist,” Andersch did not disengage himself from the West German literary scene, as he continued periodically to attend meetings of Group 47 and, perhaps more importantly, he collaborated in the West German film adaptations of both *Sansibar* (released 1961) and *Die Rote* (1962). The same year that the film version of *Die Rote* premiered, Andersch took part in a particularly contentious meeting of Group 47.

### **The Group Fractures**

At the twenty-fourth meeting of Group 47, which took place from 26-28 October 1962 in Berlin, one issue in particular overshadowed the usual routine of readings.<sup>87</sup> The *Spiegel-Affäre* had sent shockwaves of controversy through Adenauer’s Germany, and Group 47 was not immune to its polarizing effects as events unfolded during the meeting. The controversy began on 10 October 1962, when the latest issue of *Der Spiegel* included an article claiming that the West German *Bundeswehr* was in a state of woeful preparedness, having recently received a poor evaluation from NATO. Sixteen days later, on the first day of the Group 47 meeting, *Der Spiegel*’s chief editor Rudolf Augstein and journalist Conrad Ahlers were arrested and accused of treason.<sup>88</sup> At the meeting, Andersch, Hans Magnus Enzensberger, Uwe Johnson, and Martin Walser proposed a petition for the removal of Franz Josef Strauß, leader of the Christian Social Union (CSU) and government defense minister under Adenauer. As it turned out, Strauß had been directly responsible for the arrests, as well as the police seizure of *Der Spiegel*’s offices. The petition not only called for Strauß’s resignation, but it also affirmed that all journalists had a responsibility to reveal “military secrets,” a reflection of many authors’ ongoing mistrust of the West German government.<sup>89</sup> Most of the authors present, including Richter, signed, but a few, most notably Grass and Böll, refused to do so, evidently because they did not agree with the

---

<sup>87</sup> Lettau, *Die Gruppe 47*, 167.

<sup>88</sup> Parkes, *Writers and Politics in Germany*, 43.

<sup>89</sup> Parkes, *Writers and Politics in Germany*, 48.

notion that all of Germany's state secrets should be revealed.<sup>90</sup> Strauß did eventually resign, though his action likely had little to do with the petition, but the incident signified a growing rift within the group, a rift that would ultimately separate Andersch and Richter.

Having both signed the resolution against Strauß, Andersch and Richter continued to see eye-to-eye for the next couple of years, but the latter noticed that his colleague was becoming increasingly hostile toward Grass and others. In a 20 January 1963 letter to Richter, Andersch described Grass' position on the *Spiegel* affair as "comical," deriding both him and Heinrich Böll for what he called their desire "not to be shown to be 'leftist.'"<sup>91</sup> In his memoir about Group 47, Richter believed that Andersch's hostility was due in part to Grass' impressive mainstream literary success. Grass' first novel, *Die Blechtrommel* (1959), became one of the most famous works of German postwar literature, and far surpassed the critical and financial success of *Sansibar*, Andersch's most famous work. Richter recalled the issue thusly:

His attitude toward Grass was, from the very beginning [Grass first participated in the group in 1955], one of animosity. [This animosity] became more pronounced in subsequent meetings, and I can only explain it with some difficulty. This animosity was certainly mutual, but it seemed especially strong on Fred's part. As soon as he saw Grass, his face seemed to get darker, his lips more tightly pressed...Grass was more laid-back than Fred...it seemed to me that one [Grass] was like a man of the baroque period, and the other [Andersch] was like a monk that you could picture living in the middle ages. Indeed, for me it was like a clash between two epochs, on this side a love of life and on the other an aesthetic abstinence. For the one, literature was something abstract, constructible, a kingdom for himself, while for the other [literature] was the vitality of an extraordinary life, one that was inseparable from him...[Andersch] made no secret of his belief that Grass was a careerist, and he went so far to say that Grass transformed the face of Group 47 in this manner.<sup>92</sup>

One cannot help but believe that at least some of Andersch's animosity toward Grass stemmed from jealousy. The man who once boasted that he would be a greater writer than Thomas Mann, who divorced his half-Jewish wife at least in part to obtain a position in the writers' union in the

---

<sup>90</sup> Williams, "Inventing West German Literature," 79.

<sup>91</sup> Andersch to Richter, 30 January 1963, *Hans Werner Richter: Briefe*, 444.

<sup>92</sup> Richter, *Im Etablissement*, 40-41.

Third Reich, and who bragged incessantly in letters to his mother about his various publications, must surely have been frustrated by Grass' widespread success. Where Andersch's subsequent novels such as *Die Rote* and *Winterspelt* met with mixed critical and public reception, Grass continued to publish generally well-received works, including the two novels<sup>93</sup> that, along with *Die Blechtrommel*, completed the so-called Danzig Trilogy. Andersch's accusation that Grass was a "careerist," an author writing only for fame and fortune rather than to advance literary culture reeks of sour grapes, the resentment of one who wished those things for himself.

The 1965 Federal elections in West Germany marked Günter Grass' first public engagement in politics. Grass, Richter, and others openly supported the SPD, which was seeking to unseat CDU Chancellor Ludwig Erhard. As a longtime admirer of Willy Brandt, leader of the SPD, Grass hoped to use his fame to help the party win the chancellorship for the first time. The author traveled extensively, giving speeches. In addition to making speeches around the country, Grass attempted to enlist the aid of fellow authors. Predictably, Andersch refused, claiming that the SPD was a "harmless, domesticated party," one that was hardly a viable alternative to the reviled CDU government.<sup>94</sup> As Andersch withdrew further and further from politics, Richter became more involved, especially after the Grand Coalition between the CDU and the SPD ended in 1969. Rhys Williams believes that their divergent attitudes were directly related to the authors' interpretation of their actions during the Nazi period. He argues:

Richter had always justified his decision not to emigrate during the Third Reich, not to run away from what he saw as his political responsibility. Andersch, who had likewise remained in Germany, had retrospectively seen his failure to emigrate as an opportunity missed; his own belated "emigration" to Switzerland in the late 1950s he perceived, perhaps unconsciously, as rectifying the omission of the past.<sup>95</sup>

---

<sup>93</sup> *Katz und Maus* (*Cat and Mouse*, 1961) and *Hundejahre* (*Dog Years*, 1963).

<sup>94</sup> Jendricke, *Andersch*, 93.

<sup>95</sup> Williams, "Inventing West German Literature," 82.

By the mid-1960s, Andersch had abandoned participation in the group, using various explanations, including illness and work on other projects, to justify his absences. Other authors, including Böll, Walser, and Ilse Aichinger, had grown increasingly concerned that Group 47 was becoming too closely linked to the official cultural policy of the Federal Republic due to Grass and Richter's political activism. As Andersch explained in his 8 November 1964 letter to Richter, "...we can win nothing through political tactics from the system that currently dominates Germany."<sup>96</sup> Richter and Andersch's friendship suffered from the latter's disengagement from Group 47; they stopped communicating regularly in 1967, and only reestablished contact near the end of Andersch's life, much to Richter's regret.<sup>97</sup>

Another important event took place within the group in December 1965. Several authors, including Böll, Martin Walser, Peter Weiss, Wolfdietch Schnurre, and Walter Jens, drafted and published a resolution against the American war in Vietnam. This action created a significant split within Group 47 because both Richter and Grass refused to sign. Heinz Ludwig Arnold believes that those authors refused to endorse the anti-war statement because they did not want to jeopardize the group's upcoming April 1966 meeting at Princeton University, where the German professor Victor Lange had made arrangements for them to meet.<sup>98</sup> At the 1966 meeting at Princeton, Grass engaged in a war of words with Peter Weiss, a German-Jewish playwright and member of the group since 1962. Weiss had been a vocal opponent of the Vietnam War, most notably through his play *Vietnam Diskurs*. In response to Weiss' claim that the Vietnam War should become a focal point of the assembled authors' work, Grass responded that:

If, for example, Peter Weiss...suddenly realized that he should be a "humanist writer," if the poets who have washed in the waters of language do not notice that this adjective was already ruined as a contrivance during Stalin's time, then the farce of the "engaged

---

<sup>96</sup> Andersch, 8 November 1964, *Hans Werner Richter: Briefe*, 537.

<sup>97</sup> Richter, *Im Etablissement*, 43.

<sup>98</sup> Arnold, *Die Gruppe 47*, 120-121.

humanist” author becomes a stage production. Then he would become the fool that he is.<sup>99</sup>

Grass believed that authors could and perhaps should keep their political views separate from their writing. His use of the word “fool” in reference to Weiss is a perfect example of the increasingly bitter conflicts brewing in Group 47. Subsequently, its authors would disagree on other divisive issues, most of them related to politics. The group held its last “classical” meeting in Waischenfeld in 1967. During their meeting, members of the Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund (SDS) protested, chanting that Group 47 had become a “paper tiger.” A few of the group’s members, including Reinhard Lettau and Wolfgang Hildesheimer, attempted to open a dialogue with the students above the objections of Grass and Richter. Grass even confronted Lettau, telling him the latter did not have the right to speak for him.<sup>100</sup> Perhaps the students understood better than Richter and others that the group had run its course. As author and participant Yaak Karsunke put it:

In this way Group 47, or Richter’s concept of it, was destroyed in [Waischenfeld] as it was suddenly dragged into the outside world. For me, however, the group was not destroyed by its having been dragged into the outside world but rather by its inability to react appropriately to it.<sup>101</sup>

Reluctant to abandon the focal point of his career for the past twenty years, Richter planned for another meeting, to take place in a foreign country the following year. He was hoping to hold the gathering in Prague, but the events of the Prague Spring convinced him otherwise. Richter then abandoned plans to hold a meeting in 1968, and the group would not formally meet again for many years.<sup>102</sup>

---

<sup>99</sup> Arnold, *Die Gruppe 47*, 122-123.

<sup>100</sup> Richter, “Wie entstand und was war die Gruppe 47?,” 170.

<sup>101</sup> Arnold, *Die Gruppe 47*, 129-130.

<sup>102</sup> Richter, “Wie entstand und was war die Gruppe 47?,” 171-172.



### Later Works: A Brief Overview

Both Richter and Andersch continued to write into the 1970s. Perhaps because he saw it from the beginning as *his* project, Richter devoted a great deal of space to Group 47, writing extensively about the group and its members. He did, however, find time occasionally to write fiction. In particular, his *Rose Weiß, Rose Rot* (“White Rose, Red Rose,” 1971) provides significant insight into the author’s contemporary understanding of his youth, particularly his actions during the Nazis’ rise to power. The novel’s protagonist, Karl, is a devoted young communist whose circumstances mirror those of Richter in the early 1930s. Like Richter, Karl is a devotee of Trotsky, a fact that leads him into conflict with party leadership in Germany. Furthermore, Karl spends most of his time in and around Berlin, just as Richter did in the late 1920s and early 1930s. The character lives a semi-itinerant lifestyle as a member of a communist street band that hopes to counter the rising popularity of the Nazis by promoting their beliefs through song. The struggle among various political groups for Germany’s “soul” is mirrored in Karl’s personal life. His seventeen-year old girlfriend Gerda is the daughter of a conservative police major in Berlin, and is largely apolitical despite Karl’s attempts to convince her of the value and correctness of the Marxist cause. Karl’s primary antagonist is his uncle August, friend to Gerda’s father and a conservative World War I veteran who supports the Nazis in hopes that they will restore the glory of the *Kaiserreich*. For Karl, Gerda is the object at the center of an ideological tug-of-war between him and his uncle; she is passively inclined toward the Nazis because of her father’s political views, and Karl fears that he will ultimately lose her not only to fascism but to the predatory lasciviousness of his uncle. One does not require much imagination to suppose that the young, politically unaware and immature girl is meant to represent Germany itself.

The novel reveals Richter's lingering frustration with what he saw as the communists' (and his own) failure to offer a strong resistance to the Nazis. During a meeting with several comrades, Karl becomes frustrated at their endless discussion of theory:

The thought struck me that our discussion here was senseless. The SA is on the streets. They march and we talk. We experience it every night, as they emerge from the dark alleys and side streets in battle-columns, their numbers ever-increasing.<sup>103</sup>

Richter's political activism beginning in the 1960s was at least partly due to his conviction that the Nazis had come to power because of a lack of unity or willingness to fight among leftist parties. In the same scene, Richter notes that a protective layer of confidence in the historical inevitability of the proletarian revolution had dulled his comrades' concerns about Hitler, as voiced by Karl's dogmatic comrade "Liverpool":

"Hitler is only an episode. He will never come to power. Never. He has no chance. And if someone says that if we continue our present ways, he will come to power, then let him leave. We can allow errand-boys of capitalism such as Hitler to speak and agitate, but not rule. You can count on his downfall."<sup>104</sup>

Here Richter accuses party leaders in Germany of rigid, inflexible dogmatism that prevented them from opposing the Nazis as passionately as they might otherwise have. Of course, the KPD did in fact engage in numerous street brawls with Hitler's SA, but ultimately to little avail. Richter believed, however, that more could have been done to prevent the Nazis from achieving power, and the novel serves both as an admission of his own complacency and an accusation against those who did not realize the gravity of the situation in early 1930s Germany.

Andersch's later publications perpetuated his earlier obsession with flight and escape. In the novel *Efraim* (1967), the author places himself in the shoes of the titular character, a Jewish-English journalist with roots in Germany. The plot revolves around Efraim's trip to Germany to uncover the fate of his boss' daughter, whom the latter abandoned in Germany shortly before the

---

<sup>103</sup> Hans Werner Richter, *Rose Weiß, Rose Rot*. (Hamburg: Hoffman und Campe, 1971), 98.

<sup>104</sup> Richter, *Rose Weiß, Rose Rot*, 96.

war. W.G. Sebald claimed there was a sense in the novel that Andersch was actively ignoring the obvious connection to his own life, given Andersch's abandonment of his wife Angelika. Of course, one could just as easily argue that the author was attempting once again, as in *Sansibar*, to use his writing to work through unresolved personal issues. Sebald also argued that Andersch seemed to be trying to render himself critic-proof by making his protagonist Jewish. Ironically, the opposite happened, as critics such as Marcel Reich-Ranicki and Edmund Wolf, both of Jewish descent, claimed they saw nothing Jewish in Andersch's Efraim.<sup>105</sup> The narrative itself is unremarkable, although Efraim occasionally reveals Andersch's own views on issues such as patriotism:

I am completely indifferent to the love some people have for their lands or peoples. When I remind myself that the respect they have for what they call a Fatherland is merely the result of a chain of accidents—those who are Germans could just have easily been Frenchmen, Americans, Jews, or Negroes—I can only laugh. Or yawn. Should I love the Jews because I happen to be one? I love my parents because they were good people, not because they were Jewish.<sup>106</sup>

Here Andersch reasserts the sentiments that led him to “abandon” Germany in the first place by attempting to dismiss any love of one's country as foolish. This is consistent with Andersch's aloofness and intellectual arrogance, the same qualities that distanced him not only from Richter and Group 47, but from Germany as well—Andersch formally adopted Swiss citizenship in 1972.

Andersch's last major work, the novel *Winterspelt* (1974), once again revisited the notion of escape. In many ways it is similar to *Sansibar*, as it includes a wide array of characters seeking to escape various circumstances. The central figure in the narrative is Major Joseph Dincklage, a disillusioned commander in the *Wehrmacht* who seeks, in late 1944, to surrender his entire unit to the Americans shortly before the Ardennes offensive. Like the young

---

<sup>105</sup> Sebald, “Der Schriftsteller Alfred Andersch.” 143.

<sup>106</sup> Alfred Andersch, *Efraim*. (Zurich: Diogenes, 1976), 139.

disillusioned communist Gregor in *Sansibar*, Dincklage appears to be Andersch's proxy, the author as he wished he had been. Troubled by Nazi atrocities, the major almost follows through with his plan, but ultimately winds up taking part in the offensive because, among other reasons, he and his American counterpart could not agree to terms of surrender. Andersch claims in the first, explanatory section of the novel that he did not have Dincklage surrender because the author was striving to be as historically accurate as possible:

...as everyone knows, no battalion was surrendered by its commander during the war...Fiction can only be pushed so far. [This story] must suffice as a sandlot game. Perhaps this story can best escape the noose of fiction with the following explanation: Because Major Dincklage did not exist, he had to be invented. It only makes sense if one inverts the sentence: because Dincklage was invented, he now exists.<sup>107</sup>

Sebald believed that Andersch's representation of inner resistance in *Winterspelt* was an "empty and false gesture, fictitious, private, and gratuitous."<sup>108</sup> This was true not only of Dincklage but of many other characters, including the major's girlfriend Käthe Lenk, a schoolteacher frustrated with Nazi interference in curricula. Indeed, Andersch seemed to assert that the consideration of taking action was nearly as meaningful as the action itself. For the author Dincklage is a hero, even though his opposition ultimately remained internal. Just as he had done in many previous writings, Andersch continued to maintain that one could be internally a heroic opponent of the Nazis while simultaneously accommodating themselves to the regime.

### Conclusion

In the years immediately following their dismissal from *Der Ruf*, Richter and Andersch helped form quite possibly the most influential West German postwar literary organization, Group 47. The group began as a new outlet for authors like themselves to share and criticize each other's work, a forum that served as an incubation chamber for postwar literature. Richter

---

<sup>107</sup> Alfred Andersch, *Winterspelt*. (Zurich: Diogenes, 1977), 63-64.

<sup>108</sup> Sebald, "Der Schriftsteller Alfred Andersch." 145.

initially intended the group to be apolitical, a place where the primary focus would be the free development of realistic literature, not the advancement of particular political or even artistic agendas. As we have seen, political and social developments in West Germany in the 1950s and 1960s would lead ultimately to the fragmentation and disintegration of Group 47, despite Richter's several failed attempts to revive it in the 1970s. As for the authors themselves, Richter had gradually come to accept that political engagement was a necessary component of enacting change. Perhaps he hoped to make up for his earlier failure to oppose the Nazis by openly supporting the SPD, a step that Andersch was far less willing to take. Where Richter had shown a capacity to reevaluate his views, moving gradually from a conscious abstention from politics to active support of a particular party, Andersch continued throughout his career to cling to the theme that had defined most of his existence: escape. For Andersch, the best solution to any problem always seemed to be flight. From his "inner retreat" in the early 1930s to his 1944 desertion to his 1958 emigration to Switzerland, Andersch returned again and again to escape. Despite his admiration for Sartre, Andersch evidently failed to appreciate fully the French author's assertion that one must take responsibility for one's actions. His ongoing obsession with escape in his writings reflects above all else a desire, or perhaps even a need, to justify his actions in retrospect, to explain the necessity of flight. Perhaps this obsession was his way of "taking responsibility" for his actions, at least as he understood it. Viewed in its entirety, Andersch's career displays a powerful consistency, with the possible exception of his idealism in the early issues of the second *Der Ruf*. Perhaps the best that might be said of the author is that he lived consistently by his convictions, choosing again and again to protest through escape, however self-deceiving those convictions may have been.

## CHAPTER 7

### CONCLUSION

Now we must return to questions posed in the introduction. First, was Andersch's and Richter's early willingness to cooperate an opportunistic attempt to secure better treatment than the majority of POWs? In Andersch's case, we saw that the aspiring author had already accommodated himself to the Nazi regime in hopes of furthering his career as a writer. He even went so far as divorcing his half-Jewish wife Angelika, whom he supposedly married to protect her from persecution.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, we might have every reason to expect that his behavior in captivity was at least partly due to a desire to secure better treatment. If we consider subsequent developments, however, we observe that his opinions remained relatively consistent in the years following his captivity, most obvious in his articles from the second *Der Ruf*. Even in secretly observed conversations with fellow inmates, Andersch maintained his anti-Nazi views. While he may not have been brave enough to stand up to the Nazis, and while his ambition may have driven him to divorce his wife to further his career, nothing in Andersch's past argues definitively that he ever felt anything other than distaste for the Nazi regime. Richter was, by his own account, highly resistant against efforts to bring him to Fort Kearney and *Der Ruf*. Unlike Andersch, who had no qualms about deserting (further evidence of his antipathy toward the regime), Richter fought bravely and refused to betray military secrets after capture. Was Richter's insistence on the separation between loyalty to one's comrades and loyalty to the Nazi regime an indication that his later, vocal anti-Nazism was somehow "phony"? The possibility is very remote. Like Andersch, Richter's subsequent writings were consistent with his earlier hostility toward the Nazi regime. We are ultimately hindered by the fact that all information about Andersch and Richter in Nazi Germany comes from the authors themselves, and both

---

<sup>1</sup> At least according to Andersch biographer Stephan Reinhardt.

almost certainly wished to redeem themselves for their earlier inaction, as discussed in Chapter 5. Perhaps both were at least passive supporters of the Nazis, offering the Hitler salute and shouting “Heil Hitler!” along with everyone else, but the available evidence suggests that both men maintained an internal opposition to the regime stemming from their lingering communist ideological convictions.

Did Andersch or Richter ever genuinely believe in American democratic ideals as promoted by the American POW reeducation program? The answer is complex. Certainly the authors fully supported the promotion of democracy and the reorientation of their fellow prisoners away from over a decade of Nazi indoctrination. Indeed, if their writings in the first version of *Der Ruf* are to be believed, the authors did indeed believe that American democracy offered postwar Germany a new opportunity for its citizens to build a new society of equality, in which individual liberties are protected. We might therefore suggest that they did believe in American democracy, but that their belief was based partly on an unrealistic understanding of how the United States planned to implement democracy in Germany. It is evident in both versions of *Der Ruf* that the authors believed Germans, particularly returning soldiers like themselves, should implement reforms that would genuinely be theirs and theirs alone, free of interference from outside. As we saw in Chapter 5, the disappointment of those hopes in the face of postwar occupation reality, with its strict Allied control of society as well as severe material misery for the German people, led to Andersch’s and Richter’s increasingly vicious criticisms and their subsequent removal from *Der Ruf*. An early indication of these later events came with the petition of *Der Ruf*’s prisoner-staff to their supervisors, in which the editors claimed that they could no longer promote democratic ideals while being held captive. The parallel with Andersch and Richter’s later attacks against the occupation, claiming that Germany could not rebuild

properly as long as it was held in thrall by the victorious Allies, is obvious. Andersch and Richter did believe in American democracy as they understood it, but became disillusioned when they realized that the United States had no intention of allowing complete, unrestrained self-determination for the German people. Whether the fault of their misunderstanding of American democracy and U.S. intentions was their own or that of their captors is difficult, if not impossible to ascertain, but the fact remains that our subjects believed in American democracy at least in its perceived capacity to provide Germany a new beginning in which its people would establish a new, better society.

Was the authors' stark anti-American stance in the second *Der Ruf* a genuine criticism, or an attempt to distance themselves from their earlier collaborations? Ron Robin maintains that this was a primary motive behind their vocal criticisms of the occupying regime. Robin believed that each man felt he had crossed the "fine line" separating "loyalty to one's culture" from "collaboration with the enemy," and thus felt the need to protect themselves from possible accusations of collusion.<sup>2</sup> This interpretation is problematic for several reasons. Firstly, it is unlikely that the authors would have named their postwar journal after the POW publication had they wanted to avoid a perceived connection between the two *Rufs*. Secondly, as we saw in Chapter 5, the authors' criticisms emerged gradually as a result of their growing frustration with the occupation. Had they sought primarily to distance themselves from "collaboration," surely one would expect to find stark criticisms of the Allies from the outset, and not only gradually over the course of the periodical.

Indeed, as we saw most obviously in *Die Geschlagenen* and *Die Kirschen der Freiheit*, the men understood their circumstances during the Nazi period in very different ways. Richter always seemed to have borne a sense of responsibility, first to oppose the Nazis from within

---

<sup>2</sup> Robin, *The Barbed-Wire College*, 66.



(although there is little evidence to suggest any anti-government activity), then to fight bravely for the sake of his comrades. Andersch's self-described response to Nazism was an inward retreat from reality, a choice to focus on his own development as a writer, willfully ignorant of events unfolding around him. His inner retreat was followed by physical desertion in 1944. Richter's resolution to fight conservatism in West Germany from within and Andersch's decision to retreat from a "hopelessly fascist" state thus maintain a certain continuity with their earlier actions and attitudes. Despite everything that had happened in the interim, including captivity in America, *Der Ruf* and their radical postwar optimism, and the formation of Group 47 as an essentially nonpolitical literary circle, the essence of each man's character had changed little, as demonstrated in their political attitudes and activities from the late 1950s onward. The same Hans Werner Richter who at least internally supported the communist opposition to Hitler would later avidly support the SPD, perhaps driven by a conviction to make good where he had failed previously. As Williams argued, Andersch's emigration to Switzerland seems like a belated attempt to make up for the author's failure to emigrate during the Nazi period. Here we must acknowledge that, despite Volker Wehdeking's assertions in *Der Nullpunkt. Über die Konstituierung der deutschen Nachkriegsliteratur (1945 - 1948) in den amerikanischen Kriegsgefangenlagern*,<sup>3</sup> the POW experience seemingly had very little effect on the authors' development as writers. The only concession we might make is that their participation in the reeducation program and *Der Ruf* had given them the optimistic hope that Germany might be

---

<sup>3</sup> Wehdeking argues that the POW experience in America had a formative effect on what would become the postwar German literary tradition. As we saw in Chapter 5, however, many individuals (Thomas Mann, Kurt Schumacher, Bertolt Brecht, Johannes Becher) who did not share Andersch or Richter's experiences still bore similar attitudes, evident in their attitudes and writings. This would argue against the "uniqueness" of the POW experience, and suggest that it was one among many "exile experiences" endured by German intellectuals during World War II.

rebuilt anew in a democratic manner. As we saw in Chapter 5, however, such optimism faded quickly in light of the reality of Allied occupation.

Alfred Andersch and Hans Werner Richter were reasonably successful and well-known authors in the postwar period whose experiences of Nazism and World War II, as for many of their peers, fundamentally influenced their writing. We have seen that their experiences as communists, soldiers, and POWs did not uniquely qualify them to speak for postwar Germany; others who endured much different circumstances often shared ideological similarities with our subjects. Regardless, their experiences inspired Richter to become politically active, supporting the SPD against the perceived threat of “fascism,” as represented by Adenauer’s CDU. Following his early “inner retreat,” Andersch focused increasingly on his own obsession with “escape,” a theme that dominated his life both during and after the war. As Rhys Williams suggested, both men perhaps hoped to make up for their earlier inaction by overcompensating. Andersch’s “escape” to Switzerland in 1958 was, according to Williams, a belated attempt to make up for the fact that the author failed to emigrate during the Nazi period. Similarly, Williams understood Richter’s political engagement in support of the SPD as an attempt to compensate for the author’s failure to mount any sort of resistance to the Nazi regime. Perhaps the most “unique” element one can attribute to them is the creation of Group 47, which in many ways surpassed the notoriety of its co-founders to become almost synonymous with West German literature in the decades following its foundation in 1947. Perhaps they were not the most famous or important writers in recent German history, never achieving the notoriety of a Thomas Mann or a Günter Grass, but both Alfred Andersch and Hans Werner Richter played important roles in the formation and development of postwar West German literature, an achievement that should not be underestimated. Their lives as communists, as soldiers and

prisoners, as opponents of occupation, and as founding members of the most important literary circle in postwar West Germany, may not individually have made Alfred Andersch and Hans Werner Richter unique, but their circumstances represent two paths by which Germans of their generation experienced and reacted to Nazism, World War II, and their aftermath.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Archival Sources

Camp Ruston Collection, Prescott Memorial Library, Louisiana Tech University, Ruston, LA.

Records of the Office of the Provost Marshal General, Archives II, United States National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD.

Records of United States Occupation Headquarters, World War II. Archives II, United States National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD.

### Articles

Boehling, Rebecca. "The Role of Culture in American Relations with Europe: The Case of the United States' Occupation of Germany." In *Diplomatic History*, v. 23 issue 1, Winter 1999. Pp. 57-69.

Cole, Robert. "Anglo-American Anti-Fascist Film Propaganda in a Time of Neutrality: *The Great Dictator*, 1940," in *Historical Journal of Film, Radio, and Television*, v. 21, n. 2, 2001. Pp. 137-152.

Goldstein, Cara Sol. "A Strategic Failure." *Military Review*, March-April 2008. Pp. 58-65.

Steelman, Danny. "German Prisoners of War in America: Oklahoma's Prisoner of War Operations During World War II." *Oklahoma State Historical Review*, v4 (Spring 1983). Pp. 1-13.

Stets, Dan. "The Spirit of Kearney: The Project in Rhode Island that Shaped Postwar Germany." *Providence Sunday Journal*, 18 July 1982, p. 8.

Warner, Richard S. "Barbed Wire and Nazilagers: PW Camps in Oklahoma." *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, v64 (Spring 1986). Pp 36-67.

### Books

Allen, William Sheridan. *The Nazi Seizure of Power: The Experience of a Single German Town 1930-1935*. New York: New Viewpoints, 1973.

Alter, Peter. *The German Question and Europe: A History*. London: Arnold, 2000.

Andersch, Alfred. *Die Kirschen der Freiheit: Ein Bericht*. Zürich: Diogenes, 1971.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Efraim*. Zürich: Diogenes, 1967.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Mein Verschwinden im Providence: Neun Neue Erzählungen*. Zürich: Diogenes, 1971.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Sansibar oder der letzte Grund*. Zürich: Diogenes, 1971.

- \_\_\_\_\_. *Die Rote*. Vienna: Buchgemeinschafts-Ausgabe, 1960.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Der Vater eines Mörders*. Zurich: Diogenes, 1982.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Winterspelt*. Zurich: Diogenes, 1977.
- Arnold, Heinz Ludwig. *Die Gruppe 47*. Hamburg: Rowohlt, 2004.
- \_\_\_\_\_, ed. *Die Gruppe 47: Ein kritischer Grundriß*. Special volume in the series *Texte und Kritik*. Munich: Alfred Aumaier, 1980.
- Becher, Johannes R. *Gesammelte Werke*. 18 volumes. Berlin: Archive der Akademie der Künste, 1966-1981.
- Bessel, Richard, and Dirk Schumann, eds. *Life after Death: Approaches to a Cultural and Social History of Europe during the 1940s and 1950s*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Billinger, Robert. *Hitler's Soldiers in the Sunshine State: German POWs in Florida*. Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2009.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Nazi POWs in the Tar Heel State*. Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2008.
- Breitenkamp, Edward C. *The U.S. Information Control Division and its Effect on German Publishers and Writers 1945 to 1949*. Grand Forks, ND: University Station, 1953.
- Brunner, Maria Elisabeth. *Der Deserteur und Erzähler Alfred Andersch. „Daß nichts dunkel gesagt werden darf, was auch klar gesagt werden kann.“* Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1997.
- Bühlmann, Alfons. *In der Faszination der Freiheit. Eine Untersuchung zur Struktur der Grundthematik im Werk von Alfred Andersch*. Berlin: Schmidt, 1973.
- Buck, Anita. *Behind Barbed Wire: German Prisoners of War Camps in Minnesota*. St Cloud, MN: North Star Press, 1998.
- Carlson, Lewis. *We Were Each Other's Prisoners: An Oral History of World War II American and German Prisoners of War*. New York: Basic Books, 1997.
- Clarke, Peter. *Hope and Glory: Britain 1900-2000*. New York: Penguin, 2004.
- Cofalla, Sabine. *Der "soziale Sinn" Hans Werner Richters: Zur Korrespondenz des Leiters der Gruppe 47*. Berlin: Weidler, 1998.
- \_\_\_\_\_, ed. *Hans Werner Richter: Briefe*. Munich: Carl Hanser, 1997.
- Cook, Ruth Beaumont. *Guests Behind the Barbed Wire*. Birmingham, AL: Crane Hill, 2007.

- Costelle, Daniel. *Les Prisonniers: 380,000 Soldats de Hitler aux U.S.A.* Paris: Flammarion, 1975.
- Cowley, Betty. *Stalag Wisconsin: Inside World War II Prisoner of War Camps.* Middleton, WI: Badger Books, 2002.
- Crew, David F. ed. *Nazism and German Society 1933-1945.* London: Routledge, 1994.
- Demetz, Peter. *Postwar German Literature: A Critical Introduction.* New York: Pegasus, 1970.
- Dennis, Mike. *The Rise and Fall of the German Democratic Republic 1945-1990.* New York: Longman, 2000.
- Donahue, Neil H., and Doris Kirchner, eds. *Flight of Fantasy: New Perspectives on Inner Emigration in German Literature, 1933-1945.* New York: Berghahn, 2003.
- Doyle, Frederick. "German Prisoners of War in the Southwest United States During World War II: An Oral History." PhD dissertation, University of Denver, 1978.
- Edinger, Lewis J. *Kurt Schumacher: A Study in Personality and Political Behavior.* Stanford, CA: Stanford, 1965.
- Eriksen, Heino. *The Reluctant Warrior: Former German POW Finds Peace in Texas.* Austin: Eakin, 2001.
- Fest, Joachim. *The Face of the Third Reich: Portraits of the Nazi Leadership.* Translated by Michael Bullock. New York: Pantheon, 1970.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Plotting Hitler's Death: The Story of the German Resistance.* Translated by Bruce Little. New York: Henry Holt, 1997.
- Fiedler, David Winston. *The Enemy among Us: POWs in Missouri during World War II.* St Louis: Missouri Historical Society Press, 2003.
- Fuegi, John. *Bertolt Brecht: Chaos, According to Plan.* Cambridge: University Press, 1987.
- Fulbrook, Mary. *A Concise History of Germany.* Cambridge: University Press, 1999.
- Furness, Raymond, and Malcom Humble, eds. *A Companion to Twentieth-Century German Literature.* New York: Routledge, 1991.
- Gansberg, Judith. *Stalag: USA: The Remarkable Story of German POWs in America.* New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1977.
- Glaser, Hermann. *The Rubble Years: The Cultural Roots of Postwar Germany 1945-1948.* New York: Paragon, 1986.

- Goedde, Petra. *GIs and Germans: Culture, Gender, and Foreign Relations, 1945-1949*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003.
- Goodwin, Jeff, and James M. Jasper, and Francesca Polletta, eds. *Passionate Politics: Emotions and Social Movements*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001.
- Götemaker, Manfred. *Kleine Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*. Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2002.
- Grosser, Alfred. *Germany in Our Time: A Political History of the Postwar Years*. Translated by Paul Stephenson. New York: Praeger, 1971.
- Habe, Hans. *Im Jahre Null: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der deutschen Presse*. Munich: Kurt Desch, 1966.
- Haffmans, Gerd, ed. *Das Alfred Andersch Lesebuch*. Zurich: Diogenes, 1979.
- Harris, Wesley. *Fish out of Water: Nazi Submariners as Prisoners in North Louisiana During World War II*. Ruston, LA: RoughEdge, 2004.
- Hayman, Ronald. *Thomas Mann: A Biography*. London: Bloomsbury, 1995.
- Heck, Alfons. *A Child of Hitler: Germany in the Days when God wore a Swastika*. New York: Bantam, 1985.
- Hesse, Michael. *Kunst als fraktales Spiel. Potentiale der Kommunikation in den Romanen Alfred Anderschs*. Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 2004.
- Hiscocks, Richard. *The Adenauer Era: Germany's miraculous post-war renaissance and the man who created it*. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1966.
- Hörner, Helmut. *A German Odyssey: The Journal of a German Prisoner of War*. Golden, CO: Fulcrum, 1991.
- Huebener, Theodore. *The Literature of East Germany*. New York: Frederick Ungar, 1970.
- Jaspers, Karl. *The Question of German Guilt*. Translated by E.B. Ashton. New York: Fordham University Press, 2000.
- Jendricke, Bernhard. *Alfred Andersch: Mit Selbstzeugnissen und Bilddokumenten*. Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch, 1988.
- Jung, Hermann. *Die Deutschen Kriegsgefangenen in amerikanischer Hand, USA*. Munich: Giesecking, 1972.
- Krammer, Arnold. *Nazi Prisoners of War in America*. Lanham, MD: Scarborough House, 1991.

- Konzett, Matthias, ed. *Encyclopedia of German Literature*. Chicago and London: Fitzroy Dearborn, 2000.
- Koop, Allen. *Stark Decency: German Prisoners of War in a New England Village*. Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1988.
- Landsberger, Kurt. *Prisoners of War at Camp Trinidad, Colorado 1943-1946: Internment, Intimidation, Incompetence, and Country Club Living*. New York: Arbor Books, 2007.
- Loffett, Christian. *Sinn und Struktur von A. Anderschs Romanen „Sansibar oder der letzte Grund“ und „Die Rote.“* Liège: University Press, 1966.
- Lettau, Reinhard. *Die Gruppe 47: Bericht, Kritik, Polemik*. Berlin: Hermann Luchterhand, 1967.
- MacDonogh, Giles. *After the Reich: The Brutal History of the Allied Occupation*. New York: Basic, 2009.
- Mandel, Siegfried. *Group 47: The Reflected Intellect*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1973.
- Mann, Thomas. "Germany and the Germans." Lecture given May 29, 1945. Transcript from *Addresses Delivered at the Library of Congress 1942-1949*. Washington: Library of Congress, 1963.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Order of the Day: Political Essays and Speeches of Two Decades*. Translated by Helen Lowe-Porter. New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1969.
- Meinecke, Friedrich. *The German Catastrophe: Reflections and Recollections*. Translated by Sidney B. Fay. Boston: Beacon Press, 1950.
- Merseburger, Peter. *Der schwierige Deutsche, Kurt Schumacher: Eine Biographie*. Munich: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1995.
- Mitscherlich, Alexander, and Margarete Mitscherlich. *The Inability to Mourn: Principles of Collective Behavior*. Translated by Beverley R. Placzek. New York: Grove, 1975.
- Moore, Bob, and Kent Fedorowich, eds. *Prisoners of War and their Captors in World War II*. Oxford: Berg, 1996.
- Moore, John Hammond. *The Faustball Tunnel: German POWs in America and their Great Escape*. Annapolis, MD: US Naval Institute Press, 2006.
- Mundt, Hannelore. *Understanding Thomas Mann*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2004.
- Naimark, Norman M. *The Russians in Germany: A History of the Soviet Zone of Occupation 1945-1949*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 1995.



- Neunzig, Hans A, ed. *Der Ruf: Unabhängige Blätter für die junge Generation, Eine Auswahl*. With a forward by Hans Werner Richter. Munich: Nymphenburger, 1976.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Hans Werner Richter und die Gruppe 47*. Munich: Nymphenburger, 1979.
- Noelle, Elisabeth, and Erich Peter Neumann, eds. *The Germans: Public Opinion Polls 1947-1966*. Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1967.
- Otto, Daniel. *A Historical Study of the Ruston Prisoner of War Camp*. MA thesis, University of Louisiana-Monroe, 1971.
- Overmans, Rüdiger. *Soldaten hinter Stacheldraht. Deutsche Kriegsgefangene des Zweiten Weltkriegs*. Berlin: Ullstein, 2002.
- Parker, Stephen, Peter Davies, and Matthew Philpotts. *The Modern Restoration: Re-thinking German Literary History 1930-1960*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2004.
- Parkes, Stuart. *Writers and Politics in Germany, 1945-2008*. Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2009.
- Reinhardt, Stephan. *Alfred Andersch: Eine Biographie*. Zürich: Diogenes, 1971.
- Reinhold, Ursula. *Politisches Engagement und literarische Wirksamkeit*. Berlin: Akademie, 1988.
- Richter, Hans Werner. *Almanach der Gruppe 47: 1947-1962*. Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1964.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Die Geschlagenen*. Munich: Kurt Desch, 1949.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Im Etablissement der Schmetterlinge: Einundzwanzig Portraits aus der Gruppe 47*. Munich: Hanser, 1988.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Rose Weiß, Rose Rot*. Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1971.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Sie Fielen aus Gottes Hand*. Munich: C. Bertelsmann, 1976.
- Robin, Ron. *The Barbed-Wire College: Reeducating German POWs in the United States During World War II*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995.
- Salomon, Ernst von. *Der Fragebogen*. Hamburg: Rowolht, 1988.
- Schlauch, Wolfgang. *In amerikanischer Kriegsgefangenschaft: Berichte deutscher Soldaten aus dem Zweiten Weltkrieg*. Crailsheim: Baier, 2003.
- Schmid, Walter. *A German POW in New Mexico*. Translated by Richard Rundell. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005.

- Schmidt, Arno. *Der Briefwechsel Mit Alfred Andersch: Mit Einigen Briefen Von Und an Gisela Andersch, Hans Magnus Enzensberger, Helmut Heissenbuttel Und Alice Schmidt*. Frankfurt am Main: Haffmans, 1985.
- Schmidt, Wolfgang. *The Education and Reeducation of POW 31G-23742357*. Bloomington, IN: Xlibris, 2001.
- Schulze, Hagen. *Germany: A New History*. Translated by Deborah Lucas Schneider. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998.
- Schütz, Erhard. *Alfred Andersch*. Munich: Beck, 1980.
- Schwab-Felisch, Hans, ed. *Der Ruf: Eine deutsche Nachkriegszeitsschrift*. Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch, 1962.
- Sebald, W.G. *Luftkrieg und Literatur*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 2001.
- Smith, Arthur L. *The War for the German Mind: Re-educating Hitler's Soldiers*. Oxford: Berghahn Books, 1996.
- Stephan, Winfried, ed. *Einmal wirklich leben: ein Tagebuch in Briefen an Hedwig Andersch, 1943 bis 1975*. Zürich: Diogenes, 1986.
- Sullivan, Mathew. *Thresholds of Peace: Defiance and Change among German Prisoners of war in Britain Between 1944-1948*. London: H. Hamilton, 1979.
- Thabet, Sabhi. *Das Reisemotiv im neueren deutschsprachigen Roman. Untersuchungen zu Wolfgang Koeppen, Alfred Andersch und Max Frisch*. Marburg: Tectum, 2002.
- Vaillant, Jérôme. *Der Ruf: Eine Zeitschrift zwischen Illusion und Anpassung*. Munich: K.G. Saur, 1978.
- Völker, Klaus. *Brecht: A Biography*. Translated by John Nowell. New York: Seabury, 1978.
- Walker, Richard. *The Lone Star and the Swastika: German Prisoners of War in Texas*. Austin: Eakin, 2001.
- Wallace, Ian, ed. *Aliens-Uneingebürgerte: German and Austrian Writers in Exile*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1994.
- Waters, Michael, ed. *Lone Star Stalag: German Prisoners of War at Camp Hearne*. College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2006.
- Wehdeking, Volker. *Alfred Andersch*. Stuttgart: Metzler, 1983.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Der Nullpunkt. Über die Konstituierung der deutschen Nachkriegsliteratur (1945 - 1948) in den amerikanischen Kriegsgefangenenlagern*. Stuttgart: Metzler, 1971.

- Wehdeking, Volker, and Irene Heidelberger-Leonard. *Alfred Andersch. Perspektiven zu Leben und Werk*. Opladen: Westdeutscher, 1994.
- Weidauer, Friedemann. *Widerstand und Konformismus. Positionen des Subjekts im Faschismus bei Andersch, Kluge, Enzensberger und Peter Weiss*. Wiesbaden: DUV, 1995.
- Wilkinson, James D. *The Intellectual Resistance in Europe*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981.
- Wohl, Robert. *The Generation of 1914*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 1979.
- Wright, Gordon. *France in Modern Times*. New York: Norton, 1987.
- Zagovec, Rafael Alexander. *German Prisoners of War and the Homefront in Louisiana, 1943-1946: A Cultural Interpretation*. MA thesis, Louisiana State University, 1995.
- Ziemke, Earl F. *The U.S. Army in the Occupation of Germany 1944-1946*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1975.

## VITA

Aaron Dennis Horton is a native of Kingsport, Tennessee. He attended Sullivan North High School, where he graduated in the academic top ten of his class in 1997. In 2003, he earned his Bachelor of Arts in history from East Tennessee State University in Johnson City, Tennessee. He received his Master of Arts in history from East Tennessee State in 2005. In 2006, he and his wife Suzie moved to Baton Rouge, Louisiana, where they both attended Louisiana State University. Aaron began work on his doctorate in history, while Suzie entered the Master of Library Science program, which she completed in May 2008. In the 2008-2009 academic year, Aaron served as a Visiting Professor at Grambling State University in Grambling, Louisiana. He currently lives with his wife and five cats in Little Rock, Arkansas, where he serves as Visiting Professor of History at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock.