

THE POLICY OF COOPERATION: American Colonial Politics in Bavaria, 1945-49

Aaron Freedman

From May 1945 to August 1949 the United States military occupied a wide swathe of southern and western Germany, ruling over more than 16 million people. While there's been much written on the macro-political and ideological concerns of the White House and State Department during the occupation and partition of Germany, far less attention has been paid to the unique role of the military occupiers on the ground, organized as the Office of Military Government, United States (OMGUS). Borrowing from scholars of British and French colonialism, this paper examines the American occupation of Germany through a framework of indirect rule, exploring how OMGUS propped up German political elites in the Christian Social Union in Bavaria party with a vested interest in cooperation with the imperial power, and weakened those who were disinterested in cooperation as an end in and of itself. It was this policy of cooperation, somewhat independent from the pronouncements of Washington, that guided political interactions in America's colonial periphery in Germany.

In July 2013, the German newsmagazine *Der Spiegel* published a bombshell report: for years, the United States National Security Agency (NSA) had engaged in a massive wiretapping operation in Germany.¹ While similar leaks from American intelligence contractor Edward Snowden had exposed the NSA for spying in many countries, the level of espionage that the U.S. conducted in Germany—including tapping Chancellor Angela Merkel's cellphone and soliciting the help of German intelligence services in spying on German citizens—was without recent precedence for such a close American ally.

The Snowden revelations sent commentators scrambling for a new approach to U.S.-German relations, which had long been seen in both popular and academic accounts a joint partnership that emerged in the Cold War, as West Germans elected a government committed to economic development and anti-communism. But while the Snowden leaks call particular attention to it, this narrative of the U.S.-German relationship has long been woefully inadequate. In looking at the dynamic between the two countries since the fall of Third Reich—and in particular, during the Cold War—it is clear that it is not one of equal allies, but of empire, of metropole and colony. This is not mere hyperbole: the U.S. occupied Germany for four years after the end of World War II, serving not only as an economic administrator but also as a political influence, actively shaping the politics of the future Federal Republic of Germany. Examining the American occupation of Germany through the lens of empire and borrowing frameworks from scholars of British and French colonialism in

¹ "Indispensable Exchange: Germany Cooperates Closely with NSA - SPIEGEL ONLINE," *Spiegel Online*, 8 July 2013.

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the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, can offer a better understanding of the roots of America's close, yet unequal, relationship with modern Germany.

As this paper will show, during the post-World War II occupation the United States interacted with occupied Germany like an imperial power managing a newly conquered region: while senior officials in the Washington metropole debated macro-political master plans for their new colony from a distance, it was the officers on the ground who were in charge of actually negotiating the projection of state power. This colonial authority was known as the Office of Military Government, United States (OMGUS). As was the case with the indirect rule of British India and *association* in French Africa, in the American occupation of Germany it was up to OMGUS officers on the periphery to do the micro-political work of developing personal relationships, exploring local interests, and finding subordinate "partners" who could help carry out the metropole's annexation.² To do this, the Military Government focused on propping up local elites with a vested interest in cooperation with the imperial power, and on weakening those who were disinterested in cooperation as an end in and of itself. This policy of cooperation, somewhat independent from the pronouncements of Washington guided political interactions on America's colonial periphery in Germany.

The policy of cooperation, born by OMGUS and its guiding force, General Lucius D. Clay (Deputy Military Governor 1945-47, Military Governor 1947-49), initially served as a way for forces on the American colonial periphery to administer and project influence into a newly conquered territory with the crucial assistance of local political elites. However, as the occupation developed, OMGUS and its policy of cooperation had to respond to changing German party alignments and a much more pronounced interest from Washington in how German affairs aligned with rising Cold War tensions. Wedged between a developing national stage of highly partisan German politics and a newly hegemonic discourse of containment emanating from Washington, OMGUS adopted a much less flexible stance on the policy of cooperation: it demanded even greater loyalty from its German political partners while being much more willing to punish even the slightest apparent dissent against American power. It wasn't a commitment to containment or the pro-market political leader and future West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer that drove the Military Government's newfound aggressiveness, but a need to preserve its own autonomy. With its power and influence at stake on both sides, OMGUS shifted its policy of cooperation, from encouraging flexibility by local political partners to discouraging it, as its priorities changed from effective regional administration to the construction of a new state along the contours of Washington's Cold War dogmas.

This paper will examine how OMGUS developed this policy of cooperation in its relations with the largest political party entirely in the American zone—and therefore one of the Military Government's most important political partners—the Christian Social Union in Bavaria (*Christlich-Soziale Union in Bayern*, CSU). While cooperation was always paramount over ideology within OMGUS, the need to remain relevant in a vastly changed colonial project compelled OMGUS to use its policy of cooperation—and thus the close relationships it had fostered with political allies earlier in the occupation—for the ends of Washington's ideological conception of American power in Germany. In looking at this aspect of America's colonial occupation of Germany, the larger historical relationship between the two countries—which has had global repercussions during and after the Cold War—becomes more clear.

² For more on the role of local elites in the extension of colonial power, see Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1996).

Literature Review

On the whole, the literature on the American occupation of Germany has focused either on its macro-political or micro-political dimensions, without offering sufficient engagement between the two. During the Cold War, both the traditionalist and revisionist schools of thought, which emphasized Soviet and American machinations respectively, focused on macro-political narratives of ideology and high-level diplomacy. Then, with the end of the Cold War in the 1990's, a new post-revisionist school turned the focus to the non-ideological micro-politics of OMGUS and more regional German political actors like the CSU, utilizing sources opened by the German Federal Archives after reunification in 1991. While this research is heavily indebted to their work, the post-revisionists still failed to unify their approach with a broader examination of the interaction between micro- and macro-politics during the occupation. For example, while Marjorie Lamberti makes excellent use of German-language sources, as well as the Lucius Clay papers, in her 2009 article "General Lucius Clay, German Politicians, and the Great Crisis During the Making of West Germany's Constitution," she focuses entirely on the micro-political dynamic between Clay and the center-left Social Democratic Party of Germany (*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands*, SPD).³ State Department officials appear merely as individuals interacting with Clay, and not as a macro-political institutional force. Similarly, in his 1993 article "Transforming the German Party System: The United States and the Origins of Political Moderation, 1945-1949," Daniel E. Rogers uses the OMGUS archives to show that Clay played a substantial role in encouraging a centrist "politics of moderation" in occupied Germany.⁴ Yet Rogers treats Clay's micro-politicking with German parties as largely autonomous from the macro-politics of Washington's Cold War discourse. Representative of much of the post-revisionist literature, neither of these articles attempts to unify the very distinct and often confrontational micro-politics of OMGUS and the macro-politics of Washington into a single framework of the projection of American power into occupied Germany.

Rather than seeking to define the dynamics of the American occupation of Germany as micro-political or macro-political, this essay emphasizes the interaction between the two. This interaction is best understood by viewing the occupation through the dynamics of empire, by which OMGUS acted as the imperial presence on the colonial periphery. Balancing the ideological impositions of the metropole with administrative concerns over relations with local elites, OMGUS engaged in a policy of cooperation that, while always paramount, was also always changing in response to these two other forces acting upon it. Thus, while this research examines the occupation from the archival perspective of OMGUS, it places the observations and actions of OMGUS in the context of a broader imperial politics with macro-political concerns from above and micro-political concerns from below. The policy of cooperation, then, becomes more than just the non-ideological, opportunistic negotiation between the United States and the European center-right, as Deborah Kisatsky has explored in great depth, but a negotiation within the American military-diplomatic apparatus itself.⁵

In examining the relationships between Washington, OMGUS, and German political elites, this research draws on frameworks of imperial relationships developed

³ Marjorie Lamberti, "General Lucius Clay, German Politicians, and the Great Crisis During the Making of West Germany's Constitution," *German Politics and Society* 27, no. 4 (2009): 24-50.

⁴ Daniel E. Rogers, "Transforming the German Party System: The United States and the Origins of Political Moderation, 1945-1949," *Journal of Modern History* 65, no. 3 (1993): 512-541.

⁵ Deborah Kisatsky, *The United States and the European Right, 1945-1955* (Columbus: Ohio State UP, 2005).

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by historians of British colonialism in Africa and Asia. Going back to the mid-century scholarship of Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher, imperial historians have emphasized the crucial role played by on-the-ground colonial administrators in adapting empire to “conditions found in each periphery,” interfacing between the geopolitical and economic visions of London and the practical concerns of administering an overseas colony, including considerations of indigenous elites.⁶ Since the 1980s and 1990s, this spatial framework has been complicated by the “new imperial historians,” who have explored the often conflicting and contradictory “projects” of metropolitan elites and local colonial administrators and soldiers who, as Fredrick Cooper and Ann L. Stoler put it, “were simultaneously coerced and coercing, who enforced the will of the elite yet made demands themselves.”⁷ At the same time, other “new imperial historians” like Mahmood Mamdani and Olúfẹ́mi Táíwò have taken a critical lens to indirect rule, understanding the propping up of native chiefs and princes not as a good governance reform, but rather as a means for colonial administrators to expand and cement their own hegemony through the entire native population.⁸ In showing how local colonial administrators used networks of local elites to manage interests somewhat autonomous from those of the metropole, the “new imperial history” offers a vital framework for understanding the Military Government’s policy of cooperation in occupied Germany.

Unlike the work of the post-revisionists, this research does not use German-language sources: linguistic capabilities, as well as the time and budget restraints of an undergraduate paper, made use of German archives infeasible. Yet, while the perspective of CSU actors speaking from German-language archives would be informative, it is not necessary in a paper that is fundamentally about a particular set of American actors: the officials of OMGUS. The emphasis is on their policy of cooperation, and its changes in response to the way that they perceived Washington, Munich, and Bonn. This is a history of the periphery of a burgeoning American empire, told from the perspectives of the Americans who were building it on the ground. To that end this paper does make extensive use of OMGUS records housed at the National Archives, as well as Clay’s published papers.⁹

This paper will explore the development of the Military Government’s policy of cooperation over the course of two periods. Of emphasis in both are the thoughts and actions of Clay, who had the unique position of leading OMGUS for the entire period of the occupation, first as *de facto* administrator and then as *de jure* Military Governor, when many of his ideas as Deputy Military Governor became realized in practice. The first period is the early occupation, lasting from May 1945 to May 1947. During that time, OMGUS developed the policy of cooperation as a response to an unwillingness, born of the practical concerns of administering a war-torn territory, to enforce Washington’s distant but radical occupation objectives, emphasizing mass denazification and destruction of industrial capacity. By seeking out cooperative local

⁶ Ronald Robinson, John Gallagher, and Alice Denny, *Africa and the Victorians: The Official Mind of Imperialism* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2015), xviii; Ronald Robinson, “Non-European Foundations of European Imperialism,” in *Studies in the Theory of Imperialism*, ed. Roger Owen and Robert B. Sutcliffe (London: Longman, 1972), 117-142.

⁷ Nicholas Thomas, *Colonialism’s Culture: Anthropology, Travel and Government* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994); Frederick Cooper and Ann L. Stoler, “Tensions of Empire: Colonial Control and Visions of Rule,” *American Ethnologist* 16, no. 4 (November 1989): 609-621. For an overview of the “new imperial history” of space, see Alan Lester, “Imperial Circuits and Networks: Geographies of the British Empire,” *History Compass* 4 no. 1 (2005): 124–141.

⁸ Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*; Olúfẹ́mi Táíwò, *How Colonialism Preempted Modernity in Africa* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana UP, 2010).

⁹ Jean Edward Smith, ed., *The Papers of General Lucius D. Clay: Germany, 1945-1949* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1974).

elites from a wide ideological spectrum, OMGUS was able to develop a mutually beneficial relationship with the liberal-conservative wing of the CSU, which offered its support to a military government rule that de-emphasized denazification and deindustrialization. Meanwhile, the rival CSU faction, the traditionalists, was punished by OMGUS for obstructing the expansion of American interests in the occupied German state of Bavaria. During this period, when post-war German politics was still very regional and Washington divided on a comprehensive solution to the “German question,” OMGUS was given space on both sides to set the terms of the policy of cooperation and thus empower itself.

In contrast, during the second, later period of the occupation, from June 1947 to August 1949, Clay’s OMGUS was forced to modify its implementation of the policy of cooperation in the face of changes in Washington, Munich, and Bonn. In Washington, advocates for containment and partition won out in the debates over the German question, compelling OMGUS to enforce the newly hegemonic policy. Meanwhile, in Munich, the bifurcation of the CSU between liberal-conservatives and traditionalists ended with a homogenization of the party into a moderate conservative stance that, while ideologically to the right of the liberal-conservatives, was willing to cooperate with Washington’s new German policy. Finally, in Bonn, a new two-party bloc system emerged at the all-Western zone Parliamentary Council, with the CSU allying with future Chancellor Konrad Adenauer’s pro-American, pro-partition, pro-market Christian Democratic Union of Germany (*Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands*, CDU) against an SPD committed to a neutral, unified, socialist German state.

The result of these major changes was a policy of cooperation applied much more strictly than in the early occupation. With Washington taking a much more direct and forceful interest in what had become the central political, economic, and ideological battlefield of the new Cold War, OMGUS had to follow the new contain-and-partition line even more zealously so as to ensure its own relevance and power in constructing the postwar American empire. This meant that the Military Government enforced a new political rigidity, under which even the slightest deviance by the SPD and certain individual CSU politicians from the American policy line was decried as rigid inflexibility, when in fact it was OMGUS that had now become inflexible and unyielding in employing the policy of cooperation. With the stakes of the occupation raised by anti-Soviet hawks in the metropole and a deep partisan divide in Bonn, OMGUS turned the policy of cooperation from a means of ensuring what it saw as a flexible and mutually-beneficial colonial administration into a plow by which all challenges to American power in postwar Germany could be cleared.

Thus, the policy of cooperation, while always remaining paramount for OMGUS, would change its form and purpose substantially over the course of the occupation. While created by OMGUS to serve in regional micro-politics, it would end up enabling the macro-political designs of the American metropole. In this way, the colonial-imperial view of the American occupation of Germany reveals the complex yet crucial way in which micro- and macro-political forces intertwined to produce a unique relationship between the United States and the Federal Republic of Germany.

The Early Occupation (May 1945-May 1947)

By the time Allied forces seized Germany in May 1945, Washington had already provided a set of occupation guidelines to the nascent American Military Government. The April 1945 Joint Chiefs of Staff directive known as JCS 1067 would remain the

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official American occupation policy for over two years.¹⁰ Championed by the liberal Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau, Jr., JCS 1067 answered the German question through a three-pronged approach: demilitarization, deindustrialization, and denazification.¹¹ While OMGUS would accomplish the first point quite thoroughly and decisively, the other two would be sites of great policy contention throughout the occupation. If every fully implemented, JCS 1067 would have kept the German economy at subsistence levels and banned any and all active and passive supporters of Nazism—a far more extensive group than those tried at Nuremberg—from political, business, and social leadership positions. Many of the politicians in the CSU’s liberal-conservative wing with whom OMGUS would develop such strong, cooperative relationships—mostly educated Protestant professionals, most (but not all) of whom avoided open dissent and concentration camps by participating in the ordinary, daily life of the Third Reich—would have been cast out of politics, and much of public life, by JCS 1067.

But JCS 1067 would never be fully implemented, for by the end of 1946 Clay and OMGUS had already rendered its pillars toothless. While this was due in part to changing political winds in Washington—by the early Truman administration, pro-business, pro-industrialization, anti-Soviet conservatives like Assistant Secretary of War John J. McCloy were already pushing out liberals like Morgenthau, who resigned from the Treasury Department in July 1945¹²—Clay himself had a different motivation for his actions. Unlike policy makers in the capital, the chief administrator of OMGUS did not have a master ideological plan for Germany beyond increasing his own power and autonomy. In fact, Clay would continue to flexibly apply certain policy planks of JCS 1067—mainly, denazification—when they could assist German politicians who were cooperative with the American occupiers, and punish those who were understood to be obstructing their efforts. In this way, the policy of cooperation would begin to take form as a carrot-and-stick for managing the local political elites who were so crucial to Clay’s imperial project.

Clay’s first major challenge to the dictates of JCS 1067 came in the “Restatement of Policy on Germany” speech he crafted for Secretary of State James F. Byrnes, delivered in Stuttgart in September 1946.¹³ The Stuttgart speech, as it was known, laid down new *de facto* occupation principles that allowed OMGUS more flexibility in building cooperative partnerships with local elites: namely, promoting federalism (in other words, greater regional autonomy) for a future German state, and encouraging industrial development through the creation of a common financial policy and a centralized trade and industry agency for all four Allied zones.¹⁴ This latter plank would be partially realized in January 1947 with the creation of the joint U.S.-British bizonal economic and administrative agencies, known as Bizonia (the French and Soviets refused participation). Clay believed deeply in the power of

¹⁰ “Directive to Commander in Chief of United States Forces of Occupation Regarding the Military Government of Germany,” April 1945, *Germany, 1947-1949: The Story in Documents* (Washington: GPO, 1950), 24-27.

¹¹ Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945* (New York: Penguin, 2005), 105.

¹² Carolyn Eisenberg, *Drawing the Line: The American Decision to Divide Germany, 1944-1949* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1996), 69-70.

¹³ Though officially attributed to Byrnes, historians largely agree that Clay was the real architect of the speech—if he did not actually write it, his communiqué on policy suggestions sent to Washington that July was certainly so influential on the Secretary that nearly all of the Stuttgart speech’s major points—often down to exact phraseology—came directly from Clay. See John Gimbel, *The American Occupation of Germany: Politics and the Military, 1945-1949* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1968), 85; Jean Edward Smith, *Lucius D. Clay: An American Life* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1990), 387-88.

¹⁴ James F. Byrnes, “Restatement of Policy on Germany,” 6 Sept. 1946, *U.S. Diplomatic Mission to Germany*, 4 April 2014.

Bizonia to solve the practical problem of administering a region cut off from necessary material supplies (most of Germany's valuable mineral deposits laid in the British zone)¹⁵, while viewing federalism as a check on the centralizing tendencies that OMGUS attributed to both socialism and fascism.¹⁶ In this way, Clay began to turn the Military Government into an autonomous actor in the occupation.¹⁷ Rather than merely toeing the line from Washington, it took advantage of the lack of consensus among American diplomatic elites to create powerful institutions for expanding its own political and economic influence. Similar to how British imperialists fused centralized economic coordination with decentralized, indirect political rule by hand-picked native elites (what Mamdani calls “decentralized despotism”¹⁸), Bizonia and the promise of regional autonomy gave Clay the power to promote his cooperative partners, punish his foes, and deepen the Military Government's influence in Germany.

In addition to these new policy orientations laid down in Stuttgart, Clay's actions in 1946 indicate a certain range of ideological possibilities that OMGUS was willing to accommodate in its occupation. One of Clay's consistent and defining desires regarding the kinds of politicians he wanted to work with was a vague sort of liberalism, with the Deputy Military Governor including among his suggestions for a new policy statement to succeed JCS 1067 a need for “the reeducation of the German people through the utilization of liberal-minded Germans into a more democratic and liberal philosophy of life.”¹⁹ While Clay was not inclined to elaborate on the specific nature of this “liberal philosophy” beyond the equally vague concepts of supporting economic development and democratic institutions, the historiography certainly clarifies what was beyond the Deputy Military Governor's range of ideological possibilities in German politics. As Daniel E. Rogers has shown, Clay's support for democratic political parties reached its limits when parties strayed too far to the right of the political spectrum, as was the case in his crackdown on the expansion of the rightist, populist and, in Clay's words, “strongly Nazi” Economic Party of Refugees in Bavaria.²⁰ Similarly, Carolyn Eisenberg has shown that pressure from American businessmen and certain senior economic officials in the State Department and OMGUS led to the defeat in fall 1946 of a proposed decartelization program, thus limiting Military Government cooperation with the SPD on economic policy.²¹

Thus, while OMGUS certainly did have an ideological window—and was unwilling and unable to collaborate with groups and individuals outside of it—*within* that window relations with German politicians were driven most of all by a policy of cooperation. That is, Clay preferred to have the flexibility to work with the political groups that would be most cooperative with Military Government policy, even as it would change rapidly in 1946 and 1947. In his suggestions to the War Department for

¹⁵ Smith, *Lucius D. Clay*, 405.

¹⁶ As Clay insisted in his July policy statement, “The United States favors a decentralized government, composed of a small number of states joined together in a confederation or a federal type of government, which would have sufficient power to achieve economic unity.” Gimbel, *The American Occupation of Germany*, 77.

¹⁷ Not even two weeks after that speech, Clay was already trying to use it as an opportunity to officially abandon JCS 1067, cabling to the War Department that “a revision of JCS 1067 series into a new policy statement is desirable.” Lucius D. Clay, cable to War Department, 16 October 1946, document 157 of Smith, *The Papers of General Lucius D. Clay*, 263.

¹⁸ Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*, 17.

¹⁹ Clay to War Department, 16 October 1946, document 157 of Smith, *The Papers of General Lucius D. Clay*, 264.

²⁰ Rogers, “Transforming the German Party System,” 526.

²¹ Carolyn Eisenberg, “U. S. Policy in Post-War Germany: The Conservative Restoration,” *Science & Society* 46.1 (1982): 29.

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a new policy statement, Clay recommended that it be “short and concise ... an overall policy objective which would seldom require modification and the detailed interpretation of that policy could be modified by implementing directives without change in the basic document.”²² In other words, Clay wanted a policy document that would allow OMGUS personnel to adapt the broad directions from Washington to the changing local needs and conditions that projecting American economic and political authority into Germany demanded.

Armed with Bizonia and discretion over denazification, and given an incredible amount of *de facto* autonomy as the Truman administration remained divided on the German question, OMGUS was well-positioned to develop a cooperative relationship with one particular group of local political elites, who would prove vital in legitimizing and carrying out the American occupation project: the liberal-conservative wing of the CSU. The CSU, begun in August 1945 as a series of local Christian democratic parties in Bavaria, was less a coherent political party during the early occupation period than a marriage of necessity between two often diametrically opposed factions.²³ The liberal-conservatives, led by Party Chairman Josef Müller, were a grouping of Catholic and Protestant professionals, described by OMGUS as “liberal” and “progressive”—terms that signified the potential for cooperation with American authorities rather than a specific ideological program.²⁴ They stood in contrast to the traditionalists, an overwhelmingly Catholic formation that took an ultra-conservative attitude towards the role of religion in public life.²⁵ OMGUS had many reasons to dislike and distrust the CSU traditionalists: they were strongly resistant to denazification (in contrast not only to the Social Democrats and Communists, but also to the liberal-conservative wing of the CSU), had an agenda of Bavarian political separatism (including an openness to the return of the Wittelsbach monarchy, which had abdicated following World War I), and many of its leaders have been key figures in the conservative Weimar-era Bavarian People’s Party (*Bayerische Volkspartei*, BVP). OMGUS took this latter point as a serious issue, worrying that the traditionalists would prioritize the resuscitation of Weimar-era Bavarian politics over the creation of a new, American-aligned political order.²⁶

Thus, for the first few years of the occupation, it is useless to think of the CSU as a single ideological entity. Rather, for both OMGUS officials and historians, the CSU must be understood as divided between two factions that, at least until 1948, were constantly at odds with each other, even to the point of forming multi-party coalitions to keep each other out of government.²⁷ As the Military Government increasingly observed and interacted with the CSU, it came to view the liberal-

²² Clay to War Department, 16 October 1946, document 157 of Smith, *The Papers of General Lucius D. Clay*, 264.

²³ Peter James, *The Politics of Bavaria—An Exception to the Rule: The Special Position of the Free State of Bavaria in the New Germany* (Aldershot: Avebury, 1995), 94; Walter M. Hudson, “The U.S. Military Government and Democratic Reform and Denazification in Bavaria, 1945-47,” (MA thesis, United States Army Command and General Staff College, 2001), 44.

²⁴ Lucius D. Clay, letter to John J. McCloy, 5 October 1945, document 47 of Smith, *The Papers of General Lucius D. Clay*, 94; OMGB to Director of Intelligence, OMGUS, “Periodic Report for Week ending 24 Hours 11 September 1946,” Munich, 13 Sept. 1946, Periodic Reports OMGB 27 Sept—20 Dec 1946, CSU (Pol. Act.), Office of Military Government, Bavaria (OMGBY), Land Director, Investigative Correspondence and Reports, 1945-1949; Records of U.S. Occupation Headquarters, World War II, Record Group 260 (RG 260), National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD (NACP).

²⁵ James, *The Politics of Bavaria—An Exception to the Rule*, 95.

²⁶ Clay to McCloy, 5 October 1945, document 47 of Smith, *The Papers of General Lucius D. Clay*, 94; OMGB to Director of Intelligence, OMGUS, Periodic Reports OMGB 27 Sept—20 Dec 1946, CSU (Pol. Act.), Correspondence and Reports, 1945-1949, RG 260, NACP.

²⁷ James, *The Politics of Bavaria—An Exception to the Rule*, 113.

conservatives as ideal partners in its policy of cooperation, while the traditionalists were largely viewed as intransigent in their relations with the American occupiers. For example, in an April 1946 intelligence report on the small Bavarian city of Aschaffenburg, the local Office of the Military Government (OMG) noted just before municipal elections that “the Christian Social Union in Stadt Aschaffenburg is a well-balanced Party and the one best suited for democratic Government.”²⁸ The report makes clear that the CSU in Aschaffenburg belonged to the liberal-conservative wing of the party, noting that “contrary to the general bavarian [*sic*] trend” of traditionalist dominance of the CSU and in contrast with the “rightest [*sic*] influence of the [local Catholic] church,” the Aschaffenburg party was “liberal” and “progressive”—buzzwords that were less about describing a particular ideology than a potential for partnership with the American occupiers. In a similar vein, the report emphasizes how the Aschaffenburg CSU leadership was “previously politically inactive.” More than just a shorthand for saying the leadership had not been Nazis (which the report separately notes), this assessment conveys the positive attitude that OMGUS officials had towards new politicians who they could mold into local collaborators with the occupation. This is in contrast to the local SPD, described in the report as “reactionary” and having “not changed in membership from pre 1933 years. The thoughts and ideals of its members do not reflect any progressive political ideology.” In fact, the report is quite explicit in stating that its support for Aschaffenburg’s CSU over its SPD is “due almost entirely to the affiliation of some young, liberal, and politically inactive leaders.”²⁹

Though OMGUS would not often intervene in electoral politics on behalf of the CSU’s liberal-conservatives (unlike its more extensive meddling against the fiercely anti-American, far-right populist parties³⁰), it twice took decisive steps in the early occupation period to prevent the Bavarian premiership from falling into the hands of the uncooperative traditionalists: once to depose an uncooperative minister-president (the head of government in a German state) and then, just over a year later, to install a one. While OMGUS took contradictory policy positions in these cases, its commitment to punishing uncooperative politicians and rewarding cooperative ones—ensuring local political elites remained loyal to the imperial project—remained constant.

The first case was in September 1945 when, under pressure from OMGUS, Bavarian minister-president and CSU traditionalist leader Fritz Schäffer was forced to resign his post. Schäffer had been named minister-president by American military forces in May 1945, but lost the confidence of OMGUS when he appointed a number of ex-Nazis to his cabinet and when anti-Semitic speeches he had made as a BVP politician during the Weimar Republic came to light.³¹ Among those supporting Schäffer’s resignation was Clay, who was frustrated by his insufficient progress on—and often downright obstruction of—denazification. Writing to John McCloy soon after Schäffer’s dismissal, Clay elaborated on how the ex-premier “did not adequately reflect the liberal elements in the population” and had “protested that he would not be able to continue to operate the German agencies if certain of his officials were

²⁸ “Annex No 1 to Political Activity Report,” Aschaffenburg, Bavaria, 30 April 1946, 114A CSU April 1946 to July 1946, OMGB, Records of the Intelligence Division, Intelligence Records of the Information Control Division, 1946-47, RG 260, NACP.

²⁹ Here, terminology like “progressive” and “reactionary” is not deployed in its conventional usage as short-hand for “left-wing” and “right-wing,” but rather in reference to the rigidity of politicians’ ideological commitments.

³⁰ Rogers, “Transforming the German Party System,” 512-41.

³¹ Hudson, “The U.S. Military Government and Democratic Reform and Denazification in Bavaria, 1945-47,” 128-32.

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removed under the denazification program.”³² It didn’t matter that Clay had his own reservations about and inconsistencies in applying denazification; interpreting JCS 1067 was up to him, not German politicians. In complaining about denazification, Schäffer challenged the Military Government’s ultimate political authority—a grave violation of the policy of cooperation.³³

While the Schäffer episode shows that OMGUS was willing and able to intervene in political affairs to prevent uncooperative politicians from gaining positions of influence, the debate over the denazification of CSU liberal-conservative leader Josef Müller shows how the Military Government protected and supported cooperative politicians. The controversy began on November 12, 1946, when the Munich newspaper *Süddeutsche Zeitung* published a report that Müller had expressed National Socialist sympathies to the Nazi-era political police.³⁴ As the CSU was the clear favorite heading into the Bavarian parliament (*Landtag*) elections two weeks away, some OMGUS officials were concerned that a Nazi collaborator could become minister-president of Bavaria. With the Schäffer debacle fresh in everyone’s mind, Brigadier General Walter J. Muller, Director of the Office of the Military Government, Bavaria (OMGB), launched an investigation into Müller’s Nazi-era activities. Writing to Clay, Muller recommended that the Deputy Military Governor authorize the banning of Müller from any political activity (including running for office and continuing to serve as CSU Party Chairman) on the basis of his past involvement in the *Abwehr*, the Nazi military intelligence agency.³⁵ Charles K. Gailey, Clay’s Chief of Staff, responded to Muller, authorizing Müller’s dismissal from the CSU Party Chairmanship, as well as the submission of a denazification charge against Müller to the Bavarian government and the establishment of a Military Government hearing into Müller’s activities as CSU Chairman.³⁶ It appeared Müller’s career was over.

However, just a week later Clay suspended any action against Müller, including his denazification case. As he explained to Assistant Deputy Military General Frank Keating, who had protested the decision, there was a great difference between investigating Müller as party leader and *Landtag* delegate and investigating him as minister-president (the CSU did indeed win the *Landtag* election, with Müller set to take office as minister-president), an action that could discredit the premiership’s legitimacy in the eyes of the Bavarian people.³⁷ But this explanation was likely disingenuous—after all, Clay had halted the investigation into Müller

³² Lucius D. Clay, letter to John J. McCloy, 16 September 1945, document 36 of Smith, *The Papers of General Lucius D. Clay*, 82.

³³ Not inclined to forget the faces of those who were unwilling to cooperate with his occupation project, Clay would actually ban Schäffer from all political activity the following spring, when his support for the return of the pre-World War I Wittelsbach monarchy would even more flagrantly challenge American supremacy in Bavaria. See Hudson, “The U.S. Military Government and Democratic Reform and Denazification in Bavaria, 1945-47,” 55 and Rogers, “Transforming the German Party System,” 520-24.

³⁴ OMGB to Director of Intelligence, OMGUS, Periodic Reports OMGB 27 Sept—20 Dec 1946, CSU (Pol. Act.), Correspondence and Reports, 1945-1949, RG 260, NACP.

³⁵ Muller (OMGB) to Acting Deputy Military Governor (OMGUS), “Dr. Joseph Müller, Chairman of the CSU for Bavaria,” Munich, 18 Nov. 1946, AG 000.1 Politics (Josef Mueller), Executive Office, Office of the Adjutant General, General Correspondence and Other Records (“Decimal File”), 1945-49, RG 260, NACP.

³⁶ Charles K. Gailey, Chief of Staff to Acting Deputy Military Governor (OMGUS), “Revocation of Approval of Dr. Joseph Müller,” 26 Nov. 1946, AG 000.1 Politics (Josef Mueller), Executive Office, Office of the Adjutant General, General Correspondence and Other Records (“Decimal File”), 1945-49, RG 260, NACP.

³⁷ Clay to Keating (OMGUS), “Re your radio about Joseph Müller”, 7 Dec. 1946, AG 000.1 Politics (Josef Mueller), Executive Office, Office of the Adjutant General, General Correspondence and Other Records (“Decimal File”), 1945-49, RG 260, NACP.

before the *Landtag* election. As Keating had noted to Clay earlier, if the Military Governor had proceeded quickly with OMGB's recommendation to ban Müller from political office before the election, it wouldn't have been seen as overturning the will of the electorate.³⁸ Moreover, Clay's dismissal and banning of Schäffer shows that Clay had no problem with conducting a very public and direct political dismembering of a minister-president.

The real difference was that Schäffer had directly obstructed OMGUS directives, while Müller was a cooperative partner in the American occupation project. Clay recognized that the first democratically elected Bavarian minister-president in over a decade was a position of great significance—for the first time since 1933, the minister-president would represent the political will of the Bavarian people. With a liberal-conservative in this position, Clay would have a crucial ally in the German state-building project, an ally who would support the growing, centralized economic bureaucracy OMGUS was building into Bizonia. It was to this end that Clay defended his decision not to have OMGUS directly interfere against Müller, on the shaky ground of advice from "reliable sources that [Müller] did participate in move to get rid of Hitler" (which was not mentioned in Keating's own summary of Müller's Nazi-era activities³⁹) and that German courts should be allowed to decide the course of investigation. This last proposal would effectively spare Müller from any serious retribution, given the tendency of Bavarian courts to either terminate denazification cases or actually help former Nazis into political office.⁴⁰ While ultimately the traditionalists would force the liberal-conservatives to compromise on the moderate Hans Ehard as minister-president, Müller continued to serve as the influential Party Chairman.⁴¹

The Müller and Schäffer episodes show that, even as Clay and OMGUS took inconsistent and even contradictory policy positions, they were always consistent in valuing local political partners who would cooperate with the occupation. In this way, the first eighteen months of America's occupation of Bavaria was defined by the relative autonomy of the occupying military authority from the policy dictates of the metropole. As long as the Truman administration's internal conflicts between doves and hawks remained unresolved, Clay was able to spin policies however he liked in the interest of building up a cadre of German politicians loyal first and foremost to his occupation project. But by 1947 that would begin to change, as a Washington consensus around Soviet containment and German partition emerged. Denied the cracks of ambiguity with which he could advance his personal interests, the final 30 months of the occupation would see Clay's willingness to intervene in German party politics continue, but in the interest of Washington, rather than just OMGUS. Whereas the policy of cooperation had initially served the needs of America's on-the-ground colonial administrators, by 1947 it would be wielded in support of Washington diplomats and their ideological demands for a new West German state.

The Late Occupation (June 1947-May 1949)

A series of events over the course of about eighteen months marked a transition from an occupation that was still interested in denazification and quad-zonal cooperation to one with the prime objective of partitioning Germany and creating an industrialized,

³⁸ Keating to Clay, 2 Dec. 1946, AG 000.1 Politics (Josef Mueller); General Correspondence and Other Records ("Decimal File"), 1945-49; RG 260, NACP.

³⁹ Keating to Clay, 2 Dec. 1946, AG 000.1 Politics (Josef Mueller); General Correspondence and Other Records ("Decimal File"), 1945-49; RG 260, NACP.

⁴⁰ Hudson, "The U.S. Military Government and Democratic Reform and Denazification in Bavaria, 1945-47," 115, 141.

⁴¹ James, *The Politics of Bavaria—An Exception to the Rule*, 113.

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Western-aligned state in the American, British, and French zones. As Carolyn Eisenberg has shown, one major pivot point was the unveiling of the Marshall Plan in June 1947.⁴² Unlike Morgenthau's vision of denazification and demilitarization, Secretary of State George C. Marshall's plan to offer economic assistance to the European participants in World War II—and the refusal of this plan by the Soviet Union and the countries of its developing bloc—had strong support from Americans on the ground in Germany, who could read the writing on the wall that the era of quad-zonal cooperation was over and that communists, rather than just the far-right, were the new enemy.⁴³ Clay himself zealously adapted the new containment line, purging his staff of any communist sympathizers in October 1947.⁴⁴

Cementing this turn by OMGUS towards the new contain-and-partition line was the replacement of JCS 1067 by a new Joint Chiefs of Staff German policy statement, JCS 1779, in July 1947.⁴⁵ In JCS 1779, the Military Government's micro-political and Washington's macro-political concerns came together to produce a dramatic shift in official German policy. Clay got what he had long asked for: the encouragement of political decentralization and Allied-led centralized economic institutions in occupied Germany. Meanwhile, the new occupation directive almost entirely ignored denazification: the document referred only to the principles of the 1947 Moscow Conference between the four Allied Foreign Ministers, which had stripped the formerly massive policy plank of much of its teeth by abandoning attempts to prosecute "the mass of nominal members of the Nazi Party."⁴⁶ Clay also retained the support of Washington in forming cooperative relationships with a wide range of German political partners, even including left-of-center groupings like freely organized trade unions, workers' councils, and voluntary cooperatives.⁴⁷ This gave Clay the flexibility to, as late as spring 1949, pursue collaboration with the SPD when it suited his administrative objectives.⁴⁸

Yet JCS 1779 also marked a great victory for the conservatives who now dominated the Truman administration's foreign policy team. While Clay may have seen the abandonment of mass denazification as simply one less limitation on his autonomy, conservative diplomats like John McCloy saw in JCS 1779 a means to support and promote powerful business magnates who had collaborated with the Nazis.⁴⁹ At the same time, JCS 1779's planks on political decentralization and the *de facto* collapse of quad-zonal economic collaboration gave a green light to the hawks who wanted to partition Germany into Western- and Soviet-aligned halves. By June

⁴² Eisenberg, *Drawing the Line*, 9.

⁴³ After the Soviet refusal of the Marshall Plan, Louis A. Wiesner, an American diplomat stationed with OMGUS in Berlin, wrote to Clay's political advisor, Robert Murphy, that "We and our Allies should immediately begin to get just as skillfully tough toward the Communists in Western Germany and Western Europe as the Soviets are towards non-Communists in Eastern Germany and Eastern Europe," adding on that, in order to prevent a strike by Communist coal miners in Germany, "A bit of terror against the KPD leaders might help in this regard." Louis A. Wiesner to Robert Murphy, Ambassador, "Some Political Aspects of Application of Marshall Plan to Germany," 25 June 1947, Political Activity April 16, 1947—Dec 31, 1947, Political Parties and Activities Files, 1945-1947, Office of the Political Advisor, RG 260; NACP.

⁴⁴ Rogers, "Transforming the German Party System," 535.

⁴⁵ "Directive to Commander in Chief of United States Forces of Occupation Regarding the Military Government of Germany," 11 July 1947, *Germany, 1947-1949*, 35.

⁴⁶ "Denazification, cumulative review. Report, 1 April 1947-30 April 1948,"

Office of Military Government. University of Wisconsin Digital Collections; Denazi, 137.

⁴⁷ "Directive to Commander in Chief of United States Forces of Occupation Regarding the Military Government of Germany," 11 July 1947, *Germany, 1947-1949*, 40.

⁴⁸ Lamberti, "General Lucius Clay, German Politicians, and the Great Crisis During the Making of West Germany's Constitution," 46.

⁴⁹ Eisenberg, *Drawing the Line*, 12.

1948, with the Western Allies' announcement of a path to West German statehood and the Soviet blockade of West Berlin, this Cold War discourse from Washington had thoroughly infused OMGUS.⁵⁰ In order to retain its relevance in an imperial periphery that was no longer so peripheral, the Military Government had to use its policy of cooperation to enforce even tighter allegiance to American authority. Thus, cooperation grew from a tool of imperial control by peripheral elites into an extension of the metropole's ideological, macro-political, and colonial designs.

Just as the politics of containment was realigning the Washington foreign policy establishment, it was also changing the Military Government's relations with the CSU. While the liberal-conservatives had been the cooperative partners of the early occupation, Josef Müller's advocacy for Berlin as the capital of a future German state alienated his faction from OMGUS and its more ideologically-driven occupation project in 1947-49.⁵¹ Meanwhile, traditionalist leader Alois Hundhammer, who had been an early critic of OMGUS, sided with staunch American ally Konrad Adenauer on the need for political decentralization.⁵² With the CSU's most hardline conservative, anti-American members defecting to the new, far-right Bavaria Party in March 1948,⁵³ Hundhammer led his moderate traditionalists to seize most of the party leadership, setting the stage for a realignment in the OMGUS-CSU cooperative relationship.⁵⁴

Yet with the stakes for cooperation so high in a nascent Cold War environment, Clay held the entire CSU to a much higher standard for cooperation than he did the liberal-conservative faction in the early period. The Military Governor showed no mercy for those Germans who exhibited any lack of cooperation with American interests, even if they were generally ideological allies. Such was the case of Johannes Semler, a CSU traditionalist leader and the Bizonal Director of Economics. In January 1948 Semler gave a speech before the CSU's *Land* committee attacking OMGUS economic policies, which he blamed for failing to avoid a food crisis.⁵⁵ Most pointedly, he said that Germans should stop being thankful for Allied aid, which he said required them to pay in dollars for *Hühnerfutter*—literally,

⁵⁰ For example, the OMGUS Governmental Structures Branch had to lay down strict guidelines in June for American academics who were brought to Frankfurt to discuss issues of federalism in anticipation of the assembly of the Western ministers-presidents. Statements suggesting the creation of a unified German state or the formation of separate states by individual *Länder* would not be tolerated. Hans Simon, Chief, Governmental Structures Branch, to Pabsch, "Coordination of Federalism Project," 9 June 1948, Governmental Policy—Federalism, Records of the Civil Administration, The Policy Enforcement Branch, General Records of the Policy Enforcement Branch, 1945-1949, RG 260, NACP.

⁵¹ "Weekly Report of Political Activities Branch for Week Ending 2400 Hours 20 February 1947," to Vacca, 19 Feb. 1947, 3P CSU Jan-Jun 1947, Research Branch on Political Parties in Bavaria, 1945-1949, RG 260, NACP.

⁵² For more on the developing close relationship between Adenauer and American authorities in the first few years of the occupation, see Kisatsky, *The United States and the European Right*, 30, 33.

⁵³ James, *The Politics of Bavaria—An Exception to the Rule*, 98-99.

⁵⁴ By December 1948, when OMGB sided with Hundhammer's Bavarian Ministry of Education in supporting greater CSU-led state control over student unions—against the strong protest of Bavaria Party student leaders—it was clear within Bavaria that the liberal-conservative/traditionalist wedge in Military Government support had been replaced by an endorsement of the party's majority, moderate traditionalists. For more on the Bavarian student union episode, see "Hundhammer-AStA Controversy", OMGB, Records of the Intelligence Division, Research Branch on Political Parties in Bavaria, 1945-1949, RG 260, NACP.

⁵⁵ His critique was biting: Germany had been left with insufficient assets and Allied-fixed prices for goods were too low for German firms to make a profit on the international market. For a full overview of the Semler episode, see Gimbel *The American Occupation of Germany*, 191-93 and Jürgen Domes and Michael Wolffsohn, "Setting the Course for the Federal Republic of Germany: Major Policy Decisions in the Bi-Zonal Economic Council and Party Images, 1947-1949," *Zeitschrift für die gesamte Staatswissenschaft / Journal of Institutional and Theoretical Economics* 135, no 3 (1979): 338.

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“chicken feed” (a caustic reference to rations of corn).⁵⁶ These statements did not go over well in the Military Government: after being chastised by the OMGUS spokesman, Clay dismissed Semler from his Bizonal directorship.⁵⁷ The following month, when the Bavarian *Landtag* defied OMGUS by electing Semler to the newly expanded Bizonal Economic Council, Clay flew Minister-President Hans Ehard and CSU Chairman Josef Müller to Berlin, where he displayed a proclamation dissolving the Bavarian *Landtag*, already drafted in the event that the CSU leadership did not withdraw their support for Semler. Upon the leaders’ return to Munich, the *Landtag* promptly elected a replacement delegate.⁵⁸

This episode quite acutely shows Clay’s growing inflexibility with any lack of cooperation by German politicians with OMGUS. The actual content of Semler’s complaints was not really the issue here: as John Gimbel has noted, Clay had actually expressed many of the same frustrations about Allied economic policy in a May 1947 cable to Secretary Marshall.⁵⁹ What was at stake was Semler’s open, blatant, and flamboyant refusal to cooperate with OMGUS objectives, which constituted an outright challenge to Clay’s supreme authority in the American zone. In other words, Semler’s insubordination was seen and framed as total inflexibility in adjusting to the changes, inconsistencies, and incompleteness of OMGUS policies.⁶⁰ With the White House and State Department closely watching events in Germany, macro-political consideration compelled Clay to wield his micro-political might more strictly than he did just a few years earlier.

Another example of Clay’s new rigidity in German politics was his actions during the Parliamentary Council, elected by Germans across the Western Allied zones to draft the West German constitution—the Basic Law—in Bonn from September 1948 to May 1949. The Council was dominated by two competing factions: the SPD and the Adenauer-led CDU/CSU, or “Union,” bloc.⁶¹ Though the SPD had initially held all the Economic Ministries in Bizonia, by the time of the Council OMGUS was meeting the Social Democrats with a cooler reception, on the grounds of their refusal to cooperate on major issues of Allied control in Germany, such as American-led currency reform and Bizonia’s authority over the coal and steel industries. In other words, the SPD was increasingly adopting the anti-American position in contrast to the pro-American position of the CDU/CSU.

While the SPD led the initial draft of the Basic Law, in March 1949 Adenauer presented a counter-proposal that gave greater powers to the sub-national states, the *Länder*.⁶² With the SPD and the CDU/CSU having an equal number of delegates in Bonn, Clay recognized that it would take both public and backroom Allied support and brokering to settle which party grouping would ultimately decide the new

⁵⁶ Gimbel, *The American Occupation of Germany*, 192.

⁵⁷ Domes and Wolffsohn, “Setting the Course for the Federal Republic of Germany,” 338.

⁵⁸ Gimbel, *The American Occupation of Germany*, 193.

⁵⁹ Gimbel, *The American Occupation of Germany*, 191.

⁶⁰ In a cable to the War Department a few days after Semler’s speech, Clay insisted that, “Semler’s statements if correctly attributed are malicious lies and would warrant his dismissal although he is most competent of German directors.” While Clay clearly did not believe that the actual content of Semler’s statements were untrue, given that he had expressed similar concerns himself, the phrase “malicious lies” must be understood as targeting any public contradiction of OMGUS authority, any inability to bend with the changing winds of policy from Berlin and Washington. Clay, cable to Daniel Noce, 9 January 1948, document 312 of Smith, *The Papers of General Lucius D. Clay*, 528.

⁶¹ For more on the formation of the Union bloc, see Domes and Wolffsohn, “Setting the Course for the Federal Republic of Germany,” 334-37.

⁶² Kisatsky, *The United States and the European Right*, 34.

constitution.⁶³ The Military Governor set the stakes in a teleconference with Assistant Secretary of the Army Tracy Voorhees in April: “To accept German proposal on Basic Law means that open defiance by SPD leader Schumacher has won. It makes him greatest figure in Germany and repudiates CDU/CSU which has loyally stood by and which represents great majority in our zone.”⁶⁴ Even as the Allied foreign ministers urged Adenauer to give concessions to the SPD later that month, Clay continued to passionately attack any attempt at compromising with the Social Democrats, telling his political advisor Robert Draper and Voorhees that “we in offering compromise now bow to the arrogance and defiance of Schumacher and make him the top hero in Germany for his defiance. If you want that go ahead. Don’t ask me to do it.” The Military Governor even threatened to resign over the Allied compromise agreement. Though Voorhees refused to entertain this offer, Clay’s view of the future of Germany was bitter and grim: “I see four years’ work being destroyed.”⁶⁵

Though Clay made it clear that he disagreed with the SPD’s proposal for a more powerful central government versus the *Länder*, his vitriol had less to do with policy planks and more with Schumacher’s unwillingness to compromise with OMGUS at such a crucial time in and of itself. After all, American officials had very close relationships with more cooperative members of the SPD, such as West Berlin Mayor Ernst Reuter, whose vilification of the Soviet blockade of the city in 1948-49 and acceptance of American supplies was held up as a symbol of Western anticommunism.⁶⁶ In other words, to be a socialist was not a crime in the eyes of OMGUS, even in 1949, but unwillingness work with the Military Government was. Though Clay derided Schumacher as stubborn and inflexible, it was actually Clay himself who now applied the policy of cooperation so rigidly, excluding all but the most completely loyal political partners with a zeal that exceeded that of the more removed diplomatic minds across the Atlantic. Ironically, even though the conservative business establishment in Washington had despised the SPD for much longer than Clay, it was the Military Governor who now took the hardest line against the Social Democrats. For the occupation was Clay’s legacy, the instrument by which the former Army engineer had become one of the most powerful men in Europe. Now the SPD, in standing firm against Allied exhortations, appeared to threaten that legacy. Should Schumacher emerge from Bonn a victor and win West Germany’s first national elections on a platform of neutrality and nationalism, everything Clay had worked for—a Germany created by America in its own image, a loyal colony of a powerful empire—would be ruined.

Ultimately, Clay’s pessimism was misplaced. A pro-American coalition led by Adenauer’s CDU/CSU narrowly won the first West German federal elections of August 1949, cementing American influence in the heart of Europe well into the twenty-first century. Of course, as Deborah Kisatsky has shown, many of the hallmarks of West Germany’s early concessions to American wishes, such as the country’s entry into NATO in 1955 and the continuing presence of American military bases, were the product of tense negotiations across the Atlantic.⁶⁷ Yet these negotiations were built upon the imperial foundation that Clay’s OMGUS built during

⁶³ “Composition of Council: Excerpt from Report of Military Governor,” Aug. 1948, *Germany, 1947-1949*, 277.

⁶⁴ Clay, teleconference with Tracy Voorhees, William Draper, Goldwaithe Dorr, Edward Litchfield, 2 April 1949, document 702 of Smith, *The Papers of General Lucius D. Clay*, 1068-1081.

⁶⁵ Clay teleconference with Tracy Voorhees, Robert Murphy, 21 April 1949, document 723 of *The Papers of General Lucius D. Clay*, 1121-24.

⁶⁶ Kisatsky, *The United States and the European Right*, 35.

⁶⁷ For more the policy of cooperation in the early Federal Republic, see Kisatsky, *The United States and the European Right*, 36-58.

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the occupation. Cooperative relationships that OMGUS began in the early occupation, and then tightened under metropolitan pressure in the late occupation, would yield political fruit for decades to come.

Conclusion

In examining this piece of the American occupation of Germany through the lens of empire, the interplay between macro- and micro-politics stands out as one of the central tensions of the period. While the micro-political policy of cooperation was always paramount over ideology in the eyes of OMGUS, its application changed to suit the macro-politics of the metropole as the Military Government became an enforcer of Washington's Cold War discourse of containment and partition. OMGUS moved itself into alignment with Washington not necessarily because of ideological affinity, but rather because of a need to maintain its privileged position as the negotiator between metropole and colony at a time when the metropole itself was exerting more direct authority over its territory. This urgency, made more intense by the Military Government's immediate proximity to the high-stakes debates in the Parliamentary Council, compelled Clay to use the policy of cooperation to strictly enforce the new policy line from Washington. Thus, in order to retain a seat at the table of both American diplomacy and German politics, Clay moved OMGUS into alignment with Washington to the point where it actually became the metropole's strict enforcer through the policy of cooperation. OMGUS used the language of flexibility to create a clear dichotomy not between a socialist bloc and a bourgeois bloc in Bonn, but between one that would cooperate with a narrow and inflexible American line, and one that would not.

This narrative thus provides an insight into the way that German-American politics would develop during and after the Cold War. It would be defined by a closeness beyond that of allies, and more like that between an empire and a former colony that, while nominally independent, in actuality remained dependent. In those formative early years of the Cold War, the United States had no closer, more cooperative partner in Europe than Germany: it banned the Communist Party even as communists built up strong bases of support in France and Italy, it joined NATO as France was undermining American control of the organization, and decades later it was implicated in an NSA spy operation targeting its own citizens on a scale not seen in any other European country.

But this paper isn't just about this one piece of how and why the United States-Federal Republic relationship developed—it's about the broader question of how American institutions functioned as the United States projected its influence into a postwar power vacuum. This is a topic of interest not just for students of Cold War American foreign policy, but those of empire more broadly. This research has shown the crucial role of peripheral colonial actors in negotiating the establishment of direct foreign rule (and subsequent, softer forms of political influence) between the metropole and local elites. With precedents in the indirect rule of the nineteenth and twentieth century British and French colonial empires, this power dynamic is one that merits further research into other colonial and postcolonial spaces.

It is also crucial in evaluating this research and its implications to not see OMGUS as a moderating, detached actor stuck right in between two diametrically opposed forces, trying merely to balance interests and keep all parties pleased. Rather, as Clay's rhetoric when discussing the SPD shows, the peripheral colonial force is fundamentally an arm of empire. Its self-interest is not in balancing the desires of colonial and colonized elites for their own sake, but in maintaining its position of power over people who have not elected it, who have not given it a mandate to rule. Thus, the Military Government's embrace of political elites in early occupation

Bavaria was useful not because the latter held the confidence of the people (elections would come after the cooperative relationship with the liberal-conservatives began to develop), but rather because they could shape the American-occupied proto-state in a way suitable to the administrative needs of the occupiers. Abandoning mass denazification, for example, allowed the Military Government to fill the Bavarian power vacuum with a liberal-conservative elite that would be happy to work with American occupiers who would not hold professional and business success during the Third Reich against them. A grassroots political movement of those who had been on the margins of Nazi society may not have been so cooperative with OMGUS after the initial glee of liberation gave way to expansion of American political and economic interests in Germany. All this is to say, while the type of empire that OMGUS practiced fairly autonomously in the early period of the occupation was less strict than its engagement during the late period, in both times the aim was the same: the expansion of American political and economic power in the vacuum left behind by the Third Reich. That is not to say that many ordinary people did not benefit as much as the CSU elites from the American occupation—from the return of democratic elections to the “economic miracle” of the 1950’s, West Germans could reap many benefits from their country’s special relationship with the United States. But, just as the developmentalist colonial states of early twentieth century Britain and France ultimately served the metropole more than the colony, so too did the relationship between the United States and the Federal Republic after World War II serve the interests of Washington, OMGUS, and their local allies first, and only after consider those of ordinary Germans.

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