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Huns, Krauts or Good Germans?,  
The German Image in America,  
1800-1980

Konrad H. Jarausch

HUNS, KRAUTS. OR GOOD GERMANS?

The German Image in America, 1800-1980

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Since almost every imaginable attribute has at one time or other been ascribed to the Germans, this stereotype dissolves on closer inspection into a kaleidoscope of images, shaped by competing influences and groups. As long as there is no explicit crisis the media tend to be oblivious to continental news. The daily and periodical press features West Germany only occasionally as emerging leader of European opinion, as economic competitor, as military ally or as harbor of Neo-Nazism. In Hollywood, Germans function as Ersatz-Indians, with the blond-beast SS officer as villain, the common soldier as buffoon or the Junker as symbol of decadence. In high-school and college textbooks, Prussian militarism appears more often as source of the world wars than Old Germany does as homeland for about one-fifth of the American population. From the turn of the century on British intellectuals, as experts on the German danger, have set a critical cultural tone for many of their American counterparts. Lest we forget, the Jewish community is mounting a sustained effort to commemorate the holocaust not only for religious reasons but also for the political purpose of rallying support for the survival of Israel. The few remaining German-American associations cultivate a nostalgic Dirndl and Lederhosen remembrance of the Old Country in folksy singing and dancing clubs. Finally the diplomatic, business, and academic representatives of the Federal Republic are trying to improve public attitudes through an active information policy of the German Information Center, a handful of Goethe houses and several exchange programs. Since current ambivalences towards the Germans represent successive layers of earlier cliches, it is necessary to ask: How did the German image evolve?

Three major waves of immigrants from Central Europe created the basic, recurrent and largely positive impression. The thirteen Mennonite families

Few peoples have provoked such scorn or praise, such fears or hopes as the Germans. While England evokes the Queen, France calls up Paris, Italy means the Pope, Germany conjurs up the Berlin Wall, the Third Reich or the World Wars. Some also associate it with beer, quaint towns, romantic landscapes or industrial technology. Opinions are fundamentally ambivalent. According to a 1966 German government survey 13% of Americans were very friendly, 67% moderately friendly, 12% quite unfriendly and 8% undecided towards the Germans. Conscientiousness, responsibility, thoroughness, industriousness, energy, creativity, orderliness and stubbornness make them attractive as immigrants, neighbors, fellow workers or even as daughters-in-law. But rudeness, heaviness, brutality, nationalism, militarism, materialism, formalism, servility, immoderation, loudness, or tactlessness render them less sympathetic than the British (but more so than the Italians or French). Since college students consider Germans "difficult, aggressive, masculine, unromantic, uncultured but professionally useful," the language itself reinforces the confusion of technological-scientific admiration and cultural-political distrust. Though often mutually exclusive, these widespread attitudes have coalesced into the notion of a contradictory national character which is supposed to hold the key to the perennial "German problem." As the British historian A. J. P. Taylor said in 1946 with brilliant tendentiousness: "'German' has meant at one moment a being so sentimental, so trusting, so pious, as to be too good for this world; and at another a being so brutal, so unprincipled, so degraded, as to be not fit to live. Both descriptions are true: both types of Germans have existed not only at the same epoch, but in the same person. Only the normal person, not particularly good, not particularly bad, healthy, sane moderate -- he has never set his stamp on German history."

who arrived on the "Concord" at Philadelphia in 1683 began a South-West German peasant migration for land and religious freedom which established the Pennsylvania Dutch (the term is a deterioration of Deutsch) as farmers all over the Middle-Atlantic colonies. Admired by Benjamin Franklin for their "habitual industry and thrift," the rural newcomers appeared sturdy, coarse and quiet and kept to themselves. In contrast to these somewhat drab "greys," the thousands of colorful "greens" which fled after the failure of the 1848 revolution showed a more political, educated and active spirit. Led by the dynamic Senator and Secretary of Interior Carl Schurz, these Forty-Eighters established many cultural institutions such as churches, German newspapers and colleges, and campaigned for the Republican party, congenial to their own liberalism, with the slogan "liberty and lagerbeer." The hundreds of thousands of rural and increasingly also urban poor from North-West Germany, which streamed across the Atlantic in the second half of the century, settled predominantly in Mid-Western cities such as Cincinnati, Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Louis, known not only for their breweries but also for their symphony orchestras. This third group excelled in mechanical industry and created hundreds of voluntary associations from Turner (gymnasts) via the Liederkrantz (glee clubs) to the Schützenverein (shooting society) which celebrated their holidays such as Christmas or Easter (tree and bunny are German imports) with streams of beer, mounds of cake and coffee (Kaffeklatsch) and processions of oompah bands much to the chagrin of their puritanical or baptist neighbors. They were known as folksy (gemütlich), adept at music, deeply religious (Dunckers, Amish, Missouri Synod of the Lutherans), and, as before, as honest, hardworking, politically reliable, peaceful and largely passive. According to a study by

Norbert Muhlen, the most frequent adjectives used by the English press to describe them were "calm, moderate, hardy, staid, brave, kindly, quiet, domestic." As middle and lower class they were patronized by the WASPS, mocked by the volatile Irish and resented for their economic success and rise to respectability by Slavic and Italian late-comers. From Johan Jacob Astor to Frederic Weyerhaeuser, from John D. Rockefeller to George Westinghouse, from Walter Chrysler to Henry Clay Frick, from Steinway Sons to Warburg and Company, from Altmann's to Anhaeuser-Busch, there is hardly an area of American business in which German craftsmen, inventors, merchants and brokers have not left their mark.

For educated Americans, Germany meant something entirely different, a country both romantic and scholarly, symbolized by the dual meaning of Old Heidelberg. James Fenimore Cooper set volume two of his European Trilogy (1831-33) in the South-Western Palatinate of the 16th century, while Washington Irving loved German fairy-tales and legends, reflected in "Rip van Winkle" (1819). Similarly in Hyperion (1839) Henry Wadsworth Longfellow invented an American Werther with a happier ending while Louisa May Alcott in her Little Women (1868/9) created professor Friedrich Bhaer as a kindly symbol of German learning. Reflecting the sympathies of these literati, The Nation in 1866 described the Germans as "the most learned, patient, industrious, civilized people on the face of the globe, which has attained the highest distinction in arts, in science, in arms, in literature, in everything, in short, but in politics." When literary infatuation with the land of the thinkers and poets, of castles and romances waned, scholarly interest and influence took its place. In 1815 the Harvard theologian Edward Everett, the Germanicist George Ticknor,

the philologist George Bancroft and the generalist Joseph Green Cogswell went to Goettingen, and started a stream of American students which reached about 10,000 by the end of the century. "I think the Germans have an integrity of mind which sets their science above all other," Ralph Waldo Emerson judged. Attractive as the home of academic freedom, as the leader of scientific advancement, and as the place for unfettered student life (which was immortalized by Sigmund Romberg's Student Prince in the 1920's), Germany appeared, even to critical observers, as embodiment of academic ideals. The conception of the university's "chief task [as] the development of great thinkers, men who will extend the boundaries of knowledge" inspired the establishment of graduate education (The Johns Hopkins University, 1876), of scholarly associations (The American Historical Association in 1884) and the professionalization of academic occupations (W. Flexner's report on medical training) in the United States. In the last pre-war years most U. S. academics agreed with the Educational Review: "German universities constitute a principal bulwark of ideal culture in our age."

By 1900 political rivalry began to tarnish this shining image. Because of German fragmentation and American westward expansion, there had been little diplomatic contact and less conflict between the Holy Roman Empire or the German Confederation and the nascent union of the United States. Enthusiastically welcomed as struggle for democracy, the 1848 revolution, in which the Germans according to Julia Ward Howe "had dreamed of freedom, but had not dreamed of the way to secure it," disappointed many who after its failure believed with the New York Herald that Germans "lacked political ability and were incapable of establishing republican institutions." During the Danish struggle



of 1864 and the Austro-Prussian war of 1866, American sympathies were with Protestant Prussia, with which, according to the New York Tribune "is bound up so much of hope, progress and the possibility of freedom and national growth." Similarly in the Franco-Prussian conflict, the French Emperor Napoleon III, discredited by his Mexican adventure with Maximilian I in the 1860's was denounced in the press as "murderer," "perjurer," "traitor" and "the most dangerous malefactor who ever usurped supreme power." But the victory at Sedan, the achievement of German unification and the proclamation of a Kaiser on January 18, 1871, in contrast to the founding of the Third Republic produced a marvelous reversal of feelings for the new, democratic France. Walt Whitman noted: "As the case stands, I find myself now far more for the French than I ever was for the Prussians." While scholarly admiration and popular kinship continued, Anglo-Saxon empathy for "a people striving for national unification and self-government" was clouded by fears of domestic autocracy and foreign expansionism. This loss of political innocence was aggravated by the clash of German aspirations for Weltpolitik with American hopes for "open door" imperialism in Latin America (Venezuela) and the Pacific (Samoa, Manila Bay) around the turn of the century. In contrast to Prince Bismarck's mastery of diplomacy, the verbal bellicosity and fickleness of William II created the caricature of the "fearful and funny" Kaiser Bill twirling his turned-up mustache and rattling his sabre. New adjectives appeared to describe the Germans -- "arrogant," "power-mad," "militaristic and imperialistic," "fond of vainglory and conquest," because they dared covet some of the same prizes as Teddy Roosevelt. In belated imitation of British warnings (Spectator: Germaniam esse delendam) about trade rivalry and naval race, a spate of Germanophobe books,

such as the diatribe by the Washington University historian Roland G. Usher against Pan-Germanism (1913), appeared in the last pre-war years. The quiet Germans were becoming restless, with opinion hanging in the balance.

World War One (1914-1918) destroyed the remnants of friendly stereotypes and exaggerated the new, often hostile image of Germany. By playing on William II's intemperate exhortation to the expeditionary corps dispatched against the Chinese Boxer Rebellion ("Be as terrible as Attila's Huns"), Allied propaganda, picking up a theme first sounded by the New York Times in 1871, made the enemy synonymous with the 'Huns.' German-American citizens, once regarded with respect and sympathy, now became suspect as un-American hyphenates. The reasons for this unprecedented animosity were manifold. Because of the royal navy's mastery of the seas and Reuter's hold on the transatlantic telegraph cables, the Entente countries of England, France, Russia, Serbia and Japan controlled the entire flow of information from the embattled continent. The blunders of the Central Powers of Germany, Austria and Turkey, such as the violation of Belgian neutrality (Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg's ill-fated 'scrap of paper' phrase), the clumsy espionage and sabotage attempts (for which a certain captain Franz von Papen was expelled from the U.S.), the interception and publication of the undiplomatic Zimmerman telegram (proposing a Mexican-German alliance) and finally the dramatic U-boat sinkings of luxury liners such as the Lusitania with the loss of much life (in contrast to mere spoilage of property in the British blockade) helped British press-lord Northcliffe's agitation against Germany. But equally important was the reversal of public opinion in the United States. The Eastern elite (for the sake of cultural affinity), the business community (to safeguard their Entente investments)

and the Republican Party (out of imperialism) favored intervention. The Progressives and large numbers of Democrats espoused neutrality and a considerable proportion of German-Americans (for obvious reasons), Central European Jews (out of anti-Tsarist resentment), and Irish politicians (thanks to animosity against the United Kingdom) supported the Central Powers. When President Wilson moralistically decided to extend the definition of neutral rights on the high seas to include travelling on belligerent ships, he had to pull the masses along who re-elected him in 1916 because he had kept them out of the war. The government sponsored "Committee on Public Information," directed by the journalist George Creel, coordinated an unparalleled campaign of invective from the white book on How the War Came to America (1917) all the way to lurid leaflets depicting explosive puppets dropped behind the lines so that innocent little French girls would have their hands torn off. Using the Prussian historian Heinrich von Treitschke, the philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche and the progressive politician Friedrich Naumann as ammunition, intellectuals like the University of Missouri sociologist Thorstein Veblen as well as writers like the Frenchman Andre Cheradame volunteered for the propaganda effort. German language teaching was forbidden, Sauerkraut was renamed victory cabbage, and German Jews were maligned in an orgy of hate, characterized by J. G. Gazley: "It was popularly believed that every Frenchman was naturally and inherently a hero, and every German instinctively and unalterably a baby-killer."

Between the dark and threatening clouds of the little and big world wars, the Weimar Republic (1918-1933) appeared as a promising ray of hope. "In innocence," Henry Cord Meyer recalled "we evidently presumed that with militarism defeated and the Kaiser gone the Germans would build a good middle-class republic

not unlike our own." Humanitarian Herbert Hoover's post-war food relief, American business (Charles G. Dawes) mediation in the contentious reparation problem, Foreign Minister Gustav Stresemann's fulfillment policy towards the dictate of Versailles (such as his adherence to the Locarno treaties, stabilizing Western frontiers), and the radiation of Weimar cultural modernism such as Bert Brecht or the Bauhaus, restored some of the earlier favorable opinions about Germany. While there was much sentimental interest in the fall of the Second Empire (evident in the numerous English translations of memoirs of defeated generals like Ludendorff, deposed royalty like William II or retired diplomats like Count Bernstorff), the propaganda-overkill of the war led to a revisionist examination of the German guilt for the outbreak of the First World War. In works such as The Origins of the World War (1928), scholars like S. B. Fay and H. E. Barnes placed more responsibility on Serbia for the assassination of Arch duke Francis Ferdinand, on Russia for general mobilization, on France for revanchism and on Britain for the naval rivalry. The Ruhr occupation of president Poincaré (1923) made the French appear as the primary threat to peace, while democratic Germany was now the underdog, profiting from the natural Anglo-American sympathy for "our German cousins" to quote John Mander. According to one E. Luehr, "through the blistering blasts of Bolshevism, through the degradation of treaty and reparations, through the ferocity of Fascism, German democrats stood as the strongest bulwark of free representative government on the European continent." Unfortunately the shattering political impact of the unemployment and business failures of the Great Depression (1929) belied such words as soon as they were written. Some perceptive observers like Paul Kosok began to warn of the disintegration of Weimar constitutionalism, of popular resentment against German robber barons

and against the rigidity of class structure "which was effectively perpetuated by school and civic education." But the decline of interest in foreign affairs and exaggerated confidence in the inevitable triumph of republican government meant that Americans were quite unprepared for the advent of National Socialism in 1933. When the rude awakening came, journalists like Edgar Ansel Mowrer naturally reverted to old cliches and argued that Germany Puts the Clock Back (March, 1933).

Although the Third Reich (1933-1945) aroused much curiosity, Anglo-American confusion only slowly gave way to unanimous condemnation. Impressed by the order and dynamism of the "New Germany" during the Berlin Olympic Games of 1936, many Americans agreed that "you can do business with [Adolf] Hitler" and refused to heed the warnings of Jewish or political refugees against Nazi persecution. Though appalled by the enthusiasm of the German-American Bund for the Fuehrer, U.S. papers were divided on the wisdom of 'interfering' in Europe again and only strongly internationalist sheets like the St. Louis Post-Dispatch came out against the Third Reich while isolationist organs like the St. Louis Globe Democrat tried to remain neutral. But the brown purge of the bureaucracy in 1933, the 1935 Nuremberg racial laws, the Kristallnacht pogrom in 1938 and spread of concentration camps aroused the enmity of the U.S. Jewish community. When prominent Weimar Republicans like the last regular Chancellor Heinrich Brüning were forced to flee, their cause was quickly taken up by the American Left, "a very literate and vocal unit of the public," which denounced "the German form of fascism," and admired the noble experiment of the Soviet Union. Christian circles were disturbed by the church struggle and the exile of prominent Catholics like Austrian chancellor Schuschnigg at St. Louis University.

"The flight of the Muses" from Hitler's storm-troopers (recently commemorated by the Smithsonian) brought several thousand of Weimar's most creative intellectuals, artists and scholars to the New World, whose influence powerfully affected American sciences, humanities and arts. But the very struggle of men like the physicist Albert Einstein and the novelist Thomas Mann against the degradations of Nazism also testified to the possibility of another, more civilized Germany. Fascinated by the pomp and circumstance of National Socialist spectacles (like the 1935 Nuremberg party rally on which Leni Riefenstahl's film, The Triumph of the Will is based), talented newspaper and radio correspondents such as Dorothy Thompson, William L. Shirer and Howard K. Smith brilliantly reported and analyzed the fascist menace. In contrast to Franco-British appeasement, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, because of the instinctive antipathy of an anglophile patrician against the Bohemian upstart Hitler, pursued a generally anti-Nazi policy, supported largely by urban opinion-makers and East coast elites who themselves had been brought up in the Germanophobia of World War One. These influences and "the strong visual impact of Hitler and his movement" in countless newsreels blurred and overshadowed all previous German images. But because of widespread isolationism public attitudes diverged drastically from published opinion. In a December 1939 (Office of Public Opinion Research [Princeton]) poll, only 19.6% of Americans found "the German people have always had an irrepressible fondness for brute force and conquest, which makes a country a menace to world peace" while 66.6% still believed that they "are essentially peace-loving and kindly, but they have been unfortunate in being misled too often by ruthless and ambitious rulers."

Hitler's declaration of war against the United States in December 1941, according to Yale historian Hans Gatzke "the greatest single mistake of his

career," made the worst smears of World War One propaganda a gruesome reality. Between 1942 and 1945 psychological, historical or economical potboilers once again sought to strengthen fighting morale by arguing Is Germany Incurable, Germany: Jekyll and Hyde, The Thousand Year Conspiracy, The Hidden Enemy, Germany Will Try It Again, and Germany Must Perish! Yet a 1942 poll found the Germans not only warlike (68%), cruel (59%), treacherous (43%), conceited (33%), arrogant (31%), but also hard-working (62%), intelligent (41%), progressive (31%), brave (30%) and practical (21%), indicating that animosity was largely superimposed upon earlier positive views. Although there was more objective reason to hate than in the 1910s, scholars strove for "a permanent and fundamental confrontation with the negative aspects of Germany" and tried to rise above propaganda. The most widespread intellectual explanations fastened upon the concept of national character From Luther to Hitler (W. M. McGovern, 1941), decried The Rise of Metapolitics from the Romantics to Hitler (P. Viereck, 1941) and sought The Roots of National Socialism (R. Butler, 1942) in Frederick the Great and Bismarck. When A. J. P. Taylor's essay commissioned for a British occupation handbook turned out "too depressing" and he was removed from the project, he penned an even more vitriolic book on The Course of German History: "Nothing is normal in German history except violent oscillations." Nevertheless the efforts of gifted historians and political scientists like Konrad Heiden, Franz Neumann, Carlton J. Hayes, William Langer and Raymond A. Sontag produced a sounder and more diversified understanding of the causes of German development than in 1917. Though the majority of men who made American politics belonged to the minority which hated Germans as such (2%), the majority of the public (58%) in September 1944 blamed Nazi leaders for the war while

38% considered both responsible. The Germanophobes (20% in other surveys) succeeded with the "unconditional surrender" formula in shutting the door on the German resistance (by robbing them of any prospect short of total defeat) and sponsored the notorious Morgenthau Plan for "pastoralizing" the defeated enemy, which was denounced by Secretary of War Henry Stimson as "fighting brutality with brutality" and by Cordell Hull as "blind vengeance." In many ways "the real shock" came only after the end of the hostilities when the cumulative effect of propaganda and pictures of concentration-camp survivors as well as of the machinery of death created an unspeakable revulsion which will forever darken the German image. In August 1945 only 19.6% thought "Germany would really learn a lesson by this war and give up her ideas of ruling the world" while 60% believed "she would just wait for a chance to try again."

After initial hostility, the post-war period (1945-1960) reversed views from evil enemy to valued ally and restored some of the older positive connotations without eliminating the newer negative overtones. The punitive three "d's" (denazification, demilitarization and dismantling of industry), demanded by the overwhelming majority of Americans and reinforced by the atrocities disclosed in the Nuremberg trials, achieved only some of their goals. The occupation policy (JCS directive 1067) ordering GIs "soldiers wise don't fraternize" soon broke down ("this don't mean me, buddy") not only because of the charms of the Fräuleins, but also because personally "the Krauts" (as they were condescendingly called by the troops) turned out not to be monsters, but regular people. Although in the beginning reporters like Curt Riess warned against werewolf resistance (The Nazis Go Underground), the "extent of German disintegration and destruction" portrayed by more acute observers such as W. L. White



and Gustav Stolper produced "a sense of sobering shock" and a feeling of responsibility for feeding and housing the 10 million homeless refugees (philanthropically expressed in CARE packages). When the realization finally dawned among President Harry Truman's advisers that Europe could not recover without its industrial heart, U.S. policy shifted from emphasizing German "collective guilt" to reconstruction in the Marshall Plan (1949) with America as economical "doctor," ideological "re-educator," political "partner" and touristic "discoverer." Creating the term "the brave, freedom-loving Berliners," the Soviet blockade of Berlin in 1948 was the turning point. "Just a few years before swastika-bedecked Berlin had been the symbol of all we opposed," Henry Cord Meyer remembered. "Now the Anglo-American airlift ceaselessly ferried in supplies for the besieged troops and citizens." Not only the global confrontation of the Cold War with the Soviet Union, but also the German choice of freedom at the price of hunger and cold convinced the American public to support the creation of a Western Germany (the Federal Republic, founded in 1949 and granted full sovereignty and NATO membership in 1955). During the 1950s the "Economic Miracle" with about twice the growth rate of the U.S. became a great success story which restored American faith in free enterprise (so much so that it has figured prominently as argument for Reaganomics) and representative government on the continent. Wised Chancellor Konrad Adenauer's (affectionately called Der Alte, the old one) "conservative democracy" was more liberal than any previous German government and cigar-smoking economics minister Ludwig Erhard's (known as "the rubber lion" because of his bulk) "social market economy" proved more dynamic and welfare-oriented than most contemporaries had anticipated. Variousy called "the bug" or "the beetle," the unprepossessing

prewar designed Volkswagen became the symbol of postwar German industry, reliability and efficiency. Nevertheless this marriage of political convenience, encouraged by Soviet tanks, retained an uneasy undertone, since American intellectuals like William Shirer (The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich, 1960) and William Manchester (The Arms of Krupp, 1968) tried to cash in on Nazi horrors while a generation of scholars sought to ponder the deeper meaning to The German Catastrophe (F. Meinecke, 1947). Hence V. S. Pritchett was not alone in warning that the Germans "have two faces....The enigma of Germany is permanent."

During the 1960s and 1970s the image of Germany has normalized but remained somewhat polarized and ambivalent. On the personal level millions of tourists take their obligatory Rhine cruise or walk the cobbled streets of Rothenburg to discover "old Germany." Hundreds of thousands of GIs still live in military islands (such as K-town for the German Kaiserslautern) which made "home in Germany" undoubtedly preferable to the jungles of Nam. Tens of thousands of exchange students and scholars (supported by the German Academic Exchange Service or the Fulbright Program) study "the German problem" first hand. Thousands of businessmen invest in Germany or work with German U.S. subsidiaries like Siemens, Bayer or VW, proud of the slogan "made in Germany" which initially meant cheap and durable and more recently expensive but high quality. In the political realm the smooth transition of power from the CDU (Christian-Conservative) to the SPD-FDP (Socialist-Liberal) government in 1969 demonstrated a degree of stability which allowed chancellor Helmut Schmidt to campaign in 1976 with the slogan of "model nation Germany." His predecessor's Ostpolitik of detente towards the Soviet Union, the Eastern satellites and the German Democratic Republic dissipated much of the Slavic fear of German revanchism by recognizing postwar boundaries, as well as

renunciating force in reunifying the "two German states of one nation" as Willy Brandt called them. Extraordinary prosperity due to union discipline allowed major wage increases for the working masses and a high tax rate permitted the establishment of a "network of social securities" rare in a capitalist economy. Visitors continue to marvel at the blend of technological modernity with instinctive traditionalism evident in the renown of German science and industrial dependability as well as in the Gemütlichkeit of Bavarian customs (like the Oktoberfest) or in the fame of star athletes (such as soccer's "Kaiser," Franz Beckenbauer). But success has not dispelled all shadows of the past since the holocaust television series and the continuing trials of war criminals revive old fears. The Radikalenerlass, prohibiting communists in the civil service as well as the terrorism of such "Hitler's Children" as Franz Baader and Ulrike Meinhof raise painful totalitarian memories. Material affluence has created envy among former enemies and attempts to preach a "German solution" to stagflation touch off undercurrents of Germanophobia in vocal minorities. For writers such as Katherine Ann Porter (The Ship of Fools, 1962) psychological stereotypes of the chubby and sentimental Hausfrau (relegated to Kinder, Küche and Kirche), of the authoritarian patriarch of the "father-land" or of drilled and disciplined youth, have the comforting ring of familiarity which insures continuous sales. Hardly a season passes without a new potboiler with a swastika so that it seems not only to Russell Baker that "The Reich Goes On." In a series of 1966 government polls Germans were liked more by American men (64%) than by women (36%), whites (96%) than by blacks (4%), young (31%) than by old (22%), educated (73%) than by less schooled (22%), Protestants (70%) than by Catholics or Jews (24% and 2%), Republicans (36%, but fewer in population) than by Democrats (43%), Mid-Westerners (38%)

or Westerners (31%) than by North-Easterners (21%) or especially Southerners (13%). The negative World War Two traits have disappeared from the six most common adjectives, such as hardworking, intelligent, progressive, practical, brave and honest, but rather form a counter-image with quick-tempered, warlike and arrogant following in the next places. Despite "special relationship" governmental rhetoric, these layers of historic images continue to create dissonances.

The transformation of the relations between the United States and the Federal Republic from dependence to "equivalence" (acc. to R. Smyser) in the last three decades emphasizes the importance of the German image for the psychological underpinnings of the Western alliance. Compared to successive Hitler-waves there is little continuous public interest in the present state of the Germanies. Since national images tend to lag considerably behind actual circumstances, the very "normality" of Central Europe means that information is often one decade out of date. The death of the emigre generation (Hannah Arendt, 1975) is cutting the living bond between America and Germany, because the "founding fathers" of the Bonn Republic like Lucius D. Clay (1978) have passed away and prosperity has dried up the last immigration streamlets, such as the 1960s 'brain drain.' Schools and colleges cannot make up the deficit. Declining overall, German language teaching lingers in distant third place behind Spanish and French (but before Russian), and enrollments in Central European history or politics courses have fallen drastically, despite an impressive outpouring of sophisticated scholarship. Burgeoning trade and investment, communality of values, constant middle level consultations and on-going exchange projects notwithstanding, this flagging of interest, which de-emotionalized the German image (with only 2% hostile and 40% undecided in a 1972 poll) is threatening to erode the infrastructure of the relationship. In

contrast to the Eastern German Democratic Republic (GDR), which as Soviet teacher's pet, makes little effort emerge out of the shadow of its big brother, formal ties between Bonn and Washington are quite close, indeed sometimes too close for comfort. But increasing West German power and assertiveness in a "semi-Gaullist Europe" (Fritz Stern in Foreign Affairs) coupled with decreasing understanding for its views (due to outdated information) is likely to cause greater conflicts over detente (attitudes towards the Soviet Union), defense (European nuclear rearmament) or economic policy (high interest rates, dollar course) in the 1980s.

While superficially the country is more familiar to Americans than ever before, older fears are beginning to mingle with new suspicions. World War Two stereotypes are clashing more and more with recent television news images which seem disturbing but for different reasons. There is little appreciation in the U.S. of the extent of which German society is fundamentally different from the 1950s, when it was the star-pupil of the West. Hence it must come as a shock to read John Vinocour's dissection of "The German Malaise" in the New York Times Magazine (November 15, 1981). This time it is the economic recession and the peace movement of the Left ("we want no Euroshima!") which have created a "sense of trouble, of dissatisfaction, of fatigue," a "vacuum of frustration and anger" which is threatening the prosperous and reliable self-image of the recent past. Given the widespread lack of information, it is difficult to understand the sources of the current leftist anti-Americanism and lingering hopes for unification. The accuracy and reliability of images is therefore not only an academic issue without real life consequences. One country's views of another are of crucial importance, because they time and again profoundly affect policies and decisions. Hence attempts to polish up the German image by well-meaning groups or individuals are

as dangerous as efforts to keep it tarnished, lest we forget the horrors of the past. What is needed above all is a more sustained and sophisticated American interest in the outside world, focussed on those countries which, like the Federal Republic, are of primary importance to US national interest, whether it be economic, military or political (not to mention the cultural and personal dimensions). A more up-to-date and accurate understanding of German economic strength, increasing political power, and continuing social tension will not eliminate the disputes between Bonn and Washington, but it will make bargaining more responsible and successful. In many ways, misperceptions, based on many-layered views of past, are more dangerous than honest disagreements. And the consequences of misunderstanding are always worst among friends.

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