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**THE FAILED POST-WAR EXPERIMENT: HOW CONTEMPORARY
SCHOLARS ADDRESS THE IMPACT OF ALLIED DENAZIFICATION
ON POST-WORLD WAR II GERMANY**

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THE FAILED POST-WAR EXPERIMENT:
HOW CONTEMPORARY SCHOLARS ADDRESS THE IMPACT OF ALLIED
DENAZIFICATION
ON POST-WORLD WAR II GERMANY

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As the tide changed during World War II in the European theater from favoring an Axis victory to an Allied one, the British, American, and Soviet governments created a plan to purge Germany of its Nazi ideology. Furthermore, the Allies agreed to reconstruct Germany so a regime like the Nazis could never come to power again. The Allied Powers met at three major summits at Teheran (November 28-December 1, 1943), Yalta (February 4-11, 1945), and Potsdam (July 17-August 2, 1945) to discuss the occupation period and reconstruction of all aspects of German society. The policy of denazification was agreed upon by the Big Three, but due to their political differences, denazification took different forms in each occupation zone. Within all four Allied zones, there was a balancing act between denazification and the urgency to help a war-stricken population in Germany.

This literature review focuses specifically on how scholars conceptualize the policy of denazification and its legacy on German society. Scholars use common themes emphasized in denazification scholarship prior to the reunification of Germany and post, which include: economic, political, and judicial. Contemporary scholarship took the major themes of denazification and evaluated the success of denazification within the political, economic, and judicial systems of both the eastern and western zones. Today's scholars draw further conclusions from previous scholarship in the West and East, and reflect a cohesion between the East and the West within their research about German historiography. Furthermore, this review emphasizes the new research within the field, German memory and how failed Allied denazification policies had a significant impact on both the East and West German people's ability to come to terms with their Nazi past. Therefore, this literature review showcases the departure from previous scholarship within German historiography, and the innovations made by contemporary scholars in emphasizing the failures within the political and judicial systems of

denazification in both the eastern and western zones by analyzing the German experience and the specific effects on German society and national identity.

Contemporary scholarship creates a more comprehensible analysis of the period because of the reunification of Germany. Experts in the field continue to uncover new information about the occupied eastern zone of Germany; therefore, the narrative about denazification continues to evolve. Scholars, who published literature prior to reunification, lack certain elements crucial in understanding the complete historiography of denazification. One major element missing from the denazification narrative prior to reunification is a lack of representation of the Soviet occupied zone. Most literature prior to reunification is western-Allied focused with strong political undertones.

Another key element missing from prior scholarship is historians did not emphasize the social history affected by denazification policies. The social experience of East and West Germans was missing from scholarship within the late 1940s-1980s. There are several examples of historians who created strong historiographies of the period that are valuable, but lack the eastern perspective, as well as the social experience.

Elmer Plischke, wrote a useful piece in April 1947 about “Denazifying the Reich,” but his blatant disregard to the Soviet-occupied zone and the German experience makes his piece of literature the quintessential narrative that reflects prior historiography in the field. Even though Plischke’s narrative favors a western perspective, he provides empirical evidence and introduces the shortcomings and complexities of denazification that contemporary scholars still discuss. Some of the complexities he includes are the political controversies between the Western Allies

and the Soviet Union,¹ and the difficulty the Allied Council had in enforcing denazification and removing Nazis from civil service occupations.² The shortcomings Plischke mentions within his work are still considered the failures of denazification in today's narrative. Where the historians diverge is in their explanation of why the failures happened and their effects on the German populace.

Lastly, Plischke represents a common notion among scholars today that, because denazification struggled to "satisfactorily rid Germany of pernicious Nazi psychology and attitudes," it failed.³ Plischke's historiography is valuable within the field today, but lacks an eastern perspective unlike contemporary scholarship. There is a notable shift within scholarship from Plischke's western world narrative around the late 1980s and into the early 1990s that elaborated on common themes of denazification (political, economic, and judicial) to include East and West German social history and memory.

In 1990 Wolfgang Benz broke from a Plischke-type of narrative and used popular themes to draw conclusions from their effects on German citizens. Benz' article focuses on director, Veit Harlan, who produced the Nazi-sponsored film, "Jud Suss" (1940), and his trial for crimes against humanity. Benz elaborated on the judicial theme of denazification by extending his research to rehabilitation of previous Nazi party members. His conclusion was that denazification struggled to rehabilitate party members and functionaries, and instead created silence, which ultimately hindered German memory. Benz' innovative work perpetuated more

¹ Elmer Plischke, "Denazifying the Reich," *The Review of Politics* 9, no. 2(1947):160.

² *Ibid*, 158.

³ *Ibid*, 164.

scholars to study German memory and further analyze denazification policies to create new conclusions.

Today's scholars' strength lies in the emphasis they put on social history and memory. Scholars continue to express the need to explore "the impact that American, British, French, and Soviet occupiers had on German identity and memory."⁴ The first section of the review, "Understanding the Historiography of Denazification: East vs. West," emphasizes the historiography of denazification from both the Soviet occupied zone and the Western-Allied zones. Section two, "Denazification and the Judicial, Economic, and Political Systems of Germany's Occupied Zones," examines how contemporary literature displays the failures of judicial, political, and economic systems, which had major implications for German society post World War II. Lastly, section three, "The Legacies of Denazification," displays the newest innovations of scholarship on denazification, which is centered around German memory. The last section illustrates the major effects and failures of denazification on Germany. The field continues to evolve in regards to denazification, and memory studies are at the forefront, which makes the last section highly significant. All three sections reflect the recent scholarship about denazification and how contemporary scholars "consider the actual results of the experiment of denazification."⁵

⁴ Mikkel Dack, "Retreating into Trauma: The Fragebogen, Denazification, and Victimhood in Postwar Germany" in *Traumatic Memories of the Second World War and After*, ed. by Peter Leese and Jason Crouthamel (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2016), 147.

⁵ Mary Fulbrook, *Interpretations of the Two Germanies* (New York, St. Martin's Press Inc, 2000), 15.

Section One: Understanding the Historiography of Denazification: East vs. West

Part I: The Denazification Debate with the United States and Soviet Union⁶

Historians begin discussion of denazification prior to the conclusion of the war (1943) and continue their analyses far beyond the creation of the Federal Republic of Germany and the Democratic Republic of Germany. The complex legacy of denazification came to light by reunification in 1989 because of the different paths the Allied Powers took during denazification. Contemporary scholarship is focused in displaying both the perspective of the East and West; this is a main divergence from prior reunification work. Section one's purpose is to review the historiography of denazification within contemporary scholarship.

According to Fulbrook, the term *denazification* was first used by the Americans in the Pentagon as early as 1943.⁷ The Pentagon began the program by focusing the majority of their efforts on reform of the German legal system. The purpose, according to the Pentagon, of denazification was to reverse the *Gleichschaltung* (*process of Nazification*) that pervaded German society in 1933/34. Denazification meant purging German society of its Nazi influence. Even the most active supporters of denazification knew that Nazism could not be completely undone. In order to combat Nazism within occupied Germany, the Pentagon focused directives of denazification on not only the legal system, but applied to the “full range of Allied reform and punishment measures in occupied Germany within the political and economic systems as well.”⁸

⁶ Ibid., 11.; Many scholars discuss the difficulty in creating a succinct periodization for historical investigation. Historian, Mary Fulbrook, explains that periodization is a “convenient framework for the retrospective imposition of intellectual order and the flow of events and trends.” Depending on the historical narrative, historians must choose the specific trends, turning points, and key dates that stand out to explain a period. She urges scholars not to limit themselves to very specific dates because, in order to draw conclusions about a historical period, one must look at what happened previously in order to fully understand the period.

⁷ Perry Biddiscombe, *The Denazification of Germany: A History 1945-1950* (Gloucestershire: Tempus Publishing Limited, 2007), 9.

⁸ Ibid.

Perry Biddiscombe, a leading member in the field on denazification expresses that when analyzing denazification historiography, it is pertinent to ask the two following questions: “Were the goals of denazification policy worthwhile and were they practical? And second, was denazification policy developed in a responsible and balanced fashion?”⁹ The process of denazification shared in a variety of literature through the past seventy-five years, has not changed in regards to asking the above questions posed by Biddiscombe. Scholarly work by historians such as Biddiscombe, unpack the questions posed with a new perspective. He engages in the limitations of denazification by analyzing the German citizenry, pre and post war. Biddiscombe explains that the Allied Powers created policies for denazification without a strong analysis of the individuals who voted in the NSDAP. He references Jill Jones by stating, “Allied policymakers never developed planning to the point where they were able to draw distinctions between moral and political criteria, much less defining specific aims in either sense.”¹⁰ There is a much stronger, unapologetic tone, between Biddiscombe’s narrative of denazification from Elmer Plischke, an early denazification scholar. Unlike literature published pre-reunification, Biddiscombe’s historiography does not sound political. He is justified in the ways in which he criticizes both the United States and the Soviet Union’s policies. There is an unbiased, genuine truth that is illustrated throughout his research, and this is an important contribution to the field. Biddiscombe’s literature does not depart from prior historiography, he simply adds to the historical narrative with the limitations and criticisms at the forefront. His work reflects the state of the field today.

Biddiscombe begins his narrative on denazification in 1943 when Allied victory in Europe seemed possible. He reminds us that the Allies were not quite sure what they were going

⁹ Ibid, 40.

¹⁰ Ibid, 41.

to do with postwar Germany. There was a major difference of opinion between the Western Allies and the Soviet Union due to ideological differences.¹¹ Throughout the last year and a half of the war, the Allied Powers debated their options of how to approach postwar Germany. Some diplomats advocated mild treatment of the German people, while others wanted to handle the Germans harshly. There was discussion on breaking apart Germany to create a balance of power in Europe, while others promoted a centralized, federal state. Not only did the Allies have different opinions about post-war Germany, but among each country's respective bureaucrats there were debates as well. Biddiscombe remarks that the debates within each country are a crucial point in analysis when analyzing denazification because they had such large impacts on how the directives were carried out in each zone.

Within the United States, denazification was debated by many. Under the direct oversight of General Dwight D. Eisenhower, the Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF) created a civil affairs section in February 1944 called G-5 with a German Country Unit (GCU) for occupation planning.¹² According to Biddiscombe, "The GCU's primary function was to prepare the *Handbook for Military Government for Germany*."¹³ Work on the *Handbook* began on March 4, 1944, and the goal was to be the universal policy guide on the occupation of Germany. The *Handbook* reflected the theme of one school of thought on the occupation of Germany; the "welfare of the governed."¹⁴ One of the areas of the *Handbook* that ultimately failed is its ability to address the power and influence of the Nazi Party.

¹¹ Mary Fulbrook, *A History of Germany 1918-2014* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2015), 114.

¹² Biddiscombe, 19.; The "welfare of the governed" was a nineteenth century concept that focused not so much on political sentiments, but on administering to an enemy population where the occupiers would help restore utilities, public health, and the labor supply to any affected area.¹²The *Handbook* fixated on removing undesirable personnel and abolishing the Nazi Party, thus keeping the administrative structure in Germany primarily intact. Biddiscombe, 19.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

The GCU did not have the foreknowledge or know how to cope with the infiltration of the Nazi Party into local administration, the civil service, the economy, and legal system. In response to purging the NSDAP members from all facets of German society, the GCU created the *Fragebogen*.¹⁵ “Welfare governed” policy was considered by many as a “soft” approach to occupation, which threatened many others’ opinions in the United States, therefore, sparking even more debate about denazification and occupation.

One of the first cohorts to devise a denazification plan in Washington was a group made up of Ivy League academics and dissidents from Germany, known as the Frankfurt School. They used their analysis of life in Nazi Germany in order to create a plan to purge German society of Nazism. They concluded that the only way to defeat Nazism was to allow the German people to exercise a “spirit of criticism.” This meant that the purge of Nazism would come from within the population rather than administratively by occupying powers.¹⁶ The Allied invasion of Germany, according to the Frankfurt school, hindered the ideal of self-cleansing, therefore it was abandoned.

Another school of thought was the Neumann School, which had roots in the American “spoils systems.” With a great deal of research, the Neumann School compiled lists of different degrees of perpetrators within the NSDAP,¹⁷ and evaluated the level of Nazi affiliation in membership groups or appointments. An interesting outcome of the Neumann School is it perpetuated one of the major limitations of denazification. The focus on groups rather than individual actions allowed perpetrators to slip through the postwar legal system.

¹⁵ Ibid., 24.; The *Fragebogen* was given to all German government officials and asked for detailed information about Nazi affiliation. Any German citizen who wanted to receive their ration cards or work under Allied occupation had to fill out the 131 questions on the *Fragebogen*.

¹⁶ Ibid., 22.

¹⁷ The groups consisted of Wehrmacht members, civil servants, SS officials, and business leaders.

Lastly, the collective guilt school of thought came in late summer 1944. Collective guilt was the notion that all Germans should reap the consequences and responsibility of their Nazi leaders. As the war continued on, there was a common plan upon occupation of German territory in which the occupying party provided maintenance of economic and social life before final Nazi surrender.¹⁸ Due to the sentiment in favor of collective guilt shared by many Allied personnel, both the handbook and CCS 551 were disregarded. In Washington, the *Handbook* received negative criticism, and the desire to create a hardline plan of stripping Germany of all their economic power and dividing the country into several small, agriculturally driven provinces became the new focus in the Treasury Department.¹⁹ The hard occupation was disputed and the final resolution for occupation came in a compromise within the United States and its leading bureaucrats. The War and State Departments chose a combination between the “welfare state” and “collective guilt” policies, realizing that eliminating fascist influence did not go far enough in Italy, therefore, Nazis needed to be punished more harshly for their involvement.

Biddiscombe’s contribution is his criticism about the debates that took place within the United States prior to the conclusion of the war are major contributions to the field; for example. Within Biddiscombe’s historiography, he explains that none of the leading policy makers wanted to take a risk on a “bomb-battered” country, which is understandable, but the fearfulness within the bureaucrats was reflected within their various denazification policy. The American bureaucrats were so consumed with fear and this sense of competition to implement President Roosevelt’s will in regards to the occupation that their policies ended up useless, and still unfortunately implemented. He creates a rather unusual, but correct comparison between Hitler

¹⁸ Ibid., 29.

¹⁹ Ibid., 30. This plan was known as “hard occupation” and was constructed by Henry Morgenthau within the US Treasury Department.

and Roosevelt. When historians study the political and bureaucratic inner workings of the Nazi state, they often use the “functionalist interpretation;”²⁰ Biddiscombe uses this to describe the bureaucratic debates about denazification in the U.S. Similar to Hitler, Roosevelt used a similar approach with his leadership, specifically during the first stage of denazification due to his personalization of executive power²¹ and distrust in the state department. In comparison to Nazi bureaucrats, American policy makers from the War, State, and Treasury Departments all proposed the most radical denazification policies in order to outperform the others.²² Biddiscombe cites this as the beginning to the failure of American denazification. Yet he notes that the United States was not the only Allied power that struggled to agree on an appropriate denazification program.

Similar to the United States, there were three schools of thought within the Soviet Union. The first school was the “hard peace” approach, which would have appeased the leaders in the United States Treasury Department.²³ Created by two committees in the Politburo, the “hard peace” approach suggested the dismemberment of Germany, but differed on how that should be accomplished. One committee stated there should be five million workers recruited from Germany to do hard labor in the Soviet Union. The other, knowing that the Western Allies would not agree, stated that the USSR’s “best bet was simply to dismantle and extract massive quantities of industrial booty as quickly as possible, treating the occupation like a glorified

²⁰ Ibid, 41.; The functionalist interpretation explains the political and bureaucratic system of the Nazi state was run by a charismatic and remote leader. The leader provided rough policy guidelines and allowed subsidiary centers of power implement the policies with what they believed to be the desire of the Fuhrer. Due to competition, the lower level bureaucrats radicalized while implementing the will of the Fuhrer.

²¹ During Roosevelt’s presidency, he became a strong figurehead of the federal government. All presidents are a figurehead, but Roosevelt was different. He created an almost cult of personality around himself. Due to his immense control and influence, his cabinet members and other departments within the federal government to create policies in the name of Roosevelt (what would FDR want and how would he fix the problem).

²² Ibid., 41

²³ Ibid., 121.

pillaging expedition.”²⁴ The second school of thought focused on keeping Germany together, but Bolshevizing it, hoping that revolutionary currents would spread from the Soviet zone to the Western zones.²⁵ Re-indoctrinated prisoners of war and German communists in exile would lead the revolution against the Junker class. The last school of thought fixated on preserving the “popular front” strategy.²⁶ This strategy would serve as a path to socialism and would have less interference from the Soviets in German affairs, even though a course would require re-education, land reform, and decartelization.²⁷ After much deliberation, the Soviets chose a combination of the “hard peace” approach with Bolshevik undercurrents.²⁸

Biddiscombe explains that both the United States and the Soviet Union failed in creating adequate policies within their own country because of bureaucratic rivalries.²⁹ Even though the debate with America had democratic accountability, it did not mean it was any more consistent and successful than the Soviet Union. Biddiscombe emphasizes the important conclusion made by scholars today about the two superpowers, which is that their ideologies and bureaucracies were different, but they both shared the inability to create a successful denazification program. The debates within both Allied nations had lasting negative effects on denazification.

Part II: The Denazification Debate between the Allied Powers

As the Allies advanced upon Germany in 1944, neither the Soviet Union nor United States had a fully formulated plan for denazification in their occupied territory, which scholars unanimously agree is why it ultimately failed. The Allies did reach one conclusion during

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid., 122.

²⁶ Ibid, 124.; “Popular Front Strategy advocated for the establishment of an anti-fascist German bourgeoisie order and the completion of the 1848 Revolution.”

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid, 125.

²⁹ Ibid, 153

wartime planning, which was the agreement on zones of occupation. The Post-Hostilities Planning Subcommittee in September 1943 created a map of three proposed zones of occupation. At the Teheran Conference in late 1943, it was decided that the general agreement for denazification was to demilitarize, denazify, and democratize Germany.³⁰ At the Yalta Conference in February 1945, the Big Three agreed that France should have an occupation zone too along with the three zones allocated for the United States, Soviet Union, and Great Britain. There were multiple disagreements between the Allies about reparations, eastern boundaries of Germany, and the future of Germany.³¹ Finally, at the Potsdam Conference from July 17 to August 2, 1945, the Allies, consumed in debate, had little resolution or compromise on how to conduct denazification, thus leading to inconsistencies within the occupation zones.

Even though the Allies struggled with compromise, at Potsdam the Protocol of Proceedings was created. This indicated the goals of Allied denazification: denazify, demilitarize, and democratize. The Allies agreed to a nine-point plan:

- (1) Liquidating the Nazi Party including affiliated and subsidiary organization, (2) Eradicating of Nazism from German legislation, decrees, and regulations, (3) Changing the names of parks, streets, and public ways, institutions and buildings and statues named after persons or things associated with Nazism or German militarism, (4) seizing and holding of premises, property, funds, and loot of Nazi Party and its affiliated and subsidiary organizations and of individual Nazis subject to arrest, (5) prohibiting of Nazi privileges and benefits of Nazi pensions and emoluments, (6) arresting and detaining Nazi leaders, influential supporters, and other persons dangerous to the Allied occupation and its objective, (7) removing and excluding from public office and positions of responsibility and importance in quasi-public and private enterprise of members of the Nazi Party, (8) preventing Nazi propaganda in any form, and removing Nazism from German information services and media, and (9) prohibiting German parades, the public playing or Nazi anthems, and the public display of Nazi flags and other party insignia and paraphernalia.³²

³⁰ Fulbrook, 114.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 115.

³² Plischke, 156.

Many scholars, like Fulbrook and Biddiscombe, discuss the Protocol Proceedings as a pivotal moment in denazification policy historiography. Within the proceedings there was so much left open for interpretation that the occupiers chose to institute their own understandings. Fulbrook reflects the conclusions drawn by contemporary scholars by explaining the major differences between the West and East. The western zones tended to lean more towards rehabilitation than transformation meaning the West utilized the political and economic systems already in place in Germany, but elevated them to mirror America's democracy and capitalism.³³ On the contrary, in the eastern zone of Germany, the Soviets created a radical transformation of the social and economic organization of Germany.³⁴

Even though the zones approached the aims of occupation differently, they all faced the same complex obstacles—which ultimately led to the failure of denazification in all zones. Failure in both the East and the West is a new conclusion made by post-reunification scholarship. Because so much of the East was shut off to western historians and politicized for propaganda, scholars were unable to make strong comparisons of denazification's legacy as a whole. Fulbrook explains, "They had to administer a war-torn country, attempt to get basic transport and communications functioning again, feed and house the hundreds of thousands—eventually millions—of refugees fleeing or expelled from former Eastern homelands, and combat problems of homelessness, malnutrition and disease among the native population."³⁵ In addition to administering to infrastructure and the welfare of Germany, the Allied Powers had to purge their zones of Nazis and try to reeducate an entire population. Even though the Allies had differing

³³ *Ibid.*, 126.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 125.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 122.

opinions, they all agreed to the same objective: to ensure Germany would never threaten her European neighbors or the rest of the world again.³⁶

Debates among scholars about each zones' denazification efforts persist. Some historians, like Louisa McClintock, tend to argue that the Soviets focused specifically on their ideological agenda, so much so that behind every step of their denazification policy there was an underlying motivation to turn the eastern zone communist. Some of McClintock's claims are in conflict with the prevailing way of thinking in the field, specifically with her generalizations made about the Allied Powers. She claims that denazification policy was "administered uniformly," yet other scholars such as Biddiscombe and Jeffrey Herf beg to differ.³⁷ McClintock's voice resonates more with scholars prior to the opening up of East Germany.

In contrast, Biddiscombe and Fulbrook explain that Soviet denazification aimed at purging their zone in Germany of fascism; however, through late 1946 to 1947, the Soviets transformed their zone along ideological lines.³⁸ They also share that the Soviets were not the only zone to mirror ideology after their own. The United States also used their occupation powers to rehabilitate the ideology of West Germans. Fulbrook and Biddiscombe represents a new balance in the field today by incorporating the political aspirations of both the United States and the Soviet Union.

Within McClintock's scholarship, she omits the early process of Soviet denazification, in addition to the United States' agenda. She states, "For the Soviets, denazification was a tool for seizing control of the state apparatus and collectivizing economic life, and they made virtually no

³⁶ Plischke, 153.

³⁷ Louisa McClintock, "Facing the Awful Truth: Germany Confronts the Past, Again," *Problems of Post-Communism* 52, no. 6 (2005): 33.

³⁸ Fulbrook, 125 and Biddiscombe, 152.

attempt to distinguish between active and nominal Nazi Party members.”³⁹ McClintock is not mistaken with her interpretation, but Biddiscombe and Fulbrook share a more comprehensive contemporary analysis of the steps the Soviet Union took to create a zone primed to become the German Democratic Republic, and incorporate the United States’ desire to push their respective ideology on their occupation zone.

Scholars such as Fulbrook, Biddiscombe, Herf, and McClintock share similar interpretations of the differences between the Anglo-Allied Powers and the Soviets, and how they conducted denazification within their zones of occupation in Germany. Contemporary denazification historiography showcases the distinct differences between the East and West, but also explains similar limitations and struggles both zones experienced. In prior reunification scholarship, the historiography not only is missing the eastern zone, but also the relationship between the West and East. Post-reunification scholarship emphasizes a “double history of Germany.” Fulbrook states that there are attempts, which resonate within all of the scholars showcased within this review, to integrate the East German past into the history of Germany.⁴⁰ Contemporary scholars are more successful than previous historians in weaving an interconnected historiography between the western and eastern occupation zones, but according to Fulbrook, still tend to lead with their western voice. **Soviet Zone:**

Before examining the historiography of denazification within the two zones illustrated by contemporary scholars, it is pertinent to understand the East with direct relation to the West. Fulbrook states that after the fall of communism in 1989, the archives opened, and historians rushed to uncover the truths. She clarifies that after the first rush occurred, historians chose to adopt a more thoughtful approach to the analysis of the German Democratic Republic (GDR),

³⁹ McClintock, 34.

⁴⁰ Mary Fulbrook, *Interpretations of the Two Germanies* (New York, St. Martin’s Press Inc, 2000), 6.

and reexamine the history of West Germany too.⁴¹ She explains that examining the historiography in East Germany is controversial because of the political differences.

Fulbrook shares that the process of uncovering the “truths” about the GDR have been daunting. The Federal Republic German Parliament created a commission of inquiry to assist in “coming to terms” with the history of the GDR.⁴² Fulbrook reminds us that the historiography of the East is an ongoing debate due to the way in which GDR history is divided. First, there is the Socialist Unity Party (SED) published history that promoted party legitimacy. Second, the unpublished history that consists of works from historians, sociologists, surveys carried out by organizations, and the Stasi. Lastly, the third category is that of the dissident narratives. All categories of history have their limitations from which to draw conclusions, but all are academically significant in their own right. Fulbrook states that is important while doing research to keep the limitations in mind of GDR history, but with proper analysis and corroborating empirical evidence, historians are successful in drawing legitimate conclusions about the East. The historiography on the Soviet zone within this review reflects the conclusions drawn from empirical evidence and formulated by leading scholars in the field such as Biddiscombe and Fulbrook.

Biddiscombe explains that it is commonly assumed that the Soviet denazification was far different from the West. Previous scholarship was written predominantly from a western perspective. Western historians prior to reunification explain denazification in the eastern zone as having little independent importance and “merely an initial means to achieve a more nefarious ends.”⁴³ Biddiscombe begins his analysis of eastern zone denazification with conclusions similar

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ Biddiscombe, 118.

to Fulbrook. He states, with “although much remains obscure, evidence from newly opened archives indicates a pattern of policy formation quite different from that suggested by Western models of totalitarianism.⁴⁴ He states that the Soviets probably wish they were as clever as the West gave them credit for, but in actuality they were as poorly organized, confused, and as indecisive as their Western Allies. He explains that the Soviets followed a similar path as their Western Allies’ policies by leaving Nazis in place, not adhering to the ‘top-down’ directives, and reacting to the local conditions, rather than instituting a universal plan.⁴⁵ Biddiscombe explicitly references the importance of modern research within the field through his beginning statements about eastern zone occupation as less political and more about concrete empirical evidence.

Similar to their Western Allies, the Soviets created an administration to oversee occupation, which was called the Soviet Military Administration (SMA). SMA began ordering their denazification directives in November 1945. An important distinction in contemporary scholarship is that Sovietization of the eastern zone was gradual.⁴⁶ Previously stated, the Soviets chose to fuse together the Bolshevik and “hard peace” schools of thought. In the Soviet zones, Red Army combat commanders served as town commandants where they struggled to listen to anti-fascist Germans.

Politically, directly after occupation, communists were immediately installed into key positions of civil service.⁴⁷ By September 1945 a dramatic socioeconomic revolution took place in the Soviet occupation zone: estates over one hundred hectares and lands belonging to former Nazis were confiscated and redistributed.⁴⁸ Fulbrook clarifies a common misconception that the

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 119.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 145.

⁴⁷ Mary Fulbrook, *Interpretations of the Two Germanies*, 14.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

land reform was not to simply move the East into a communist economic system, but focused more importantly on toppling the Junker class,⁴⁹ which the Soviets believed helped perpetuate the cause of militarism and Nazism in Germany.

Throughout Biddiscombe's work he repeats the Soviet Union's gradual plan to turn the eastern zone into a Soviet communist state. He cites minor and monumental moments such as the lack of support evoked at the Lander levels for the communist Party (KDP), to the suspension of reparation deliveries from the American zone, to dollar imperialism, and the collapse of the Control Council in 1948. The significance of Biddiscombe and Fulbrook's denazification narrative reflects a new revelation within post-reunification scholarship. Their research helps set a less western centered view on Soviet denazification.

As early as November 1945, the distinctions were made between "nominal"⁵⁰ and "activist"⁵¹ Nazis, and by 1947 there was "something of an amnesty for 'small Nazis'⁵² who were prepared to join in the building of a new society."⁵³ By 1948 and 1949, restrictions on the activities and rights of former Nazis were removed, and by 1952 received full GDR citizenship. Fulbrook explains that Soviet denazification policies in the eastern zone failed to allow East Germans to "confront the German legacy together" because of the assumption of a "new clean bill of political health"⁵⁴ brought on by communism. Denazification in the eastern zone inhibited the creation of a new national identity in the GDR. The East was unable to come to terms with

⁴⁹ The Junker class were the land-owning elites in Germany that the Soviets believed helped perpetuate the Nazi cause.

⁵⁰ Nominal Nazis were German citizens who became Nazi Party members after May 1, 1937. If individuals were not party members, they were subject to lose their jobs because Hitler wanted complete control over the German population. He needed the population to be at the mercy of the Reich in order for the control he aspired to have.

⁵¹ Activist Nazis were Germans who joined the Nazi Party without compulsion.

⁵² "Small" Nazis were individuals who were members of the party, with minor participation.

⁵³ Mary Fulbrook, *A History of Germany 1918-2014*, 125.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 129.

their Nazi past because of the distorted history perpetuated by Soviet denazification directives, specifically within their reeducation plan.

One of the leading memory historians in the field, Robert Moeller, states that as soon as the shooting stopped, the communist party, with unwavering support from the Soviets, altered the narrative from the individual German citizen possessing any type of guilt to laying the blame in the hands of Hitler and his “clique.”⁵⁵ Furthermore, reeducation emphasized the narrative of resistance against fascism and the importance to cleanse the eastern zone of Nazis. In reference to Moeller’s research, Fulbrook states, “In the East the radical socioeconomic reforms in agriculture, industry and finance started the process of transformation into a Soviet-style society.” Between the reeducation of a population and the transformation of many systems within society, they began reshaping the political attitudes and perceptions of the population in the East, thus paving way for a society free from their Nazi past.

Soviet-sponsored amnesia is an important conclusion made by many contemporary scholars in the field because it allowed for additional research on memory and the study of Germans from the East coming to terms with their Nazi past. Memory studies is one of the most significant developments within the field because it allows for a deeper understanding of the effects of occupation on the individual German citizenry, from both the West and East. Fulbrook is not a leading memory scholar, but her use of Moeller’s “collective amnesia” research within her work expresses support for the new conclusions made in the field and the significant support of memory studies by leading denazification scholars.

Western Zones:

⁵⁵ Robert Moeller, “The Politics of the Past in the 1950s: Rhetorics of Victimisation in East and West Germany” in *Germans as Victims: Remembering the Past in Contemporary Germany*, ed. by Bill Niven (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2016), 28.

Biddiscombe and Fulbrook both express the degrees of difference between denazification within the eastern zone versus the western. The East focused their efforts on transformation of the economic and political systems, while the West transformed the political system but rehabilitated all other aspects of German society.⁵⁶ Historians separate western zone denazification within two phases. Phase one includes the issuing of the *Fragebogen* and phase two focuses on the transition from retribution to rehabilitation, specifically through political and economic means.

By early summer 1945 there were four directives concerning denazification, specifically in the American zone. Similar to their Soviet counterparts, the Americans issued a directive in July 1945 that created 136 mandatory removal categories.⁵⁷ In order to categorize Nazis, the western Allies issued the *Fragebogen* to all German citizens within their zone. It had 131 questions on all aspects of political orientation and activity during the Third Reich.⁵⁸ The *Fragebogen* classified the individuals into five categories: (I) major offenders; (II) offenders; (III) lesser offenders; (IV) followers or fellow-travelers (*Mitläufer*); (V) exonerated.⁵⁹ A tribunal staffed by Germans, but overseen by Americans, would determine the classification. After final classification (there was an appeal process in place), individuals might be imprisoned, fined, restricted in their activities and employment, or be allowed to move in society freely.

In denazification post-reunification scholarship, the *Fragebogen* is an important piece of evidence to formulate conclusions about denazification from. Since the questionnaire was done on an individual basis, historians use it to analyze individual German experience in the West during the years 1933-1945. Scholars like McClintock, Biddiscombe, Bill Niven, and Fulbrook

⁵⁶ Fulbrook, 126.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

draw similar conclusions on the limitations within *Fragebogen* system and how it affected West German society. A common criticism among historians involves the 131 questions posed within the *Fragebogen* itself. McClintock states, “The format was vague and did not accurately establish effective criteria for determining active collaboration with the Third Reich.”⁶⁰ The questionnaire was designed to determine party affiliation, but the Allies did not take into account the extent of the Nazi Party’s infiltration into German society; the *Fragebogen* struggled to differentiate between the different categories of Nazi affiliation.

An interesting conclusion both Biddiscombe and McClintock reach involves the issue of addressing the easiest cases first. The “nominal” (classes III and IV) Nazis were tried and the more prominent were cast aside because the investigative process was easier and less cumbersome.⁶¹ In order to process the *Fragebogen*, the occupiers had to verify the responses with documented evidence. A “nominal” Nazi’s minor involvement in the party was less time consuming than an “offender.” Furthermore, there was the chance that people could lie or lessen their affiliation with the NSDAP.

Due to the cumbersomeness of the *Fragebogen* in the West, the Spring of 1946 was transformative. The Spring of ’46 was transitional because all Allied Powers realized that the German economy needed to be rebuilt rather than ravaged.⁶² The British and French struggled at home to feed their own people, and the United States worried about the communist threat. The dangers of communism were beginning to outweigh the Western Allies’ desires to punish former Nazis. The US State Department urged Clay to speed up denazification, even though many cases had yet been dealt with. The “schnell” reforms were put in place to recategorize Nazis into class

⁶⁰ McClintock, 34.

⁶¹ Biddiscombe, 61.

⁶² Fulbrook, *Interpretations of the Two Germanies*,14.

II (“Offender”) or class IV (“Followers”). By May 1, 1948 there were still 28,000 cases of Nazi “hardliners” (class II) awaiting trial.⁶³ The Land denazification ministries took over the cases and the *Spruchkammern* hurriedly reviewed the hardcore Nazis in the “Major Offenders” and “Offender” category. By May 1949, the Federal Republic of Germany was founded, and denazification was in the control of the new government of West Germany.

Fulbrook concludes through her historiography of western zone denazification a series of contemplative questions to the field. She wonders whether 1945, after unconditional surrender, really marks the ‘zero hour’ which many Germans like to claim.⁶⁴ She continues to question if there really was a fresh start for the West because denazification analysis from her own work and colleagues suggests that there was a high degree of continuity as far as both “personnel and economic structures, even though the political framework was radically changed in the West.”⁶⁵ She showcases the limitations within western Allied denazification policies, and also the ongoing research within the field. Fulbrook urges that more research needs to be done within the western German population during denazification to understand how far western denazification policy went to rehabilitate the West.

Conclusion on Overview of Denazification:

Denazification in both the eastern and western zones is an ongoing study among historians. Scholars continue to develop the historiography of the East and its relationship with the West during occupation. An example of disputed scholarship is in Stalin’s “hardline” communism plan in East Germany.⁶⁶ Because of the political differences of the western world and the Soviet Union, scholarship often reflected the political differences, therefore, many

⁶³ Biddiscombe, 80.

⁶⁴ Fulbrook, 15.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 16.

western historians throughout the duration of the Cold War concluded that the Soviets had a preordained plan to create a communist state within their eastern zone. After the archives were opened post reunification, contemporary scholarship reflects a different narrative that the future of the eastern zone was not preordained.⁶⁷

Fulbrook explains that there are areas in the field that need to continue to be analyzed, including eastern zone history involving the question of why the Social Democratic Party (SPD) and the Communist Party (KPD) ultimately merged together to form the Socialist Unity Party (SED).⁶⁸ Another area of inquiry is the Eastern Germans' personal experience and how they felt with the dramatic changes of occupation and communism to their lives. Lastly, an additional area of study that needs further consideration is whether or not American perceptions of the Soviet threat were realistic or exaggerated.⁶⁹ Fulbrook encourages further research to conceptualize how the policies helped support the division and creation of two different states and societies.⁷⁰ The haphazardness, politically-charged agendas, and inconsistencies of denazification helped perpetuate not only the longevity of the division of Germany, but also its collective memory as a reunified Germany.

Section Two: Denazification and the Judicial and Political Systems of Germany's Occupied Zones

Part I: Judicial System

The Allies focused a great deal of effort at the beginning of occupation, 1945-1947, to confront the Nazi past through the legal system; this period is known as the Nuremberg interregnum.⁷¹ Denazification within the judicial systems in the East and West includes the

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Biddiscombe, 146. (SMA Order 201)

⁶⁹ Fulbrook, 15.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 16.

⁷¹ Herf, 204.

Nuremberg Trials Länder tribunals. Scholars like Jeffrey Herf, John Michalczyk, and Susanne Karstedt examine conclusions made among their colleagues in regards to prosecuting nominal and major Nazi party members within the Nuremberg Trials and Länder tribunals.

Historian, John Michalczyk's historiography about the Nuremberg Trials aligns with the majority of contemporary scholars by emphasizing that Nuremberg marks the one moment where the Allied Powers came together during denazification.⁷² Where he stands out among his colleagues is his use of film to describe the historiography of the Nuremberg Trials. His approach draws similar conclusions to that of Herf and Karstedt, but his analysis renders a different perspective. He describes the Allied power's contribution to the trial through the evidence they contribute through the use of film, thus not only showing the combined commitment by the Allies to prosecute the Nazis for their crimes, but the different contributions made by each country.⁷³

Michalczyk states that the Nuremberg Trials were a combined effort between all Allied Powers to set a universal precedent on war crimes, crimes against humanity, and crimes against peace. They all maintained that the German citizenry could not and would not govern themselves until the crimes of the Nazi era were presented to Germans and to the world, and the only way to do this was through an International Military Tribunal.⁷⁴ The Nuremberg Charter was signed by the Allied Powers on August 8, 1945 to handle the war criminals of the European Axis Powers. The International Military Tribunal was established within Article 1 of the Charter. Article 6 of

⁷² John J. Michalczyk, *Filming the End of the Holocaust: Allied Documentaries, Nuremberg and the Liberation of the Concentration Camps* (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2014), 13.

⁷³ The British, Americans, and Soviets all created different documentaries illustrating Nazi atrocities. While liberating POW and concentrations camps across Europe, the Big Three enlisted members of the military to document the atrocities for evidence in the future trials. Because each country had a different advancement path, the film footage of Nazi inhumanity was different. The Soviets focused a great deal of their film on the cruelty of Nazi occupiers in the East, while the United States and Great Britain emphasized the viciousness carried out by the Nazis on the European Jewish population.

⁷⁴ Herf, 206.

the charter established the four counts for the indictment, which include: crimes against peace, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and participation in a criminal organization.⁷⁵ The Nuremberg Trials were held from November 20, 1945 to October 1, 1946, and the successor trials from 1946-1949. They established that “Hitler and the Nazi regime had launched World War II as a war of aggression and racism, had ordered and implemented the mass murder of European Jewry and millions of others in concentration camps and death camps.”⁷⁶

Within Biddiscombe’s historiography he focuses primarily on the different *Länder* in both East and West. Within the West, Biddiscombe cites a major shift within the Spring of 1946, which changed the course of denazification within the judicial system. All of the *Länder* governments approved the “Law of Liberation from National Socialism and Militarism.” The new legislation focused on rehabilitation and ended the collective-guilt policy. Rather than rely on the *Fragebogen*, Land authorities introduced a *Meldebogen*. The *Meldebogen* was a watered-down version of the *Fragebogen* with seventy-eight questions on personal identity, finances, and party affiliation. The Western Allies put in place the *Spruchkammern* (*denazification civilian tribunals*) that organized prosecutions on the basis of four categories: major offenders, offenders, lesser offenders, and followers.⁷⁷ By the spring and summer of 1946, six appellate tribunals were created to entertain appeals. The new plan separated the nominal Nazis from the active, so Germans could regain their place back in society. Even though the West sought reform within denazification policy, Biddiscombe concludes that it was not enough to save the program from failure.

⁷⁵ Michalczyk, 13.

⁷⁶ Herf, 206.

⁷⁷ Biddiscombe, 64.

Within Biddiscombe's research he shares the conclusions of western denazification within the judicial system. He states, "The 'Germanization' of denazification worked poorly than the first for a multitude of reasons such as many tribunals received bribes,⁷⁸ universities struggled to cleanse their faculty and study Nazi population,⁷⁹ and it was very difficult to find untainted judges and lawyers."⁸⁰ By the end of denazification, the legal system set up by the Americans, registered over 13 million Germans and tried 958,000.⁸¹ Twenty-five thousand were rated as a "major offender" or "offender" and 595,000 people were classified as "lesser offenders" or "followers." Three hundred and twenty-one thousand case proceedings resulted in exonerations or were abandoned and over a half of million people were punished, but most were fined.⁸² The efforts made within the western zones' judicial systems failed due to the difficulty to implement and enforce directives.

Throughout Biddiscombe's research on the East, he explains there were as many mishaps within the restructured judicial system similar to the West. Rather than tribunals (West), the Soviets developed Land-level commissions to deal with NSDAP members in their particular jurisdictions. The Land-level commissions evaluated the citizens in the eastern zone by utilizing their own questionnaire similar *Fragebogen*. The NSDAP members who held private or public posts had to submit to their local commissions. The commissions reviewed the questionnaire and decided the fate of each individual.

Biddiscombe's work on denazification within the judicial system is well received by the field. He is a leading historian because of his vast research conducted and recorded within his

⁷⁸ Ibid., 73.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 68.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 65.

⁸¹ Ibid., 81.

⁸² Ibid.

literature. Anyone can put out an abundance of material about denazification, but what makes his significant is his ability to treat the East and West as their own entities, but he merges them together to form one Germany history through the multiple failed policies carried out during Allied denazification. Biddiscombe is the quintessential historian in regards to how denazification research is shown in modern times by evaluating the Allied program not from just a western perspective, but from an eastern as well. His use of multiple *Länder* trials brings validity and clarity to his conclusions about the similarities and differences between the East and West.

Similar to Biddiscombe, Herf affirms that there were major differences between the West and East in regard to denazification within the judicial system in the East. Herf explains that authorities focused on social class, rather than individual responsibility. Herf states, “The aristocracy, officer corps, and middle classes were assumed to be followers of National Socialism, while the working class was assumed antifascist.”⁸³ Due to the Soviets emphasis on class, Herf encourages that there needs to be more research regarding political justice within the Soviet zone.

An example of Herf’s literature where he expresses the political injustice within the Soviet system is through the “The Waldheim Trials.”⁸⁴ East Germans were labeled “Nazi criminals,” but in actuality they displeased the East German authorities, which is exactly why Herf encourages more research to uncover other instances of injustice within the legal system in

⁸³ Herf. 74.

⁸⁴ Ibid.,73; The Waldheim Trials took place in 1950 and led to 4,092 convictions, including 49 executions, 160 life sentences, and 2,914 sentences longer than ten years. The Trials were disguised to the East Germans as a determination to confront the Nazi past.

the East.⁸⁵ Herf's research created a standard practice for other historians to investigate the East and the injustices through the lesser Nazi trials.

The conclusion of occupation in both the East and West did not conclude the analysis of denazification on the judicial systems within the zones. Karstedt and Herf specialize in the legacy of Nuremberg and the lesser *Länder* trials, and the considerable effects they had on Germans within the East and West. Their research is valuable to look at the legacy of Nazi trials on East and West German society. Both individuals present new research in the field in regards to the legacy of Nuremberg with respect to German social history. Herf focuses his research on memory (East and West), while Karstedt centers her analysis on ex-prisoner reentry and its implications specifically on West German society.

After the conclusion of occupation, many perpetrators were released from prison before the end of the 1950s.⁸⁶ Due to the inefficiencies of denazification in post-war German society, the judiciary system, specifically in Western Germany, struggled with transitional justice and rehabilitation of war criminals. Furthermore, Karstedt concludes that previous scholarship did not consider the effects on western Germans of former Nazis reentering society. She encourages scholars to continue analyzing reentry patterns post-international conflict because the effects on a society are long-lasting, which is conveyed in her research.

Particularly interesting is Karstedt's research on how the Nuremberg Trials created a blueprint for the international community on trying high level perpetrators, but did not set a precedent for the reintegration of perpetrators into their still troubled societies. The Allies did not create a procedure for executing prison sentences or early release within the restructuring of the

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Karstedt, 374.

judicial system during denazification.⁸⁷ She analyzes the returning war criminals in regards to their reentry, admission of guilt and justification, memoirs, and political activism. The effectiveness and legacy of the Nuremberg and the lesser trials on the two Germanies is Karstedt's significant achievement to the field. She concludes that the Nuremberg and the lesser trials did not help to rehabilitate the perpetrators, which prompted a new area of research in analyzing perpetrators reentry into eastern and western German societies, and the social effects from the lack of reentry policy from Allied denazification.

Each international tribunal, according to Karstedt is different, and she encourages scholars to understand the differences between the way the international community held Germany responsible post-Nuremberg and how countries today are held accountable for their actions. The difference lies in the relationship between the western Allies and the new government of the FRG. The FRG did not gain sovereignty unless the government legitimized the verdicts of the Nuremberg Trials.⁸⁸ Even though the Nuremberg Trials' verdicts had guaranteed legitimacy from the new government in the FRG, the Allies created no procedure or road blocks within their denazification policies for the reentry of Nazi perpetrators, therefore the new government in the FRG chose the procedure (or lack of) for the reentry of prior Nazis.

In addition to Karstedt's conclusions made about reentry policy, she made a compelling argument about the lack of individual guilt the Nuremberg Trials fostered for the prior perpetrators.⁸⁹ Karstedt claims that the denazification period failed to designate individual guilt, and shifted the ultimate guilt on Hitler. She concentrates her case study on Albert Speer and explains that he was the only high-ranking Nazi official to take moral responsibility, but pivoted

⁸⁷ Ibid., 373.

⁸⁸ Karstedt, 376.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 378.

from personal guilt to complete blame and responsibility with Hitler.⁹⁰ Albert Speer's total blame on Hitler perpetuated a type of transferring of guilt from the individual to Hitler.

Another important aspect of a war criminal's impact on the public, according to Karstedt, was the perpetrator sharing his or her story to the public through writing a memoir. Karstedt used Albert Speer's two memoirs to explain the power behind an ex-prisoner's memoir on a society's memory. She states that when the masses in West Germany read Speer's memoir it helped to normalize the climate of a "community of accomplices" within West Germany.⁹¹ Therefore, Speer fulfilled the wish of postwar Germans by being deeply involved in Nazi criminal activity but coming out untainted by his crimes. The rest of West Germany believed if Speer could be absolved, so could they.⁹² The justice system reformed by the western Allies during denazification did not rehabilitate prior perpetrators after Nuremberg, but helped perpetuate a society that was unable and unwilling to look at their own personal guilt.

Karstedt's article is extremely important insofar as it highlights the major conclusion from scholars about denazification: its ultimate failures within the legal system. Through analyzing the Nuremberg Trials and how war criminals came back into German society, Karstedt's analysis brings to the forefront the discrepancies and missteps that followed Nuremberg. Her research also touches on the broader theme of German memory and how war criminals like Albert Speer affected the collective memory of German society. A weakness in her article lies with her sample size. She focuses so much of the article on Speer, that she forgets to draw conclusions from the 78 cases that formed the basis for her preliminary conclusions. Albert

⁹⁰ Ibid., 379.

⁹¹ Ibid., 381.

⁹² Ibid.

Speer was a prominent perpetrator, but her argument would have been more compelling if she would have included more references to the other case studies.

Similar to Karstedt, Herf centers portions of his research on the legal measures taken during denazification, and the effects on German society. His major analysis is in the field of collective memory, and how the judgements from Nuremberg impacted the East and West German memory. Within section three, there is a much more in-depth conversation on how German collective memory was formed due to the mishaps of denazification policy by the western and eastern zones, but there is an important emphasis on the German judicial system and denazification. According to Herf, the trials created a very public expression of political history within each individual's memory. There was a connection between the Nuremberg judgements and their focus on Nazi aggression and crimes with postwar German misery.

Before and after the end of the war, the Eastern Germans specifically felt the wrath of the Nazi race war from the Soviet Union. The Allies showed little attention towards the suffering of the Germans, and the outcome of the Nuremberg Trials repeatedly focused attention back to the period of history from 1933-1945. Herf concluded that both the Soviet and Western Allies struggled to use the judicial system during denazification to help the German people come to terms with their Nazi past. The policies put in place hindered their soul-searching and had long-lasting impact on their collective guilt and memory, which is the major emphasis of Herf's research.

Herf elaborates on how collective guilt did not resonate with either the Eastern or Western Germans, primarily because the trials perpetuated the idea that the only people who were truly guilty of the Nazi atrocities were the high-ranking Nazis, and not the everyday

German citizenry.⁹³ Ostensibly because the Nuremberg Trials (along with other *Länder* tribunals) prosecuted the fascist leaders, the eastern zone was declared cleansed of fascism. Even though the Soviets did not come to this conclusion directly after the Nuremberg Trials, it was their way to never look back on the eastern zone's Nazi past, thus preventing collective memory and collective guilt within the Eastern population.⁹⁴

In summation, scholarship concludes that the judicial system put in place to deal with the crimes of the members of the NSDAP was ultimately insufficient. Biddiscombe summarizes the state of the field by stating, "The tribunals soon came to be likened to laundries: one entered wearing a brown shirt and left with a clean starched white shirt instead."⁹⁵ The judicial system failed to effect a general purge and provoke serious soul-searching. Both Herf and Karstedt express that the failure of the legal system from both the East and West during denazification had lasting effects on German society's collective memory. This conclusion by scholarship does not disprove the successes of creating an International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg, but due to the lack of policies in place for reentry, amnesties, and inefficiencies of *Länder* tribunals, and the need to survive after a world war, the judicial system during denazification cannot be categorized as an overall success and had major ramifications on German society.

Part II: Politics and Denazification

During the denazification period, German political life was reorganized or transformed, depending on occupation zone. The political differences between the Soviet Union and the United States were showcased during the implementation of their respective denazification

⁹³ Herf, 208.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 72.

⁹⁵ Biddiscombe, 127.

policies. Many of the inconsistencies within Allied occupation were due to a difference in political beliefs. These differences created a major wedge between the two superpowers, which perpetuated the beginning of the Cold War. Many scholars post reunification dedicate their research on understanding the effects Allied political policies had on the German people. This section displays how contemporary scholars communicate denazification of the political systems within the East and West, but also shares the new analyses on the legacy of political denazification.

As the war came to a close in late Spring 1945, the occupying powers decided how to reorganize German domestic politics. Fulbrook emphasizes while the Allied Powers were eager to restructure political life in Germany, the Germans themselves were primarily focused on their day-to-day survival, which created roadblocks for the implementation of Allied policy.⁹⁶ Fulbrook clarifies the difficulty the Allies had to transform political life because the Germans first priority was survival, not formulating a new democracy. There were many more worries that Fulbrook illustrates within German society such as rebuilding homes and communities, finding missing loved ones, food, and a job. Fulbrook explains that the Allied Powers faced obstacles prior to the actual implementation of new political policies due to the devastating state of existence of Germany.

All Allied Powers chose to use democratic rhetoric within their zone. The Soviet zone emphasized “democratic centralism,” while the Western zones emphasized “freedom and democracy.”⁹⁷ Due to the Allies’ different understandings of democracy, they took a variety of approaches to recasting Germany’s political system in their respective zones.

⁹⁶ Mary Fulbrook, *A History of Germany 1918-2014*, 118.

⁹⁷ Mary Fulbrook, *Interpretations of the Two Germanies*, 29.

Within the East, Fulbrook states by the fall of 1945, it became clear that the Soviet-backed KPD (German Communist Party) would never garner enough electoral support from the masses due to the popularity of the SPD. Between 1945-46 the Soviets created a merger between the KPD and SPD (German Social Democratic Party) to create the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED). Over the next years of occupation and denazification, due to pressures and purges, the communists were able to gain complete control of the SED. Under Soviet occupation, the SED focused on executing the “democratization” of East German politics under the Marxist-Leninist interpretation of democracy.⁹⁸ Fulbrook explains that even though the rhetoric, “democratization” was used in both the East and the West, the Western Allies were focused was focused more on rehabilitation of political life rather than a complete transformation.⁹⁹

The Western powers’ political views were more muted, according to Fulbrook than their Soviet counterparts. The West believed in a more grassroots approach, meaning the parties would be founded at the local levels first. Individuals who wanted to apply for new political parties could do so in autumn 1945.¹⁰⁰ The Western Allies controlled the licensing because they wanted to make sure of the new political parties’ democratic character. In the West, the SPD and KPD stayed separate unlike in the East where they combined. The Catholics and Protestants reformed as the CDU, and several liberal parties emerged, which merged into the Free Democratic Party (FDP). The CDU dominated West Germany for the next decade and a half with Konrad Adenauer as its leader. There were many small political parties that never made it out of the local level, and historians often note that even into the 1950s the vast number of

⁹⁸ Ibid., 120.

⁹⁹ Rehabilitation in the West meant that the occupiers used the history of political parties, but rehabilitated the structure to guarantee an American democratic process.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 120.

political parties looked similar to the Weimar Republic. The Western Allies used their power to make sure the political chaos of Weimar did not plague the Western occupation zones.

The British and Americans were determined to establish a working democracy at the local level. Mary Fulbrook explains that the Allies faced difficulties for their desire for a working democracy to come to fruition at the local levels, much to their own faults. Fulbrook sites Barbara Marshall's case study of Hanover. She explains that the British gave unfair advantages to conservative groups over Social Democrats and deprived the SPD of main organizational means such as forbidding youth and sporting groups.¹⁰¹ Due to the British control over the organization of SPD groups, it inhibited their ability to create a functioning community. With the lack of community present within the SPD, they were unable to efficiently organize, which was exactly the result desired by the British. Even though the West constantly were differentiating their democracy from the East, both superpowers were guilty of using their power as a strong hand in party politics.

Another example Fulbrook cites as a political obstacle within the western zones' denazification was their struggle to stay politically neutral during local elections. In one town a Nazi mayor was reelected democratically, and the Americans did not want him in power. They were conflicted because they wanted to remove the newly elected official, but knew they had to reinforce the message of democracy. The Allies realized quickly that the Germans could not quite conceptualize what democracy really meant. Fulbrook explains that democracy to post-war Germans had negative connotations because the individuals who remembered Weimar democracy associated it with national debt, humiliation, economic crisis, and political chaos. She creates a blanket assertion about post World War Germans and states that some Germans still

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 121.

associated democracy with humiliation, national defeat, and economic devastation, and on top of all of that it was being instituted by the victors.¹⁰² She needs to elaborate on her generalization because she negates the population of West Germans that embraced democracy. Fulbrook does improve her argument by stating that even with the negative sentiments held by the German people, by spring 1946 local governments were formed in the Western zones. The individuals elected worked with the occupying powers to rebuild Germany.

Fulbrook's conclusions about western Allied manipulation is enlightening because it reflects the reexamination of the western zones by post-reunification scholarship. The new tone of denazification narratives is indicative in Fulbrook's literature because she does not only emphasize Soviet problems, but western as well. Prior to reunification, scholars were creating separate German history, and Fulbrook demonstrates one of the distinguishing factors of new literature by combining the historiographies of the West and the East to create a more succinct representation of political denazification within German history.

Within Robert Moeller's research he concludes that the legacy of denazification within the political systems in the Soviet and western zones had a deep impact on the East and West German populaces. Even though the Soviets focused their efforts on communism and the western, democracy, the occupiers inadvertently perpetuated a victim narrative for the German people. Moeller determines the political reorganization of Germany had lasting effects on Germans viewing themselves as victims, rather than feeling any type of guilt post World War Two. The victim status perpetuated by the Allied Powers hindered Germans' capability to comprehend their Nazi past.

¹⁰² Ibid., 122.

Within East Germany, the Soviets and East German communists shaped a strong narrative that the Germans “had been deprived of their rights, deceived and victimized by the “Hitler clique” that had waged an aggressive war against its European neighbors. The “Hitler clique” was responsible for the deaths of “millions of Germans” who “had been driven into death on the battlegrounds and on the home front’ as well as the millions who had died in concentration camps.”¹⁰³ In order to change the political climate of East Germany, the Soviets focused their efforts on anti-fascist education. The noblest forms of German history taught in the East were the political dissidents who resisted Hitler and his regime. The conversion from Nazi to communist was extremely important to the political reorganization of East Germany. Given that the eastern Nazis were declared communists and supposedly converted by the government, they were forgiven of all their past sins by the communist regime. Moeller explains that the conversion was simply a myth brought about by the communist regime in East Germany. The declaration made by the leaders of the GDR assisted in the East Germans inability to deal with their Nazi past.

Moeller, along with other scholars, demonstrates how a simple policy from the Soviets changed the psychology of how East German society dealt with their Nazi past. Eastern politicians reiterated through speeches and public ceremonies the emphasis of antifascist resistance, continued to elevate individuals like Ernst Thälmann, and downplayed the everyday German’s suffering from the war.¹⁰⁴ Due to the opening of archives post-reunification, Moeller explains that historians have found interviews with East Germans that revealed their suffering and grief, and there were no positive sentiments about the Red Army as liberator. These records prove the magnitude of perpetuated myths upon the East Germans from the political elites. Their

¹⁰³ Moeller, 28.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 30.

message and infiltration into everyday German life began during occupation and did not end until 1989. The lasting political message from the East had lasting effects on East German memory. Even though the East and West had different political ideologies, similar effects on memory and victimhood occurred in the West due to denazification policy.

The West, similar to the East, assisted in progressing German people's victim status. The difference lied within the rhetoric and messages from political leaders to the German people. Moeller explains that in 1949 Adenauer (first chancellor of the FRG) addressed the West German Parliament and explained that the "highest objective" of the new state was "to strive for social justice and the alleviation of misery."¹⁰⁵ Adenauer used the failures of Western denazification to emphasize German victimhood since the Allies did not do enough during occupation to relieve the misery of the German people. He acknowledged that the legacy of the war took many forms within German society, whether it was loss of life on the battlefield, loss of life within the Jewish community, individuals who were victimized by the Red Army or by the Allied bombs, or families who still missed relatives held in eastern POW camps. The political message to the German people was that the new government would help alleviate their suffering, thus outwardly labeling Germans victims of the war, rather than perpetrators. Adenauer's message of victimhood came from the message of denazification, which claimed World War II as "Hitler's War."¹⁰⁶ By the 1950s, the Western Allies agreed with the newly formed FRG government that the military was not to blame, but Hitler. Adenauer simply expressed the sentiments fostered during Western Allied occupation. During the early days of the Federal Republic, rhetoric of victimization was a central part of civic culture.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 32.

Within both the East and the West, the political systems enforced the rhetoric that there was a small group of Nazi leaders who were responsible for Germany's misfortunes and the mass of 'good Germans' were ready to move on and learn from their Nazi past.¹⁰⁷ Within all zones, victimhood was established and an emphasis on survival shaped the future of the two Germanies—whether that be a social market economy or communism.

Moeller's work reflects contemporary scholarship because he expresses that both the East and West by 1950 may have been clearing away the rubble and slowly recovering from the miseries of war, but they were choosing to forget. The strengths of his scholarship lie in his comprehensive explanation of memory between the two Germanies, but also the way in which he compares and contrasts them. His particular focus on the East and his attempt to look at individual narratives within the Soviet bloc country is innovative. Scholars, contemporary and past, struggle to breach the surface of eastern German life. Moeller found personal narratives that countered the official history of the GDR. His scholarship on memory has created an evolution in denazification scholarship that has influenced subsequent studies and his conclusions are incorporated in an abundance of denazification literature.

Section Three: The Legacies of Denazification and German Memory

A significant conclusion drawn by contemporary historians in the field is that Allied denazification failed to purge the zones and did not provoke any type of soul-searching in the minds and hearts of West and East Germans alike. Thus, many Germans never came to terms with their Nazi past. Because individual life was so difficult in Germany post World War Two, Germans focused more on their victim status rather than the regime they voted into power. Due to the failures of denazification in the Allied zones, they helped feed the "collective amnesia" of

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 35.

German society after the war. The field's newest conclusions about German memory are highlighted through the analysis of the *Fragebogen* and the legacy of the Allied denazification on German memory and national identity.

Part I: *Fragebogen*

Mikkel Dack explains that it has only been within the last twenty years that there is an active dialogue among historians on how to appropriately remember German suffering. Discussing German suffering is a difficult subject because many German citizens were bystanders, or active members of the NSDAP and helped perpetuate a great deal of suffering. Bill Niven explains that the end of the Cold War has allowed for the introduction of memory studies without a “distorted and manipulative representation of themes.”¹⁰⁸ Not only have memory studies been an actively new development in the field of history, but also psychology, sociology, literary studies, and social anthropology. Dack summarizes the state of the field: “Over the past 70 years, the historiography of post-WWII Germany has evolved from a single-framed story of western liberal triumph, focused entirely on themes of political reconstruction and large-scale social and economic change, to a series of intricate studies that deconstruct individual and collective experiences of recovery and remembrance, loss and neglect.”¹⁰⁹

Scholars tend to vary in degrees of agreement on German cultural representations of suffering, but where they reach consensus is on Germans' sense of victimhood during denazification. Even though there were benefits from claiming victim status as a German citizen, the truth is that many did, in fact, experience extreme violence and trauma during and immediately after the war. Dack shares that by May 1945, “approximately 5.3 million German

¹⁰⁸ Mikkel Dack, “Retreating into Trauma: The *Fragebogen*, Denazification, and Victimhood in Postwar Germany,” in *Traumatic Memories of the Second World War and After*, ed. Peter Leese and Jason Crouthamel (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2016), 144.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 144.

soldiers had been killed, another 4.4 million had incurred injury, and a million had died in prisoner-of-war camps.”¹¹⁰ Through Allied bombing, some 600,000 civilians died, 900,000 were wounded, and 7.5 million became homeless.¹¹¹ Once the war ended, the Allied occupation authorities had to not only purge Germany of its Nazi past, but also help German citizens deal with post-traumatic stress and extreme anxiety. Dack explains that scholarly study on German wartime suffering, victim identity, and the process of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (coming to terms with the past) has been ongoing in the last twenty years; nonetheless, little is still known about the private thoughts and psychological state of German civilians during occupation because of the “political and social chaos and uncertainty of the immediate postwar years.”¹¹²

The difficulty to find valuable information about private thoughts from East and West Germans is inhibited by the strict control over information by the American, British, French, and Soviet governments. Therefore, historians like Dack rely on occupation reports, opinion polls, journal entries, newspaper article, and memoirs to conceptualize German thoughts. The major piece of evidence utilized by scholars is the *Fragebogen* because it does allow for detailed evidence of individual German experience. The questionnaire used by the Allies during denazification not only gives insight for historians, but also allows Germans to talk about their own suffering, loss, and motivations. The *Fragebogen* serves two main purposes for scholars: (1) to learn about individual experience and (2) to study how denazification helped perpetuate German victimhood.

The *Fragebogen* was an essential component of Allied denazification (East and West) and it represents the contradictory nature of the Allied denazification program. Dack states, “The

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 146.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid., 147.

Fragebogen was used not only to root out Nazism from German political and economic systems and to punish ‘active’ Nazis, but also to identify and reward those Germans who had remained either passive or resistant to the regime and could help in the reconstruction of democratic principles and institutions.”¹¹³ In filling out the questionnaire, German citizens were forced to relive and reflect on not only the traumas of the war, but also life under the NSDAP. Germans were able to personally “interpret, describe, and reinvent the traumas of the war and hardships of a dictatorship.”¹¹⁴ Dack explains that leading cognitive psychologists, sociologists, and psycholinguists maintain that writing helps “assist in the construction of personal narratives” and helps establish and reinforce an individual’s identity.¹¹⁵ Therefore, the *Fragebogen*, fostered a medium for the articulation of victim status perceptions and created an environment in Germany that delayed psychological recovery from the war.¹¹⁶ Questionnaires from both the East and West allowed for new stories/identities to be constructed that replaced actual events and factual information. Thus, allowing individuals to reconsider or rationalize their relationship with the Nazi party.

Dack’s research on the importance of the *Fragebogen* is enticing. He explains that existing literature in memory focuses on the “political and cultural continuities and the persistence of Germans in forgetting, manipulating, and substituting memories of the past.”¹¹⁷ Dack promotes scholars to dedicate further research on the influences that American, British, French, and Soviet occupiers had on German identity.¹¹⁸ He encourages to look at the extent to which the occupiers changed German national identity through their policies of denazification.

¹¹³ Ibid., 148.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 144.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 155.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 144.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 149.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

The *Fragebogen* discouraged Germans from processing their trauma individually. He cites Judith Herman's assertion that a survivor of traumatic experiences needs an environment that fosters empowerment, autonomy, and safety, and denazification did not provide this for the German people.¹¹⁹ The continued uncertainty, strict military control, discrimination, and denunciations at the hands of the occupiers (different in each zone and region),¹²⁰ caused ordinary Germans to struggle finding an environment that fostered community and that could cultivate a culture of coming to terms with the past. Rather, the environment that was created from denazification was a culture of conflict and mistrust; therefore, national identity was altered, and victimhood was encouraged.¹²¹ Overall, scholars agree that the *Fragebogen* hindered individual Germans from processing and overcoming past experiences of war and violence, which prompted retreat to trauma and victimhood.

Part II: The Legacy of Denazification on German National Identity

Denazification policies created victim status within the German population and also had lasting effects on West German national identity. The German people found themselves humiliated and defeated again on a world stage, and they had to bear the devastation from loss of life, homes, and communities. When the Allied powers occupied Germany they vowed to demilitarize, denazify, and democratize. All of the negative effects of German defeat previously stated, created quite the burden on their national identity. The post-war years in East and West Germany were a crucial time in the creation of a new, national, German identity.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 150.

¹²⁰ Within the first few months of issuing the *Fragebogen*, the occupied governments had a difficult time evaluating the questionnaire, therefore, they relied heavily on denunciations at the local level. Families, friends, and neighbors reverted back to the day of the Reich by denouncing each other.

¹²¹ Ibid., 155.

According to Stephen Welch and Ruth Wittlinger between the late 1950s and 1960s in both the East and West, marks a new phase of history. In 1965 Adenauer told West Germans that the postwar years were over and Walter Ulbricht did the same in 1963 for the East Germans. Both leaders discussed the same sentiments about the future, they encouraged their citizens to focus on a Germany that was less outlined by their Nazi past.¹²² Welch and Wittlinger use Moeller's research on the ramifications of denazification policy on "German amnesia" and argue that it directly affected East and West Germany's recreation of a national identity within the 1950s and 60s. Their work traces the evolution of national identity through post reunification.

Welch and Wittlinger elaborate on the effects directives from denazification policy had on West Germany's national identity. Because of the atrocities committed during the Third Reich in Germany, and their desire to forget, the West was reluctant to use national symbols to identify itself.¹²³ West Germans focused on having more of a European identity following the war, and identified themselves with "liberal democratic values" due to their lack of pride in their historical legacy.¹²⁴ Because of their troubling past, West Germans became the model cosmopolitan state since they focused their efforts on integration and supported the European project.

While attempting to navigate their new national identity, Moeller, Fulbrook, and Jean-Paul Bier and Michael Allinder argue through a series of events between the 1960s to reunification, mark major moments of evolution within the West German's pursuit for a national identity. The scholars listed above create a stronger evaluation of West German national identity than Wittlinger and Welch because of their use of a variety of historical events, but also their

¹²² Moeller, 39.

¹²³ Stephen Welch and Ruth Wittlinger, "The Resilience of the Nation State: Cosmopolitanism, Holocaust Memory, and German Identity," *German Politics and Society* 29, no. 3 (2011): 44. Welch and Wittlinger.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

ability to make connections between historical events within the decades prior to reunification; something that Wittlinger and Welch's research is lacking.

Fulbrook characterizes the 1960s within West Germany as a resurgence of Germany's Nazi past. Younger generations questioned the older generations about their Nazi past. Due to a more activist spirit within the youth population, scholarship started to address the ordinary system and Nazi past. One of the first historical moments Fulbrook cites as important to opening of West Germany's Nazi was the Adolf Eichmann Trial¹²⁵ in 1961. Not only did the trial resurface Germany's Nazi past, but sparked a resurgence in convicting perpetrators. In 1969 the statute of limitations was lifted, therefore, allowing perpetrators to still be convicted of their crimes.¹²⁶ In the early 1960s, the West Germans also found that the accusations made by their communist neighbors about the Chancellor's cabinet were true. Adenauer's cabinet had a number of high-ranking Nazi officials, therefore, connecting West Germany directly to Hitler, a fact that was constantly reiterated by the East. By the late 1960s, Willy Brandt, a Social Democrat, was elected chancellor and changed the direction of German memory and identity.

The later part of the century prompted even more drastic measure taken in regards to West Germans confronting their Nazi past. Moller mentions May 1970 as an important time in West German's evolution of national identity because it was the first time in history that the German Parliament commemorated the end of the war, and Brandt called for a "sober confrontation with the past."¹²⁷ The 1980s brought intensified scrutiny of the past, therefore allowing the conversation about all of the victims of the Third Reich such as homosexuals,

¹²⁵ Adolf Eichmann was a member of the SS and a high-ranking Nazi official who helped carry out the Final Solution. He was put on trial in Israel in 1961. The trial was televised and sparked a great deal of debate on Nazi atrocities.

¹²⁶ Fulbrook, 123.

¹²⁷ Moeller, 40.

Jehovah's witnesses, Sinti and Roma, and "asocials." The new conversations brought about by the 1980s were a departure from the idea of victimhood of German citizens that was perpetuated by Allied denazification. Moeller states, "The story of the German past that emerged in the Federal Republic in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s was one in which 'no one was free from history', and if not collectively guilty, Germans were certainly collectively accountable for their past."¹²⁸ Even though Germans began to come to terms with their past, the constant reminder of their Nazi past made it difficult, according to Welch and Wittlinger, for Germans to create a national identity they were proud of.

The 1990s and early 2000s, sparked a new balance between victimization and acknowledgment and guilt, and Germans' ability to feel pride within their national history. Welch and Wittlinger explain that the German Chancellor (1998-2005), Gerhard Schroder, contributed to the normalization of Germany and its postwar period. Schroder helped perpetuate the notion that the Nazi past did not need to function as an obstacle within German history and identity. Prior to Schroder, it seemed that any positive sentiments towards German national identity were hindered because of the Holocaust. However, he encouraged citizens to fully acknowledge the crimes committed under the Third Reich, so a positive national identity could be created in Germany.¹²⁹ Schroder created a new power and confidence for Germans to engage with their Nazi past, rather than hide and forget it. Welch and Wittlinger mark Schroder's sentiments as significant in the development of German national identity because he reminded them that Germany is much more than the years of 1933-1945.

Fulbrook, Moeller, Welch and Wittlinger use previous scholarship to connect the field of memory to the evolution of German national identity post World War II. They emphasize the

¹²⁸ Ibid., 41.

¹²⁹ Welch and Wittlinger, 47.

importance of the occupation years (fostering victimhood) had on the development of a national identity in the West by tracing German identity into the recreation of the German Republic and how Germany achieved a positive outlook on their national identity. Welch and Wittlinger highlight within their research that Germany's ability to come to terms with its Nazi past within the last thirty years helped perpetuate an all-inclusive German national identity. The twenty-first century in Germany, concluded from Welch and Wittlinger, marks a German national identity that encompasses the atrocities from the past, the separation of a nation, and the reunification all with an underlying tone of pride in the major accomplishments of German history.

Unfortunately, the weakness of their research lies in its disregard for the East and missing moments in history of the West. After a brief overview of the FRG's national identity or lack thereof, the analysis goes straight into post reunification with the election of Gerhard Schroder as the chancellor. Wittlinger and Welch disregard East German identity and the implications of combining two separate identities into one reunified country after the wall fell. The article by Wittlinger and Welch, even with its faults, explains the long-standing impact of Allied denazification policies on Germany's national identity.

Conclusion:

The study of denazification has been ongoing since the conclusion of Allied occupation. The state of the field has not changed dramatically with the historiography of western denazification. The difference between the past, prior to reunification and today, is historians did not have the resources from the East to create a comprehensive, Allied denazification historiography. The historiography of the western-Allied perspective tended to have political biases and historians used speculation to fill in the missing information about the East. After the conclusion of the Cold War, scholars accessed the historical archives that helped create a

complete Allied denazification historiography. Scholars continue to research emerging evidence from the East in order to contribute more of a complete German history of denazification.

Furthermore, scholars, within the late twentieth century and beginning of the twenty-first century, started dissecting the prior historiography even more after reunification to draw more conclusions on German social history, which has transformed the field of study in regards to its themes. The political, economic, and judicial themes of denazification still remain prominent fields of study within denazification, but have been extended and elaborated on to explain the effects the political, judicial, and economic policies of denazification had on East and West Germans.

Throughout the 1990s into the twenty-first century, the new theme of memory emerged within denazification studies. Historians started working with sociologists, psychologists, and social anthropologist in order to continue to study uncharted territory of the relationship between history and memory. Historians have revolutionized how denazification is studied and taught. Moeller, Fulbrook, Herf, Wittlinger and Welch, and Dack changed the way in which denazification is researched. They emphasize the importance of the German experience due to denazification policy. It is no longer a one-dimensional entity of occupation, but a complex process with many effects that are shared throughout the essay.

After analyzing a variety of pieces of literature on the topic of denazification, the field still needs to continue its research on East Germany and denazification's effects on Germans coping with their Nazi past. The field is flooded with information about the West, and there is a need for Moeller, Biddiscombe, and Fulbrook specifically to continue their work in understanding the East Germans and their individual relationships with their Nazi past. This literature review's purpose is to showcase the continuity and progress within scholarship about

denazification, with an emphasis on the failures and effects of Allied political and judicial denazification policies.

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