FROM SOLDIERS TO CITIZENS:
THE CIVIL REINTEGRATION OF DEMOBILIZED SOLDIERS OF THE GERMAN
WEHRMACHT AND THE IMPERIAL JAPANESE ARMY
AFTER UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER IN 1945

By

BIRGIT SCHNEIDER

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
Department of History

MAY 2010

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To the Faculty of Washington State University:

The members of the Committee appointed to examine the dissertation of BIRGIT SCHNEIDER find it satisfactory and recommend that it be accepted.

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Noriko Kawamura, Ph.D.

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Brigit Farley, Ph.D.
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THE CIVIL REINTEGRATION OF DEMOBILIZED SOLDIERS OF THE GERMAN
WEHRMACHT AND THE IMPERIAL JAPANESE ARMY
AFTER UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER IN 1945

ABSTRACT

by Birgit Schneider, Ph.D.
Washington State University
May, 2010

Chair: Raymond C. Sun

Demilitarization and democratization of Germany and Japan constituted the
Allies’ essential goals of the Second World War; when the war was concluded and plans
for postwar settlements were set up, the two countries’ militaries were dissolved and their
personnel disbanded. Demobilized soldiers returned to their war-maimed countries as
soon as they were released from the custody of the respective Allied power to which they
had surrendered. Most returned before 1948, although for some, Soviet captivity meant
up to ten years of forced labor. This dissertation analyzes the situation of demobilized
soldiers after their return home. It examines how returnees—former soldiers, now
civilians—were perceived and treated by the American occupation in the American zone
of occupation of Germany and in Japan, and by their own governments. Demobilized
soldiers were, based on their indoctrination in the military and their engagement in the
fighting of the war, understood as potential proponents of militarism, and as adversaries
of democracy by the occupation. The German and Japanese administrations saw them in
a more productive light, as a significant economic force and as potential supporters of democracy. As a consequence, policies with regard to demobilized soldiers oscillated between restrictions imposed by the occupation and material support provided by the national governments; between demilitarization and reconstruction. The analysis of archival material has yielded that the material provisions proved to be decisive in assuring the integration of former soldiers in postwar civil society, and in avoiding their alienation with the democratic governments.

Demobilized soldiers were at the same time the embodiment and the culprits of defeat, both perpetrators and victims of militarism. Their numbers and presence in contemporary discourse underscore their significance in postwar German and Japanese societies. Tracing the transition from war to peace through the study of veterans under American occupation, this dissertation shows how the occupation as well as German and Japanese policies were successful despite their very different motivations in preventing the re-emergence of militarism, and in integrating veterans into German and Japanese civil society.
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ABBREVIATIONS

BPA  
_Bundespresse- und Informationsamt_ (Federal Office for Press and Information)

CI&E  
Civil Information and Education Section of SCAP

CDU  
_Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands_ (Christian Democratic Union)

COSSAC  
Chief of Staff, Supreme Allied Commander

DDT  
Dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane

DEF  
Disarmed Enemy Forces

DM  
Deutsche Mark

_En'gohō 援護法_  
Law for the Support of the War Wounded and War Dead

_(Sen'shōbyōsha senbotsusha izoku nado en'gohō, 戦傷病者戦没者遺族等援護法)_

FDP  
_Freie Demokratische Partei_ (Free Democratic Party)

Gestapo  
_Geheime Staatspolizei_ (Secret State Police)

GHQ  
General Headquarters

GULAG  
_Glavnoye Upravlyeniye Ispravityel'no-Trudovih Lageryey i koloniy_ (Chief Administration of Corrective Labor Camps and Colonies, Главное Управление Исправительно-Трудовых Лагерей и колоний)
*Gun’onren* 軍恩連
Kyūgunjin kankeisha onkyūken yōgo zenkoku renrakukai
(National Association of Former Soldiers and Military Affiliates for the Protection of Pension Rights, 旧軍人関係者恩給権擁護全国連絡会)

IJA Imperial Japanese Army

IRAA Imperial Rule Assistance Association (*Taisei Yokusankai*, 大政翼賛会)

IRAPS Imperial Rule Assistance Political Society (*Taisei Seijikai*, 大政政治会 or *Yokusan Seijikai*, 翼賛政治会)

JCS Joint Chief of Staff

JSP Japanese Surrendered Personnel

KgEG *Kriegsgefangenenentschädigungsgesetz* (Law for the Compensation of POWs)

LAG *Lastenausgleichsgesetz* (Equalization of Burdens Act)

LAG *Landesarbeitsgemeinschaften für Kriegsgefangenenfragen* (State Working Group for POW Questions)

MIA Missing in Action

NCO Non-Commissioned Officer

NS *Nationalsozialistisch* (National Socialist)

NSDAP *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* (National Socialist German Workers’ Party)

OMGUS Office of Military Government for Germany, U.S.

POW Prisoner of War
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>PWTE</td>
<td>Prisoner of War Temporary Enclosure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RGCO</td>
<td>Regional Government Coordinating Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RM</td>
<td>Reichsmark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>Sturmabteilung (Storm Detachment)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Sicherheitsdienst (Security Service)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SS</td>
<td>Schutzstaffel (Protection Squad)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCAP</td>
<td>Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCAPIN</td>
<td>SCAP Index</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEP</td>
<td>Surrendered Enemy Personnel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHAEF</td>
<td>Supreme Headquarters Allied Expedition Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPD</td>
<td>Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (Social Democratic Party of Germany)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWNCC</td>
<td>State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNRRA</td>
<td>United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USAFPAC</td>
<td>United States Army Forces in the Pacific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USFET</td>
<td>United States Forces European Theater</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VdH</td>
<td>Verband der Heimkehrer, Kriegsgefangenen und Vermisstenangehörigen Deutschlands (Association of Returnees, POWs and Family Members of MIAs of Germany)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waffen-SS</td>
<td>Armed Schutzstaffel</td>
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## Glossary of German and Japanese Terms

### German Terms

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<tr>
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<td>Committee for POW Issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ausschuss für Kriegsgefangenenhilfe</td>
<td>Committee for POW Aid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brennpunkte des Wohnungsbedarfs</td>
<td>Hotspots of housing demand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bundesministerium für Heimatdienst</td>
<td>Federal Ministry for Homeland Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bundesrepublik Deutschland</td>
<td>Federal Republic of Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bundestag</td>
<td>Parliament of the Federal Republic of Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bundeswehr</td>
<td>German Federal Armed Forces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung</td>
<td>Federal Center for Political Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Büro für Heimatdienst</td>
<td>Bureau for Homeland Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Der Heimkehrer</td>
<td>The Returnee, newsletter of the VdH</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deutsche Soldatenzeitung</td>
<td>Newsletter of the Verband Deutscher Soldaten</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dienststelle für Kriegsgefangenenfragen</td>
<td>Bureau for POW Issues at the Länderrat</td>
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<tr>
<td>Entlassungsgeld</td>
<td>Discharge pay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entlassungsort</td>
<td>City or town of discharge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entlassungsschein</td>
<td>Discharge paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entwurzelung</td>
<td>Uprooting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
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<td><em>Evangelisches Hilfswerk</em></td>
<td>see <em>Hilfswerk der Evangelischen Kirchen</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Flüchtlingsverwaltung</em></td>
<td>State and local offices for refugee questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Frauenarbeit</em></td>
<td>Work with women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Frauenschaft</em></td>
<td>(National Socialist) Women’s League</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Gesetz über Hilfsmaßnahmen für Heimkehrer</em></td>
<td>Returnees’ Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Gleichschaltung</em></td>
<td>Coordination into Nazi associations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Heimat</em></td>
<td>Home</td>
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<td><em>Heimatlos</em></td>
<td>Homeless</td>
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<td><em>Heimkehr</em></td>
<td>Homecoming</td>
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<td><em>Heimkehrer</em></td>
<td>Returnee</td>
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<td><em>Heimkehrerbetreuungsstelle</em></td>
<td>Assistance office for returnees</td>
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<td><em>Heimkehrergesetz</em></td>
<td>see <em>Gesetz über Hilfsmaßnahmen für Heimkehrer</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Heimkehrerkultur</em></td>
<td>Returnees’ culture</td>
</tr>
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<td><em>Hilfswerk der Evangelischen Kirchen</em></td>
<td>Protestant Relief Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in <em>Deutschland</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Historikerstreit</em></td>
<td>Historians’ Dispute</td>
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<td><em>Kaiserreich</em></td>
<td>German Empire, 1871-1918</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Kyffhäuserbund</em></td>
<td>German veterans’ association, named after</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the Kyffhäuser mountain range and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>monument in Thuringia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Land (pl. Länder)</em></td>
<td>Federal states of Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Länderrat</strong></td>
<td>Coordinating body of the three federal states of the American zone of occupation</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Lebensraum</strong></td>
<td>“Living Space” in Eastern Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maschke-Kommission</strong></td>
<td>Historians’ commission under Erich Maschke</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Mehlemer Diskussionswochen</strong></td>
<td>Discussion weeks in the town of Mehlem</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Meldebogen</strong></td>
<td>Denazification questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt</strong></td>
<td>Military History Research Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parlamentarischer Rat</strong></td>
<td>Parliamentary Council, predecessor of <em>Bundestag</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Rechtsstaatliches Gedankengut</strong></td>
<td>Body of thought of the rule of law</td>
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<td><strong>Referat für Kriegsgefangenenfragen</strong></td>
<td>Department for POW Issues</td>
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<td><strong>Reichsbund der Kriegs- und Zivilbeschädigten, Sozialrentner und Hinterbliebenen</strong></td>
<td>Reich Association for the Civil and War Injured, Social Security Recipients, and Bereaved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rheinwiesenlager</strong></td>
<td>Rhine meadow camps</td>
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<td><strong>Soforthilfegesetz</strong></td>
<td>Emergency Assistance Law</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Soldatenverband</strong></td>
<td>Soldiers’ association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sonderweg</strong></td>
<td>Peculiar path</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spruchkammer</strong></td>
<td>Denazification court, staffed with laypersons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Staatsrentnertum</strong></td>
<td>Dependence on state welfare and pensions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stunde Null</strong></td>
<td>Zero Hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Suchdienst</strong></td>
<td>Tracking service of the Red Cross and German churches for POWs and MIAs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Trümmerkultur</strong></td>
<td>Culture of the rubble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Trümmerliteratur</strong></td>
<td>Literature of the rubble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Volkssturm</strong></td>
<td>“Folk storm;” German militia of men between the ages of 16 and 60 not otherwise serving in the military</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wohnungsgesetz</strong></td>
<td>Housing Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Zuzugsgenehmigung</strong></td>
<td>Formal acceptance of a person’s application to move to the city or town noted on the discharge papers, granted by housing agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Verband Deutscher Soldaten</strong></td>
<td>German Soldiers’ Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vergangenheitsbewältigung</strong></td>
<td>Coming to terms with the past</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vertrag über die abschließende Regelung in bezug auf Deutschland</strong></td>
<td>Treaty on the Final Settlement With Respect to Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Zwei-plus-Vier-Vertrag</strong></td>
<td>Two-Plus-Four Agreement</td>
</tr>
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### JAPANESE TERMS

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<th>Translation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ai no undō kyōgikai</td>
<td>Love of Sports Convention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atarashii rekishi kyōkasho wo tsukuru kai</td>
<td>Society for History Textbook Reform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinreisha</td>
<td>“Spirit pacifying shrine,” in the Yasukuni compound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dainiji sekai taisen</td>
<td>Second World War</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daitōa sensō</td>
<td>Great East Asian War</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fujin renmei</td>
<td>Women’s League</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fukuin (shita) gunjin</td>
<td>Demobilized soldier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fukuinsha</td>
<td>Demobilized [soldier]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gakusei dōmei</td>
<td>Students’ alliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gunjin gunzoku</td>
<td>Soldiers and civilian employees of the armed forces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gunjin onkyūhō</td>
<td>Military Pensions Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gyokusai</td>
<td>“Shattering the jewel,” suicide attack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hikiage engo kyoku</td>
<td>Bureau of Repatriate Welfare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hikiagesha chōsa kādo</td>
<td>Enquiry card for repatriates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hikiagesha shōmeisho</td>
<td>Repatriation certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hikiagesha</td>
<td>Repatriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hōkai</td>
<td>Collapse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idō shōmeishō 異動証明書</td>
<td>Change certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jieitai 自衛隊</td>
<td>Self-Defense Forces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaikōsha 僚行社</td>
<td>Association of former Army officers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kami 神</td>
<td>Deity, in Shintō</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindaishugi 近代主義</td>
<td>Modernism, modernist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kōbunsho 公文書</td>
<td>Official (archival) document</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kokuritsu kōbunshokan 国立公文書館</td>
<td>Japanese National Archives</td>
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<td>Konran 混乱</td>
<td>Disorder, chaos</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manmō dōhō engokai 満蒙同胞援護会</td>
<td>Manchuria and Mongolia Support Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meiji 明治</td>
<td>Era of rule of Emperor Mutsuhito, 1867-1912</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nihon Izokukai 日本遺族会</td>
<td>Japan Society for the War Bereaved</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ōkyū engo 応急援護</td>
<td>Emergency relief</td>
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<tr>
<td>Onkyū bōkokuron 恩給亡国論</td>
<td>“National ruin through pensions argument,” slogan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onshi zaidan dōhō engokai 恩賜財団同胞援護会</td>
<td>Compatriots’ Support Association (Imperial Foundation)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sarariiman サラリィマン</td>
<td>“Salaried man,” clerk, white-collar worker</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sengo 戦後</td>
<td>Postwar</td>
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<td>Japanese</td>
<td>English</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shōwa 昭和</td>
<td>Era of rule of Emperor Hirohito, 1926-1989</td>
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<tr>
<td>Suikōkai 水交会</td>
<td>Association of former Navy officers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiheiyō sensō 太平洋戦争</td>
<td>Pacific War</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teichaku engo 定着援護</td>
<td>Settlement relief</td>
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<td>Tonarigumi 隣組</td>
<td>Neighborhood associations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tsukurukai つくる会</td>
<td>See Atarashii rekishi kyōkasho wo tsukuru kai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yasukuni jinja hōsankai 靖国神社奉賛会</td>
<td>Yasukuni Worshippers’ Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yasukuni mondai 靖国問題</td>
<td>Problem of Yasukuni Shrine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zaidan hōjin kyōjokai 財団法人協助会</td>
<td>Mutual Help Foundation</td>
</tr>
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</table>
DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my grandfathers,

Gerhard (1914-1995)

and

Helmut (1925-2009),

whom I never asked about their return from captivity.
INTRODUCTION

POSTWAR: TRANSITION FROM WAR TO PEACE

During the fifty years following the Second World War, postwar historians have tended to highlight the economic miracle and the successful establishment of democracy in West Germany and Japan after 1945. Since the 1990s, however, postwar historiography has come to increasingly criticize this positive outlook that reflected the atmosphere of departure of the early postwar years. Instead, scholars have asserted that the postwar years were not merely a forward-looking point of departure, and blamed the German and Japanese people and postwar historians for not sufficiently working through the past and for failing to take on responsibility. Neither side is wrong, but both are not entirely right. In order to convey a credible and useful picture, postwar history needs to balance the positive outlook that was undoubtedly present in postwar societies with the manifold ways in which these societies were anchored in their past. This balance, caught between the push for modernization and the preservation of traditions, is not only the historian’s to unearth; it is a balance that postwar societies themselves had to work to maintain after the occupation of Germany and Japan imposed the opportunity of self-renewal on these countries. The changes that were implemented to society, the economy, and the political structures were partly thrust upon Germany and Japan by the occupation and partly envisioned by the occupied themselves; many regarded the lost war and the occupation as an opportunity rather than a form of punishment and willingly cooperated
with the Allies.\textsuperscript{1} There was no ground zero on which these changes could be constructed, however; both literally and figuratively, postwar societies had to rebuild themselves on top of the rubble left by the Second World War and the Asia-Pacific War. Neither in the destroyed cities nor in the minds of the people was there a blank slate on which a “postwar” could be constructed. Notwithstanding the utter destruction, the material, ideal, and personal losses, and the collapse of government, postwar reconstruction had to build on existing social and physical structures. While defeat and occupation brought about the radical change of political and legal frameworks, the physical environment, people’s daily practical lives, and their minds did not change overnight. The material situation ameliorated only slowly, rationing was maintained for a considerable period of time, the rubble of the cities had to be cleared away, and militarists and fascists had to be eliminated from influential political, public, and economic positions. The economy had to be revived despite the difficulties and restrictions of postwar reconstruction and occupation, and structures—both literal and figurative—had to be created. Cities and personal lives had to be rebuilt from the wartime destruction, and changed as gradually as these frameworks were implemented. All of these were evolutionary rather than abrupt changes.

\textsuperscript{1} Punishment remained one of the major objectives of the occupation; however, the creation of a lasting peace, the elimination of ultra-nationalism and militarism, and democratization crystallized as the ultimate goals. See Gerhard Wettig, *Entmilitarisierung und Wiederbewaffnung in Deutschland, 1943-1955: Internationale Auseinandersetzungen um die Rolle der Deutschen in Europa* [Demilitarization and rearmament in Germany, 1943-1955: International discussions about the role of Germans in Europe], Schriften des Forschungsinstituts der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik e.V. 25 (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1967), 55. The economically debilitating reparation payments and the imposition of—rather than reeducation to—democracy in the Weimar Republic after the First World War were no insignificant causes for this decision. This dissertation focuses on the American occupation of part of Germany and of Japan; however, references to the Allied powers are made whenever other countries were involved.
This evolution of postwar Germany and Japan, their citizens’ lives, and specifically people’s civil behavior, appears to be one of the most crucial characteristics of the postwar decade\(^2\), and is at the center of this dissertation. Between wartime societies and peacetime societies is a necessary transition. It does not need to be emphasized that neither wartime nor postwar societies are static; yet both exist within relatively well-defined social and political frameworks, composed of an existing legal canon, enforced by police, and maintained by an established government. The flexibility of wartime and postwar societies is quite limited compared to a postwar situation, in which legal and political frameworks are abolished and new ones created. This transition with its difficulties, its opportunities, and its creativity constitutes the most prominent feature of postwar history. In Germany’s and Japan’s wartime societies, individuals were bound by totalitarian social and political frameworks; in contrast, after the war, when the social and political frameworks were completely overhauled, individuals and their choices became more significant because their options were more diverse and less predetermined. The choices individuals made were obviously not inevitably detached from their socio-economic and political backgrounds; they were, however, less bound by fixed frameworks simply because the frameworks themselves were in flux in both Germany and Japan.

\(^2\) There is no crucial event that would justify the claim that “postwar” lasted 10 years. On the contrary, historians have argued for a number of end points of the “postwar,” such as with the establishment of German and Japanese sovereignty (in 1949 and 1952, respectively), with the collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe (1989) for Germany and for Japan with the death of emperor Hirohito in 1989 or the burst of the Japanese economic bubble in the 1990s, or even not at all. In 1955, both West Germany and Japan established new armies (though in Japan, the creation of the Self-Defense Forces had begun four years earlier), most veterans had returned from captivity, and laws had been created to provide for and support veterans materially. Although the creation of militaries is not significant for my topic, the decade in which no military force formally existed in Germany and Japan lends itself to the periodization of my topic. The crucial pieces of legislation, a compensation bill in Germany and the recreation of military pensions in Japan were passed in 1953; however, as this dissertation is concerned with longer-term processes, the examination of a ten-year period appears appropriate.
and Japan during the first postwar decade. In such time of transition, we can therefore consider the decisions of individuals, as well as of particular socially significant groups, as substantial indicators of the creative forces used (and needed) to rebuild the two countries. The political and legal frameworks that were created by the American occupation and by the German and Japanese governments received considerable substantiation and criticism by individuals and social groups; therefore the interplay between these two, occupation and national governments, constitutes an important factor in postwar and reconstruction history.

In order to reach a profound and nuanced understanding of the postwar history of Germany and Japan in particular and, to a somewhat lesser degree, of defeated and occupied countries in general, a thorough examination and evaluation of the period of transition from war to peace, and from totalitarianism to democracy is necessary. Germany and Japan underwent very different postwar changes, mainly due to differences in wartime leadership, people’s wartime experience, postwar occupation and the socio-political frameworks that were established during and after the occupation period. Despite these profound differences, both countries were in a similar transitory situation, in which the profound ideological changes effected the renewal of their social, political, and economic foundations. With the individual being a significant factor in this transitory situation, demobilized returning soldiers are a particularly powerful example to elucidate both the changes that society underwent and the path from wartime to peacetime society.

Demobilized soldiers of the German Wehrmacht and the Imperial Japanese Army occupied a double role; they were perpetrators, because they had been members of the

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3 This is not to contradict the idea of the longue durée that the French Annales School has brought forward. To the contrary, I argue that the transitory period of the postwar decade did not constitute a sharp rupture but gradual, yet thorough-going, changes across the supposed 1945 divide.
armies of aggressive and expansive states, as well as victims, because they had suffered defeat, captivity, and material or personal losses through the war. In their double role, they symbolized postwar society, the members of which were also both perpetrators and victims. Demobilized soldiers were a group of people that is extremely difficult to define. Demobilization refers to the action of discharge; soldiers would return home after a variety of official discharge procedures from the military bases at which they were stationed at the time of defeat, from camps at which they were held after their own or their county’s surrender; these could be within their own country or outside. Soldiers could also be held captive for years by the Allied power that had taken them captive, which was mostly the case for the Soviet Union. The experience of return, as well as the conditions the returnee found upon his arrival differed greatly, depending on the circumstances and location at the day of surrender. The temporal distance of return from the war’s end also made for a different social, economic, and political experience; the later a soldier returned, the less his country was still in the process of transition. Returnees had initially been drafted from all over Germany and Japan, respectively, as well as from all kinds of socio-economic backgrounds and professions, and had been assigned to very different military units and theaters of war; hence the level of indoctrination as well as the level of fighting they experienced varied greatly. While there is certainly no clear-cut “genuine experience of war” that was the same for every soldier, some parts of the experience suggest that there are sufficient parallels to merit an analysis

5 The terms “demobilized soldier” and “returnee” are used interchangeably in this dissertation. When referring to Japanese civilian settlers expelled from the Asian mainland, who are generally called “returnees,” I will use the term “civilian returnees” to clarify the distinction from military returnees. The term “veteran” is only used when I am writing about the 1950s, when the individuals in question had gained some distance to return and captivity.
of the admittedly diverse group of returnees as such. First of all, notwithstanding their social or economic standing, or their political opinions, all of them were drafted into military service from civilian life; they had to leave school, and give up profession or occupation, were organized into military units, trained and indoctrinated, and deployed. While soldiers’ places of deployment and degree of combat experience varied greatly, their military experience was characterized by the camaraderie, permanent supervision, lack of individual decision-making, and the experience of fighting.\(^6\) Years of experience of male companionship, receiving orders (and following them), of a life dedicated to the homeland (and not to oneself; with the readiness to die any day) without self-determination, and of exposure to warfare and violence was diametrically opposed to the situation in which the returnees found themselves upon their return. The economies of postwar Japan and Germany needed the demobilized soldiers in the workforce; they also needed creativity, energy, and decisiveness in a situation of scarcity of almost anything. On the other hand, the structural damage and material shortages made the economic return for demobilized soldiers very difficult. As a prerequisite for economic functioning, the returnees had to be reintegrated socially at least to a certain point, because as stigmatized outcasts,\(^7\) they would not have been able to contribute to the necessary economic development of their countries.

Not only social and economic, but also political reintegration was necessary in postwar Japan and Germany. The political radicalization of German demobilized soldiers


\(^7\) As described by Takuji Kimura, “Fukuin: Gunjin no sengo shakai e no hōsetsu [Demobilization: The integration of soldiers into postwar society],” in *Sengo kaikaku to gyaku kōsu* [Postwar reforms and the reverse course], ed. Yutaka Yoshida (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Köbunkan, 2004), 86-107.
after the First World War has shown that neglect on the social, economic, and political levels, segregation, and exclusion can be extremely dangerous for the political stability of a fledgling democracy. Historians of Germany have argued that German post-Second World War policies with regard to demobilized soldiers were a direct result from these experiences;\(^8\) however, even in Japan, where this past experience had not been made, attempts were made to reduce the militaristic potential of the returnees and utilize their potential economic contributions. For demobilized, returning soldiers, the change from their wartime military communities to postwar civil society represented a very stark contrast—one that the non-drafted part of the population did not experience—in terms of social behavior, economy, and the expectations placed on them.

The civil reintegration of returnees oscillated between the two poles of absolute demilitarization by the occupation administration, and the evolving efforts regarding their wellbeing by local, regional, and national bodies. On a general level, the elimination of militarism required the abolishment of the military and its elements, as well as its underlying ideology, its industrial capacities, and its potential influence on society. With regard to the creation of a peaceful society, demilitarization was a necessary prerequisite on the agenda of the occupation. On the individual level, however, it was impossible to abolish the elements of the military: soldiers could be made civilians, but not eliminated like ammunition plants. Therefore, demilitarization entailed much more than what the Allies initially had envisioned, much more than the mere demobilization of the soldiers. The civil reintegration of returnees was a vital part of demilitarization, as only this integration ultimately eliminated the militarist potential that the Allies sought to destroy.

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To transform returnees into active elements of civil society, to enable them to be economically and socially productive, and to include them in political processes constituted the scope of civil reintegration. The *Heimkehr* (return home) of demobilized soldiers therefore marked the end of their military service and the beginning of their civilian life, but although a date was specified on their discharge papers, their actual transition into civilian life did not happen instantaneously. Seen in this light, the war was far from over on May 8 for Germany and on August 15, 1945 for Japan. On the other hand, the return of demobilized soldiers did not merely mean the end of military actions, but it was also “an index for reconstruction”: the reintegration of the demobilized was a requirement for the successful rebuilding of Japan and Germany, which would have been impossible without the support of returnees.

The year 1945 and the end of the total war that Germany and Japan had waged was a turning point beyond any doubt. It meant the end and the discrediting of the authoritarian and ultra-nationalist wartime regimes, despite their initial approval by the populace (this is not true for Japan, where popular support comparable to the elections and rallies of Nazi Germany did not exist); in fact, it meant the complete discrediting of right-wing policies and of nationalism *per se*. Defeat, occupation, and the loss of national sovereignty caused a political U-turn that implanted democracy and pacifism into the political systems of the two countries. Hence, in terms of the actual politics, domestic and international, May and August 1945 constitute a definite break with the past. But was 1945 the “*Stunde Null,*” the “zero hour,” the fresh start from scratch of the *sengo*, the postwar, that many historians have claimed or implied? It was not, on a number of

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different levels. Personal and institutional continuities from both the wartime regimes and prewar governments existed because democratization in the late 1940s made use of the more democratic (or at least less militaristic and authoritarian) pasts of the Weimar Republic and Taishō Japan, as well as usable elements of the mass cultures and modernisms of the 1930s. In Japan, considerable continuity existed in the national bureaucracy. For the individual, the deprivations and restrictions of the war resembled the scarcities and limitations related to defeat and occupation. Although the political climate changed, it did not become more open or permissive with occupation: censorship was applied to media and entertainment, and demilitarization and denazification curbed the freedoms of the supporters—alleged or real—of the Nazi regime in Germany and of the military cliques in Japan. Had news been filtered through ultra-nationalist and Nazi lenses, they were now filtered through American standards. Occupational bans were in place, as were curfews in the early months of the occupation. The presence of the military, albeit demobilized, remained also constant: in the streets, returning soldiers were as visible as were the occupation armies, which might not have looked so different from the Wehrmacht and the Imperial Japanese Army. The changes that 1945 brought did not create a blank slate from which a completely new beginning would have been possible. After all, the people remained the same—profoundly impacted by the experience of war, totalitarianism, and defeat, they could not simply shed these experiences. The political situation changed radically in May and September, 1945, but then, too, the changes could only be implemented gradually. 1945 constituted a turning point, embedded in a period of transition that encompassed the war and the postwar years; a turning point within a curve and not a spike.
This dissertation rests on the premise that the postwar years were fundamental in the creation of the democratic and peaceful societies that Japan and West Germany have become. It assumes the postwar decade as a period of transition in which the basic parameters for German and Japanese national sovereignty, international relations, and intra-societal relations were created. This process was not a linear one, but characterized by numerous frictions, ambiguities and internal contradictions. What did this mean for demobilized soldiers? Their transition was from extreme violence to peace; from military formations to civil society; from the camaraderie and authoritarianism of their units to the more complex social hierarchies that existed in the family and at work; and from an environment in which everything necessary for life was provided for to an environment characterized by the daily struggle to make ends meet. The experience of the military was not one that was easily to be shed; many demobilized soldiers suffered from diseases, loss of limbs, traumata, or had simply difficulties finding their whereabouts in a society in which individual responsibility was crucial. Indoctrination might have lost its grip on the soldiers already during the war, when they were confronted with the hopelessness of the military situation and the helplessness of their military leaders. More important than political propaganda might have been the security that the military setting and an authoritarian government seemingly provided—stability paired with the security of knowing the expectations, and with the relative economic security of being in the military and provided for. This security was irrereplaceably lost for ex-servicemen after their return.

Omer Bartov argues, however, that the “spiritual commitment, absolute obedience” remained intact until the end of the war, and that returning soldiers integrated versions of their own suffering, combined with the indoctrinated belief of the Soviets as aggressors, into “Germany’s collective memory of the war.” While the “normalization” of the war memory left no place for the suffering of Germany’s victims, as Bartov argues, and the Cold War exacerbated the threat that the Soviet Union constituted, we should not forget that there existed also a great disillusionment with the war, its daily realities, and its leadership among the soldiers. Omer Bartov, *Hitler's Army: Soldiers, Nazis, and War in the Third Reich* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 182-3.
to their homes or whatever was left of them. The ending point of demobilized soldiers’
transition to civil society was not a fixed, tangible point in time—similar to the postwar
period, which also lacks a distinctive ending point. We might assume economic stability
or physical and mental recovery as relative and flexible goals on the individual level; on
the conceptual level of this dissertation, the ending point of the transition is the elusive
concept of the “civil integration” of the former soldiers.

CIVIL REINTEGRATION AND THE CREATION OF POSTWAR SOCIETY

Civil society constitutes the precondition for a functioning democracy, and the
angst of the American occupation governments (GHQ/SCAP, General Headquarters/
Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers in Japan; and OMGUS, Office of Military
Government in Germany, U.S.) of former soldiers remaining attached to their militaristic
indoctrination or education is easily understandable given the ferocity of warfare and
ultra-nationalist ideology. I agree with the leaders of the occupation forces about this
militaristic potential that the former military bore. It is at least as important to recognize,
however, that the majority of demobilized soldiers had been taken out of civilian life
before they were drafted, that many soldiers were disillusioned about the war and the
regime’s propaganda in 1945, and that the demobilized soldiers themselves had an
interest in being at least economically integrated. The developing German and the
Japanese authorities clearly recognized the significance of the economic potential of
returnees. After all, over eleven and seven million men, respectively, constitute a
considerable economic force. Contrary to the occupation’s perception, however, the
Japanese and German governments perceived returnees in a more positive light; as a potential rather than a threat. While this might have been out of the economic and political necessity of gaining their support, it also reflects the administrations’—and by extension the populations’—pragmatic attitude with regard to demobilized soldiers. They had fought a war that was now discredited as a war led by militarists, Nazis, and ultra-nationalists, a war that was not their own and that they had lost. They had not come back as soldiers, but as civilians—demobilized—and were thus equal to the rest of the population. Hence, in both Germany and Japan, administration and society were much more willing to receive and integrate demobilized soldiers than were the occupation authorities.

Demobilized soldiers found themselves caught in between the two poles—the occupation and the national governments—and their different or even opposing measures and legislations. This made the integration not easier, but frequently caused alienation and resentment. Ultimately, the German and Japanese governments were left with the responsibility of reconciling returnees, and of accommodating them medically and financially, but also socially and politically. It is the balance between the measures of the occupation and the measures of the local authorities that was crucial for the veterans’ whereabouts and integration; a balance that was often times haphazard instead of negotiated, and irregular instead of systematic. The analysis of this balance between the occupation and the German and Japanese governments, which eventually succeeded in preventing returnees from clinging to their military past and from openly opposing the democratic governments (as veterans had in Germany after the First World War) is at the core of this dissertation.
There are several facets to the return of demobilized soldiers, the most important of which are social, economic, and political change. After returning from military deployment and an all-male environment of camaraderie and obeying orders, the demobilized had to adjust to different social settings in which not military ranks and hierarchy but family and social networks were dominant and in which social interaction was characterized by individualism and self-determination rather than orders and obedience. Economically, war destruction, occupation restrictions, scarcity, and occupational bans challenged the returnees who had experienced the relative economic security of military employment for years. The democratization and decentralization stipulated by the victorious Allies and, to a lesser degree, by democratic forces within Japan and Germany, were diametrically opposed to the wartime experiences of the returnees, which were characterized by the strict hierarchy and authoritarianism genuine to most militaries of the time but amplified by the totalitarianism of the regimes and the nature of their ideologies. Thus, the return from the military (or captivity as prisoners of war, POWs, which was also authoritarian, highly regulated, and relatively economically secure in the sense that POWs were provided for, albeit often at very low levels) constituted a major external change in the returnees' lives: from military subordination and control, from indoctrination and militarism, from camaraderie and relative economic security, they returned to civil society and evolving democracy, to difficult economic situations in which creativity and decision-making were crucial to survival, and to a society in which women had necessarily, through the war-related absence of men, acquired considerable economic and political independence.¹¹

¹¹ The topic is explored in depth by Elizabeth D. Heineman, *What Difference Does a Husband Make? Women and Marital Status in Nazi and Postwar Germany*, Studies on the History of Society and Culture 33
The process of transition from wartime coercion to postwar freedoms\textsuperscript{12} entailed what I call “civil reintegration,” and it was, once again, a more profound transition for the demobilized soldiers than for those who had been civilians during the war. The reintegration of demobilized soldiers into civil society most importantly comprised their demilitarization, and thus an action that was very much in line with the objectives of the occupation forces. However, it also entailed their re-socialization to function again in a non-military environment, with all the challenges listed above; their adaptation to the different economic situation as well as their amalgamation into a different (yet not unknown) social setting.

Demilitarization was one of the main objectives of the occupation, as U.S. postwar policy-making was guided by the understanding of militarism as the most significant cause of Germany’s and Japan’s aggressive and ultra-nationalistic regimes. The eradication of militarism was not an end in itself; rather, it served as a means to achieve the ultimate goal of stable and peaceful democracy. The prohibition of everything military, the elimination of so-called militarists from influential positions in politics, the economy, communication, and society, the abolition of all military forces, production, and facilities were instrumental for reaching this goal. For the demobilized soldiers, however, this meant immediate hardship. Pensions for military service, for widows and orphans, and for the war wounded were abolished; previously existing veterans’ associations that could have provided assistance were banned because they, too, were feared to propagate militarism. Returning soldiers had, especially during the first

\textsuperscript{12} The postwar freedoms were obviously paired with the coercion exerted by the occupation, with reeducation, and with the forcible demilitarization, but generally speaking, the postwar era was aimed at establishing the freedoms (and obligations) of a democratic civil society.
few years after the war, literally nothing to fall back on. Due to the difficult economic situation, public assistance for the general population was equally insufficient. I argue, however, that the situation of complete lack of support was psychologically more difficult for ex-servicemen than for destitute civilians because they had been provided for during the time of their service in the military while the civil population was used to care for themselves.

Given the drastically different circumstances that returnees were exposed to before and after their demobilization, the returnees exemplify the overall transitory situation of the two postwar countries: moving from military and totalitarian rule to an occupation aimed at creating democracy. Arguably, the most difficult transition for the demobilized was not the economic or political situation they were confronted with, but the change from military to civil life, combined with responsibility for oneself and, in most cases, for family members or dependants. In a larger context, the entirety of Japanese and German society underwent this transition, though in a less drastic manner: they shifted from a totalitarian state that not only provided for its people\(^\text{13}\) but also united them ideologically, to a democratic society based on individual responsibility. As the transition was crasser for demobilized soldiers because of the extremity of their exposure to militarism and warfare, their example demonstrates the difficulties of transition from wartime to peacetime society more drastically. As they constituted a cross-section of society, they are a representative sample of the broad variety of backgrounds and outlooks, as well as of the different attempts at engaging with the problems endemic to postwar society.

\(^{13}\) This is truer for Germany than for Japan. The German state possessed quite an elaborate welfare system.
Precisely because of the problems that returnees faced after their return—physical and social recovery from military service, finding housing and employment, and generally making a living—authorities were faced with the necessity of supporting them in order to prevent widespread discontent. Occupation and democratization made a radical break with the militarism of the past inescapable, yet the particularities of returning soldiers required special attention to their problems, despite the tangible link to the militaristic past that returning soldiers constituted. Hence, returnees stood literally between the old and the new regime, not belonging to either one. To win their support—or at least acquiescence—for democracy meant not only the successful conversion or reeducation to democracy of millions of men and, by extension, the diversion of a great and violent anti-democratic potential. More importantly, it involved overcoming, at the very basis of society, the spirit of ultra-nationalism, aggressive militarism, and totalitarianism that had characterized Nazi Germany and pre-war and wartime Japan. A careful balance had to be found between the complete ban on everything that remotely resembled militarism, as envisaged by the Allied occupation, and the material and social care for returnees, who were seen distinctly as both remnants of the old order, and as important and economically productive elements of society.

Reintegration of demobilized soldiers on all of the aforementioned levels was a necessary precondition to the reconstruction of a functioning society (and, by extension, a functioning state), and therefore required a concerted effort from several sides. The authorities, both at the occupation and the national governments, once established, were aware that the economic potential of returning soldiers was only to be used if the returnees were supported in their return to civil life: most notably, provisions for medical
recovery, for continued education, and for the establishment of economic enterprises were regarded as necessary stimuli to turn the masses of defeated ex-soldiers into an economically beneficial force. Democratization, too, could not simply be instituted or imposed, but had to develop through political and social discourse among the people; in order to understand it, it is necessary to evaluate both the discourse itself and the historical process that enabled it.14

In more than one respect, returnees embody the transition that Germany and Japan underwent during their occupation after the war. They had to shift their lifestyle from a military to a civilian one without much recognition for the service they had provided to their country; they needed the economic as well as social support of their communities in order to become useful members of society again, yet without notion of recognizing or valuing military achievements or spirit. Their role was one of simultaneously being perpetrators and victims, but the opportunity to dwell on either characteristic was precluded by the aforementioned necessity to separate from militarism and totalitarianism. Thus, returning soldiers were forced to look forward and immediately cast away whatever identity they had developed during their military service. Just like the remainder of German and Japanese society, they had to be reeducated; however, through their experience in the military, their indoctrination had been much more intense than the civilian population’s. Demobilized soldiers’ transition from war to peace—from military service to civil society—was a difficult process, which, however, was fundamental for the creation of postwar society.

Specifically the integration of returnees in the procedures of civilian life—their acknowledgement in and support through government and legislation, their return to civilian work and family life, and their participation in the political processes were important elements contributing to the constitution of civil society in defeated Germany and Japan. This dissertation argues that returnees were indispensable for the recreation of postwar society. While their sheer numbers—roughly eleven million men in Germany, and more than seven in Japan—already support this claim, the efforts undertaken by the authorities demonstrate that contemporaries saw in this large group indeed one of crucial significance for the respective countries. In addition, the discourse that existed about returnees within German and Japanese society—by the medical profession, social workers and welfare organizations, and political groups—further underscores that these men were indeed of great importance for postwar society.

**DEMOBILIZED SOLDIERS IN POSTWAR SOCIETY**

The main research questions guiding this dissertation are: What happened when the soldiers came back? What goals were projected on them by the American occupation and by the German and Japanese governments? Did these goals evolve, and how, and how is the evolution reflected in the measures and policies planned and implemented? Were these goals achieved? What were the connotations and intentions of these goals? My assumptions with regard to the occupation and to the governments of Germany and Japan are that democratization was the most important long-term goal for both. Returnees, who had been more heavily indoctrinated than civilians, and who had been subject to
military codes of behavior—by default authoritarian, and thus more authoritarian than civil society—were perceived to be less democratic in their outlook and consequently more in need of reeducation. They were also feared to be more likely advocates of authoritarianism and militarism, and thus potentially dangerous for the development of democracy; therefore, reeducation had to be combined with some kind of oppression of militaristic spirit. However, although demobilized soldiers constituted a significant portion of postwar German and Japanese societies, they were by no means prominent actors; rather, their actions were a response to how the occupation and the German and Japanese governments treated them.

Over the course of the first postwar decade, the American long-term goal of democratization remained constant; however, the internal developments within Japan and Germany as well as the international developments caused considerable changes in the policies implemented by the U.S. occupation. The evolving Cold War necessitated Germany’s and Japan’s economic reconstruction and their international political integration into the Western alliance, and at the same time caused the American position toward the demobilized military to soften. The creation of new militaries—the Self-Defense Forces in Japan and the Bundeswehr in West Germany—testifies to this tendency.

The Japanese government and the developing administration in the American zone of occupation in Germany, later the West German government, were confronted with a multitude of seemingly insurmountable tasks. They had to initiate, manage, and direct the reconstruction of the country while balancing their own goals with the goals and orders of the American occupation. They had to accommodate the reactive goals of
the occupation, namely the purge of those responsible in the wartime regime; and they
had to actively rebuild their own countries, taking into consideration both their own and
the occupation’s ideas. The balance between the occupation’s goals and the German and
Japanese governments’ aims, and between active and reactive politics, was particularly
precarious with regard to demobilized soldiers. During the war, the soldiers had been at
the forefront of their respective countries, carrying out expansion and defense and thus
securing their homelands’ well-being; they had also implemented and asserted the ultra-
nationalist, racist, and ultimately genocidal policies that their leaders had devised. Having
been drafted, they were victims of their leaders’ ideas, but their actions turned them into
perpetrators of an unjust and lost war. Allied policies stipulated demilitarization in order
to eliminate demobilized soldiers’ militaristic potential, but the German and Japanese
administrations realized that more had to be done for them to transform them into
supporters of and participants in, rather than mere nominal members of, democracy.
Economic support constituted the foremost political measures that the German and
Japanese governments created in addition—and, at least initially, in some opposition—to
occupation policies, with the goal of preventing the alienation of demobilized soldiers
from the new governments.

In addition to examining the goals and policies toward returning soldiers of the
occupation forces, this dissertation tries to unearth what the return of demobilized
soldiers meant for the soldiers themselves, and in the larger context of postwar society.
How were the soldiers received, and how did this reception influence returnees’ attitudes
and behavior? Did returnees constitute significant forces in the economic, social, and
political development of Japan and Germany? What were the returnees’ goals, and were they able to attain them?

Demobilized soldiers faced a difficult situation during the first postwar decade. Their difficulties began with physical and mental scars resulting from the war and captivity, and continued in the not easily surmounted estrangement from their families, and in the material difficulties of making ends meet in a dire economic situation. For many of them, the indoctrination during their time in the military and the material difficulties of the first few years after their return made them critical of the new government; yet their assessment of the wartime regimes, characterized by disillusionment, was similarly critical. Initially motivated by material goals such as the reinstatement of military pensions, compensation, and support in the establishment of a new livelihood, the returning soldiers united in veterans’ associations. Material, and particularly financial difficulties were the most pressing problem veterans were facing, and the early goals of veterans’ associations focused on the securing of state support. Once this goal was attained and material stability achieved, less urgent and more idealistic goals could be pursued. The material plight, however, was an expression of the veterans’ priorities. Multi-faceted as their backgrounds and identities were, they were unified in their initial material distress. The threat of a revival of militarism, which the Allies and the Japanese and German governments had initially feared, did not materialize because of the heterogeneity of the veterans; because the members had been drafted and considered themselves at least in part victims of militarism rather than its proponents; because the wartime regimes had been thoroughly discredited in public opinion; and because the material plight of the veterans was answered.
German and Japanese societies had mixed feelings toward returnees. On one hand, they welcomed their fathers, sons, and brothers with open arms, hoping to be able to return to a more complete family life and more economic security. Both these hopes were difficult to fulfill, given the estrangement caused by long absence and the intense experience of war in the first instance, and the difficult economic situation of postwar economic reconstruction in the second. On the other hand, returning soldiers were members of the military that had lost the war. Naturally, the military and political leadership was more severely blamed than returning common soldiers, but demobilized soldiers were also seen as culprits of defeat, and as having failed to protect the country in an appropriate fashion.

Both impressions complemented each other. Generally, the civilian population displayed sympathy to a limited set of close social relations: family, friends, and special acquaintances. Personal connection was the key in this situation—compassion was only available in specific cases to which one had a meaningful relationship (especially in a situation in which the status of victimhood was jealously guarded in order to avoid having to take responsibility). Outsiders of the inner circle of an individual’s social network were more easily blamed for defeat and the difficult situation of the country. The spectrum of emotions toward returnees covered everything in between these two antipodes of deep sympathy and deep antagonism, and it was not uncommon for a person to hold one view toward returnee family members and another toward the former military in general.
STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION

The civil reintegration of returning soldiers entails elements of the social, the economic, and the local political adaptation of returnees to their new, civilian environment. While each of these three areas could provide sufficient material for separate dissertations, the focus on the civil reintegration allows a broader look at the intersections of these areas and the reconstruction of a more comprehensive picture of the return of demobilized soldiers into civil society. In order to conduct a thorough analysis of these intersections, but also due to the availability of archival materials, I have chosen to approach the topic from three sides.

The first chapter examines the American occupation’s planning for and policies of demobilization. It explains the wider implications of demobilization on practical, ideological, and legal levels, as well as the situation of the surrendered German and Japanese militaries at the end of the war. Further, the chapter explains and interprets the process of demobilization: what happened to the soldiers after their government surrendered, and how was demobilization carried out logistically? Soldiers would be transported to Germany and Japan, respectively, if they surrendered outside of the country, and would leave the military for their homes after a brief stay at a demobilization camp, primarily for health checks and to process paperwork. This chapter sets the stage for the following chapters, but also constitutes the foundation of the study, because it explains the practicalities of the demobilization process. The chapter uses a top-down approach, focusing on the political process of decision-making to evaluate the process of demobilization, because the demobilized themselves were not active participants in demobilization but remained passive objects of the policies devised. Following the first
chapter is an interlude that describes and evaluates the experience of coming home. This part is intended to illustrate the realities that demobilized soldiers encountered while coming home, and to create a conceptual transition between the chapters that deal with the process of demobilization and with what happened after the ex-soldiers’ return.

The second chapter assesses the responses the American occupation on the one hand, and the German and Japanese administration on the other developed in reaction to the sudden influx of millions of former military men who had to find their families, housing, and work, and many of whom needed to recover from diseases or war-related injuries. Similar to the first chapter, the emphasis is on policies, their implementation, and the results and consequences of these policies. The chapter demonstrates the profound dilemmas faced by both the occupation and the national administrations: between demilitarization and reconstruction, as well as between the need to eliminate militaristic tendencies from society and the need to support and provide for destitute returnees. It was from the side of communal and national bodies that medical and financial attention was given to returnees, however, this support only developed slowly due to the lack of financial means and the absence of administrative structures specifically responsible for returnees’ welfare. The chapter further puts returnees and the institutions in charge of them into a larger context by assessing their relation to other victims of war and totalitarianism, and concludes by drawing a brief yet more inclusive picture of postwar society. A second interlude about uprooting, and the mental issues involved in homecoming, but also in the general situation of the German and Japanese societies, follows the second chapter. It is devised to illustrate, in a similar manner as the
The first interlude, the realities of return, and to underscore the particular role that demobilized soldiers played in the process of reconstruction.

The third chapter assesses the efforts of returnees themselves, and the interactions between veterans’ associations and the German and Japanese governments. The chapter first examines the processes of creating pieces of legislation for returnees that governed material issues such as pensions and compensation; it then continues to evaluate and question the creation of a veterans’ identity.

The dissertation roughly follows the chronology of events. This is possible within the topical structure because of the respective predominance of the occupation, the regional and national governments, and the veterans themselves during the first postwar decade.

Overall, the study has become much heavier on policy than I had initially intended, with only the interludes effectively constituting a break from the top-down approach, as they are dealing with the experiences and mentalities of veterans themselves. The lack of previous studies focusing on the policies with regard to demobilized soldiers has contributed to this emphasis on policy-making, as has the simple lack of action by veterans themselves—rooted in the initial ban on veterans’ associations that precluded such activities during the occupation years, but also in their socio-economic diversity and heterogeneity. Further, the fact that most of the source material used for this study is archival sources—produced by ministries or their branches and officials, and by political parties—has also resulted in a top-down analysis focusing heavily on policies. This top-down approach deviates considerably from the study of mentality that I had in mind when I formulated the project. It is, however, a way to lay a solid foundation for the further
study of the topic. The archival documents constitute the basis for the future work with the topic, and therefore the emphasis on politics and policy-making will in the future serve as a stepping stone for a more bottom-up examination of the experience of returning from war to civil society.

The archival situation in Germany and Japan merits some discussion, because it accounts for a number of asymmetries in this study. In Germany, the complete abolition of all national administration following the collapse of the Third Reich caused the total absence of archival material until roughly mid-1946; the lack of paper further rendered the creation of a body of archival documents difficult. Local and regional government bodies were allowed by the American occupation to form before the state governments were created, and long before a national government was established. As a consequence, great differences existed in the care for returnees by local and regional administrations during the first two years of the occupation, and in the creation of bodies of archival documents. Much material has remained at communal and regional archives, which I have not used because a local or regional focus would have rendered a coherent argument about the American zone of occupation very difficult, and because a study using material from several of these smaller archives would have gone far beyond the scope of a dissertation. Once comprehensive administrative offices and ministries were established in the period between mid-1946 and mid-1947, the documentation is quite thorough; however, no single ministry was specifically charged with the care for returnees. Generally speaking, the holdings of the administrative branches responsible for welfare, work, and Displaced Persons and refugees were the most fruitful sources with regard to returnees; however, the relative wealth of communication between the government and
Germany’s largest veterans’ association demonstrates that significant information also existed beyond these ministries. The federal structure of German archives rendered the search for material particularly fascinating: my archival research took me to Koblenz, Freiburg im Breisgau, Wiesbaden, Munich (where duplicates of the occupation documents are held), and Berlin. Of interest was further the examination of a number of conservative politicians’ papers at the archive of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Bad Godesberg (Archiv für Christlich-Demokratische Politik, ACDP) which provided not so much factual information but a wealth of opinions, only few of which I was able to integrate in the dissertation.

In Japan, the archival structure is much more straightforward given that Japan has remained a centralized country. Further, the Japanese government remained intact and functional during the occupation, so that a continuous coverage of archival materials exists. Unfortunately, however, while the Japanese National Archives possess an excellent online search tool, the holdings with regard to demobilized soldiers suffer from a severe lack of documentation. Personal papers and notes, correspondence within or among ministries or between officials and members of the public, transcripts of meetings, and speeches and manuscripts—all of which existed in German archives—were completely absent in the holdings I worked with at the Kokuritsu Kōbunshokan, the National Archives. It appears that only “official documents” (kō bun sho) are kept at the archives, an impression that was confirmed by a number of Japanese historians I met at various conferences. Materials related to the process of creating policies through discussions, meetings, and the examination of materials and personal opinions are either deemed unimportant or a source of future incrimination. In addition to the National
Archives of Japan, the use of the National Diet Library and its *Kensei Shiryōshitsu* (Modern Japanese Political History Materials Room) has proved extremely fruitful both for official and government publications and for access to duplicates of the occupation documents, which are otherwise only accessible at the United States National Archives in College Park, Maryland.

Dealing with quite different bodies of archival material has rendered it challenging, at times impossible, to create a parallel narrative of Germany and Japan. A comparison aiming at the emphasis of similarities and differences was not my intention in writing this dissertation, and the differences in the available documents have further contributed to a sometimes asymmetrical choice of examples. Yet I believe that this asymmetry serves to illustrate the differences—not only in the mere existence of documentation, but also in the perception of those who created (and purged) the documents—between Germany and Japan. The similarities in the situation of the two countries, which encouraged me to conduct this kind of study, cannot and are not intended to veil the profound differences in the politics, international position, economy, culture and social community that characterize them. It is not the goal of this dissertation to emphasize or downplay the similarities and differences of Germany and Japan, however; rather, this study aims at the examination of returning demobilized soldiers of defeated and occupied countries, and their reintegration in postwar societies.
CONCEPTUALIZATION

This dissertation is conceptualized as a study of demobilization and civil reintegration in postwar society. It uses the American zone of occupation of Germany and American-occupied Japan as two case studies in which demobilization—that is, the dissolution of the military after the two countries were defeated by the Allies in 1945—took place, and in which the demobilized soldiers were forced to find their way back into civilian life. The Second World War, generally referred to as the Asia-Pacific War for the Asia/Pacific theater and the Second World War for the European theaters of war, evolved from a territorial war to an ideologically motivated war. As a consequence, it was conducted by its main participants as a total war, with the mobilization of all parts of the economy and society for the war effort. It was concluded with unprecedented measures, which involved the brutalization of warfare on all sides (for example, the German war against supposed partisans in Eastern Europe, Japanese suicide attacks, and the use of two atomic bombs by the United States), and the effective stripping of the

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15 I would like to thank Elise Foxworth for calling my attention to this formal issue. The name of the war, and further its duration, have been in the center of long debates, specifically for the Asian theater. There is little debate that in Europe, what was eventually called the “Second World War” began with Nazi Germany’s attack on Poland on September 1, 1939 and ended with Germany’s surrender on May 8, 1945. In Asia, the war is generally considered to have begun in July 1937, with a skirmish “incident” at Marco Polo Bridge near Beijing, which was followed by the all-out war between Japan and China. Other points that are used to set the beginning of the war in Asia are the Mukden incident of September 18, 1931, which the Japanese Kwantung army provoked to justify the expansion of the militarily controlled territory along the Manchurian Railway; the establishment of the Japanese puppet state Manchukuo in Manchuria in February 1932; and the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on the Hawaiian island of Oahu in December 1941. In Japanese, the Asia-Pacific War is commonly referred to as the Pacific War (Teiheiyō sensō) or the Second World War (Dainijī sekai taisen); its official name during the war was Great East Asian War (Daitōa sensō).

losers’ national sovereignty by the winning Allies through military occupation, the institution of occupation governments as a replacement for national governments, and the denial of peace treaties until 1952 in the case of Japan and 1990 in the case of Germany (the so-called Zwei-plus-Vier-Vertrag, Two-Plus-Four Agreement, Treaty on the Final Settlement With Respect to Germany). The Japanese empire was reduced to little more than its four main islands, the island of Okinawa transformed into an American military base. Germany in its prewar borders was stripped of all territories east of the river Neisse (in a bid that accommodated the Soviet Union’s thirst for territory by shifting Poland’s national territory to the west, adding Poland’s eastern territories to the Soviet Union) and divided into four zones of occupation, which resulted in the creation of two separate states under Western and Soviet influence, respectively, in the fall of 1949. While the Cold War deepened the existing antagonism between the Western Allies on the one hand and the Soviet Union and China on the other, the reduction of Germany’s and Japan’s territories, the military occupation and the governmental control exerted by the Allies were a result of ideological and total warfare. The postwar settlements, the occupation of Japan and the division and occupation of Germany, and the policies of demilitarization were therefore a result of the way the war had been conducted, but evolved in the changing political climate of the Cold War.

This dissertation uses Japan and the American zone of occupation of Germany as two case studies in the analysis of demobilization and reintegration. It would have gone far beyond the scope of a dissertation to include all of Germany—if at all feasible, it would have rendered the picture much more complicated. In addition to the documen-

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17 For reasons of clarity and brevity, I will be writing about “Germany” when I am referring to the American zone of occupation of Germany.
tation in the American zone being the most extensive compared to the other occupation zones,\(^{18}\) this limitation appears useful to keep the study (and the time of research) at a reasonable size and to avoid the distraction that would have resulted from the inclusion of other occupation zones because of the great disparities particularly in the early years after the war. Further, most of the policies and developments of the American zone of occupation were anticipating the policies of the other Western zones; American influence increased with the unification of the British and American zones to the Bi-Zone and the accession of the French occupation zone to the Tri-Zone, and was then cemented through the foundation of the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany, Bundesrepublik Deutschland). The American preponderance manifested itself in the United States’ leading economic and diplomatic role, and in the crystallization of the Cold War as a conflict with the Soviet Union and the United States as nuclei. Finally, using only the American-occupied part of Germany in this study allows to focus on a comparable set of occupation policies and thus serves to even out differences between Germany and Japan. Even if comparison is not the goal of this dissertation, and if profound differences existed between the American assessment and treatment of Japan and the American zone of occupation of Germany, the processes of demobilization and civil reintegration are more easily examined with fewer differences between the two geographical points of reference.

Why not a comparative study? I do not wish—in fact, I would like to avoid—to compare Germany and Japan for the sake of comparison because I believe the approach to be inherently limited. Comparison, albeit a difficult way to treat a subject academically, appears to be restricted to the examination of similarities and differences, and the causes

and consequences of these. This might certainly be a worthwhile undertaking for a number of subjects; in history, I doubt its usefulness. What seems to be of more significance than analyzing parallel and opposed developments and events is the examination of one larger topic—the demobilization and civil reintegration of soldiers—from the transnational angle of two different countries that found themselves confronted with that topic at one point in time. Of course, to claim that there were similarities between Germany and Japan in the first postwar decade already is a comparison. Defeat after total war and warfare on ideological grounds, unconditional surrender, the loss of national sovereignty, military occupation, demobilization, democratization, reeducation, the separation of the state from religion and from economic conglomerates, and the diplomatic integration into the Western (America-centered) defense alliance, for example, were all similarities that existed between Germany and Japan. On the other hand, historical, cultural, political, economic, geopolitical, and social differences made (and make) Japan and Germany different enough to make a comparison almost unfeasible. This is particularly why I am consciously avoiding the comparison of what happened in Germany to what happened in Japan. The similarities are the reason why Germany and Japan constitute valuable countries for an analysis that involves two countries, and make such an analysis useful; the differences have to be kept in mind but are not a deterrent. The larger picture would be obstructed if comparison were the goal of this study; this would prevent us from drawing conclusions, and stall the evaluation of the actual themes of this dissertation: demobilization and the civil reintegration of the demobilized. To study these themes in two countries yields more than the sum of the geographical parts; it offers a larger understanding of the manifold processes that the demobilization of
defeated armies entail; we can gain insight into the transition from war to peace, the
forces at work between occupation and national governments, and the transformation that
societies undergo when they, too, are effectively demobilized after a total war. This study
therefore transcends the boundaries of conventional national history by incorporating two
national histories with the history of occupations, Cold War history, and the study of the
connections between the Second World War and the postwar. On a practical level, I will
analyze the various elements and developments of demobilization and reintegration for
Japan and the American zone of occupation in Germany separately, tying the develop-
ments together and showing the larger picture at the ends of the chapters, in the interludes,
and most importantly in the conclusion. Although at times, I have made direct
comparisons, I have tried to avoid them in order not to distract the reader.

Throughout the dissertation, I will first examine Germany and then Japan. This
does not suggest any preference, nor does it necessarily enhance the flow of the argu-
ment; rather, some consistency with regard to the order in which I deal with the two
appeared desirable. As the war ended earlier for Germany than for Japan, I begin with
Germany and keep this order.

A note on Japanese names: All names of Japanese individuals in the text appear in
the Japanese order, that is, the last name is followed by the given name. As this was
technologically not possible to implement for the footnotes and the bibliography,
Japanese authors’ names are rendered the same way as Western names, with the given
name preceding the last name and, in the reference list, the last name followed by a
comma and the given name.
Quotes from German and Japanese sources appearing in the text are my own translations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Germany: Facing the Nazi past through postwar history

Demobilized soldiers as a group—which are extremely difficult to define because of their heterogeneity—have been remarkably understudied, given that they constitute such an important lens to examine the various aspects of postwar German and Japanese history. Moreover, it is surprising that the existence of such a group, which allows us to broaden our perspective from the national level to a broader, more abstract approach, has been barely acknowledged by historians.

The importance of demobilized soldiers and returning POWs in postwar German and Japanese societies is reflected in the attention they received from various sides between 1945 and 1955: they were a significant political issue both domestically and internationally; a political force through the creation of veterans’ associations; an economic and social factor; the object of medical preoccupation and attention by churches and welfare institutions; and in the center of debates about questions of gender, family, and identity. It is remarkable, however, that these former soldiers have received very little attention by historians, which illustrates what Hanna Schissler has called “an everlasting present” of West German history that has been standing in the way of a
thorough historical examination. In Japan, the fact that the Asian empire was not dissolved through a negotiation between the metropolis and the colonies but through “third party decolonization” by way of Allied intervention, and that the discourses of Japanese victimization were shaped by various different interest groups served to preclude the historical analysis and interpretation of demobilized soldiers.

In order to place the historiography of demobilized soldiers and my own work in the context of existing historical scholarship, it appears desirable to first evaluate the general development of histories of the postwar in Germany and in Japan, and then to take a closer look at works that focus more specifically on POWs, demobilization, and veterans.

During the conservative government of German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer (1949-1963), historical studies of the immediate postwar years emphasized the external circumstances of German occupation, division, and integration in different diplomatic alliances. They created a static picture of the foundation of the West German state, because only “if one left the miserable years out of the historical context of the Federal Republic, the formation of the Bonn state could be understood as an act of creation without preconditions; and only if the years before the Adenauer Era remained a mythos, the legend of the self-induced success of the Western [German] state could thrive.” The paradigm and generational shift under the social democratic governments of Chancellors

20 Lori Watt, When Empire Comes Home: Repatriation and Reintegration in Postwar Japan (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2009), 12.
Ludwig Erhard and Willy Brandt opened up a more thorough engagement with the late forties; however, the fascination with everything rubble—a growing engagement with Trümmerliteratur (literature of the rubble) and Trümmerkultur (culture of the rubble), most notably, but also serious historical engagement—remained largely powerless vis-à-vis the established foundation myth of the Federal Republic. Only in the 1970s, historians began to distance themselves from the notion of 1945 and 1949 as the caesura that had enabled the successful development of the West German state, but the popular notion of the Stunde Null, the “zero hour,” remained, and has even recently been reasserted by scholars. Particularly since the 1980s, a more thorough historical engagement with the immediate postwar years developed in the shape of extensive studies of primary sources and regional studies, made possible by the opening of archival sources related to the occupation.

23 Ibid., 405.
Since the 1990s, the field of “new cultural history,” which deals with gender, race, youth, popular culture, as well as with the victims and perpetrators of Nazi Germany, has witnessed a great extension. Most of the works of this field confirm the continuity—or at least the connections—across the 1945 divide in terms of persons and institutions, but also in terms of ideas and social development. While the label “new cultural history” describes these works’ approach, it understates the scope of their analysis: many if not all of them employ the lens of “culture” to enable a broader perspective than political history alone can achieve, with the aim of arriving at more comprehensive and inclusive findings than older works. Perhaps the most comprehensive volume on this kind of German post-war history is the volume edited by Hanna Schissler, _The Miracle Years_, because it brings together many of the relevant scholars of the field and because it offers a cross-section of the most recent tendencies in academic scholarship focusing on the first two decades of the Federal Republic of Germany. What the book rightfully criticizes is the monochromacity of the myth of the economic miracle that dominated West German historiography until the mid- and late 1990s. Further, by employing the “cultural” approach to an analysis of the political and economic situation of postwar Germany, the

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book essentially takes away some of the implied claims of primacy of “political history.”^{28}

The process of remedying the unambiguous interpretations of the beginnings of the West German state must be considered significant because it constitutes a significant piece in the jigsaw puzzle of Vergangenheitsbewältigung, the German “coming to terms with the past.” Vergangenheitsbewältigung constitutes the fundamental process of the German quest for an identity that makes sense of the Nazi past, a quest that Robert Moeller has termed the “search for a usable past.”^{29} This search constitutes the nexus between the new cultural history and the more traditional political history; between the historians of the Stunde Null and those who claim continuity across 1945; between the advocates of the Sonderweg (Germany’s “special path”) and the proponents of the qualification of the Holocaust^{30}—all participants in the scholarly debate, notwithstanding which side they are on, strive to make sense of what role Nazi Germany played in German history, and how this episode (or was it more? as the historians of the Sonderweg would argue) shaped postwar Germany. Postwar history attempts, to oversimplify it a little, to make sense of how (West) Germany succeeded in becoming the peaceful and democratic state that is firmly embedded, morally and politically, in the Western alliance.

^{28} The dichotomy could also be coined in terms of “history from below” versus “history from above.”
^{30} The event I am referring to is the Historikerstreit, the “historians’ debate,” a public debate of German historians and philosophers in the second half of the 1980s about the singularity of the Holocaust. The two opposing positions were that the Holocaust was merely a response to the threat of Communism, and in its cruelty and scope comparable to the violence of Stalinist Communism; the main argument on the other side was that the Holocaust was singular in its cruelty because German history followed its own distinct path (the Sonderweg) and her history was therefore not comparable to other countries’ developments. A comprehensive compilation of the documents and arguments is provided in Rudolf Augstein, Historikerstreit: Die Dokumentation der Kontroverse um die Einzigartigkeit der nationalsozialistischen Judenvernichtung [The historians' dispute: Documentation of the controversy about the uniqueness of the National Socialist annihilation of Jews] (Munich; Zürich: Piper, 1987). The Historikerstreit influenced German historiography as much as did the shifts in the political orientation of the Federal Republic’s governments.
The history of postwar Germany is inextricably linked to the history of the Third Reich, because of the (at least initial) collaboration of the Germans with the Nazi regime, and because of the totality of the war. Hence, the ubiquitousness of the Second World War and Nazi Germany has its roots in the all-encompassing nature of the war and National Socialism, that is, in “the participatory alliance of affluence and power between the regime and the people’s community.”\textsuperscript{31} To examine the war’s aftermath therefore implies the examination of the war, even if this examination consciously excludes the war (as would be the case with histories that use 1945 as a caesura), because the postwar is inherently based on the war and cannot be evaluated without the war as its foundation.

One theme of the engagement with—or without—Nazi Germany is the history of denazification. The topic is only marginally related to the study of demobilized soldiers, because after the war, Nazis and not militarists were blamed for the war and purged from their offices. The Nuremberg War Crimes Trial tried members of the associations affiliated with the Nazi party, that is, its military wings and the secret police. The \textit{Wehrmacht} emerged unsullied from the process. Yet the theme of denazification can be used effectively to trace the development of postwar historical scholarship. It is arguably the only theme that has never lost the attention of the historical community. It has consistently received a lot of attention, and the ambiguities of its goals, implementation, and outcomes have succeeded in sustaining the topic’s attraction from the 1950s onwards. Many of the very early studies were created by persons involved in the denazification procedures, mostly in the context or direct aftermath of the occupation, such as the bestseller \textit{Der Fragebogen} (“The Questionnaire,” referring to the denazification

questionnaire every adult had to complete),32 William E. Griffith’s article “Denazification in the United States Zone of Germany,”33 or Arsen Yakoubian’s dissertation.34 Owing to the difficult access to sources, Justus Fürstenau’s dissertation, which was published unchanged as a book only fourteen years after it had been written,35 remained the only larger German academic work on denazification at the time.36 Still considered a standard work is Lutz Niethammer’s regional study on denazification in Bavaria, Mitläuferfabrik (“Factory of fellow travelers”),37 which provided a relatively comprehensive analysis of the subject despite its geographical limitations. Since the 1980s, a number of more comprehensive studies were published that are now considered standard publications on denazification.38 On a comparative level, Klaus-Dietmar Henke and Hans Woller have edited a volume that evaluates denazification in different European countries and in different political systems,39 extending the scope of analysis beyond national boundaries and ceasing to evaluate Nazism and denazification as an exclusively German theme. The

37 Niethammer, Die Mitläuferfabrik.
most recent work on denazification might be David Monod’s *Settling Scores*, which analyzes the relationship between the American occupation’s cultural policies and the German musical establishment, and provides an evaluation of the workings of Allied reorientation of Germany. The book falls in the afore-mentioned category of “new cultural history,” employing music and composers as a lens to analyze the processes of denazification and democratization, and continuities across the 1945 “divide.”

Denazification might be the prime example of the ubiquitous existence of Nazi Germany in postwar history, symbolizing both a break with the past and the connections across the divide of the end of Hitler’s regime. The topic has served to confirm and underscore that Germany was purged and purged itself from Nazism, but also to demonstrate the difficulties and ambiguities that this process entailed. It has made possible the simultaneous presentation of Germans as victims and as perpetrators, and is thus a powerful symbol for the ambivalence and multi-faceted nature of German postwar history.

Demobilized and returning soldiers have not figured prominently in postwar German history, for a number of reasons. First of all, traditional military history generally emphasizes battles, strategy and tactics, technology, and military leaders; therefore, military history during the first three postwar decades was characterized by histories of the military as a whole and its leaders. Extensive studies have been carried out with the

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support of German national archives, and have brought forward an impressive body of technical and documentary works on the Wehrmacht. Only relatively recently has military history moved to include history “from below,” that is, from the individual soldier’s perspective. The scholarship includes both accounts of the war itself and the analysis of soldiers’ writings during or about the war.

Second, the Cold War contributed greatly to the kinds of military histories that were written—and published—about the Second World War. In the case of Germany, the integration into the Western defense alliance and the developing European community as well as the creation of a new German army, the Bundeswehr, facilitated a much less critical handling of the Wehrmacht than the National Socialist state received overall. To allow the young Federal Republic to possess an army also permitted a conservative historiography of her predecessor’s army, particularly because of the continuity of high-ranking personnel from the Wehrmacht to the Bundeswehr, and because the military wings of the National Socialist state, the SS (Schutzstaffel, Protection Squad) and SA (Sturmbteilung, Storm Detachment) were essentially blamed for the genocidal excesses


of the Second World War in Europe while the military itself, the Wehrmacht, remained unscathed. The first critical monograph on the Wehrmacht highlighting the indoctrination of the army was only published in 1969. The Cold War and the personal connections between Wehrmacht and Bundeswehr which suggested that high-ranking officers and generals had not been involved in the workings and crimes of the Reich (as they would have been tried otherwise) facilitated and even enabled the creation of the myth of the “good” or “unsullied Wehrmacht,” which persisted in popular consciousness until it was shattered by Christopher Browning’s and Daniel Goldhagen’s works and the “Wehrmacht Exhibition,” all of which linked common soldiers and Germans to the crimes of the Nazi regime. Less influential for public consciousness but of great


47 Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust (New York: Knopf, 1996). Goldhagen’s book sparked great discussion, both in Germany and internationally, and among historians as well as among non-academics. While Browning’s book had shown the “human face” of the Holocaust by portraying the internal workings of a German police battalion in Poland and essentially provided a similar study as Goldhagen’s, the latter’s work was heavily criticized for factual inaccuracies, simplistic explanations (such as anti-Semitism as the all-encompassing motive for the genocide of the European Jewry), and lack of perspective. An assessment—it is much more than a review—of Goldhagen’s book by the eminent German historian Hans-Ulrich Wehler summarizes the book’s challenge: “It is the quality of political debate in our country that is at issue here: can we acknowledge the legitimacy of Goldhagen’s challenge … while nevertheless insisting firmly on the complete failure of his own ‘explanation’?” Hans-Ulrich Wehler, “The Goldhagen Controversy: Agonizing Problems, Scholarly Failure and the Political Dimension,” German History 15, no. 1 (1997): 90-91.

significance for the scholarly community are the works of Omar Bartov,\(^49\) and, more recently, Hannes Heer and Klaus Naumann\(^50\) as well as Wolfram Wette,\(^51\) all of whom also demonstrated the Wehrmacht’s involvement in war crimes and the atrocities of the Nazis’ war for Lebensraum. Together, these works arguably constituted the beginning of historians’ more critical assessment of the Wehrmacht, but also confirmed the shift in the historiography of the military from large-scale political and technical analyses to a more social and bottom-up approach, which is particularly apparent in Browning’s analysis of a single battalion.

Third, demobilized soldiers did not return to German society as soldiers, but as civilians and as former prisoners of war. Through the denazification and demilitarization policies, Germans were forced to distance themselves from the Nazi regime or face punishment or at least reprimands. When former soldiers returned home, no matter if they had been in Allied captivity or not, they had been demobilized; they were not soldiers anymore, they were not even allowed to keep wearing their uniforms (they had to “dye or die”\(^52\)). The process of demilitarization has been investigated on the level of international negotiations,\(^53\) but the social and cultural dimensions of this process have been largely ignored.\(^54\) Further, demobilized returning soldiers were competing with other groups—with the victims of the Nazi regime and persecution, of Allied bombing, of expulsion

\(^{49}\) Bartov, *Hitler’s Army*.


from the formerly German parts of Eastern Europe, and of persecution or flight from the Soviet zone of occupation, and also with the perpetrators of the Nazi regime—for the attention of historians. Due to the combination of the policies of demilitarization during the postwar years, and the influence of politics on historical scholarship, the former soldiers’ presence in postwar Germany remained largely unrecognized, an absence that was endorsed by historians.

It is important to mention that prisoners of war differ strongly from veterans in terms of the attention they received from historians. The Ministry of Expellees (Bundesministerium für Vertriebene) of the Federal German government commissioned a group of historians to study German war prisoners during and after the Second World War in 1957; the result was a monumental twenty-two-volume work, published between 1962 and 1974, that analyzed the situation of German POWs of the Second World War in all of the countries that kept them in custody. Inevitably, the study, organized geographically, could not overlook the often-times appalling conditions in which the prisoners were held, treated, re-educated, and put to work; however, the provocation of foreign countries was to be avoided and the international community was not to be led to think that Germany wanted to unleash a political debate about the treatment of their former POWs. As a result, the commission’s work was carried out in relative secrecy, and the results of the work was initially not to be made accessible to the public, but limited to research

institutions as source material. Eventually, copies of the work were made publicly accessible but were distributed in a small edition so that only a limited number of archives, universities, and state and national libraries hold the work today. The work is a significant scholarly achievement and constitutes an important engagement with historical sources; however, given the limited distribution, it did not receive much attention by the German public. It is today accessible in a number of larger university and regional libraries as well as the German National Library. A number of works about German war prisoners has been compiled after the study of the so-called *Maschke-Kommission* by Wolfgang Benz and Angelika Schardt, Stefan Karner, and Andreas Hilger, for example. All of these works focus on POW camps, the politics of the captors and the social and economic dimensions of imprisonment. In a similar way, a number of works deals with the experience of German POWs in Western captivity, describing and evaluating the relationship between captors and captives, social ties, and re-education. The ending point of these works is either at the gate of the camp or the arrival in Germany. As their focus is on the experience and politics of POWs, what comes after the release is not of importance or interest.

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Arthur L. Smith’s work is a noteworthy exception to older works about POWs and their return to Germany. His earliest work about *Heimkehr*, the return home from the Second World War, is a thorough analysis of the return of German POWs into occupied Germany. It explains, in a similar manner as this dissertation, policies created by the occupation (though his work includes all four occupation zones) and by German administrative bodies with regard to returnees. It is a highly specialized study which provides only a very brief and schematic conclusion and emphasizes the microcosm of *Heimkehr* rather than the macrocosm of postwar society. One of his later works is a response to a work by Canadian journalist James Bacque, who claimed that the U.S. government deliberately let one million die from starvation and insanitary conditions in the temporary enclosures along the Rhine River in which the disarmed *Wehrmacht* was initially held. Bacque’s conspiracy theory of President Eisenhower welcoming the chance to pay back the Germans was based on admittedly poorly kept and unclear American records; however, neglectful research also led to his conclusion. Smith’s book *Die “vermisste Million,”* but also the collection of essays by Günter Bischof and Stephen Ambrose are direct replies to Bacque’s claims, disproving them as false, fabricated, and sensational.

Among the few more recent historians who have acknowledged the importance of demobilized soldiers for postwar Germany is Konrad Jarausch, who included and acknowledged the influence of returnees, materially as well as ideologically, in his long-

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61 Smith, *Heimkehr aus dem Zweiten Weltkrieg.*
term study of postwar Germany. Further, James Diehl has examined the treatment that veterans received after 1945 in West Germany by comparing it to the situation after the First World War and focusing largely on professional soldiers and compensation. His work makes an important contribution to the history of veterans, as it paints a comprehensive picture of the political currents that shaped the debates about pensions, compensation, and latent militarism in veterans’ associations. His extensive and detailed work is for the most part political in its approach, closely following the negotiations and legislative processes about the provisions for veterans. Owing to its extensive use of negotiation protocols and thorough analysis of the process of inception of the legislation for returnees, Diehl’s book has been indispensable for my own work. Rüdiger Overmans, a former member of the German Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt (Military History Research Institute), has included the period after the release of POWs in his research, which overall focuses on POWs, repatriation, and war captivity in the larger context of the First and Second World Wars and World history. His work emphasizes the significance of the connections between captivity and release into civil society, and the political dimensions of German POWs, and thus underscores the conjunctions between POWs and domestic and international politics. Finally, Frank Biess has published a “comparative” study of German POWs returning to East and West Germany, in which the returnees’ identity as former POWs is strongly emphasized. The themes of his book, which is based on his dissertation, are victimization, the political discourses that served to

65 Jarausch, After Hitler.
66 Diehl, Thanks of the Fatherland.
integrate veterans into the evolving community of citizens of the Eastern and Western
German state, and the governments’ efforts to attain the release of POWs held in the
Soviet Union. Biess’ book is relatively close to my own work, particularly because he
looks at the two German states (while I look at West Germany and Japan), but also
because he evaluates the process of becoming citizens. In this evaluation, however, lies
the most important difference between his and my work: his approach uses memory and
representation, and emphasizes the POW experience, while my work uses the institutions
and their measures with regard to returnees, and includes ex-servicemen who have not
been POWs (not at all or not formally) in order to evaluate the “making of citizens.”

A study that examines the processes of the return of demobilized soldiers into
German society has yet to be written. Arthur L. Smith’s work on returnees is, in its
comprehensiveness and thoroughness with archival sources, very narrowly focused,
possibly due to its age. Biess’ work comes close, although it deemphasizes the
institutional and occupational components as well as the early years of the occupation,
and focuses mainly on the experience of Soviet captivity. It is particularly the diversity of
facets of captivity and return that is the most prominent characteristic of the topic, and
that hints at the pervasiveness of return in postwar society, which makes the subject so
compelling—and challenging.

68 Biess, Homecomings. He further published Frank Biess, “Survivors of Totalitarianism: Returning POWs
and the Reconstruction of Masculine Citizenship in West Germany, 1945-1955,” in The Miracle Years: A
Cultural History of West Germany, 1949-1968 (Princeton, Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001), 57-
82; Frank Biess, “Men of Reconstruction—the Reconstruction of Men: Returning POWs in East and West
Germany, 1945-1955,” in Home/Front: The Military, War and Gender in Twentieth-Century Germany
(Oxford, New York: Berg, 2002), 335-358. In a volume edited by himself, Mark Rosenberg and Hanna
Schissler, he published Frank Biess, “The Search for Missing Soldiers: MIAs, POWs, and Ordinary
69 Biess, Homecomings. The quotation is from the headings of chapters four and five.
**Japan: The postwar in perspective**

The writing of Japanese history through an international academic community began as early as the late nineteenth century, when the study of all things oriental created institutes of Asian studies—mostly literature, history, and culture—across Western Europe. Cooperation between Japanese and European scholars in the research of Japan is exemplified by the journal *Monumenta Nipponica*, published since 1938 by Sophia University in Tokyo, which has only used English as its standard language since the 1960s; before, more than half of its articles were published in French and German. In the United States, the scholarly engagement with East Asia received a significant institutional stimulus with the creation of the Harvard-Yenching Institute in 1928, which encouraged higher education in and research about Asia; the independent institute subsequently served as the basis for the creation of the Department of East Asian languages and Civilizations at Harvard University, the funding for the Harvard-Yenching Library, and the *Journal of Asiatic Studies*.

A second focus on the study of East Asia was policy-making. Particularly the engagement in the Pacific War and in the occupation of Japan served as an encouragement to the study of Japanese history and culture in the United States. The connection between the two can be found, for example, in the person of Edward O. Reischauer, who grew up in Japan, earned his doctorate from Harvard University in 1939, served as Japan expert for the U.S. Army Intelligence Service, and continued to research and teach about Japan, but also about China, at Harvard after the war. He founded the
Institute of Japanese Studies at Harvard University, which was later named after him.\textsuperscript{70} Reischauer can be seen as one of the most influential founders—if not the founder—of the discipline of Japanese historical study in United States academia.

The connections between military intelligence and the war-related study of Japan on one hand, and the academic engagement with Japan on the other are particularly apparent in the historiography of Japan after the Asia-Pacific War, because of the personal connections with the war and the occupation. In close proximity to the occupation, many works were published that evaluated Japan’s occupation and the changes the country underwent as a consequence of the lost war through the lenses of the occupying forces or foreign correspondents.\textsuperscript{71}

Among the Japanese themselves, 1945 was perceived as a rupture; “the voluminous literature of reminiscence, part oral history, part diary, part reconstruction, perpetuated the frozen moment [of August 15, 1945] that separated the past from the present in personal memory.” This was consistent with the American occupation, which established the tenets that Japanese history began anew in 1945, that good and bad forces in the war could be clearly identified and separated from each other, and that Japanese modernity, which had deteriorated with the war, could now be rectified.\textsuperscript{72} Historiography

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\textsuperscript{70} Edwin O. Reischauer, My Life Between Japan and America (New York: Harper & Row, 1986). Reischauer described the field of Japanese history as “almost nonexistent” in the 1930s in the introduction to his memoir.
of postwar Japan had, according to Carol Gluck, four “custodians” who all created different and conflicting accounts: progressive and mostly leftist intellectuals for whom the very first few years after the war had born the promise of true and profound revolutionary change, which was later on betrayed by the actual developments of the decades following the war; the conservative establishment consisting of intellectuals and politicians alike, who strove to create a positive past to correspond to the positive present characterized by economic growth and the acceptance of Japan into the Western democratic alliance; the media, which created the past as something very distinct from the present; and private memories, which absorbed and adapted current historical interpretations into their life stories.

The antagonism between leftist and conservative interpretations of sengo, “the postwar,” is arguably the most prominent feature of Japanese historiography of the postwar decades, and despite the political dominance of the conservative stream, progressive historians have been instrumental in creating a critical assessment of Japan’s postwar decade. Three examples of the leftist, “progressive” camp shall illustrate the breadth of their positions and approaches: Ienaga Saburō, Maruyama Masao, and Arai Shin’ichi. Ienaga published school textbooks based on his New Japanese History that critically assessed Japan’s military conduct during the Asia-Pacific War. He filed several lawsuits against the Japanese government after he had had to correct or tone down passages in the textbooks, an act he understood as censorship. The criticism he displayed between the war and the postwar is sengo, “postwar” (as a noun), which corresponds to the German term Stunde Null, the “Zero Hour.” Stronger and therefore less used is the term haisen, defeat.

73 John Dower emphasizes the conservative interpretations of the postwar, which are rooted in the political domination of Japanese politics by the Liberal Democratic Party, and downplays the role of leftist and progressive intellectuals in the process of writing postwar history in John W. Dower, “‘An Aptitude for Being Unloved’: War and Memory in Japan,” in Crimes of War: Guilt and Denial in the Twentieth Century (New York: New Press, 2002), 218.
toward what he understood as a pro-militarist attitude of Japanese education and official history is at the center of his works: his main argument was that “the emphasis on militarism in the curriculum, combined with the media’s glorification of war and the government’s suppression of pacifist and liberal views, was a major factor in socializing the great majority of Japanese to support aggression enthusiastically.”

Maruyama Masao, leftist political scientist and historian, emphasized the lack of autonomy among the Japanese people which had allowed ultra-nationalism and prevented the development of democracy. His work focused on the individual’s role in society and, more specifically in the context of postwar Japan, individual responsibility and agency. Arai Shin’ichi concentrated his numerous works and writings on the Second World War and war responsibility, and, being a trained historian, has been particularly influential.

The “progressive” camp was by no means a homogeneous one; despite its overall opposition to more conservative interpretations of Japanese history in general and the Pacific War in particular, and despite its ability to monopolize the academic study of history in the first two postwar decades, different streams existed within this group.

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Broadly defined, Marxist and “modernist” (kindai shugi) historiography were the two strongest contenders, differing profoundly on matters of historical interpretation and the perception of the driving forces of history. What they had in common, however, was the understanding of Japanese fascism as a “crisis of Japanese modernity” and as the logical consequence of secular aberrations of Japanese history. This theory of a Japanese “special path” in history was developed much earlier than the German Sonderweg theory, demonstrating the Japanese historians’ resolve to unearth the structural and cultural sources of the reasons for Japan’s ultra-nationalistic development.

Two examples will illustrate the other, the conservative end of the spectrum. Etō Jun, at the time literary critic, historian and social analyst, lamented that democracy had been introduced through the American occupation but that as a consequence, Japanese society had been stripped of national integrity because the profound changes that the occupation had imposed on Japan—such as the renouncing of military engagement in the constitution—had not been in line with Japan’s past development and constituted a break with the national character. The consequent loss of national identity constitutes the overarching theme in much of the conservative literature. The conservative, if not right-wing, tendencies in Japan’s historiography and politics can further be observed in the debates around history textbooks. The Atarashii rekishi kyōkasho wo tsukuru kai (their

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79 Ibid., 174.

80 For a more elaborate view on conservative politics and historiography, see Yoshibumi Wakamiya, The Postwar Conservative View of Asia: How the Political Right Has Delayed Japan’s Coming to Terms with Its History of Aggression in Asia (Tokyo: LTB International Library Foundation, 1999).

English name is “Society for History Textbook Reform,” commonly abbreviated *Tsukurukai* established as its goal to teach the Asia-Pacific War truthfully and without the propaganda of foreign countries. While the textbook created by the *Tsukurukai* is not widely used in schools, their efforts to diminish Japanese aggression and to downplay the atrocities committed by the Japanese military during the Asia-Pacific War have received harsh criticism by progressive intellectuals and historians within Japan as well as internationally.

The so-called “New Left,” stemming in essence from intellectuals disillusioned with the actual development of Japanese politics and public discourse after the occupation took a conservative turn with its “reverse course” due to Cold War politics, reemerged in the late 1960s and early 1970s when criticism of the United States in the context of the Vietnam War challenged the established conservative doctrine. The “New Left” especially emphasized the ambiguities and internal contradictions of the American occupation, the continuities and connections across the divide of 1945. Much of the English-language scholarship used to focus on political history or a combination

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86 Schonberger himself is no exception with his Schonberger, *Aftermath of War*. 
of political and economic history. Some historians extended their approach to less political features such as, for example, Akira Iriye who employed the cultural notions of Japanese and American politicians to explain the Pacific War; however, these remained the exception rather than the rule. It has only been in the past two decades that a scholarly direction centering on culture, gender, race, identity, memory, oral history, and history from below has developed in the United States, comparable to the German “new cultural history.” Its beginnings can be traced back to the less orthodox approaches of the “New Left,” and particularly to John Dower, whose books incorporate significant cultural and social analyses. An important work that is an outcome of the more critical and historical (as opposed to anthropological and social science) approach is the edited volume Postwar Japan as History, devised to provide the history student (and teacher) with an introductory tool to the topics of postwar Japan: political economy, culture and society, and the interaction of political and social groups with the government. The admittedly impossible attempt to provide both breadth and depth, both an overview and insight into the problems and controversies about postwar history, has been brilliantly implemented by the numerous and eminent scholars who contributed chapters to the book. It is noteworthy that more recently, an attempt has been made to reconnect to this discussion on postwar Japanese history in the form of a conference “Revisiting Postwar Japan as

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87 For example, Akira Iriye and Warren I. Cohen, eds., The United States and Japan in the Postwar World (Lexington, Ky.: University Press of Kentucky, 1989).
89 The two books in question are Dower, War Without Mercy; John W. Dower, Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II (New York: W.W. Norton & Co./New Press, 2000).
91 Ibid., x.
While so far, no publication has ensued from the conference, its existence demonstrates the persistence of scholarly interest and the significance of the time period for Japanese history.

Oral history and diaries have particularly received attention by historians recently, as they allow a much more nuanced historical picture than political or economic history alone. Further, the construction of memory and identity has emerged as a key approach to postwar Japanese history, taking up issues of how history has been created and presented, and the implications for Japanese identity. In the same context, the ideas of nationalism and national identity, of colonialism and decolonization, and issues of gender in the broader sense have emerged. These topics reflect the fresh approach that postwar historiography has been turning to: reevaluating the meaning of the occupation,

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96 Louise Young, Japan’s Total Empire: Manchuria and the Culture of Wartime Imperialism (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1998); Sandra Wilson, The Manchurian Crisis and Japanese Society, 1931-33 (London: Routledge, 2002); Watt, When Empire Comes Home.
97 For example, Yūko Suzuki, Feminizumu to sensō: Fujin undōka no sensō kyōryoku [Feminism and war: The wartime collaboration of women activists], Shinbun. (Tokyo: Marujusha, 1997); Margaret Reeson, A Very Long War: The Families Who Waited ( Carlton South, Vic: Melbourne University Press, 2000).
the continuities and discontinuities between the war and the postwar, and the profound issues of the construction of national identity through the “creation” of history. They demonstrate that “the postwar” is not a monolithic and static entity created by the occupation and economic success. Rather, sengo was a complex push and pull of a variety of forces within and outside of Japan, wrestling to make ends meet, to accommodate a variety of ideas about what postwar Japan and postwar society should look like, and an unfinished process of coming to terms with the legacies of the war.

The history of demobilized soldiers has only scantily been dealt with by scholars of Japan; however, a few works merit to be mentioned. The “traditional” approach to military history, focusing on strategy and military leadership, existed in Japan roughly equal to Germany—and most anywhere in the world.\(^{98}\) A few works on military history employ a more complex approach, and while they are only marginally related to my topic, they demonstrate that the field has become more diverse during the past decade.

Meirion and Susie Harris, not trained historians but non-academics with an interest in the foundations of Japan’s increasingly difficult geopolitical situation in East Asia “wishing to understand the “Japan Peril” paranoia of East Asia,”\(^{99}\) have examined the various Allied demilitarization policies in their work *Sheathing the Sword*.\(^{100}\) Their specific focus is on the purge of militarism and its advocates during the American occupation, and on Japan’s subsequent development from an adversary of the United States to an ally. Interestingly, their voluminous analysis leaves out demobilized soldiers

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almost entirely, thus neglecting the potential for militarism that the Americans saw in them.

Edward Drea’s compilation of his own essays and presentations constitutes an important work about the workings of the Imperial Japanese Army during the Pacific War. The book is not limited to a mere top-down approach (although most chapters are focused on strategy, planning, and the military leadership), but also includes analyses of the training of military conscripts and life in the military, for example. It stresses the connection between the imperial institution and the army, but also unearths more problematic aspects of the army such as its lack of coordination across the Asian continent and its difficult relation to the Navy.¹⁰¹ The book ends with the end of the war, assuming defeat as the appropriate ending point, entirely leaving out the dissolution of the military forces and demobilization.

Ulrich Straus’ work offers an interesting approach to the matters of indoctrination, the relation between patriotism and militarism, and the general psychology of the Imperial Japanese Army. Focusing on Japanese soldiers’ “anguish of surrender” during the Pacific War but tracing the military’s ideological development back to the Meiji era, the book provides a thoughtful analysis of the soldiers’ minds at war and in captivity. The book also includes a brief chapter on the situation of demobilized soldiers after their return to Japan; however, this section consists almost exclusively of individual

experiences at a level of subjectivity that makes generalizations and conclusive interpretations impossible.\textsuperscript{102}

While demobilized soldiers constitute an element in the creation of memory and have also been recognized by historians in this regard,\textsuperscript{103} only the works by Franziska Seraphim, Beatrice Trefalt,\textsuperscript{104} and Lori Watt\textsuperscript{105} mention explicitly their role in postwar society. None of them focuses on demobilized soldiers \textit{per se}, however. Trefalt analyzes how the Asia-Pacific War was perceived by the Japanese through the changed perception of army stragglers over the course of the quarter century between 1950 and 1975; Watt examines the processes of integration of civilian repatriates from the former Japanese colonies in Asia and uses this group as a lens to evaluate decolonization and its consequences on the metropolis. Hardly any scholarly work exists that truly focuses on demobilized soldiers in Japan, and that examines their reintegration into postwar society.

The notable exception is Kimura Takuji, doctoral student at Hitotsubashi University who is currently completing his dissertation on bereaved families in postwar Japan, but whose Master’s Thesis focused on demobilized soldiers and associations of former professional soldiers.\textsuperscript{106} While his work does not mention archival sources and only includes very few references, his book chapters have confirmed my own interpretations of the archival documents.

\textsuperscript{102} Ulrich Straus, \textit{The Anguish of Surrender: Japanese POW’s of World War II} (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003). The work’s greatest and most unfortunate shortcoming is its lack of source material.

\textsuperscript{103} Especially Seraphim, \textit{War Memory and Social Politics in Japan, 1945-2005}.

\textsuperscript{104} Trefalt, \textit{Japanese Army Stragglers}.

\textsuperscript{105} Watt, \textit{When Empire Comes Home}.

Working on Japanese POWs in Southeast Asia is Euan McKay, doctoral candidate in International Relations at the University of Tokyo. His research centers on POWs who were held back by the British, American, and Dutch militaries and colonial administrations in order to perform forced labor—construction work, clearing of rubble, and guarding stockpiles and facilities, but also the defense of the colonial forces against emerging indigenous independence movements.107

Finally, an unparalleled book is Sabine Frühstück’s Uneasy Warriors 108 about the role and place of Japan’s Jieitai (Self-Defense Forces) in Japanese society. The book emphasizes issues of gender, national identity, militarism, and Japan’s international position; its assessment of the development of military and non-military stereotypes provides an understanding of the perception of all things military after the Pacific War. Frühstück argues that the Japanese sarariiman (salaried workers, clerks) became an ersatz for soldiers (or, in the more historical sense, warriors) as symbols of masculinity when the military was abolished after the war and the new Self-Defense Forces were created. She argues that the functions of the Jieitai differed fundamentally from those of the Imperial Japanese Army in that the Self-Defense Forces engaged, at least until 2004, only in non-combat operations, while the Imperial Japanese Army (IJA) had fought to establish, maintain, and defend the Japanese empire in Asia. Her assessment of the postwar era (which is cursory because her emphasis is on more recent developments) suggests that demilitarization was successful and served to create this stark distinction

107 He presented his work at the Japanese History Group meeting in Tokyo in January 2010. Euan McKay, “Allied Use of Japanese Surrendered Personnel in Post-War South East Asia, 1945-1947” (presented at the Japanese History Group at the Institute of Social Science, University of Tokyo, January 19, 2010), http://ssj.iss.u-tokyo.ac.jp/archives/2010/01/ssj_6014_japane.html. While McKay has not published his work yet, his dissertation topic is an indication for the increasing diversity of approaches to postwar Japanese history, as well as for the significance of not yet demobilized soldiers and POWs.
108 Frühstück, Uneasy Warriors.
between the two Japanese militaries. This position about the successful demilitarization and the essential absence of anything military in the postwar time has been challenged by Sandra Wilson’s brief article “War, Soldier and Nation in 1950s Japan.” The article evokes the lingering images of the war in postwar Japan that historians have generally neglected in the past. While her overall work focuses more on nationalism and its cultural expressions, the article aptly expresses the position of this dissertation: that the social and political presence of demobilized Japanese soldiers in the first postwar decade has only been reflected in a very inadequate way by historians.109 The article also underscores that demobilized soldiers constitute a significant link between the wartime past and the postwar present that historians have tended to neglect or obscure, but which was in fact tangibly present in postwar society.

Comparative studies and conclusion

A number of similarities in German and Japanese history have sparked historians’ interest in writing comparative studies.110 Beginning with the characterization of both countries as latecomers in terms of industrial development and the creation of a nation-state, the topics include legal history (because the Japanese constitution of the Meiji era was influenced in key points by the constitution of the German Empire), the Axis connection between Germany and Japan during the Second World War, the political,

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110 For example, Kentarō Awaya, ed., Sensō sekinin, sengo sekinin: Nihon to Doitsu wa dō chigau ka [War responsibility, postwar responsibility: How do Japan and Germany differ?] (Tokyo: Asahi shinbunsha, 1994); Yukio Mochida, Kindai Nihon to Doitsu: Hikaku to kankei no rekishigaku [Modern Japan and Germany: The history of comparison and relations], Minerva jinbun shakai kagaku sōsho 123 (Kyoto: Minerva Shobō, 2007).
economic, and social reconstruction beginning in the 1950s, the historical and social backgrounds of literary trends, and memory. In many cases, the comparison is not even a direct one, but consists of a number of chapters existing side by side, with only introduction and conclusion providing the comparative argument.

As I have noted in the “national” sections of this literature review, historians after the war have, albeit at different times, undergone a development that classified their respective country’s development as an aberration from a normal (or, rather, ideal) development, termed Sonderweg in German and Nihon no tokushu na michi in Japanese. While this interpretation in Japanese historiography has not generally been acknowledged among Western historians, it constitutes a significant parallel to German historiography, demonstrating that the effort of Vergangenheitsbewältigung, of coming to terms with the past, has been an ongoing undertaking by historians in both countries. This quest for a “usable past,” affirmative of the present yet critical of the past, all the while acknowledging the ties between them, constitutes an essential part of the creation of (national) identity. Germans and Japanese, historians as well as lay persons, have continuously sought to imbue the present with meaning derived from the past. Given the similarities of Germany’s and Japan’s past—collaboration in the Axis, defeat and unconditional surrender, occupation, temporary loss of national sovereignty, regaining

111 Laura Elizabeth Hein and Mark Selden, eds., Censoring History: Citizenship and Memory in Japan, Germany, and the United States (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 2000); Nils-Johan Jørgensen, Culture and Power in Germany and Japan: The Spirit of Renewal (Folkestone, Kent: Global Oriental, 2006).
114 One such example is Heide Fehrenbach and Uta G. Poiger, eds., Transactions, Transgressions, Transformations (Berghahn Books, 2000).
115 Sebastian Conrad, Auf der Suche nach der verlorenen Nation: Geschichtsschreibung in Westdeutschland und Japan 1945-1960 [Searching for the lost nation: Historiography in West Germany and Japan 1945-1960] (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999), 404-5. This work is the only one I have found that mentions the term.
sovereignty and integration into the Western defense alliance (the Eastern one for the Eastern part of Germany), and the so-called economic miracle combined with the durability of the democratic political system imposed by the Allies (this is not true for East Germany)—it is not surprising that efforts of working through the past have shown a number of similarities. It is true that the geopolitical situation of the two countries has had a greater impact on their practical responses to the war since its end. Germany, almost landlocked and divided into two countries influenced by the Cold War opponents, had little choice but to seek the reconciliation with her neighbors actively, which can be seen in the efforts in European integration with what has become the European Union, and in Chancellor Willy Brandt falling to his knees at the memorial of the uprising of the Warsaw ghetto in 1970, for example. Japan, an island nation maintaining her closest economic and diplomatic ties after the war with the United States, was confronted with a continent dominated by Soviet Russia and Maoist China; the domestic conservative political climate precluded reconciliation when the diplomatic relations eased in the 1980s. For Germany and Japan, “the meanings attached to those histories [of the war] were sometimes so alike as to seem uncanny. To the historical experience[s] … each country responded in its own way, but the responses themselves were homologous. However different in form and function, they occupied a similar structural position in the national discourse that related the past to the present.”

The likeness of the role of the war in postwar history, the inseparability of war and postwar, and the difficulty of creating a usable, let alone useful, past for Germany and Japan enable this dissertation to examine the two countries in a larger topical study.

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without comparing them. The theme of demobilized soldiers represents the connections across the perceived divide of 1945; the reintegration of demobilized soldiers serves as a tool to evaluate how the two countries have reconfigured their societies after total war and total defeat. In order for demobilized soldiers to “return” to their civil lives, administrative structures had to be created and the former soldiers themselves had to adjust themselves to the different situation—not only the tangible circumstances, but also the mental, ideological, and identity circumstances of coming to terms, for themselves, with their past.
CHAPTER 1

DEMOBILIZATION BETWEEN ALLIED OCCUPATION AND NATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

PRECONDITIONS: ALLIED POLICIES AND THE IDEOLOGIES BEHIND OCCUPATION

American postwar planning essentially began as early as the Second World War, and went through three distinct stages. The initial stage, 1939-1941, consisted of early research about the conditions in Germany and Japan; based on this research the basic principles for the postwar treatment of the two countries were created. In the second stage, 1941-1943, a more systematic cooperation of government departments took place, and while it was riddled by the practical differences of planning such a comprehensive occupation, it re-assessed earlier planning and greatly expanded it. In the third stage, 1944-1945, military planning played an increasing role, as did diplomatic issues.¹ Throughout the planning process and despite the numerous different groups of persons involved—academics, non-academic experts of Germany and Japan, economists, and members of various government bodies—the tendency to establish temporary control over both countries with the goal of establishing long-term stability is apparent. Despite the various differences and debates surrounding specific policies and measures to be applied, the elimination of militarist influence and the establishment of democracy

remained at the core of the drafting process.\textsuperscript{2} The involvement of other Allied countries in the planning for postwar times posed an additional difficulty that was particularly apparent in the planning for Germany, which was to be divided into occupation zones, as had been determined during the Tehran conference; however, the policy-making process was characterized by a “powerful determination yet lacking a stringent line,”\textsuperscript{3} which manifested itself in the relatively quick establishment of demilitarization and democratization as main targets, but in the utter difficulty to create tangible policies to attain them.

United States postwar planning with regard to Germany and Japan emphasized that the two countries’ defeat was self-inflicted as they were the aggressors in the war, and that the treatment the people of Germany and Japan would receive was an answer to the unspeakable suffering that Nazi Germany and ultra-nationalist Japan had brought over other peoples.\textsuperscript{4} The occupation of Germany and Japan remained focused on the two above-mentioned goals of demilitarization and democratization. One was directed toward the past: the settling of accounts with the war’s aggressors, and the punishment of those responsible for the war. The other was directed toward the future: the prevention of the recurrence of a similar war. To this end, political, economic, and social reorganization and control were necessary.\textsuperscript{5} The demobilization of the German and Japanese militaries

\textsuperscript{2} Ibid., 31 and 38.
\textsuperscript{5} Klaus-Dietmar Henke, “Die Trennung vom Nationalsozialismus: Selbstzerstörung, politische Säuberung, ”Entnazifizierung”, Strafverfolgung [Separation from National Socialism: Self-destruction, purge,
was a response to both of these goals: it was intended to eliminate militarism and the threat of military aggression as well as create a democratic and peaceful society.

Demobilized soldiers embodied the military threat on one hand, and bore the promise to support a new democratic society on the other. They were, however, by no means in the center of occupation policy; rather, their military past set them apart from the rest of civil society, and their well-being and integration was second to other victims of the wartime regimes. In this sense, the needs of demobilized soldiers were largely neglected in Allied occupied postwar society, as opposed to the victims of German Nazism and Japanese ultra-nationalism—Jews, ethnic minority groups, and imported slave laborers—and civilian victims of the war itself—victims of the Atomic bombs, those who had lost their homes due to Allied strategic and fire bombing, and expellees from the former empires.

The Atlantic Charter, developed in the summer of 1941, and which later became the basis for the foundation of the United Nations, emphasized the need for the preservation of peace in the world and for the political, economic, and religious freedom of all peoples. Written before the United States and Britain declared war on Japan following the attacks on Pearl Harbor, Malaya, and Hong Kong in December 1941, the document only refers to the defeat of Nazi Germany as the means to realize this vision; however, given that the charter laid the groundwork for “a concerted Allied response to Axis aggression worldwide,” we may infer that its principles extended to Japan as well. It is noteworthy that the charter already established the two basic goals mentioned above: the eradication of the aggressive militarism and oppression that characterized Nazi

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Germany (and wartime Japan), and the creation of free and democratic societies as well as world-wide peace and stability.\(^7\) These goals remained, in principle, unchanged from 1941 until the Potsdam Declaration and until after the end of the war, when the “Basic Initial Post-Surrender Directive” (JSC 1380/15) for Japan was written.

**Germany: Abolishing the Wehrmacht**

As early as at the conferences of Tehran (November 1943) and Québec (September 1944), the American, British, and Soviet leadership made clear that German defeat should include the dismemberment of its military forces. This goal was emphasized at the conference of Yalta, in February 1945:

> It is our inflexible purpose to destroy German militarism and Nazism, and to ensure that Germany will never again be able to disturb the peace of the world. We are determined to disarm and disband all German armed forces; break up for all times the German General Staff, that has repeatedly contrived the resurgence of German militarism; remove or destroy all German military equipment; eliminate or control all German industry that could be used for military production; bring all war criminals to just and swift punishment and exact reparation in kind for the destruction wrought by the Germans; wipe out the Nazi party, Nazi laws, organizations and institutions; remove all Nazi and militaristic influences from public office and from the cultural and economic life of the German people; and take in harmony such other measures in Germany as might be necessary to the future peace and safety of the world.\(^8\)

Likewise, the Potsdam Declaration, June 1945, emphasized the need for the disarmament and abolition of all German military forces, and the destruction or Allied control of all military equipment and facilities:

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3. The purposes of the occupation of Germany by which the Control Council shall be guided are:
(i) The complete disarmament and demilitarization of Germany and the elimination or control of all German industry that could be used for military production. To these ends:–
   (a) All German land, naval and air forces, the S.S., S.A., S.D., and Gestapo, with all their organizations, staffs, and institutions, including the General Staff, the Officers’ Corps, Reserve Corps, military schools, war Veterans’ organizations and all other military and quasi-military organizations, together with all clubs and associations which serve to keep alive the military tradition in Germany, shall be completely and finally abolished in such manner as permanently to prevent the revival or reorganization of German militarism and Nazism;
   (b) All arms, ammunition and implements of war and all specialized facilities for their production shall be held at the disposal of the Allies or destroyed. The maintenance and production of all aircraft and arms, ammunition and implements of war shall be prevented.\(^9\)

Demilitarization had been set forth, along with denazification, democratization, and decartelization, as one of the four major goals of occupation. The prevalent considerations of the American, British, and Soviet heads of state at the conferences had been to establish a postwar order in Germany that avoided the mistakes of Versailles. To establish economic and military conditions in Germany that would prevent (or disable) the country to aggress its neighbors again had been one of the major foci of the conferences during and after the war.

Two points are important to note. First, there a consensus existed among all powers who participated in the conferences and in the planning for postwar Europe that reestablishing stability was essential, and that Germany ought to be prevented from future aggression. This included the negotiation of reparations: Stalin, Roosevelt, Truman, Churchill, and Attlee were aware that the reparations claimed by the Versailles Treaty after the First World War had contributed to Nazism and militarism. Consequently, reparations in kind (as opposed to

monetary payment) and the complete abolition of military forces were closely interlinked in the planning for a politically and economically stable Europe. It is important to emphasize that this consensus existed during all conferences held during the war and afterwards, as well as with the changing heads of state.

The second point to note is that the Wehrmacht, the German army, was not planned to be subject to general punishment; neither the negotiations during the conferences nor the communiqués published after the conferences indicate that the Wehrmacht ought to be held responsible as a single homogeneous body. In the course of disarmament and, more generally, the elimination of militarism, however, the Wehrmacht was clearly understood as a proponent of militarism, which was the reason for its subsequent abolition. More significant than the punishment of the military as a whole—war criminals would be put on trial in Nuremberg later—was the eradication of the military spirit and tradition, which the Allies saw as a characteristic of Germany since the late nineteenth century that needed to be eliminated once and for all.

From an administrative point of view, the Allies were confronted with a seemingly insurmountable obstacle to the occupation of Germany:

… it should perhaps be put on record here that these arrests [of the Dönitz Government] create a situation which may be called unique in modern European history, in that one of the great sovereign States of Europe is without any Government whatever as a result of military defeat. Germany is not annexed to, nor ruled by, a Foreign Power. The Reich is under the military control of the Allied Powers, but apart from this control there is no central civil authority in Germany. A political vacuum exists which will have to be filled.10

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The absence of a civil government greatly exacerbated the general situation in Germany: after the unconditional surrender and the arrest of the Dönitz Government, which had continued to exist without any great impact until May 23, 1945, there existed no central administration and therefore no coordination of distribution, transport, and the like. The Western Allies were confronted with administrative tasks they were quite unprepared for. Further, war-time planning had mainly focused on military strategy, and neglected civilian matters or administrative issues.

An actual policy for the demobilization of the Wehrmacht was only agreed upon in July 1945, two months after the end of the war. The “Joint Plan for Demobilization of German Armed Forces” was based on an “[e]stimate of the situation to be encountered at the start of this Council Period”\(^\text{11}\) and clearly shows the difficult and chaotic situation of Germany immediately after defeat:

German Armed Forces personnel will be held as disarmed units in or attached to concentration areas or as prisoners of war under control of occupation forces. At a convenient time stragglers, deserters, self-demobilized personnel and others informally discharged will have been ordered by the Supreme Commander to report to designated Allied centers in order that they may be documented, screened by Intelligence, formally discharged, and otherwise accounted for.\(^\text{12}\)

As the German military administrative structure was found “destroyed” and “dispersed,”\(^\text{13}\) the surrendered soldiers would remain in their units in the camps, retaining the military hierarchy in order to preserve order among the troops and to ensure the maintenance of a chain of command—or at least communication channels. The existence of large numbers of stragglers and deserters was acknowledged, as was the fact that there

\(^\text{11}\) U.S. Group C.C., “Joint Plan for Demobilization of German Armed Forces (Army, Navy, and Air Force),” July 10, 1945, 3, OMGUS RG 84, POLAD 728/34, IfZ.

\(^\text{12}\) Ibid., 4.

\(^\text{13}\) Ibid.
were “self-demobilized” men whose units had dissolved themselves. It was not the goal of the demobilization as envisioned by the Control Council staff to discharge the Wehrmacht, its auxiliaries, and para-military troops as quickly as possible; the demobilization plan listed as its tasks the supervision and survey of German troops, the partial release of non-German personnel, the registration of stragglers and deserters, and “[t]he discharge of German personnel not required for duties in connection with the occupation forces or for reconstruction work in liberated territories, but urgently required in civil capacity for work inside Germany (e.g. Medical personnel, agricultural workers, and workers in essential industries).”

**Japan: Demilitarization and Democratization**

Policies with regard to the postwar organization of Japan had been created by the Joint Chief of Staff long before the surrender. In addition to the general agreements that were made between the United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union at the war conferences of Casablanca, Tehran, and Jalta, the Unites States had developed plans for the postwar treatment of Japan as early as spring 1945. Given that militarism was understood as the single most important reason for Japan’s aggressive and ideologically coined expansion, its very eradication can be understood as the basic guiding principle of the American occupation. The Allied war goal—and consequently, the goal for the occupation—was to end the militaristic, authoritarian, fascist, and ultimately genocidal regimes. The goals for the ensuing peace, pronounced in the Atlantic Charter, were

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14 Ibid., 6.
15 In order to increase the clarity of this dissertation and its argument, I will refer to the occupation of Japan as a United States endeavor, as neither the Soviet nor the Chinese armies or governments had a presence in Japan that would have influenced the occupation policies implemented by GHQ SCAP to a similar degree.
freedom and self-determination.\textsuperscript{16} The eradication of militarism, which was seen as a
necessity to achieve the peaceful coexistence of all countries of the world, was a direct
result of the war goals; militarism was understood as the most significant cause for the
nature of the German and Japanese political regimes as well as the aggression of the war.

In August of 1945, representatives of Australia, Canada, China, France, India, the
Netherlands, New Zealand, the Philippines, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, and
the United States agreed on the “Basic Post-Surrender Policy for Japan” which stated as
its primary object “carrying out the instrument of surrender and […] establishing
international security and stability.” These two, the document continues, “depend[ed]
first, upon the complete destruction of the military machine which has been the chief
means whereby Japan has carried out the aggressions of the past decades, second, upon
the establishment of such political and economic conditions as would make impossible
any revival of militarism in Japan; and third, upon bringing the Japanese to a realization
that their will to war, their plan of conquest, and the methods used to accomplish such
plans, have brought them to the verge of ruin.”\textsuperscript{17} The elimination of militarism on the
political, economic, and ideological levels were, by the end of the war, understood by the
Allies as a means for the pacification of Japan, because militarism was perceived as the
root of the wartime regime and policies.

The “Ultimate Objectives” of the Basic Post-Surrender Policy for Japan were “to
insure that Japan will not again become a menace to the peace and security of the world
[and] to bring about the earliest possible establishment of a democratic and peaceful
government,” which would be achieved through the complete disarmament and

\textsuperscript{16} Churchill and Roosevelt, “Atlantic Charter.”
\textsuperscript{17} Far Eastern Commission, “Basic Post-Surrender Policy for Japan,” \textit{GHQ SCAP CI&E Bulletin},
September 24, 1947, 2.
demilitarization of the country and the encouragement of the Japanese people “to develop a desire for individual liberties and respect for fundamental human rights, particularly the freedom of religion, assembly and association, speech and the press.”\textsuperscript{18} Demilitarization was thus seen as a counterpart of creating a democratic society: through the exclusion of militarism and its proponents, democratic tendencies could be encouraged and furthered. The Basic Post-Surrender Policy further makes clear that the Allies understood how much “militarism and military nationalism” had been interwoven with Japan’s wartime politics, economy, and education, and states the goal of removing militarists from any influential position, a measure that later became known as “the purge.” By prohibiting “[u]ltra-nationalistic or militaristic social, political, professional and commercial societies and institutions,”\textsuperscript{19} the occupation aimed at the prevention of “anti-democratic and militaristic activity […], particularly on the part of former Japanese career military and naval officers, gendarmerie, and former members of dissolved militaristic, ultra-nationalistic and other anti-democratic institutions.”\textsuperscript{20} The guideline that this document provides categorizes every member of the former military—not only professionals—as a potential militarist, striving to undermine democracy. It is obvious that the initial occupation policy was intended more as a general outline of the occupation principles, and not as detailed and differentiated analysis of Japan’s postwar situation. It is noteworthy, however, that the military as a whole was seen as potential proponents of an anti-democratic stance, and that it was deemed so significant that it was the only specific larger group of people directly referred to in the entire document.

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., 3.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., 5.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid.
The “Basic Post-Surrender Policy” clarifies the priorities of the occupation, and the goals that the Allies—particularly the United States, who carried out the bulk of the occupation task—had for Japan: in order to create and maintain a peace and stability in the world that Japan neither would nor could threaten, all “militaristic influences”\textsuperscript{21} had to be eliminated. The largest and most obvious target for this task was the military, which included not only the high command, but also common, drafted soldiers. The second proposition, to support the Japanese people in the creation of a democratic society,\textsuperscript{22} appears to be unrelated to the members of the military who are subject of the first proposition only; however, as the military was to be abolished and turned into civilians, these are in fact the same persons. The two policies actually constituted two aspects of the same goal, and would mutually influence each other: the eradication of militarism was the precondition for the creation of a democratic society, and the support of democratic tendencies in Japanese society would work toward the prevention of militarism rising again in the future. The demobilization of the Japanese Army and Navy can be seen in the same light: the elimination of the military, which had fought the Allies during the war, served as a precondition for the creation of the democracy in Japan that the Allied envisioned to establish. Even if the military and Japanese civilians, as they appear in the two paragraphs of the policy, seem to be two distinct groups of people for which two different policies would apply, they were in fact inextricably linked to each other, as they constituted the same people—the Japanese people—after demobilization and the return of the soldiers to civilian life.

\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., 2.
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., 3.
The fact that this point is formulated twice in the Basic Post-Surrender Policy speaks for the importance that the Allies attributed to the two-fold process of demilitarization and democratization. The first passage reads:

The nations composing this commission [...] are therefore agreed [...] to complete the task of physical and spiritual demilitarization of Japan by measures including total disarmament, economic reform designed to deprive Japan of power to make war, elimination of militaristic influences, and stern justice to war criminals, and requiring a period of strict control; and to help the people of Japan in their own interest as well as that of the world at large to find means whereby they may develop within a framework of a democratic society an intercourse among themselves and with other countries along economic and cultural lines that will enable them to satisfy their reasonable individual and national needs and bring them into permanently peaceful relationship with all nations;

Following almost immediately, in the second passage, titled “Ultimate Objectives,” the two goals of preventing Japan from becoming a threat to the “peace and security of the world” and of establishing a stable and democratic society are complemented by a list of four means by which these goals will be achieved. The first and last of these are the geographic and economic limitations imposed on Japan. The second and third are the following:

b. Japan will be completely disarmed and demilitarized. The authority of the militarists and the influence of militarism will be totally eliminated. All institutions expressive of the spirit of militarism and aggression will be vigorously suppressed.

c. The Japanese people shall be encouraged to develop a desire for individual liberties and respect for fundamental human rights, particularly the freedom of religion, assembly and association, speech and the press. They shall be encouraged to form democratic and representative organizations.

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23 Murakami emphasizes that these were the two most important goals of the American occupation. Kimiko Murakami, *Senryōki no fukushi seisaku* [Welfare policies under the occupation] (Tokyo: Keisō Shobō, 1987), 58.
25 Ibid., 3.
The Basic Directive for Post-Surrender Military Government in Japan Proper, issued in November 1945, specifies the same goal of demilitarization in a similar manner. It decrees the demobilization of all military formations, for the abolishment of any association that might keep Japan’s military tradition alive, and for the dissolution of all military agencies, so that the Japanese potential to wage war would ultimately be destroyed.\textsuperscript{26} Democratization, as the second main target of the occupation, is only referred to briefly and in vague terms: “These measures [to prevent Japan from becoming a threat to the international community again] include […] the strengthening of democratic tendencies and processes in governmental, economic, and social institutions; and the encouragement and support of liberal political tendencies in Japan. The United States desires that the Japanese Government conform as closely as may be to principles of democratic self-government […].”\textsuperscript{27} Again, although the target groups of democratization and demilitarization overlap significantly in the group of the soldiers that were to be demobilized, the fact that the two policies do not refer to each other is an indication for the realization of occupation policy. The basic policies of the occupation of Japan did not understand demobilized soldiers as future members of civil society, but rather saw in them only the military potential that needed to be eliminated for the sake of international peace and stability.

\textsuperscript{26} Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, Government Section, “Basic Initial Post-Surrender Directive to Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers for the Occupation and Control of Japan (JCS 1380/15),” 431.

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., 429.
THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DEMOBILIZATION

Germany: Overwhelmed with soldiers

Although this dissertation does not deal with the numerous issues surrounding the issue of prisoners of war—legal, economic, social, psychological, and diplomatic, most importantly—I would like to provide at least a sketchy picture of where most POWs were at a given point in time in order to convey a sense of the meaning of their eventual return. In the American and British zones of occupation, none of the surrendered personnel was transferred outside of Germany; they remained on German soil until their discharge. The French and the Soviets transferred prisoners out of Germany; France received prisoners from the American zone of occupation for labor, which was mostly carried out in France, and in some instances in Germany. The Soviets transported all of their prisoners into labor camps in the Soviet Union.

At the time of surrender about eleven million German soldiers came under Allied control, about seven million in Western and about four million in Eastern custody. Exact numbers of German POWs after German surrender are notoriously unreliable and sporadic, due to the lack of records and communication. Statistics about returnees were only begun in 1947 in the Western zones of occupation. The Soviet Union never published exact numbers of how many prisoners she was holding, exploited prisoners heavily and for a long time, and failed to provide adequately for the internees, which

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resulted in high levels of malnourishment and chronic diseases. In addition, communication between the inmates in the Soviet Union and their families in Germany was not allowed; the incertitude about so many men’s fate caused much concern among German families waiting for their husbands, fathers, sons, and brothers to return, but also among German politicians who saw the country’s developing international position greatly compromised. The Soviet Union returned a first group of prisoners in the second half of 1946, but in the following years, trains sending back released soldiers were sporadic and varied greatly in size. A second large wave of returnees was brought back between 1953 and 1956. The very last POWs were only released in the 1960s. The Soviet Union justified the prolonged captivity of so many men by claiming they had been convicted as “war criminals”\(^\text{30}\)—regardless if they had indeed been charged, or tried, or convicted, or not.

The American and British military, who had control over the seven million German soldiers in the Western zones of occupation, were thus faced with the seemingly insurmountable task of providing for them and gradually releasing them from military service and internment, respectively—while the Soviets exploited their labor for years. The process of discharge of the men who had constituted the *Wehrmacht* is indicative of the policies of demilitarization and democratization behind it, and serves as an early introduction to the problems and opportunities that returnees faced at their return.

The Supreme Headquarters Allied Expedition Force, SHAEF, presided by General Dwight D. Eisenhower, had been created in early 1943 under the name COSSAC (Chief of Staff, Supreme Allied Commander) as an integrated US-British planning agency for Europe, and renamed after Eisenhower became Supreme Commander in late

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\(^{30}\) Biess, *Homecomings*, 45.
1943.\textsuperscript{31} SHAEF staff gathered information about the countries in Northwestern Europe and were planning for the establishment of Allied military control, the reestablishment of national administrations, their guiding principles, and their material supply.\textsuperscript{32} The development of plans for the invasion of Europe through Northern France (Operation “Overlord”) also necessitated planning for postwar settlements; thus, SHAEF’s planning on the countries occupied by German forces and on Germany herself has to be understood as both military and civilian planning. Military planning was by far more important, however, or at least more urgent, so that the planning of non-military activities remained somewhat at the margins of SHAEF’s prospect. Military strategy against the German forces, questions of transportation and supply for the Allied troops, and short-term relief for the population of France and the Benelux countries figured most prominently in SHAEF’s planning. Further, even if the agency possessed several branches and sub-committees, its staff was limited especially with regard to the actual implementation of postwar and civilian planning.

In early 1945, SHAEF anticipated a large number of surrendered German forces would soon come under its responsibility. The Allies intended to have Allied prisoners of war and displaced persons fed and supported by the Germans themselves, but also anticipated that the situation in defeated Germany would be chaotic. The American War Department approved a request by SHAEF that, within the framework of Operation “Eclipse,” German troops should feed and maintain themselves, and that all members of the German armed forces remaining in Germany were to be unofficially declared

\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., 13.
“Disarmed Enemy Forces” (DEF). This was theoretically illegal by the terms of the Geneva Convention, but a logical and pragmatic step given that the numbers of prisoners the American military was anticipating were far too large to support. In fact, the British military followed suit and labeled their German prisoners of war “Surrendered Enemy Personnel” (SEP), with the same intention and practical implications.

The international conventions of The Hague (1907) put prisoners of war under the responsibility of the government whose military forces had captured them, and required them to “be treated as regards board, lodging, and clothing on the same footing as the troops of the Government who captured them.” The Geneva Convention specified requirements for housing, food, clothing, sanitary facilities and health care, and guaranteed prisoners the right to keep their possessions and to correspond with their families. All those who had been captured by enemy forces ought to be classified as prisoners of war. Prisoners were to be released as quickly as possible after the end of hostilities. No special provisions had been made in either the Hague or the Geneva Convention for surrendered military forces, nor for the case that no peace treaty would be concluded.

During the war, the Geneva Convention had been respected by most of the combatants as an act of reciprocity: humane treatment of prisoners of war in one country usually resulted in the humane treatment of this country’s prisoners of war detained

33 Smith, Die "vermisste Million", 93-94.
36 Ibid., Article 1.
37 Ibid., Article 75.
abroad. The Soviet Union had not signed the Convention, and thus did not feel bound to respect its requirements; consequently, the provisions for POWs in Soviet captivity were below the standards set by the Western Allies, and it was common to put prisoners to work even after the termination of military activities, which the Geneva Convention forbade. Reciprocally, during the war, Soviet prisoners in Germany were heavily exploited, treated inhumanely, and equally forced into hard labor by Nazi Germany’s authorities.

Arguably, the most important reason for the British and American circumvention of the Geneva Convention was supply: had all German demobilized military staff been considered prisoners of war, they would have had the right to the same food, housing, and sanitary provisions as prisoners of war in camps in the US or Britain, or as captive Allied soldiers. Further, it was considered more important—at least from a political and numerical point of view—to take care of the non-German prisoners of war within Germany and the huge number of displaced persons. Transport facilities were scarce, and were not used to transport food for demobilized soldiers. Another reason for the creation of the DEF and SEP status was work: the Allies used the demobilized military for reconstruction of Germany’s infrastructure, such as the repair of roads, railroads and ports, and to restore water and electricity supply. This would have been equally possible with prisoners of war, but DEF could be detained for an unspecified amount of time; in

38 Smith, Die "vermisste Million", 17.
39 James Bacque claimed that in the temporary enclosures along the Rhine river in which the disarmed Wehrmacht was initially held, the U.S. government deliberately let one million die from starvation and insanitary conditions. Bacque’s conspiracy theory of Eisenhower welcoming the chance to pay back the Germans was based on admittedly poorly kept and unclear American records, and has since been disproved by historians, especially through local history and a small number of more general publications. Bacque, Other Losses.
addition, they could be used for mine-clearance, which would have been illegal for POWs.\(^{40}\)

Until the first months of 1945, the American military had either sent German Prisoners of War into camps in the United States or Canada, or had interned them in camps in Britain and France.\(^{41}\) When the US Army moved into Germany and crossed the Rhine, the number of prisoners taken exceeded transport capacities, and prisoner camps had to be created closer to the front. Until early May, 1945, thirteen temporary prisoner camps had been set up along the Rhine River. Two more were under construction. In total, these camps could accommodate almost one million demobilized soldiers.\(^{42}\) More camps existed in Bavaria, Württemberg, Baden, Lower Saxony, and at the coast of the North and Baltic Seas. These camps were located approximately in the areas where the Wehrmacht had surrendered, but also took in an influx of units retreating from east of the Elbe River and from Denmark and Norway.

On May 8, 1945, the number of German demobilized military personnel of which SHAEF was in charge was slightly over four million.\(^{43}\) Neither SHAEF nor the Allied troops had enough suitable personnel at their disposal to conduct or even supervise German disarmament or, in case the German units were outside of Germany, the move back to Germany:

…it was out of the question to attempt to disarm the Germans or to arrest members of the Gestapo, the S.S., the S.D., or other wanted persons. Responsibility for making these arrests was placed upon the German commanders … The Germans [staying in Denmark and in the Magdeburg Bulge] were ordered to march into Schleswig-Holstein as quickly as

\(^{40}\) Smith, *Heimkehr aus dem Zweiten Weltkrieg*, 24-5.
\(^{42}\) Smith, *Die "vermisste Million"*, 95.
\(^{43}\) Ibid., 24.
possible, taking their personal weapons and equipment with them. Armament and material were to be left behind.\textsuperscript{44}

Despite the command over German troops being in the hands of the Allied Forces, German military hierarchy was kept intact, and disarmament itself was carried out by German officers and generals that were considered suitable by British or American forces.\textsuperscript{45} In order to accommodate the millions of men that came under Allied control within a few weeks, two different kinds of enclosures were set up in the British and American zone of occupation; “camps” and “internment areas.” Both were enclosed areas, guarded by German and sometimes Polish personnel, but under the supervision of Allied personnel. The mentioned camps along the Rhine River covered areas of between 200 and 300 acres, and were divided into “cages” in which between 5,000 and 8,000 people were enclosed. Cages were separated from each other by ten foot high, barbed-wire fences, with walkways for guards in between the cages; the camps themselves were equally enclosed by barbed-wire fences and had towers to overlook the camps. During night time, lamps were lit to prevent detainees from flight. The camps only consisted of areas of ground, with nothing but scraps of canvas, cardboard, or tin as shelter. Most camps were established on agricultural land close to areas of settlement with some infrastructure and possibly housing for the Allied personnel.\textsuperscript{46} The camps along the Rhine were called “Prisoner of War Temporary Enclosure” (PWTE), which indicates that they were intended as temporary facilities and that further, despite the legal question, internees were well understood as prisoners of war.

\textsuperscript{44} Donnison, \textit{Civil Affairs and Military Government}, 158.
\textsuperscript{45} Holger Piening, \textit{Als die Waffen schwiegen: Die Internierung der Wehrmachtsoldaten zwischen Nord- und Ostsee 1945/46} [When the weapons turned silent: The internment of soldiers of the Wehrmacht between North Sea and Baltic Sea 1945/46], 2nd ed. (Heide: Boyens & Co., 1996), 72-73; Smith, \textit{Die "vermisste Million"}, 45-6.
\textsuperscript{46} Strauss, \textit{Kriegsgefangenschaft und Internierung}, 117-21.
Internment areas were much larger than camps, and less structured. They were mostly established in the British zone of occupation, and basically consisted of areas naturally enclosed by water—rivers, canals, and swamps—and guarded by the British military. The population that lived within internment areas had to leave their property, but there were various degrees of strictness with which residence, work, and passage would be permitted. Buildings within these areas were used to house members of the British Army and German officers. Soldiers of lower ranks had to live in tents and huts built of any material available, and were permitted only limited access to villages.

One characteristic of the early prisoner camps was their location on agricultural land that had simply been fenced with barbed wire. While SHAEF had anticipated a large number of surrendered German personnel for the spring of 1945, there had been no adequate practical preparation for the millions of soldiers that had to be accommodated. During the first weeks after surrender, no shelter whatsoever protected the prisoners from rain and cold, as the Allied forces had confiscated all equipment from the German soldiers at their surrender, including tents. No buildings or trees existed in the camps to shield against the weather, and rain soon turned the ground into mud. Beginning in late May and early June, the International Red Cross provided fabric to build small makeshift tents, which were later replaced by large, weatherproof tents that fit twenty persons. The situation was particularly bad for prisoners enclosed in the makeshift camps along the Rhine river, the so-called Rheinwiesenlager, “Rhine meadow camps,” which were characterized by appalling sanitary and housing conditions, to which the American military and administration had no short-term answer.

47 Piening, Als die Waffen schwiegen, 88-93 and 99.
48 Ibid., 72-3 and 94-5.
49 Strauss, Kriegsgefangenschaft und Internierung, 164-165.
Food was the major problem in both kinds of camps. “Among all prisoners, the question of food was the central point of everyday life in the camp.”\textsuperscript{50} There was a general scarcity of food in 1945 in the countries directly affected by the war, caused by the lack of agricultural workers and the destruction of production facilities. The collapse of the central authorities in Germany that had coordinated distribution and transport of food further tightened the situation. Consequently food was scarce for both civilians and imprisoned. At the end of May, 1945, the British and American Military Administrations had to provide for roughly six million demobilized soldiers and prisoners of war.\textsuperscript{51} Difficulties with food supply had arisen in the United States early in 1945, and necessitated the provision for the prisoners from elsewhere. Food for the camps thus came mostly from German sources: the Allies had commandeered \textit{Wehrmacht} and state stocks, which were used to feed the imprisoned, and required farmers to deliver quotas.\textsuperscript{52} Nevertheless, rations were small and contained few nutritious ingredients; hunger, thirst and starvation were common.\textsuperscript{53} With the development of German regional authorities and their gradual increase in influencing the matters of the camps, the role of charitable associations became an important economic factor. The German Red Cross, the \textit{Evangelisches Hilfswerk} (the “Protestant Relief Organization,” an organization formed within the Evangelical Church in Germany\textsuperscript{54} to support refugees, reconstruction, and generally alleviate material hardship), and the Catholic relief organization Caritas were

\begin{footnotes}
\item[50] Ibid., 171.
\item[51] Smith, \textit{Die "vermisste Million"}, 23.
\item[52] Strauss, \textit{Kriegsgefangenschaft und Internierung}, 176.
\item[53] Ibid., 177-179.
\item[54] The Evangelical Church in Germany is a federation of mainstream, regional Lutheran, Reformed, and Protestant churches, the majority of which is located in the northern half of Germany. The German term \textit{evangelisch} is more accurately translated as “protestant.”
\end{footnotes}
instrumental in the distribution of food, medical supplies, clothing, and books in the camps.\textsuperscript{55}

Albeit no plans or procedures had been established, members of the \textit{Volkssturm} (literally “folk storm,” the German militia of men between the ages of sixteen and sixty who were not otherwise serving in the military) and the less than sixteen year-old members of the anti-aircraft troops in German cities were released immediately and without formalities. The first guidelines for an orderly and systematic release of German POWs\textsuperscript{56} were released in the summer of 1945, just two months after surrender.\textsuperscript{57} The document manifested the authority of the Joint Demobilization Committee and the zone commanders for the demobilization of the German military apparatus, and realistically assessed the goal of demobilization as difficult and dependent on Allied, rather than German priorities, as well as the ability of German areas to accommodate dischargees. The plan particularly stressed the need for German personnel to be used for Allied work projects, and for the use and maintenance of German military hierarchy in the implementation of demobilization.\textsuperscript{58} These early discharge procedures envisioned that only soldiers interned in the American zone of occupation who were either from the American zone or had been recruited there would be discharged by the American authorities; all others were to be transferred to their zones of origin or recruitment. This transfer caused—and maybe concealed—the handover of American POWs to the British and French, for whom they “represented a form of reparation for the damage done to their

\textsuperscript{55} “Bericht über den Besuch in Hersfeld am 9. April 1948 [Report about the visit to Hersfeld on April 9, 1948],” April 12, 1948, HMI 503/184a, HHSAW.
\textsuperscript{56} Operations “Eclipse” and “Barleycorn” were planned and carried out earlier, but did not constitute the beginning of the organized, comprehensive release process.
\textsuperscript{57} U.S. Group C.C., “Joint Plan for Demobilization of German Armed Forces.”
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., 13.
countries by German armed forces”⁵⁹ and who then “exploit[ed] them as much-needed sources of labor, both in their occupation zones and at home.”⁶⁰ The policy of releasing only persons whose home was located in the zone of their internment was maintained in “Directive No.18, For Disbandment and Dissolution of the German Armed Forces” in November 1945, in which the procedures of exchange were specified as a “one-for-one exchange” and regulations for discharge certificates were established. The papers had to be printed in the language of the occupying power and in German.⁶¹ The so-called Entlassungsschein D-2 or D-II was an immensely important piece of paper for the demobilized soldier, as it alone granted access to food stamps and was necessary when an individual applied for housing or registered with the local employment agency. Mutual recognition of discharge papers began in 1947, when discharge into other occupation zones became standard. Identical papers were only issued beginning in 1949.⁶²

Discharge was to be preceded by a selection process—personnel with training in vital economic sectors and medical personnel had priority, and intelligence and medical examination prior to anybody’s release was intended to prevent both the release of wanted persons or suspects and the spread of communicable diseases. Along with the discharge certificate would be issued their remaining pay, a sum of RM 80 for officers and RM 40 for enlisted men, and a transportation warrant for the dischargee’s destination—home. Given the division of Germany into four zones of occupation, the

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⁶⁰ Diehl, Thanks of the Fatherland, 66.
⁶¹ Allied Control Authority, Control Council, “Directive No. 18: Disbandment and Dissolution of the German Armed Forces,” November 12, 1945, Appendix 1-2, OMGUS AGTS 122/18, IfZ.
⁶² “Empfehlung der Regierungsvertreter für Kriegsgefangenen- und Heimkehrerfragen der 3 Westzonen aus der Sitzung in Königstein am 21. Februar 1949 an die Zentralstelle für Flüchtlingsangelegenheiten der Vereinigten Wirtschaftsgebiets und an die Länderregierungen [Recommendations of government representatives of the offices for POW questions of the 3 Western zones at the meeting in Königstein on February 21, 1949, to the central office for refugee question of the bizonal and the state governments],” 1949, 1, BMVt B150/330 Bd.1, BAK.
discharge procedures were by no means the same across the zones’ borders. In an effort to standardize discharge procedures, the German authorities criticized the discrepancies between the sums that were paid as *Entlassungsgeld*, “discharge pay,” for example, as early as 1947. Differences existed between the American and British zones, which paid RM 40 and 80, respectively, to privates and officers, and the Soviet Union who paid RM 50 to everybody discharged in Frankfurt/Oder, and France, the Benelux countries, and the Eastern European countries that paid nothing at all.\(^\text{63}\) The regional fragmentation within the zones can be seen in the fact that the state of South Wurttemberg, despite being in the French zone, paid RM 50 to dismissed military personnel.\(^\text{64}\) This situation further demonstrates the growing independence of regional *Länder* governments who gradually overtook the financing of the discharge pay. Beginning in August 1947, the *Länder* were solely responsible for the disbursement of *Entlassungsgeld*.\(^\text{65}\) Given the existence of a large number of stragglers, deserters, and soldiers who had simply “demobilized themselves” after surrender because their units were isolated or starkly decimated, the years until 1949 saw the emergence of many veterans without papers. It became possible for them to receive discharge papers from the authorities—usually at discharge camps, if they could plausibly plead their case—even years after their actual return. They could also receive their discharge pay; however, as the discharge procedures

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\(^{63}\) Ausschuss für Kriegsgefangenenfragen beim Lärderrat, “Kommissionsbesprechung über finanzielle Fragen für Kriegsgefangene [Meeting of the commission about financial questions regarding POWs],” November 15, 1947, BMVt B150/309 Heft 2, BAK. Interestingly, the committee talked about introducing *Entlassungsgeld* for returnees who were discharged into the Soviet zone of occupation at this session. While the exact procedures are not spelled out in the archival material, this indicates that the initial policy of paying the *Entlassungsgeld* only to the veterans released within their home zone, and of transferring (or exchanging) those whose home was in a different zone to that zone, was upheld. Thus, we can infer that soldiers were not discharged outside of their discharge zone.

\(^{64}\) Ibid.

were only continuously recorded beginning in 1947, it became the rule that
*Entlassungsgeld* was only disbursed if the discharge had been in or after 1947.\(^{66}\) The amount of *Entlassungsgeld* was subsequently adjusted to the changing economic conditions. With the devaluation of German money in the currency reform of 1948, the discharge pay was reduced to DM 5,\(^ {67}\) but subsequently raised again to DM 50.\(^ {68}\) In 1951, it was raised to DM 150;\(^ {69}\) by 1955, it had been raised to DM 200.\(^ {70}\)

Despite the logistic difficulties of providing for German military personnel on German soil, their discharge took only some 18 months to complete, a remarkable accomplishment under the circumstances. It began almost immediately after surrender, in June 1945, and was completed by the end of 1946. During this time, the number of internees steadily decreased and the provisions for inmates improved in quality and quantity; the support of the Red Cross and other charitable institutions in Germany greatly contributed to this improvement. The screening of all internees led to a number of them being more permanently held—members of the SS, the Gestapo, and individuals suspect of war crimes were initially kept in the internment camps throughout Germany. They were later united at Landsberg prison near Augsburg in Bavaria.

Initially, the discharge procedures were carried out at all camps, but with the reduction of prisoners held on German soil, discharge camps were set up in order to

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\(^{66}\) Ausschuss für Kriegsgefangenenfragen beim Länderrat, “Kommissionsbesprechung.” Numerous other documents in the folders of the BMVt also mention the issue of *Entlassungsgeld*, although in less detail.

\(^{67}\) Sozialdemokratische Partei, Kriegsgefangenenhilfe, “Letter to Kriegsgefangenenhilfe to Minister für Arbeit und Wohlfahrt,” October 4, 1948, HMI 503/184b, HHSAW.

\(^{68}\) “Auszahlung der Entlassungsbeihilfe aus Mitteln der Länder der US Zone für Heimkehrer [Payment of discharge allowance to returnees from funds of the states of the US zone],” 1948, HMI 503/184b, HHSAW.


\(^{70}\) “Wichtige Hinweise des VdH für die erwarteten Heimkehrertransporte [Important information by the VdH regarding the expected arrival of returnees],” *VdH-Pressestit*, September 22, 1955.
enable the orderly release of POWs brought in from elsewhere—Canada, the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and the Soviet Union. Friedland, in today’s Lower Saxony, in the area where the British, Soviet, and American zones met, existed for the longest time as a discharge camp and was used for refugees from the German Democratic Republic and for Eastern European emigrants of German ethnicity after 1955. Gronenfelde, near Frankfurt/Oder, was the camp at which all transports from the Soviet Unions arrived. The most important camp in the British zone was the “Munsterlager” near the city of Münster. In the American zone, discharge camps existed in Dachau near Munich, Hammelburg near Würzburg, Moschendorf near Hof, Piding near Reichenhall, Neu-Ulm, Waldschänke near Hersfeld, Ulm-Kienlesberg, and Malmsheim near Stuttgart. The conditions in all camps within Germany improved gradually, along with the gradual improvement of the German economy; however, the particular situation of returning POWs demanded special provisions, which the regional administrations responsible for the camps’ upkeep had to make great efforts to obtain. Until mid-1947, donations of nutriments, medicine, and bandages had to be solicited from German drug companies; the German Red Cross only began to distribute these in September of 1947. Only at that time, medical supplies and nutriments found their entry in the regional governments’ budgets for the first time. In a similar manner, the discharge camps constantly struggled to be able to provide returnees with adequate clothing, shoes, and hygiene articles. Charities and welfare associations were particularly significant in supporting the most basic material needs of returnees and

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71 Various pieces of correspondence between the council of the states of the American occupation zone, discharge camps, rehabilitation camps for returnees, and German companies can be found in BMVt B150/326 Heft 1 at the BAK.
72 E. Bach, “Medikamente, Stärkungsmittel und Verbandsstoff für Heimkehreralager in der US-Zone [Medicine, nutriments, and bandages for returnee camps in the American zone],” April 30, 1948, BMVt B150/326 Heft 1, BAK.
POWs, in addition to their spiritual efforts for them. While conditions in the camps within Germany were particularly economically difficult, POW camps abroad were criticized for being militaristic in their organization and creating an atmosphere that was feared to ultimately inhibit the successful democratization of the internees. The introduction of democratic self-government, the acceleration of the screening process particularly for individuals who were known as anti-fascists and the supply with educational material about the new situation in Germany became issues which regional government bodies as well as political parties took on. The concern by German authorities to supply POWs in French and British, but also in Soviet camps with “cultural food” as well as information about what they would encounter at their return demonstrates the authorities’ awareness of the “culture shock” that returnees would inevitably experience. To prepare them ahead of their return was meant as a means to shorten and ease the process of adjustment, to prevent disillusionment, and to remind returnees that their return and their contribution to Germany’s reconstruction were significant despite potentially disappointing situations they might encounter.

In February 1947, there were still 579,000 POWs held by the Western European countries: 530,000 in France, 30,000 in Belgium, 14,000 in the Netherlands, and 5,000 in

73 “1. Jahresbericht der Betreuungsstelle des Hilfswerkes der E.K.i.D., Hauptbüro Kassel, im Heimkehrerlager Waldschänke zu Hersfeld [First yearly report of the office for returnee support by the Protestant Relief Organization, Kassel main office, in the returnee camp in Waldschänke near Hersfeld],” November 11, 1947, 6, HMI 503/184a, HHSAW.

74 Mugdan, “Kulturelle Betreuung von Kriegsgefangenen, deutschen Zivilarbeitern im Ausland und Heimkehrern [Cultural support of POWs and German civilian workers abroad and returnees],” December 16, 1948, BMVt B150/359 Heft 1, BAK.

75 “Protokoll über die Tagung des Landesausschusses der Christlich-Demokratischen Union Groß-Hessen in Friedberg [Protocol of the convention of the state committee of the CDU of Greater Hessia in Friedberg],” May 30, 1946, 5-6, Nachlass Bruno Dörpinghaus 01-009-003/1, ACDP; “Satzung der Dienststelle für Kriegsgefangenenfragen beim Länderrat [By-laws of the office for POW Issues at the state council],” December 19, 1946, 2, Dr. Margarethe Bitter ED 449/1, IfZ; “Satzung der Dienststelle für Kriegsgefangenenfragen,” 2.

76 Various pieces of correspondence pertaining to the subject matter can be found in the folder BMVt B150/361 at the BAK.
Luxembourg. The United States were still holding almost 40,000 POWs, about half of which were located in camps in the American Zone of Occupation, the other half helping the dismantling of American military installations in Italy. The U.S. had transferred over half a million POWs to France and Britain, in order to supply needed sources of labor and in order to be rid of them. At the Conference of the Council of Foreign Ministers in Moscow in the Spring of 1947, amidst the negotiations for a peace treaty for Germany, the return of the POWs still held in Allied captivity was debated, and it was resolved that all should be returned to Germany by the end of 1948. The use of prisoners of war for labor was generally understood as a form of reparations, and the fact that no peace treaty had been signed with Germany facilitated the justification for the prolonged captivity. As this practice received increasing criticism from German media as well as politicians, France, Britain, Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands introduced work contracts that POWs signed voluntarily. In this way, several hundreds of thousands of men stayed in these countries and the British-occupied Middle East, working mostly in mining and agriculture, but also in other occupations. The Soviet Union never introduced work contracts; it openly opposed the return of POWs even after the foundation of the two German states and continuously treated them as reparation services. In addition to former soldiers, there were also civilians and refugees being held prisoner in the Soviet Union. Repatriation from Soviet imprisonment took much longer than from the Western Allies because the Soviets consciously used POWs as an economic force to rebuild the country’s infrastructure; the construction of roads and railroads was probably the most

77 “Kriegsgefangene in amerikanischer Hand [POW in American captivity],” Der Tagesspiegel (Berlin), February 19, 1947.
78 Perhaps one of the most serious and substantial publications on this topic is Erich Kaufmann, “Die Freilassung und Heimschaffung der Kriegsgefangenen in völkerrechtlicher Beleuchtung [The release and return of POWs in the light of international law],” Süddeutsche Juristenzeitung, February 1947.
common work for POWs. Despite the economically difficult situation that returning POWs faced at their return to Germany, they were understood as economically important for postwar reconstruction in Germany, and their delayed return—from the Soviet Union, but also from Western countries and from voluntarily work contracts abroad—was greatly lamented. The greatest fear was that life in barracks would undermine the mental and moral force of the inmates and workers, and ultimately disadvantage German reconstruction economically, but also spiritually.79

In November 1948, the United States, Britain, and the Benelux countries had released all of the POWs they had held within as well as outside of Germany; France still held 30,000 prisoners but promised their discharge by the end of the year. 25,000 free workers remained in Britain and 8,000 in the province of Cyrenaica (Eastern Lybia) under British oversight; 120,000 in France, 1,500 in Luxembourg, and between two and five million—once again, no more than various estimates are available—in the Soviet Union, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and the rest of Eastern Europe.80 About 800,000 Soviet POWs were returned to West Germany between the spring of 1947 and the spring of 1950.81

The demobilization process that took place in Germany was complicated and delayed by the lack of a central authority, by the unclear legal situation paired with the desire of European countries to use German war prisoners as a source of cheap labor, and by the sheer absence of a usable infrastructure in the initial months after defeat. The appalling conditions in the very first makeshift camps along the Rhine river and in the

80 Ibid.
81 Reichling, “Letter to Dr. Hilde Wander, Institut fuer Weltwirtschaft an der Universität Kiel: Heimkehrerzahlen,” November 1, 1951, StBA B128/3553 L40/01, BAK.
enclosures in Northern Germany bear witness to the Allies’ helplessness and unpreparedness in which the surrendered German soldiers and sailors were taken hostage. The claims that President Eisenhower deliberately let a million soldiers starve in the Rheinwiesenlager\textsuperscript{82} have been disproven. Hostility toward Germany as a country and German Wehrmacht soldiers in particular was certainly present in the planning for and during the postwar years; however, in the long run the will to establish a lasting peace and prevent militarism from rising anew, as well as the will to prevent Germany’s renewed international isolation similar to the situation in the aftermath of the First World War, ultimately prevented the occupation’s policies with regard to interned soldiers and POWs from being exclusively punitive in character. Therefore, if the conditions of “Surrendered Enemy Personnel” were terrible from both a humanitarian and a legal point of view, the American military administration made an honest effort to release soldiers into either civil life or into the custody of one of the other occupation powers, and to negotiate with the emerging German bodies about the treatment of the internees and the procedures of their discharge.

**Japan: Repatriating soldiers in Japan, and soldiers and civilians from Asia**

The cooperation of United States military and political bodies with regard to the occupation of Japan was embodied by the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee (SWNCC) and subcommittees on the military side, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff on the political side. Communication and procedure channels between the two agencies were

\textsuperscript{82} Bacque, *Other Losses*. 

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established as early as March 1945, and a draft policy set up in May. This draft policy, Joint Chief of Staff (JCS) Directive 1328, contains the essence of later occupation policies with regard to demilitarization. Titled “Disarmament, Demobilization, and Disposition of Enemy Arms, Ammunition and Implements of War,” the directive defines and describes the military forces and the actions to be taken in the course of their demobilization. The sections about what should happen with mobile and immobile military equipment were discussed at length in the drafts sent back and forth between the JCS and the SWNCC; however, the policies with regard to the soldiers were explicit and remained unchanged over the summer: the “Japanese forces,” including all Japanese and Japanese-controlled land, sea, and air forces, military and para-military formations and their auxiliaries (except for the civil police force), at any place in the Empire, were to be completely disarmed at defeat and thus rendered incapable of further resistance. They were then to be evacuated to Japan proper and there demobilized.

Shortly before the end of the war in the European theater and a few months before the end of the war in the Pacific, nothing more than one basic decision had been made with regard to the Japanese military: it was clear at this point that the military was to be abolished as a proponent of militarism; as a consequence, all members of the military were to return home. Japan would be reduced to little more than her four main islands,

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83 State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee, “Politico-Military Problems in the Far East: Disarmament, Demobilization and Disposition of Enemy Arms, Ammunition and Implements of War (SWNCC 58/5): Enclosure,” May 21, 1945, RG 218, NDL.
84 Joint Post-War Committee, “Disarmament, Demobilization and Disposition of Equipment of Japanese Armed Forces (JCS 1328),” April 27, 1945, RG 218, NDL.
85 Not the area of “Japan proper,” but the areas from which the military was to be evacuated were specified: “Occupied areas in China (including Manchuria, the Kwantung Leased Territory and Kwangchowan). Karafuto (southern part of Sakhalin). Korea (Chosen). Kurile Islands (Chishima). Hokkaido. Formosa (Taiwan) and Pescadores (Hoko or Boko). Hong Kong. French Indo-China. Thailand. Burma. British Malaya. Netherlands East Indies. Philippine Islands. Marianas. Marshalls, and Caroline Islands and all other land and water areas not mentioned above, south of the thirtieth degree of north latitude.” Ibid., 4.
and the Japanese Empire would cease to exist. The initial planning for the occupation also held that “[t]he Japanese Imperial High Command shall be abolished at the earliest practicable date as a means of preventing the reestablishment of Japanese military power. However, in order to facilitate the rapid demilitarization and disposal of the Japanese armed forces, the commander in chief of the United Nations armed forces is authorized to operate through this agency and to retain temporarily such parts thereof as are considered essential to the effective control and administration of the Japanese armed forces during the period of demobilization.”

Demobilization would be carried out by the Japanese government, more specifically the Army and Navy Ministries, under the supervision and command of SCAP. The lack of more specific planning of the implementation of demobilization of Japan’s armed forces was due to the practical consideration that the task would be carried out by the Japanese themselves.

When the Japanese government accepted defeat after two atomic bombs had been dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, as well as after the Soviet declaration of war and the Red Army’s attack on Manchuria, Sakhalin, and Korea, the Japanese military was spread over vast parts of East Asia. Despite having been driven back during the last two years of the war by mainly American, British, and Chinese forces, the Japanese army and navy still held positions in Eastern China, Manchuria, Korea, Formosa, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific Islands. The occupation forces had to deal with a total of almost 7.5 million Japanese troops, of which roughly 3.5 million were stationed on home soil. Though many of the troops in the homeland had been mobilized from university classrooms, their being under arms produced a “terrific psychological tension” in the

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86 Ibid., 6-7.
Allied occupation commanders who feared strong resistance by the Japanese army and navy. The fierce fighting that American troops had encountered at their advance in the Pacific confirmed this assumption, and indeed, the second half of August 1945 witnessed a number of putsch attempts by higher ranking military officials against the impending occupation. However, these were isolated incidents and not coordinated efforts by the military leadership, directed against the Emperor’s action of surrender and against those members of the Cabinet who were in favor of the surrender, rather than against the military occupation of Japan. Indeed, the official account of the United States occupation of Japan confirms the relief about the absence of serious threats stemming from the troops not yet demobilized, by emphasizing: “By preventing unnecessary contact of the Occupation Forces with the Japanese military forces the possibility of provoking clashes was minimized. The dissolution of one of the world’s once great armies and navies was accomplished without incident.”

Given that it was the responsibility of the Japanese High Command to carry out disarmament, demobilization, and the removal of any further military structures, no further, more specific policies were drafted by JCS with regard to the implementation of the demobilization process. The only stipulation contained in the policy concerned the aspect of the physical return of the soldiers to their home towns or villages. Once the soldiers would arrive in the homeland, “[t]he Japanese people [were] to be impressed with the fact of the complete defeat of their armed forces. To this end, the personnel of such forces will in no case be permitted to return to their homes in military formations,

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87 Takemae, *The Allied Occupation of Japan*, 56.
88 Ibid., 56-57.
with bands playing, or with a display of flags, banners or emblems of distinction.” The postwar return of soldiers was envisioned as the contrary of their war-time departure, which had been a ceremonious farewell including celebrations both at home and at shrines. It was further the contrary of the return of fallen soldiers during the war whose spirits - ashes or last letters—were received and equally celebrated (though in a different atmosphere) at the shrine and at their family’s home. The requirement for the unceremonious return of demobilized soldiers was rooted in the belief that militarism was at the root of Japanese aggression, and in the will to demonstrate to the Japanese people that the returning men had been defeated. Those men who had left their homes as soldiers came home defeated and stripped of anything military, members of a country and not an army, civilians rather than the soldiers as which they had left. On the one hand, the Allies wanted to avoid returnees to be celebrated as soldiers, and to curb pro-military sentiment; on the other hand, the return of civilians instead of soldiers might have served to prevent unrest, both internally and directed against the occupying forces, by sending home civilians and thus to a degree not reminding the Japanese of defeat.

Of unforeseen benefit to Allied planners was the fact that the particularities of a future demobilization had been specified in the Japanese wartime mobilization law of May 1943. While the eventual demobilization happened in a completely different context than had been anticipated at that point, the practical implementation remained the same. The demobilization process had been planned, and the responsibilities for its implementation had been assigned to officials. Along with the continued functioning of

the Japanese government and military administration, this was an important factor in the quick and orderly demobilization of the Japanese military.

On August 15, the Japanese Army stationed on the Japanese mainland was 2,354,946 persons strong. The personnel broke down as shown in Table 1. The Navy comprised 1,693,223 personnel at the end of the war, of which 1,300,328 were stationed within Japan. The demobilization of the military on Japanese soil began on August 23, even before the occupation forces arrived. Formally, the Imperial General Headquarters remained in charge of the initial demobilization; when they were abolished on September 13, 1945, the War and the Navy Ministries were given the task. In the course of demilitarization, these two were put under the guidance of a civilian minister and renamed First and Second Demobilization Ministries. Their task was further to survey military facilities and to communicate their details to the occupation forces, to surrender war materiel such as weapons, ammunition, aircraft, and the like, to organize mine sweeping, and to provide transportation for returning troops and civilians.

Little documentation exists about the process of demobilization of the soldiers and sailors stationed within Japan at the very end of the war, and indeed the initial stage was chaotic at best. Desertion was common, and attacks of common soldiers against their leadership frequent. These incidents, however, remained locally confined and did by no means represent an organized attack on Japan’s military leadership; rather, they were an expression of soldiers’ discontent with the harsh and unfair treatment many soldiers had

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94 Japanese living in the different parts of the former Japanese Empire, most importantly Manchuria, China, and Korea were repatriated to Japan; further, Chinese, Formosans, and Koreans most of whom had been coerced into labor in Japan, were repatriated to their countries of origin.
95 Kimura, “Fukuin,” 93.
received from their superiors during the war. At the end of the war, the troops that were about to be demobilized were disillusioned about the country they had been fighting for. Their ideological education in the military had emphasized discipline, cooperation, faith in victory, and loyalty toward the emperor as well as the military leadership. After the war ended, soldiers lamented the lack of patriotism and the double standards of their officers who had ordered discipline and obedience from the soldiers while being abusive and egotistic. With the lost war, the promise of social equality by the American occupation, the disillusionment of Japanese soldiers with the ill-treatment received by their superiors, and the increasingly critical attitude toward the wartime military government, in addition to the generally poor provisions available for the troops awaiting demobilization, we can perceive the amount of combat fatigue and relief about being able to return home. The coherence and zeal of the troops was lost with Japan’s defeat, and the authority of officers forfeited with their double standards. The soldiers who came home were disheartened by the experience of warfare, but also by the reality of military life.

In addition to assaults on officers, there developed a general chaos that permitted soldiers to loot army stockpiles and even pillage nearby cities—a disorder that sent many city dwellers outside the city until they dared to come back to safeguard whatever was left of their possessions. Even though the general disorder and lawlessness mostly lasted for only two or three days, the consequences for the looting of army stockpiles affected the returning soldiers’ image gravely. Newspaper reports painted a very negative

96 Ibid., 100.
image of them—even more so later, when black market activities, theft, burglary, and the like were added to their accounts.\textsuperscript{100}

Table 1: Japanese Homeland Forces, including civilians, at the time of the capitulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fifth</th>
<th>Karafuto, Kuriles, Hokkaido</th>
<th>125,300</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eleventh</td>
<td>N. Honshu</td>
<td>117,271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twelfth</td>
<td>Tokyo Area</td>
<td>563,930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thirteenth</td>
<td>Nagoya Area</td>
<td>170,859</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifteenth</td>
<td>S. Honshu and Shikoku</td>
<td>222,531</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sixteenth</td>
<td>Kyushu</td>
<td>478,192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Army Ground Forces</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,678,083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air, Miscellaneous, and Army civilian employees</td>
<td></td>
<td>676,863</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Japanese Empire Army</td>
<td></td>
<td>2,354,946</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The lack of order during the first few days after the announcement of Japan’s defeat did not represent a continuing symptom of postwar Japan, or of the demobilization process. In fact, the demobilization of the troops stationed within the Japanese main islands went so smoothly that almost no accounts considered it noteworthy enough to record.\textsuperscript{101} The existence of demobilization plans contributed to the smooth and comparably efficient implementation of demobilization, particularly as they demonstrated an awareness of the possible complications involved in such a big task. They emphasized the need to

(1) be careful that no social fear arises from the implementation of the demobilization.

\textsuperscript{100} ATIS, “Review of the Japanese Press: Demobilized Soldiers - Mainichi Shimbun,” January 15, 1946, GHQ/SCAP RG 331, Box 3329 (2) 030, NDL.

\textsuperscript{101} The only official account that explains the demobilization of army and navy, both in Japan and abroad, in some detail is Kōseishō engokyoku, Hikiage engo no kiroku zokuzoku.
(2) maintain public order and security, so that demobilization can be carried out. 
(3) disregard [civilian occupation], affiliation with government offices, and 
civilian employee status, and demobilize everybody quickly. 
(4) ensure the custody of military stockpiles. 
(5) prevent chaotic traffic conditions caused by the transportation of the 
demobilized.\textsuperscript{102}

To carry out demobilization, all units of the district armies within Japan would 
first surrender all weapons, stocks, horses, vehicles, etc. to the commanders in charge of 
overseeing the demobilization, and then assemble in their formation area to be formally 
released, to separate, and to return home. Once the bulk of the units were released, staff 
officers, educators and drill sergeants, and security personnel were demobilized. 
1.9 million personnel had been released by October 15, about 85 percent of all troops 
stationed in Japan. The existence of a detailed demobilization plan as well as the 
maintenance of channels of command and of military structure throughout the process 
streamlined and simplified demobilization; however, the target of having released but 
100,000 men by October 15 was not reached. On that day, 216,000 men were still 
awaiting demobilization.\textsuperscript{103} The statistics compiled by the War Ministry and later the 
Demobilization Ministries and Bureaus indicate that by the first of November, 1945, out 
of the total of 2,354,946 military personnel stationed in Japan, ninety-four percent 
(2,228,761 persons) had been demobilized.\textsuperscript{104}

It had been stipulated in the Imperial Demobilization Law that police units were 
to be reinforced in order to maintain public order, and that the demobilization of strong 
units was to be postponed if any threat arose from their demobilization. Japanese sources

\textsuperscript{102} Ibid., 317.  
\textsuperscript{103} Ibid., 319.  
\textsuperscript{104} GHQ SCAP Military Intelligence Section, “Final Report on Demobilization,” 12.
document an increase from 25,000 to 140,000 men until late 1946, while occupation sources state a planned increase to 93,900, of which only 84,000 had been recruited at the end of 1946. All special police forces were abolished and the civil police force was subject to a revision, aiming at its decentralization and democratization.

Demobilization of the troops within Japan was concluded in December 1945, less than half a year after surrender. At this point, all army and navy stationed within the main islands of Japan had been formally and officially discharged and sent home. Given the condition of Japan at the time of defeat—with most of its major cities reduced to rubble, and without significant means to rebuild the country’s infrastructure and communication channels, the demobilization of over two million troops stationed on the Japanese main islands was a major success for the postwar administration. The lack of communication and infrastructure, as well as the lack of reliable information from the Japanese military made demobilization somewhat difficult for the occupation; however, the Japanese administration retained its responsibility over the process due to the maintenance of Japanese military structure. GHQ had oversight but was not involved in the day-to-day business of carrying out demobilization. The fact that the procedures of demobilization drew heavily on demobilization plans which had been established during the war made its implementation easier and, more importantly, quicker: had no demobilization plans existed, the establishment of discharge procedures, the distribution of responsibilities, and the creation of a chain of command for demobilization would have taken much longer. Further, Japan’s difficult economic situation made the quick

105 Kōseishō engokyoku, Hikiage engo no kiroku zokuzoku, 320.
107 Ibid.
108 “Sixth Army Recapitulation of Demobilization and Surrender,” October 14, 1945, GHQ/SCAP RG 331, Box 3329 (2) 030, NDL.
discharge of soldiers a necessity. Particularly food rations had to be economized with, and the fast release of homeland troops meant economic relief for the Japanese government, as demobilized soldiers would have to provide for themselves. The smoothness of demobilization that is described in the official records, however, might be symptomatic of a will to gloss over existing difficulties and focus on the successful final outcome—an attitude that is sometimes encountered in Japanese documentation. While this does not falsify the records per se, it narrows the possibilities for interpretation and evaluation greatly.¹⁰⁹

Given the military education and indoctrination that Japanese soldiers had received—especially the unconditional loyalty to superiors, the Emperor, and the country¹¹⁰—and which had been enforced through the day-to-day practice in the military, surrender appeared almost unreal.¹¹¹ While official records emphasize the orderliness of the ensuing demobilization or imprisonment, the reality of defeat and of a lack of control and authority, particularly outside of Japan, and the insecurity that came with it caused scores of soldiers to flee their units and added to a general sense of confusion.¹¹² If deserters were found, they would receive the harshest of treatments by their officers.¹¹³

The demobilization of troops stationed overseas required that they first be repatriated back to Japan, which was probably the greatest obstacle that had to be

¹⁰⁹ A day-long soldiers’ mutiny in Niigata city, which was eventual put down by some officers who afterwards agreed with the unit to remain silent about the incident, is described in Kentarō Awaya and Takane Kawashima, *Haisenji zenkoku chian jōhō* [Information about public order in the entire country at the time of defeat], 7 vols. (Tokyo: Nihon Tosho Sentā, 1994). Quoted in Kimura, “Shūsen chokugo no guntai to shakai,” 24.


overcome. In addition to more than three million soldiers stationed outside of the Japanese main islands, there were another three million Japanese civilians who were residents of virtually all areas that had been part of Japan’s wartime empire. The initial Allied policies for postwar Japan, particularly as stipulated in the Potsdam Declaration, envisioned the return of all military forces to Japan. It did not explicitly mention that Japanese civilians living overseas would have to be repatriated as well; however, the reduction of Japan to her four main islands and the termination of the Japanese Empire made the return of these civilians a requirement.\textsuperscript{114} In order to ensure the civilians’ safety and well-being, the Japanese War Ministry determined that the repatriation of civilians should be given priority over the repatriation of military personnel.\textsuperscript{115} GHQ decided in October, however, that the military were to be repatriated first, and that the Allied military headquarters would cooperate with demobilization.\textsuperscript{116} This reversal of Japanese policy by the American occupation constitutes an early indication of the different perceptions about the military that was to be dissolved and the civilians who were to be brought back to the Japanese main islands. The significance of demobilization becomes visible with regard to the sequence in which it was to be carried out; and while the dissolution of the Japanese empire was by no means insignificant, the policy demonstrates that the military potential of army units was perceived as a military threat whose elimination was a more immediate necessity.\textsuperscript{117} Even though both the return of Japanese civilians and military personnel was the goal of the Japanese government, GHQ primarily intended to eliminate Japan’s military presence outside of Japan.

\textsuperscript{114} Watt, \textit{When Empire Comes Home}, 40-41.
\textsuperscript{115} Kōseishō engokyoku, \textit{Hikiage engo no kiroku zokuzoku}, 320.
\textsuperscript{116} Ibid., 321.
\textsuperscript{117} GHQ SCAP Historical Commission, \textit{History of the Nonmilitary Activities of the Occupation of Japan}, 1:13.
Japanese army units remained in their formations after the surrender, but were placed under the oversight of Allied troops who were in charge of peacekeeping and repatriation (see Table 2). The troops were disarmed and then congregated in areas from which they were to be shipped back to Japan, and were provided for by the respective Allied military force in charge until overseas branch offices for “demobilization services” consisting mainly of “aid and guidance”\textsuperscript{118} were eventually created in March 1946.

Table 2: Allied powers in charge of the repatriation of Japanese soldiers located across Asia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nation in charge</th>
<th>Location of Japanese troops</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>Philippines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Southern Korea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pacific Islands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Okinawa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Siam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Burma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Andaman islands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nicobar Islands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Malaya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Singapore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>French Indochina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Indonesia (Dutch colony)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Eastern New Guinea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bismarck Islands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Solomon Islands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Borneo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>Chinese mainland except Manchuria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Taiwan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>North of the sixteenth parallel in French Indochina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soviet Union</td>
<td>Korea north of the thirty-eighth parallel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Manchuria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kuriles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sakhalin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Trefalt, Japanese Army Stragglers, 25-6.

The sequence of repatriation carried out under American control began in the South Pacific on September 2, in the Philippines and on the Bonin Islands on 118 Kōseishō engokyoku, Hikiage engo no kiroku zokuzoku, 321.
September 3, and in South Korea on September 9. Overall, the repatriation from U.S.-
controlled territories lasted until May 1946; repatriation from Chinese lands and from
Australian-controlled areas took from November 1945 until July 1946. The British forces
repatriated Japanese military personnel in two groups, between May and September 1946
the first and between March and November 1947 the second group.\textsuperscript{119}

It appears that no detailed and comprehensive lists have been compiled regarding
the numbers of Japanese repatriates, differentiating between military personnel and
civilians. Even the Record of Repatriation Protection (\textit{Hikiage engo no kiroku}), which is
extremely detailed and thorough in its reproduction of numbers, does not provide any.
The table below shows the total repatriation numbers for armed forces and civilians alike;
however, knowing that Allied policy stipulated that military personnel was to be
repatriated first, we can assume that the ratio of military to civilians decreased over the
time period of repatriation. The numbers further indicate that repatriation only came into
full swing in late 1945, and that the bulk of Japanese repatriates only came back to Japan
during 1946 (see Table 3).

Table 3: Estimated net repatriation of civilians and armed forces beginning on date shown (in
thousands)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>To Japan</th>
<th>From Japan</th>
<th>Net Repatriation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Aug 1945 - 31 Oct 1945</td>
<td>6,249</td>
<td>1,194 [sic]</td>
<td>5,055 [sic]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Nov 1945 - 25 Apr 1946</td>
<td>2,308</td>
<td>762</td>
<td>1,546</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 Apr 1946 - 30 Sep 1946</td>
<td>12,013</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>1,925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Oct 1946 - 30 Sep 1947</td>
<td>1,136</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>1,001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Oct 1947 - 30 Sep 1948</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>318</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{119} Kōseishō engokyoku, \textit{Hikiage engo no kiroku zokuzoku}, 322-323.
Despite the significance of demilitarization in allied planning and the implementation of the occupation, the return of Japanese soldiers was delayed by a number of issues. One of these was the fact that the British as well as the French, Dutch, and Americans used the surrendered Japanese military personnel in Southeast Asia for labor—reconstruction of infrastructure and agriculture, but also the guarding of facilities and support for British troops in their struggle against Southeast Asian independence movements—and thus kept them from returning to Japan for an average duration of one year. The Japanese were referred to as “Japanese Surrendered Personnel,” or JSP. This situation had its precedents in the European theater, where surrendered German troops were not identified as POWs but as Surrendered Enemy Personnel and as such assigned to work projects even after the end of hostilities, against the Geneva Convention. The need for labor in Europe’s Southeast Asian Empires as well as the interest in receiving reparations in the form of labor justified the informal retention of Japanese soldiers. The Soviet military administration demonstrated the same attitude toward Japanese prisoners as they had toward German ones: several hundreds of thousands of military and civilians were taken captive and deported to Siberian labor camps.

121 Ibid., 251.
122 The Soviets reported 594,000 captives, both civilians and military, in September 1945, and only began to release them in December 1946. GHQ SCAP Military Intelligence Section, “Final Report on Demobilization,” 56-57.
A second factor in delaying the return of Japanese overseas troops was the availability of ships and crews, and the usability of Japanese ports. The repatriation of the Japanese overseas army depended on means of transportation. Initially, demobilization had been devised as to be carried out under the authority of the Japanese War Ministry. The logistics of returning more than three million soldiers and as many civilians to Japan proved to be an almost impossible task for the Japanese alone; restrictions on the use of merchant and Navy ships imposed by SCAP\textsuperscript{123} necessitated that Japanese transport capabilities be reinforced by American ships in order to carry out the repatriation of Japanese civilians and army personnel in a meaningful time frame. In addition, a total of one hundred ninety-one American vessels were provided for the repatriation of Japanese Navy personnel (see Table 4).\textsuperscript{124}

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|}
\hline
 & \textbf{Japanese vessels} & \textbf{American vessels} \\
 & merchant ships & military vessels & LST and Liberty ships \\
\hline
November 1945 & 41 & 113 & 11 \\
\hline
December 1945 & 44 & 119 & 45 \\
\hline
January 1946 & 55 & 172 & 192 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Use of Japanese and American vessels for repatriation}
\end{table}

Source: Adopted from Kōseishō engokyoku, ed., \textit{Hikiage engo no kiroku zokuzoku}, 323-4.

The troops returning to Japan arrived at one of the dedicated ports of entry, in which reception centers had been set up. The reception centers were part of the Welfare Ministry, but were controlled by SCAP. At port cities at which the reception centers were located—Uraga, Maizuru, Kure, Shimonoseki, Hakata, Sasebo, and Kagoshima, the

\textsuperscript{123} Yasuo Wakatsuki, \textit{Sengo hikiage no kiroku} [Records of postwar repatriation] (Tokyo: Jiji Tsūshinsha, 1991), 254.

\textsuperscript{124} Kōseishō engokyoku, \textit{Hikiage engo no kiroku zokuzoku}, 333.
Welfare Ministry set up regional offices; in addition, branch offices were opened in Yokohama, Senzaki, and Moji. On November 30, 1945, the War and Navy Ministries were transformed into the First and Second Demobilization Bureaus, which were responsible for the organization and supervision of the troops abroad and the transport; once they reached the reception centers, the Welfare Ministry was responsible for the soldiers and civilian repatriates. When a repatriation ship reached a Japanese port, it would have to anchor first at a certain distance in order to ensure the ship’s quarantine. A boat was then sent out from the reception center, and staff disinfected the repatriation ship. About an hour later, a second boat was sent, the crew of which then enquired about the physical condition of the persons on board, received a list with all the names as well as their paperwork, distributed “returnees’ enquiry cards” (hikiagesha chōsa kādo), explained the procedures at the reception center, and enquired about deceased persons on board. Once these formalities were concluded, the ship proceeded to the pier and the returnees were let off the ship—welcomed by family members and the staff of the reception centers, though cordoned off from them, and by music—and to customs inspection. They were then given a bath and new clothing if necessary, vaccinated against smallpox and other infectious diseases, and sprayed with the pesticide DDT against typhus. After this procedure, the civilian repatriates had to have their repatriation certificate (hikiagesha shōmeisho) replaced with a change certificate (idō shōmeisho), and received a food ration and a “Repatriate’s handbook.” Soldiers had to remain with their unit, whose leader had to report on deceased and missing members; render ashes, possessions, or letters of the deceased; and testify to war-related injuries. The release was

then formally concluded with a roll call and the distribution of discharge papers, the issuance of train tickets for the ride home, and the splitting of units and re-grouping by destination.\textsuperscript{126}

Although “[d]efeat had been unthinkable, surrender inconceivable,”\textsuperscript{127} the demobilization of Japan’s military forces within the main islands was completed in a remarkably quick and smooth manner. The existence of demobilization plans issued during the war and the maintenance of administrative structures within the Japanese government can be seen as the major contributors to the comparative ease of the demobilization process. On the other hand, the attempts to prevent surrender, to topple the government and to kill Premier Minister Suzuki, and the existence of military factions that ardently favored the continuation of the fighting\textsuperscript{128} clearly indicate that the relatively smooth demobilization and dissolution of the army and navy on the home soil were not a natural sequence to Japan’s surrender. Had a larger group of generals and officers opposed the peace settlement with the Allies, it is doubtful that demobilization could have been carried out so smoothly. Therefore, the military leadership’s obedience to the Japanese government\textsuperscript{129} and, perhaps more importantly, to the Emperor, can be seen as the most significant precondition for the successful implementation of the demobilization ordered by the Allies. Outside of Japan, however, the demobilization plans were of no

\textsuperscript{126} The processes of the reception centers are described in some detail in Hikiage engochō, \textit{Hikiage engo no kiroku}, 36-38. Interestingly, Barbara Trefalt claims that at least early on during the repatriation process, missing persons were a problem that was simply ignored by the Welfare Bureau’s personnel, due to their preoccupation with the already shear insurmountable task, in \textit{Japanese Army Stragglers}, 24-25. It appears plausible that the routine of collecting information about deceased and missing military personnel and civilians was only collected once sufficient personnel was available at the reception centers, and when a thorough routine had been established. It is not possible for me to estimate, however, at what point in time this might have occurred.


\textsuperscript{128} Ienaga, \textit{Japan’s Last War}, 231-2; Takemae, \textit{The Allied Occupation of Japan}, 56.

\textsuperscript{129} Sano, \textit{One Thousand Days in Siberia}, 2.
use. We might assume that the wartime planning for demobilization would have been applicable to places outside of the Japanese main islands had these territories not been severed from Japan in order to completely dismantle her empire. The fact that these territories were not under Japanese control anymore should have rendered the Japanese government’s demobilization plans obsolete for the rest of Asia. It is interesting to note that the most important source about the demobilization process mentions the existence of a demobilization plan in the chapter about demobilization within the Japanese main islands, but claims in the sections about demobilization and repatriation from the various parts of Asia that no plans or preparations had been made for demobilization. It is likely that with the return of government authority to the indigenous or colonial governments, the authority over the Japanese troops switched from the Japanese government to the Allied governments—China, the Soviet Union, the United States, Britain, and France—especially given that demobilization from Asia was carried out under the supervision of these governments. Japanese facilities for repatriation were already limited, as can be seen with the inadequate supply of repatriation vessels. Had demobilization plans (notwithstanding their existence) been created for the rest of Asia, they might have failed due to the lack of capacities. In addition, the necessity of repatriating not only the military personnel but also the millions of civilian residents of the former Japanese colonies or territories was nothing that Japan had prepared for—nor the Allies. Despite the unplanned and fragmented nature of repatriation, its short duration was impressive: not only were most of the civilians and military personnel repatriated within sixteen months from Japan’s surrender, but approximately one and a

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130 Hikiage engochō, *Hikiage engo no kiroku zokuzoku* [Record of repatriate welfare, vol.3], 318-9; Hikiage engochō, *Hikiage engo no kiroku*, 12.
half million Koreans, Chinese, and Taiwanese were brought back from Japan to their native countries. The remainder of Japanese on the Asian continent—several hundred thousand men and women, civilians and soldiers alike—remained in Soviet imprisonment and was only released between late 1946 and 1948.\footnote{Zen’ichi Kamishima, *Hikiage no keii to genkyō* [The whole story and present state of repatriation] (Tokyo: Zaigai dōhō kikan sokushin zenkoku kyōgikai, 1948), 7-9.}
INTERLUDE: THE WAY HOME

Even the physical act of “returning home” was much less straightforward than it would be under normal circumstances; therefore, it merits some explanation. In order to illustrate what the way home might have entailed, I will use the experience of two persons, Armin Rodmann and Kanemitsu Naotoshi as two examples of what “coming home” looked like in postwar Germany and Japan. Needless to say, there were as many different homecomings for demobilized soldiers as there were soldiers coming home—or simply returning to their place of origin because their homes, physically and spiritually, had been destroyed, because their families had fallen victims to the bombings of cities, or had had to relocate without being able to leave word of it to the soldier or soldiers in the family. The lack of communication and transportation infrastructure made the way home a difficult one, and more importantly, one with no certain outcome. Further, as Kafka’s well-known short story “Heimkehr” powerfully illustrates, even if there was a home and family to return to, the estrangement after an absence such as the soldier’s proved discouraging for the re-establishment for once intimate relationships.

Armin Rodman sent a letter to the Ausschuss für Kriegsgefangenenhilfe, the Committee for POW Aid, of the state of Hesse, on September 3, 1947, asking for advice and support by the committee about the existence of which he had recently learned.\(^1\) He described his situation as follows:

> Completely at a loss about the hardships and bad luck that I have had in the past 2 ½ years since my return from Soviet captivity, I read today about the existence of the Commission for POW aid in the state of Hesse. Please permit me to bring forward my plea for your help.

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\(^1\) Armin Rodmann, “Letter to Ausschuss für Kriegsgefangenenhilfe in Hessen,” September 3, 1947, HMI 503/184a, HHSAW.
I managed to flee from Soviet imprisonment (Odessa) on 4/3/47, and somehow made it through Romania, Hungary, and Austria, to Germany, where I have been staying since 6/15/1947. After a brief stay with relatives of my sister-in-law in Niederhülsta, district of Fritzlar, I was forced to leave this place because first, they lacked the room [to house him] and second because of the divorce suit my sister-in-law had filed. Besides, I would not have been able to find work in this little community far off any lines of communication, except for agricultural work. At least, I was able to apply for an identification card, which was issued to me by the Fritzlar district administrator on 6/27/47.

First, I then visited several relatives of comrades who are still in captivity, hoping to find accommodation somewhere and get the permit to move there, and to start working after a brief recovery. Unfortunately, success was denied everywhere, partly because of local regulations, but often apparently because of a lack of sympathy and goodwill of particular offices.

It took some effort to find out my wife’s current place of residence. It is in the Soviet zone, in Böhlen near Leisnig, in Saxony. As I have fled Soviet captivity, I could and would not move there under any circumstances, which should be comprehensible. On the other hand, as a native East Prussian (I was born on 2/28/1918 in Königsberg/Prussia) I would not easily receive permission to establish residency anywhere here, either. A further fact has tremendously complicated my situation: as I was not released by the Russians, I do not have discharge papers that would state a place of discharge where they would have been obliged to accept me [to establish residency]; on the other hand, such discharge papers were not to be gotten anymore anywhere, as the Dachau camp [where it had been possible before to receive discharge papers for soldiers who had not been regularly discharged] has been closed since 6/30.

I have thus forcibly become a vegetating something, yet I have an urgent longing to have a new home [Heimat], as small and primitive it might be, and to be able to work in a reasonable trade. In addition to the depressing state of my permanent homelessness and to the fact that I depend on the goodwill of a few helpful people, my wife fell sick with pulmonary tuberculosis and has to receive lung fillings [Pneufüllungen] every eight days. Even if her disease is not clinically active, the lousy nutritional situation in the Eastern zone causes her body to degenerate more and more, and she is psychologically stressed to an extent that she has ceased to believe in an improvement, let alone recovery of her disease. I myself am, due to pulmonary asthma, a sensitive heart disease, and water [most likely hydropsy], unable to work in many trades (such as construction work, which would have allowed me to establish residence somewhere), and am therefore at my wits’ end. I do not even have the money to buy the most basic food items, and I cannot keep going to different places to look for a place to stay.

You will understand that the moral burden about my wife’s well-being is increasing daily, so that the setbacks that I encounter daily bring me close to despair. I have to be able to finally take care of my wife. I am asking myself often: Should there really no person in Germany who would be able to help a returnee like me? Is Germany not my home anymore?

2 The date has been changed to American style; that is month/day/year. In the German original, it is day.month.year.
I am thus asking you kindly for your help and support. Enable me to find a place to live, as it will be winter soon and I do not want to freeze to death in the street!

Politically, I am compromised, as my work as a postal supernumerary qualified me to be a party membership aspirant in 1938. When I was drafted in 1939, I ceased to be an aspirant; I never owned a party [membership] book or a [party] ID card. I believe that the Wehrmacht amnesty law applies to my case. I am contacting you in the grateful expectation of your help, as you are the only and for me the last institution that might be able to help me.

Respectfully Yours,
Armin Rodmann

Rodmann’s way home resembled more an odyssey than an orderly retreat. It is symptomatic for Germany’s postwar situation, because it entails many of its characteristic elements: the division of the country into occupation zones, paired with the difficulty of moving across these borders; Soviet captivity until well after the war’s end; an irregular discharge; the shortage of housing and work in every part of Germany; malnutrition and diseases; and a developing bureaucracy that failed to take into account the various irregularities that had occurred in people’s lives due to the war, defeat, and the division of Germany. Rodmann’s way home is therefore a symbol for the lack of existence of a true home. Although the Heimat certainly existed in the sense of the region or country of origin, it had disappeared because it was an impossible place to return to.

With most of Germany’s cities destroyed through bombing and fire beyond recognition, with the eastern territories not belonging to Germany anymore, with millions of people relocated from their destroyed homes into crowded rooms they had to share with strangers, with their families at home estranged through the work and duties they had to perform during and after the war, many returning soldiers failed to realize that they themselves had changed through the experience of war, and that the “home” to which they were trying and hoping to return had been destroyed by the war they had fought.
I would like to be able to produce a similar story as an example for a Japanese homecoming, but I do not have one; the Japanese archives are remarkably silent about the individual, and often times, letters and personal notes are deemed not worth keeping. Therefore, the story about Japanese soldiers coming home looks very different from the German one – it is focused on one single aspect, and a story that many returning Japanese soldiers lived, but in that, it is truly and uniquely Japanese.

The departure of recruits from their families for the Japanese Army or Navy was “one of the most important rituals of the war.” It was an elaborate procedure both at home and at the local Shintō shrine, much like a farewell party combined with a train of people – family, local officials, and members of patriotic organizations – to the shrine, to the village office or town hall, and finally to the train station where the recruits were seen off.³ Over the course of their education at school and at the compulsory military training, the children and young adults had been instructed in the morality and ethics of nationalism, particularly the “veritable duty to die for the emperor. … Indoctrination included instruction on the high place of the military in Japanese society, the emperor’s leadership of the military, the need for absolute loyalty to military superiors, and the importance of unit cohesion.”⁴ The necessity to die for one’s country’s sovereign was thus engrained in the young men who left for the war, and was codified in the Field Service Code: “it was impermissible for Japanese soldiers to become prisoners of war.”⁵

With suicide being an acceptable exit from the dilemma of an impossible military situation on one hand and the unacceptability of being captured as Prisoners of War, suicide charges became ever more common toward the end of the war. The Japanese

³ Yamashita, Leaves from an Autumn of Emergencies, 13.
⁴ Straus, The Anguish of Surrender, 34. Emphasis original.
⁵ Ibid., 38.
word for these suicide charges, gyokusai, literally means “shattering the jewel.” It actually implied that the mission “amounted to little more than a suicidal way out, often with little or no effect of the military situation.”⁶ The fact that even before Japan’s surrender, the numbers of Japanese POW were continually rising testifies to the lessening grip of pre-war indoctrination and to a certain disillusionment with regard to the heroism of war and soldierly existence. This disillusionment did not transfer to the Japanese homeland. Whenever there were suicide attacks, Japanese authorities would assume the death of the entire unit, sending the notifications of the honorable deaths to the families. These notifications usually included information about the place and date of death, and even the fatal wounds sustained, and were not to be doubted⁷ - particularly as the death of a soldier in the family was an honorable event that was not to be mourned. The soul of the soldiers would subsequently be enshrined along with all others who had given their lives for the country and the emperor at Yasukuni Shrine.

It was only in the months during the return of Japanese soldiers and sailors from overseas that it came to light that not always had the whole unit perished, or that there had been many cases where a unit had been dispersed, or a few soldiers had survived a battle. Even if the military authorities had been aware of soldiers being taken prisoners, and of persons missing, the notifications of death would still have been sent out to the soldiers’ families. Not only was it a question of honor, but the bereaved families would receive monetary benefits as a consequence of their son’s, husband’s, or brother’s death.

⁶ Ibid., 43.
⁷ ATIS, “Review of the Japanese Press: The Dead Come to Life - Nippon Times,” November 29, 1945, GHQ/SCAP RG 331, Box 3329 (2) 030, NDL.
“It was considered to be inconsistent with the spirit of the Japanese military mind to hope that they were alive under such circumstances.”

There were many soldiers—once again, no numbers exist, or have been recorded—who returned home after they had been declared dead, after their families had received a notification of their honorable sacrifice to the country and the emperor, and after their souls had been enshrined. When these soldiers came home to their families (if the family had survived, and if he was able to locate them), joy was one of the reactions, but there was also a great deal of embarrassment. Stories such as the one of a “Mr. X” who found upon his unanticipated return that his younger brother had succeeded him as head of the household, had married his wife, and a child had been born to them certainly were “an extreme example, but similar occurrences undoubtedly [took] place.”

In late December, 1945, 40,000 ex-servicemen were reportedly alive – so many that administrative procedures had to be created to change the census registers, solve questions about insurance and benefits that had been paid to bereaved families, and generally to rehabilitate the affected persons.

The individual’s wish to survive rather than to sacrifice himself for the emperor, or to feel more closely related to his family than to a distant emperor strangely coincided with the reality of Japan’s defeat: it had been inconceivable in the rhetoric of the war to surrender and be taken prisoner by the enemy, yet on August 15, the emperor was the one who broadcast the defeat and surrender of the entire nation. In a sense, the

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9 Ibid.
11 Yamashita, Leaves from an Autumn of Emergencies, 39.
occupation of Japan by the Allies was a situation comparable to the whole country being prisoners of war, lacking the sovereignty to decide their own fate. Soldiers who returned alive after the war who had previously been declared dead therefore embody the very situation that Japan was in: in essence betraying the indoctrinated pre-war or wartime ideals, yet alive; responding not to a distant emperor anymore but to their own and their families’ needs. Instead of sacrificing their lives for the emperor, they chose or were forced to return to Japan and take part in the peaceful reconstruction of the country. One might choose to understand the return of soldiers who had been reported dead as a metaphor for rebirth, for a new beginning, and for a complete break with the past. We might want to consider, however, that these Japanese soldiers, similar to Armin Rodmann and millions of other German and Japanese soldiers, despite the changes the war had produced in them, were still the same persons who were now seeking to return to a home that had changed tremendously, but were willing to re-create these homes, if not the country in which they were located. The return of changed men to changed homes can be understood, consequently, as a metaphor for the continuity between the war and the postwar: what they returned to, as well as the difficulties they encountered during this return, was a result of the war they themselves had fought. It was a condition that required fresh thinking and a change of attitude given the different political situation, but it was also a constant reminder of the past. The way home, full of obstacles, surprises, and difficulties, was the geographic and figurative transition between the war and the postwar, and it embodied the very situations of Japan and of Germany.
CHAPTER 2

HOMECOMING BETWEEN AMERICAN OCCUPATION AND NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

Demobilization—that is, the formality of the soldiers’ discharge from the military, and by extension the eventual abolition of the Wehrmacht and the Imperial Japanese Army—was formally completed for the individual soldier when he had left the demobilization camp or repatriation center. At that point, however, the ultimate goal of demilitarization was by no means achieved yet. Even if the documents that stipulated the dissolution of the Japanese and German militaries contained no specifications on the further course of action with regard to the now dissolved military (nor if any actions were to be taken in the first place), the goal of demilitarization implied the complete demilitarization of Germany and Japan not just in terms of their military power but also in terms of the countries’ economies, cultures, and societies. Following a total war was total demilitarization. In practical terms, this meant the dissolution of military and paramilitary associations, the ban on military training even in civilian settings, the abolition of all industries that could possibly contribute to the production of materials or products usable for warfare, and tight controls of transport capacities.\(^1\) It went as far as an Allied, respective American, involvement in legislation and jurisdiction in the form of creating a new constitution for Japan, and in the form of the Tokyo and Nuremberg war crimes trials. It also included the complete abolition of German sovereignty, exemplified

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\(^1\) For Germany, see Wettig, *Entmilitarisierung und Wiederbewaffnung*, 103. For Japan, see Mayo, “American Wartime Planning.”

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not only in the division of Germany into four zones of occupation, but more importantly in the abolition of all German administration and the creation of an Allied body—the Allied Control Council, with the four zone commanders at its top—as the highest authority in Germany. In the case of Japan, the deliberations about whether to keep the emperor or to abolish the imperial court as an institution demonstrated almost as much involvement, even though the outcome was more respectful of Japanese political traditions than in the German case. The end of the war meant defeat and the loss of sovereignty for Japan and Germany, with the double goal that stood behind demilitarization (and democratization and decartelization, and in Germany denazification): punishment and prevention.² The occupation policies with regard to demobilized soldiers reflected the first proposition more clearly than the second; returnees were understood more as a threat that needed to be held at bay rather than supported. On the other hand, the Japanese and German governments had a much different attitude, because demobilized soldiers constituted a significant economic, political, and social potential that was all the more important in the difficult economic situation in the years following the war. “Out of the conflicting attitudes about the treatment of the former Japanese military that existed between the Japanese government which released and demobilized its military as a premise for the protection of its national polity, and GHQ which aimed at the elimination of militarism and militarist nationalism, and hammered out [the principles of] demilitarization and democratization, developed [divergent] policies.”³ The nature of the policies of the American occupation and the

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³ Murakami, Sennyōki no fukushi seisaku, 59. In principle, this quote is also applicable to Germany, despite the initial absence of a central German authority.
Japanese and the German governments—at times conflicting, at times complementing each other—is at the core of this chapter.

To this end, I will first introduce three measures by the occupation: the abolition of pensions and veterans’ associations; the so-called purge of officials with a military background from positions of responsibility in politics, economics, and society; and re-education. None of the three clearly falls into one of the two categories of punishment or prevention; but all of them include characteristics of both. While the ban on pensions and veterans’ associations and the purge of officials might at the first glance appear to be more retributive than prophylactic in character, they were also intended as measures to prevent the continued or renewed influence of militarism from reaching the breadth of society. Re-education might not seem to carry reprimands at first glance (and was certainly not meant as such); however, it was created as a direct counterpoint or answer to the militarist and Nazi indoctrination. I have chosen these three as examples of Allied policies because these were the most far-reaching ones that affected a large number of individuals, but also because they demonstrate the ambiguities and internal contradictions of the occupation most vividly. Not many large-scale policies existed that affected veterans specifically; therefore, these three should be representative of American policies with regard to demobilized soldiers. Following these examples, I will go on to explain the measures that the Japanese and German governments took to accommodate returning demobilized soldiers: mostly acts of welfare or similar support, but also more active efforts at reintegration. The very idea of the accommodation and support of demobilized soldiers ran counter to Allied policies, because it emphasized assistance instead of exclusion, and the reconstruction of society instead of the destruction of militarism.
Herein lay the basic and most fundamental antagonism between the American occupation and the Japanese and German governments: while the ideas of the occupation policies were primarily focused on retribution, the Japanese and German administrations were for practical reasons compelled to emphasize a more forward-looking approach in which the responsibility for reconstruction were paramount. This does not mean that the American occupation was not interested in the political and economic reconstruction of Japan and Germany, or that the Japanese and German administrations were not involved in the purge of former militarists and Nazis; on the contrary. But the occupation of Germany and Japan would not have taken place without the goal of eliminating militarist and ultra-nationalist influence in the two countries; and new democratic governments of Germany and Japan could not have been created without the will to reconstruct the countries. Without a level of cooperation between these two poles, neither of these two aims would have been possible to achieve. Thus, despite the existing antagonisms in the complicated and multi-faceted relationship between the occupation and the German and Japanese governments, they ultimately complemented each other in creating a workable setting for developing the postwar political and social settings.

American occupation policies were by no means unanimously decided; in fact there was much debate and argument over responsibilities, goals, means, and specific tasks. Perhaps one of the most fundamental obstacles to a smooth implementation of a functioning occupation was its hybrid nature: the obligation to carry out both political and civil tasks; and the sharing of the occupation duties by the War Department and the
State Department in Germany. Until July of 1945, SHAEF remained in charge of all military and civilian activities of the American occupation forces. After its dissolution, USFET (United States Forces European Theater) overtook the task of governing the American zone; with OMGUS (Office of Military Government for Germany, U.S.), a civilian body was created on October 1, 1945. The American occupation was headed by General Joseph McNarney until 1947, and from 1947 until 1949 by General Lucius D. Clay. In Japan, General Douglas MacArthur separated the Military Government Section from the United States Army Forces in the Pacific (USAFPAC), the military forces under his command which were to carry out the task of the occupation, and thus created GHQ/SCAP (General Headquarters, Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers), a section that would be in charge of the civil administration and political affairs in Japan. The creation of non-military bodies for the purpose of governing, administering, and supervising—essentially, democratizing—occupied Germany and Japan makes clear the dual purpose of the occupation: punishment in the form of control and containment by the military forces, and prevention in the form of political guidance (or intervention) and re-education.

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5 Benz, Deutschland unter alliiertter Besatzung.
6 Takemae, The Allied Occupation of Japan, 66.
OCCUPATION MEASURES: DEMILITARIZATION AND REEDUCATION

Germany: Denazification in practice

“In the minds of the Allies, nazism and militarism were inextricably linked.” The politics of demilitarization therefore included all institutions and organizations associated with the National Socialist regime; the Allies’ politics were in fact geared toward these organizations rather than toward the German army, the Wehrmacht. Systematic denazification policies began on July 7, 1945, with the issue of an USFET directive on “Administration of Military Government in the U.S. Zone in Germany,” which included a section on the “Removal of Nazis and Militarists.” Targeted by this directive were in principle higher Nazi functionaries, members of the SS, SD, Gestapo, high officials, mayors, political leaders, and all members of the NSDAP who had joined the party before May 1937 (when a law had been passed that all officials had to hold party membership). Further, presumed war criminals, officers, sergeants, and corporals of the Waffen-SS, the SA, the NS-Motor Corps, and the NS-Aviation Corps; the General Staff, top personnel of the military and arms administration, and leaders of the economic administration of the Reich. Denazification officials had some freedom to determine if professional officers of the Wehrmacht fell under denazification categories. In addition to the Wehrmacht’s general staff, the officer corps was perceived as particularly dangerous, because demobilized officers of the First World War had successfully undermined the Weimar

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7 Diehl, Thanks of the Fatherland, 55.
9 A comprehensive list of all categories of persons to be removed from their offices and barred from taking public office or important positions in administration, the economy, or the media, can be found in Benz, Deutschland unter alliierten Besatzung, 39 and 115.
Republic, supported the Nazis, and filled the ranks of the NSDAP’s military wings. In order to prevent a similar development in postwar Germany, the Allies determined that of the 350,000 members of the officer corps, some 58,000 were deemed potentially dangerous. Early deliberations about their treatment included their forced exile, and collecting their fingerprints after their release. Eventually, the Allies resolved that these 58,000 “were to be kept in confinement as POWs until conditions had materially improved and then, after their release, closely controlled and watched.” Negotiations about the cutting of military pensions were underway from the end of the war until the summer of 1946, when Control Council Law 34 was promulgated and implemented—it officially stipulated the dissolution of the Wehrmacht, although this abolition had been de facto declared in the Potsdam Declaration and JCS 1067. Hit hardest by the abolition of military pensions was the officer corps, as its members faced great obstacles in finding civilian work without professional training outside the military, with the negative attitude of potential employers, and with their own reluctance to take on work they considered below their (comparatively high) social status. During the Nazi regime, all associations had, under the policy of Gleichschaltung, been coordinated into Nazi associations; JCS 1067 banned all Nazi organizations and ordered “the total dissolution of all military and paramilitary organizations … together with all associations which might serve to keep

10 Diehl, Thanks of the Fatherland, 57.
11 U.S. Group C.C., Army Ground Division, “Permanent Record of German Officer Corps and Certain Other Arrested Germans,” May 21, 1945, OMGUS RG 84 POLAD 728/33, IfZ.
12 Diehl, Thanks of the Fatherland, 57-58. Diehl notes that the extent to which this control was implemented is uncertain.
14 Diehl, Thanks of the Fatherland, 61.
alive military tradition in Germany.” Therefore, self-help groups along the lines of former veterans’ associations were outlawed, and veterans virtually deprived of any public material support. Only war-disabled persons were able to receive compensation for disabilities that limited their ability to work; however, these compensations were not to be higher than what was paid to civilian disabled persons. The continued application of the policy, despite the appeals of German officials, had “a devastating effect. Hundreds of thousands of disabled veterans, their families, and survivors of soldiers killed in the war were reduced to poverty and made dependent on the already overburdened general welfare services. The material desperation of the war victims was matched by an equally great sense of injustice and degradation.” Beginning in 1947, after OMGUS had realized the detrimental effects of its policies, war-related disability benefits were raised and the most pressing economic difficulties alleviated, but recipients were accommodated differently across zonal borders, and only the early Federal Republic created a unified legislation on disability compensation.

Re-education by the U.S. government began as early as in American captivity for a select number of prisoners. In a special program, they were trained to become aids for the Military Government in Germany; however, upon their arrival, General Clay refused

15 “JCS 1067,” 489.
16 Ibid., 500.
18 Ibid., 359-60.
their employment by OMGUS, which left them in the same position as returning POWs who had not had been re-educated in democracy.\textsuperscript{19}

Re-education programs that were targeted toward the German youth also affected returning soldiers, at least the younger ones among them. According to a report by Reverend Bernard J. Sheil, head of the U.S. Catholic Youth Organization, on “Youth in Germany,” the group of nineteen to twenty-five year old youth “search genuinely for democracy and how to get it started in Germany. They are pathetic in their eagerness to be helped in the formation of the new Germany, and speak constantly of the necessity of a leader to direct them to democratic life.”\textsuperscript{20} USFET made efforts for re-education of the youth by encouraging American soldiers to spend their leisure time working with German youth groups, providing reading material and motion pictures, performing one-act plays and skits, and organizing discussions. The military branch of German occupation thus complemented the work of OMGUS, which was in charge of all re-education, and provided “additional opportunities for intermingling of troops and youth on a wholesome basis.”\textsuperscript{21}

Paul Binder, member of the CDU and of the state government of Württemberg, and later of the \textit{Parlamentarischer Rat}, thought about creating a government office in the future sovereign German state that would be responsible for the political education of Germans. His idea was the establishment of a small bureau that would first have to find a group of collaborators for the task of implanting the ideas of the rule of law

\textsuperscript{19} Arthur Lee Smith, \textit{The War for the German Mind: Re-Educating Hitler's Soldiers} (Providence, R.I.: Berghahn Books, 1996), especially 146-149. Smith attributes the lack of interest on the side of Clay to ongoing disputes between the War Department and the State Department.

\textsuperscript{20} Bernard J. Sheil, “Summary of Report to President Truman on Youth in Germany,” February 1946, 2, OMGUS RG 260-1945 (AG45)-46/84/3, Folder 5, IfZ. His overall optimistic observations concluded “German youth can be saved” (p.4), suggesting that re-education had a somewhat missionary character.

\textsuperscript{21} W.D. van Buskirk, “Army Assistance to German Youth Activities, US Zone,” October 5, 1946, 16, OMGUS RG 260-1945 (AG45)-46/84/3, Folder 3, IfZ.
(rechtsstaatliches Gedankengut) into the German people by educating them. While the project is very general in its description and outlook, and makes no mention of specific target groups whose civil education would have been particularly pressing, the very idea of the government educating its people democratically is in itself a measure of reeducation. Binder’s plan was realized in the Büro für Heimatdienst (Bureau for Homeland Service), which was later more aptly named Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung (Federal Center for Political Education). The Büro für Heimatdienst maintained close connections to the Verband der Heimkehrer and supported the association’s efforts at returnees’ education financially, ideally, and by supplying symposium speakers.

Denazification and demilitarization were an inseparable process in Germany that was exacerbated by the different practices in the four zones of occupation, and by the sheer difficulty of assessing a person’s responsibility, intent, and contribution to the Nazi regime post-hoc. The creation of denazification categories and their schematic application of denazification guidelines were often criticized for being too rigid, and for effectuating the opposite of what they hoped to achieve with the policy. American public opinion was also a factor that kept denazification policies in the American zone strict. These policies, however, aggravated Germany’s administrative and economic situation, because of the numbers of persons who were removed from their offices and positions. When denazification was handed over to German authorities, with the “Law for liberation from National Socialism and Militarism” in March 1946, the chaos did not subside; every adult now had to complete the Meldebogen, the questionnaire that would

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22 Paul Binder, “Letter to Kurt Kiesinger: Über rechtsstaatlich-demokratische Volkserziehung [About the national education in the rule of law and democracy],” March 28, 1947, Nachlass Paul Binder 01-105-030/4, ACDP.
23 Henke, “Trennung vom Nationalsozialismus,” 34.
assign one of the five denazification categories—major offenders; incriminated persons; less incriminated persons; followers; and non-incriminated persons—to the person. The ensuing congestion of the courts staffed with laypersons (Spruchkammern) did not help to make denazification more popular, or more effective. In the overcrowded denazification courts, it was not uncommon that judgment was rendered on absent persons—POWs who were not yet returned—which caused much discontent as it was based on the testimonials of neighbors or former colleagues and not on the person’s own Meldebogen. The professional consequences, such as bans from holding office or demotion were most strongly lamented by returnees.

Denazification was focused, as the name suggests, more on the elimination of nazism from German society, than militarism. To be sure, the high command of the Wehrmacht was summarily captured and tried at the Nuremberg Trials, and the officer corps constituted at least a nominal threat. The bulk of the Wehrmacht, however, was simply released from captivity into civil life, and ceased to be of noteworthy significance for the occupation’s policy-making. Only when it became clear that the military government’s policy alienated veterans from the occupation and from the democratization process, “creating a revengeful, self-conscious, underprivileged class detrimental to successful democratic development in Germany,” OMGUS reversed its earlier policies and attempted to provide at least minimal accommodation for ex-soldiers with disabilities. In general, however, once soldiers were released from the military and their associations prohibited, they did but constitute a vague threat resulting from the experience of the

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24 Ibid., 38-40.
25 M. Schönwandt, “Politische Säuberung der Kriegsgefangenen?? [Purge of POWs??],” Magazine article manuscript, unpublished, May 2, 1947, 1, BMVt B150/326 Heft 2, BAK.
First World War—and even this threat emanated from the officer corps rather than from the masses of drafted soldiers.

**Japan: Pensions and the Purge**

In November 1946, GHQ/SCAP issued a memorandum which required the Japanese government to “terminate any payments … of any public or private pensions or other emoluments or benefits of any kind granted or conferred to any person … by reason of military service, including severance or retirement pay or similar bonus of allowance, except compensation for physical disability, limiting the recipients’ ability to work, at rates which are not higher than the lowest of those for comparable physical disability arising from non-military causes” by February 1946. Pensions and benefits were also abolished for members of associations and societies banned by the occupation, for persons removed under the purge, and for persons who had been arrested or convicted for war crimes. The military should cease to be a source of income for its former members, regardless if one was a soldier, a member of any of the societies banned for being militaristic in outlook, or a suspected or convicted war criminal. The memorandum did not affect “pay, subsistence, travel or other normal allowances occurring prior to discharge from military service.”  

Except for minimal support for physical disabilities, in February 1946, returning soldiers would stop receiving the severance payments and pensions that they would normally have received based on the length of their engagement. In the economically difficult and insecure situation of postwar Japan, the cutting of

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pensions and one-time payments meant hardship for many. The First Demobilization
Bureau petitioned, and proposed to SCAP to create a substitute, the “Welfare Annuity
Insurance System.” This plan would permit the Demobilization Ministry to effectively
continue disbursing the severance payments and pensions which SCAP had ordered to be
abolished, under the guise of reimbursing soldiers’ insurance payments made during the
war. This was intended to replace pensions and severance payments, and thus to alleviate
already difficult situations for returnees, but also for bereaved families. The plan was
made public on March 13, after it had been approved by the SCAP’s Finance Division.
SCAP saw the “Welfare Annuity System” as a means to circumvent the policy of
abolishing military pensions, and forbade the payment of more than what had been
actually paid to the insurance; in a memorandum in July, 1946, SCAP confirmed its
intent to inhibit any payments vaguely resembling a reward or acknowledgement of
military service by firmly asserting the ban on pensions. The “Welfare Annuity
Insurance System” had been devised to alleviate the economic difficulties most
demobilized soldiers were facing; further, as the Demobilization Ministry claimed, “the
suspension [of pensions] had at first a menacing effect upon the living of the tens of
millions of ex-soldiers, causing much agitation, but tumult seems to have gradually
abated after the announcement [of the Welfare Annuity System].”

28 First Demobilization Bureau, Yokohama Liaison Department, “Petition to Expedite the Approval of the
Welfare Annuity Insurance System,” May 9, 1946, 厚生省 平 12 厚労 00097-100, NAJ. The particulars of
the Welfare Annuity System are laid out in the announcement of the plan on March 13, which is attached to
the document in translation.
29 At least this is what the document claims. Ibid.
30 GHQ SCAP, “Memorandum for the Imperial Japanese Government (SCAPIN 1647-A): Pensions and
Benefits,” July 9, 1946, 厚生省 平 12 厚労 00097-100, NAJ.
31 First Demobilization Bureau, Yokohama Liaison Department, “Welfare Annuity Petition.” I have not
been able to confirm the existence of instances of “tumult” in newspapers. Further, it remains unclear why
it took SCAP more than four months to halt the project of the Welfare Annuity System, especially given
Ministry also stated that “should the Welfare Annuity system fail to go through, it is viewed with apprehension that commotions would arise from the persons interested.”\textsuperscript{32} While the rationale and reason for the abolition of pensions lay in the recent war, it was not only this war’s soldiers who were affected; the cut of pensions was implemented for all ex-soldiers who were still receiving pensions or other forms of payments, even if they had fought in earlier wars.\textsuperscript{33} The abolition of pensions further extended to bereaved families; as a consequence, families who had lost the bread winner through the war and who had been able to rely at least partly on the benefits paid by the state now lost that benefit. A total of 150 million Yen had been scheduled to be spent in the form of pensions for veterans of the Imperial Army and Navy.\textsuperscript{34} Beginning in December of 1948, however, payments to the families of missing persons—civilians, military personnel, or civilian personnel of the military—began to be disbursed as a means of welfare.\textsuperscript{35}

Given the drastic cut of all military pensions, the only other possible source of support for demobilized soldiers would have been veterans’ associations; however, the occupation regarded these as a means to propagate militarism, and thus banned them in the fall of 1945 along with other associations such as the Imperial Rule Assistance Association (IRAA, \textit{Taisei Yokusankai}; founded in 1940 by Prime Minister Konoe, it was intended as a “loose framework for uniting the people behind the government through

that the First Demobilization Ministry asked for an expedition of the approval process in May 1946, and after it had supposedly gained the support of SCAP’s finance division.
\textsuperscript{32} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{33} Masayasu Hosaka, \textit{Shōwa rikugun no kenkyū} [Study of the Shōwa army] (Tokyo: Asahi Shimbunsha, 1999), 754. This explains the high number of soldiers mentioned in the previous quote; the Demobilization Ministry most likely added veterans of the Sino-Japanese War (1894/95) and the Russo-Japanese War (1904/05) to the currently demobilized soldiers.
\textsuperscript{34} Murakami, \textit{Senryōki no fukushi seisaku}, 69.
\textsuperscript{35} Tōkyō, \textit{Tosei jūnenshi [Ten years of metropolitan government]}. (Tokyo: Tōkyōto, 1954), 221.
various volunteer organizations,”36 under state Shinto) and its corresponding political body, the Imperial Rule Assistance Political Society (IRAPS, Taisei Seijikai or Yokusan Seijikai). The goal of the occupation forces was to eradicate militarism, rather than to provide material support to former members of the military; therefore, their measures were characterized by the idea of demilitarization rather than consideration for the economic situation of the demobilized. The ban on pensions also affected associations whose interests were more charitable than military, such as the Zaidan hōjin kyōjokai, which had been founded in late 1945 to help demobilized sick and wounded soldiers whose pensions had been cut, and whose situation had deteriorated after the ban on veterans’ associations. At its foundation, Zaidan hōjin kyōjokai had 6500 members, of which only about 210 were civilians; therefore, it was understood to be effectively a veterans’ association and was consequently banned only about a year after its creation, and after it had distributed about 300,000 Yen to its members.37 From these measures, we can understand that the occupation attempted to create a complete break between the former military and the current civil society, and that the abolition of military pensions particularly served the end of demilitarization. Severing the ties between the military and the civilian lives of drafted and then demobilized soldiers can be seen as a means by the occupation to create a civil society that had nothing to do with the military – not even pensions. The Japanese government was left with the task of addressing the economic effects of the policy.

37 Tōkyōto, Tosei jūnenshi, 236.
In January 1946, SCAP issued a memorandum that required the Japanese government to “remove from public office and exclude from government service all persons who have been

a. Active exponents of militaristic nationalism and aggression.

b. Influential members of any Japanese ultranationalistic, terrorist, or secret patriotic society, its agencies or affiliates.”  

All ministries were instructed to screen their personnel by way of a questionnaire, to evaluate the questionnaires, and to dismiss as soon as possible any person who fell under the provisions of SCAPIN 500, in order to replace them with “new officials who will foster the revival and strengthening of democratic tendencies among the Japanese people and who will respect fundamental human rights of freedom of speech, religion and thought.”  

The categories for removal and exclusion list war criminals, career military and naval personnel, special police, officials of the war ministries, and influential members of ultranationalistic and secret patriotic societies, such as the above-mentioned Taisei Yokusankai and Taisei Seijikai; further, officers who had been involved in the financing and development of Japan’s imperial expansion and governors of occupied territories, and finally any person who had “shown himself to be an active exponent of militant nationalism and aggression.” Overall, the “purge” of militarists was successful in that militarist tendencies were kept out of the government and that the Japanese state did not return to militarism or ultra-nationalism. A total of 193,600 officials were


39 Ibid., 482.

40 Ibid., Appendix C.
removed from their offices, and subsequently barred from taking influential positions in political parties, large businesses, and the media.

It may be doubted, however, that in fact everybody in the categories provided by SCAP was indeed purged from their office and effectively banned from holding public officer thereafter. The SCAP memorandum stipulated as an exception that “removal may be postponed in the case of individuals who are absolutely required to insure demobilization of the Japanese armed forces in the outlying theaters or to carry out the provisions of this directive. … However, if the Imperial Japanese Government represents that in order to carry on indispensable peaceful executive activities of such government, the temporary reinstatement of an individual so removed is essential and that it is impossible to obtain a suitable replacement, an application so stating … may be filed with this Headquarters.” The applications needed SCAP’s approval and were to be only temporary. Already at the end of 1946, it became clear that this provision, which had been intended to ensure the functioning of the government and the demobilization process, was used to maintain employment for officials who otherwise would have been banned from their positions. Along with the continuing downsizing of the two Demobilization Bureaus, the ongoing restructuring of the Demobilization Bureaus are well documented in the archives; however, these documents do not reveal the extent of

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41 Hosaka, Shōwa rikugun no kenkyū, 754.
45 See, for example, Sadayoshi Hitomatsu, “Fukuin kikō no saihensei ni kansuru ken [Materials pertaining to the reorganization of the structure of demobilization],” January 1948, 内閣 平 14 内閣 0030-100, NAJ; [Demobilization Bureau], “Fukuin kikō seiri keikaku [Plans for the arrangement of the organization of demobilization],” April 30, 1948, 内閣 平 14 内閣 0034-100, NAJ.
removal of personnel from office. The eventual dissolution of the Demobilization
Bureaus into the Ministry of Welfare was only accomplished in May 1948, half a year
after SCAP ordered the Ministry to dissolve, and a quarter after the date initially
envisioned by SCAP.  

The initial ban on carrying out military funerals—also in order to eradicate
militarism—created quite some alienation among the families of the deceased and
among surviving veterans, in part because ashes that had been transferred to Japan
lay piled up in Buddhist temples until the ban was lifted in 1948. The participa-
tion of public officials in funerals and in memorial services for the war dead
had been prohibited in the course of the very first demilitarization measures;
public memorial services for the war dead of a town or village, as had been
common during the war, were entirely banned. As a consequence, surviving ex-
soldiers as well as the families of deceased soldiers increasingly sensed that
military service was not acknowledged anymore. While this was exactly in line
with the Allied goal of demilitarization, it served to alienate veterans and their
families because it broke with socio-religious customs that had resulted from war
but were not necessarily understood as militaristic in nature by the people who
observed them.

Even before the abolition of military pensions and the removal of militarists from
office, SCAP issued a directive that removed undesirable teachers from the education

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46 Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, Government Section, Political Reorientation of Japan, 139-
140.
47 Tōkyōto, Tosei jūnenshi, 221.
system in October 1945;\(^{49}\) notably, however, the directive was given out after the Ministry of Education had created a new “Educational Policy toward Construction of a New Japan,” that was pronouncedly democratic in its orientation.\(^{50}\) In the wake of these policies, teachers who were drafted for the war were banned from taking on their former profession upon their return. This policy was only eased when the lack of teachers became more pressing, and when the teachers’ education—which was also introduced in a more organized and streamlined fashion during the postwar reforms\(^{51}\)—had become an effective tool to shape the contents of civil education.

Re-education of Japanese ex-soldiers must be understood as a concerted effort by the American occupation and the Japanese government. Both authorities had a vested interest in the successful political “conversion” of demobilized soldiers to democratic values; the occupation would provide the guidelines and sometimes provide material for the programs, while the Ministry of Education would be in charge of implementing the programs. These were not geared to former military personnel specifically, however; the target group was more broadly defined as “repatriates,” who had to be re-educated in the new ways of Japan—most importantly, the political and economic changes.\(^{52}\) Thus, this kind of re-education was more geared toward the integration of former residents of the colonial periphery into the metropolis—the main islands of Japan, to which defeat had

\(^{49}\) GHQ SCAP, “Memorandum for the Imperial Japanese Government: Investigation, Screening, and Certification of Teachers and Educational Officials,” in *Education in the New Japan*, by GHQ SCAP CI&E Section (Tokyo, 1948), 29-30.


\(^{51}\) Ibid., 186.

\(^{52}\) For example, slide films, movies, picture-story shows (*kami-shibai*), and photo exhibitions as media for the teaching of “postwar innovations” such as police decentralization, land reform, and the constitution are listed in “Information Materials Aid Reorientation Program for Repatriates,” *GHQ SCAP CI&E Bulletin*, August 18, 1948.
reduced her—and to the creation of a homogeneous national body (and mind),\(^{53}\) rather than toward the democratization of indoctrinated ex-soldiers. Beginning in 1947, the Ministry of Education implemented a program of adult education equally geared toward repatriates from the former colonial empire, with the goal of gaining their participation in the democratic reconstruction of Japan. The program, located in the reception centers, used public lectures, print media, posters, and movies to instruct returnees about the domestic and international political situation, about economic and cultural issues, the freedom of religion and speech, the new constitution and legislation, and topics related to daily life.\(^{54}\) Specifically, the program, which instructed returnees about the current situation of the country and explained to them the requirements of occupation and democracy, was intended as a means to facilitate the transition from life in the former colonies of Japan to life in a changed Japan that had forfeited the colonies. The results of the program, or the returnees’ reactions to these efforts were not recorded. This program was reinforced and tweaked to returnees from Soviet-controlled areas and Manchuria; given that the Soviet Union delayed their return to Japan, the Education Ministry responded to the need to instruct these late returnees about the changes that had taken place in Japan since the end of the war. The democratization of Japan figured prominently in the materials that were distributed, as did pamphlets about the country’s economic structure, or “How to begin a new life,” and legal and constitutional issues.\(^{55}\)

The abolition of pensions and the restructuring of the education system were not only geared toward militarists and high officials, nor were they specifically geared

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toward military personnel. They were part of the vast undertaking of demilitarization and
democratization, through a profound overhaul of the authoritarian and militaristic
structures of the Japanese state and society. The measures presented here are but a
fragment of this larger project; other elements of it were the introduction of women’s
suffrage, land reform, the separation of government from religious institutions, freedom
of speech and religion, and—most importantly—the creation of a new constitution. It is
quite ironic that the American occupation undertook the distribution of sovereignty to the
Japanese people by way of denying to Japan the sovereignty to do so herself. Based on
the experience of Japanese warfare and ideology, however, this approach made sense; a
profound transformation of Japan appeared necessary to prevent the renewal of Japanese
aggressive expansion. In order to help this transformation succeed, Allied intervention
appeared desirable to many nations in the world.

If we examine the American policies that had an effect on demobilized soldiers
isolated from other occupation policies or from the larger goals of the occupation, they
might appear as the kind of punishment, and were indeed understood as such by many of
the affected individuals. The efforts invested in re-education make clear, however, that
punishment became less significant with the ongoing democratization of Japan and with
the growing tensions caused by the evolving Cold War, in which Japan became ever
more important an ally in the U.S.-centered western alliance. Demilitarization was there-
fore understood as a prerequisite for democratization, as was the abolition of militaristic
institutions—the military itself, and militaristic and ultra-nationalistic associations—
along with the purge of its members from influential positions of society and the halt of
payments to veterans. Re-education of repatriates from Manchuria and Soviet-controlled
areas was geared toward the very same goal, that is, the prevention of Communist influences—especially given that most repatriates had spent time in Soviet POW camps and been subject to Communist propaganda—and the strengthening of Western democracy among the population of Japan.

**THE ADMINISTRATION’S MEASURES**

**Germany: Toward the equal treatment of returning POWs**

In the fall of 1945, the American military government of the German zone of occupation constituted the *Länderrat*, a body destined to coordinate the work and decisions of the three *Länder*, the federal states, of the American zone, Bavaria, Württemberg-Baden, and Hesse. The city of Bremen joined as a separate state in January 1947. The work of the *Länderrat* was under the supervision of the Regional Government Coordinating Office (RGCO), but enjoyed considerable freedom in most areas of its day-to-day business. Its most important task was to make sure that legislation and decisions were made unanimously across the states of the American zone. In addition to the fields of law, finance, transportation and postal services, agriculture, welfare, culture/education, social politics, commerce, and the coordination of cross-state import and export, OMGUS permitted the creation of a zone-wide Committee for POW Issues in early 1947. The context of this creation is significant: the negative attitude toward POWs and demobilized

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56 A detailed description of the development and work of the *Länderrat* can be found in Benz, *Deutschland unter alliierter Besatzung*, 281-282.
soldiers, based on the perceived threat of militarism that emanated from them, had weakened because the threat had failed to materialize; in addition, the “harsh treatment of German prisoners by the Soviets helped to promote a more humane policy on the part of the Western Allies.” In a climate in which German public opinion perceived returning POWs as a significant economic and political potential, the creation of this committee can be understood as a sign of emancipation of the state governments—not from the control and tutelage of the occupation, but toward an administration that responded more directly to the practical needs of the German states. The Committee for POW Issues was initially created as Dienststelle für Kriegsgefangenenfragen beim Länderrat (Bureau for POW Issues), with the focus on attaining the well-being and release of German POWs, and on facilitating the communication between them and their families. Its field of activity shifted to include the care for returned POWs and its name was changed to Ausschuss für Kriegsgefangenenfragen (Committee for POW Issues) in 1948. It was composed of representatives of the state governments; its executive branch was the Department for POW Issues (Referat für Kriegsgefangenenfragen). On the state level, the Committee was supported by Landesarbeitsgemeinschaften für Kriegsgefangenenfragen (state working groups for POW questions; abbreviated LAG in the archival material); however, despite what the name suggests, their main concern was not POWs per se but the care for those who had just returned. The LAG devised measures, policies, publications,

57 Diehl, “U.S. Policy Toward German Veterans,” 356.
58 “Satzung der Dienststelle für Kriegsgefangenenfragen,” 2.
59 Margarethe Bitter, “Die Arbeit für Kriegsgefangene in Bayern [The work for POWs in Bavaria],” March 1948, 2-4, Dr. Margarethe Bitter ED 449/3, IfZ. Dr. Margarethe Bitter was a member and later a senior
and other kinds of support for returning POWs. They were not large bureaucratic apparatuses but bodies that consisted of members of welfare organizations (such as the Caritas and the Red Cross), members of political parties and trade unions, and related government offices (state chancellery or ministry, Ministry of Labor, Ministry of the Interior, and Ministry of Culture) that worked together in formal monthly meetings and that had a staffed office and a president. The Department for POW Issues (Referat) constituted the connection between the Committee for POW questions (Ausschuss), the LAG, the Länderrat, the military government, and international organizations.  

One of the first larger projects of the Ausschuss was the registration of POWs through their families in Germany, with the goal of obtaining a somewhat reliable number of how many persons were still in captivity. A 1947 survey listed that 394,800 persons had been registered as POWs, another 425,000 as MIA (Missing in Action), across the American zone of occupation. In order to keep the information about POWs current, returnees were asked during their stay at the discharge camps to provide information about fellow inmates, and about the whereabouts of their units at the end of the war.  

This kind of research made clear the wounds that the war had torn in the social fabric of German society; the government councilor (Oberregierungsrat) of the Bavarian State Chancellery from 1946 until 1950 and an expert in POW questions. She can be considered the driving force behind much of the activities of the Bavarian LAG. For her CV, see U. Elbracht, “Vita Margarethe Bitter, Dr. jur.,” 2006, http://www.ifz-muenchen.de/archiv/ed_0449.pdf (accessed February 15, 2010).  

E. Bach, “Aufbau der Kriegsgefangenen-Betreuungsarbeit in der US-Zone [Establishment of the support offices for POWs in the American zone],” October 16, 1947, BMVt B150/306 Heft 1, BAK.  

Mommer, “Bericht des Referenten des Kriegsgefangenen-Ausschusses beim Länderrat in der Pressekonferenz am 29.8.1947 [Report of the referee of the Commission for POW Issues at the state council at the press conference on August 29, 1947],” August 29, 1947, 3, Dr. Margarethe Bitter ED 449/1, IfZ. Ultimately, the information provided by returnees and by families whose members’ return was still awaited, was combined in a large index card database compiled by the so-called Suchdienst.
number of returnees who had no family left (or whose families were in the Soviet zone of occupation) were so staggering that the Ausschuss made efforts to encourage families to “adopt” returnees, which included contact and an exchange of information during the POW’s internment as well as material support after the POW’s return.\textsuperscript{62} Initiated by individuals and supported by the media, this undertaking was motivated by philanthropic ideas, but also by political considerations. One appeal called on “the entirety of the German people to take on the collective adoption of its orphaned and homeless [heimatlos] children,” and stated that “we need to help the civilian of tomorrow, the citizen of tomorrow, with whom we want to built a new, happier, and better Germany.”\textsuperscript{63} The goal of providing initial material support through a temporary place to live and help finding employment was meant to “overcome as quickly as possible the [experience of] being a soldier and being a prisoner of war.”\textsuperscript{64}

The LAG began issuing a monthly publication for returning POWs from the beginning of its existence; this publication, called “Informationsdienst für Kriegsgefangene” (Information Service for POWs) was intended to provide practical information for POWs who were still interned abroad and those who

\textsuperscript{62} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{63} Erich Wollenberg, “Patenschaften für heimatlose Kriegsgefangene [Godparents for homeless POWs],” 9, 1947, 1 and 3, BMVt B150/335/1, BAK. Wollenberg appears to have been the driving force behind the “adoption” movement (the German word Patenschaft literally means godparenthood) in the sources I have consulted; however, without more research in newspapers and magazines of the time, it is impossible to conclude if there were other organized attempts with the same goal. He used the magazine Echo der Woche, a popular Munich magazine, to publish about the Patenschaft project. This document is a transcript of an article that appeared in the Echo der Woche in September 1947; an abbreviated version of the article exists in the archived papers of Paul Binder, Erich Wollenberg, “Kriegsgefangene ohne Heimat [POWs without a home],” Echo der Woche, September 13, 1947. ACDP, Nachlass Paul Binder. He was a Württemberg politician of the CDU, and secretary and vice president of the Württemberg-Hohenzollern government in 1947. We can assume the significance of the project from the interest of individual politicians as well as the LAG.

\textsuperscript{64} Wollenberg, “Patenschaften für heimatlose Kriegsgefangene,” 3.
were in the discharge camps in Germany. The goal of the periodical was to facilitate the arrivals’ orientation in the gallimaufry of regulations to be observed and offices at which returnees had to register. It contained, for example, information about duty-free items that returnees were able to bring with them, about Entlassungsgeld, the use of express trains, food rations and how to treat malnourishment, supply of housing and clothing, and regulations regarding welfare. The publication included the addresses of the LAG and charity organizations, and an encouragement to contact them for help and guidance. While the archival sources do not suffice to permit an estimate about the distribution of this publication, or its reception, other sources confirm that the situation encountered by returnees indeed made such a publication desirable and necessary: after some years in the military and in POW camps, and possibly also some time as a contract worker for France, Britain, or Belgium, the requirements of postwar Germany were much different and rather unexpected.

The first and arguably the most difficult thing that returnees were confronted with was bureaucracy, which already began in the discharge camps: ex-soldiers were asked to provide information about the whereabouts of comrades, fellow inmates, and MIAs to the Suchdienst, and they had to declare their Entlassungsort, the city or town at which they wanted to be released. The Entlassungsort was noted on the discharge papers, and was subsequently required to provide housing for the returnee. Given that virtually all larger cities in the American zone had sustained considerable damage during the war and had been declared Brenn-
punkte des Wohnungsbedarfs, “hotspots of housing demand,” it was necessary to produce evidence that one of these cities was in fact the returnee’s hometown or that his family had moved there, in order to get approval to be discharged to that city. Persons without a family would be allowed to return to their hometown even if it was a Brennpunkt des Wohnungsbedarfs; returnees whose pre-war homes were located in the regions that had been separated from German territories in 1945 were allowed to name any place they wanted to live at, but in case local authorities denied the relocation, the refugee administration (Flüchtlingsverwaltung; state and local offices for refugee questions) had to determine another destination. As family reunion was one of the main goals of the complicated regulations of postwar relocation, returnees were encouraged to settle wherever their family was. However, often times the reverse would not be allowed. Most importantly, the family’s move across zonal borders or into a city where the ex-soldier had found work was not possible. With little inhabitable living space due to wartime destruction and more people to accommodate, the difficulties of providing sufficient living space for discharged soldiers, but also for Displaced Persons, refugees from the eastern parts of the former Reich, and for those whose homes had been destroyed during the war, seemed to be insurmountable for the local administrations. The Allied Control Council had enacted Law no.18, the

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66 As „hotspots of housing demand, Stuttgart, Ulm, Heilbronn, Mannheim, Heidelberg, and Pforzheim for Württemberg-Baden; Bad Homburg, Bad Nauheim, Darmstadt, Frankfurt, Fulda, Gießen, Hanau, Kassel, Limburg, Lorch, Marburg, Neu-Isenburg, Offenbach, Rüdesheim, Wetzlar, and Wiesbaden for Hesse; Ansbach, Bayreuth, Coburg, Erding, Erlangen, Fürth, Kaufbeuren, Landshut, Munich, Murnau, Neu-Ulm, Nuremberg, Weiden, Würzburg, and Rothenburg o.T. for Bavaria; and in addition the cities of Bremen and Bremerhaven are listed Landesarbeitsgemeinschaften für Kriegsgefangenenfragen der US-Zone, Informationsdienst für Kriegsgefangene [Information service for POWs], vol. 16, 1948, 2.

67 Landesarbeitsgemeinschaften für Kriegsgefangenenfragen in der amerikanischen Besatzungszone, “Informationen für Heimkehrer [Informations für returnees]” (Kohlhammer, 1949), 7, Militärgeschichtliche / Sachthematische Sammlungen MSg200/411 (Bib.), BA-MA.
Wohnungsgesetz (housing law), based on which German housing agencies registered all usable housing and allocated living space to those in need, in March 1946. The necessity for such drastic measures of redistribution—the law basically seized living space and forced individuals and families to let or sublet to persons who had lost their housing—becomes apparent with a look at the numbers: at the end of the war, an estimated two to three million apartments had been destroyed, which amounted to almost twenty percent of the prewar housing. The average number of persons per room of livable space amounted to between one and a half and two in Hesse in late 1946. The regulations of the Wohnungsgesetz included that living space for POWs was not to be occupied; however, in practice, this proved impossible to implement because of the large numbers of people that the housing agencies needed to accommodate. Consistent with Allied policies of demilitarization, the Wohnungsgesetz had not made any specifications with regard to returning demobilized soldiers. The Department for POW Issues increasingly came to note that returnees drew great disadvantages from that particular lack of regulations, given that their living space was temporarily occupied by other people, whose lack of housing had to be accommodated by the local housing agencies immediately, and whose relocation would be rendered difficult by the continued lack of housing. Returnees were thus forced to share the living space of their families when they arrived, without the possibility of having the need for the

69 Hessisches Staatsministerium, Minister für Arbeit und Wohlfahrt, Staatskommissariat für das Flüchtlingswesen, and Mann, “Statistische Informationen [Wohnungswesen] [Statistical information (accommodation)],” October 15, 1946, HSM 508/2093, HHSAW.
70 M. Schönwandt, “Der Wohnraum des Kriegsgefangenen [The POW’s accommodation],” Magazine article manuscript, unpublished, May 3, 1947, 2, BMVt B150/326 Heft 2, BAK.
enlarged family’s living space recalculated.\textsuperscript{71} The housing situation was exacer-
bated for the entirety of the German population by the influx of returnees, of dis-
placed persons from the former Eastern German territories, refugees from the
Soviet zone of occupation, and freed concentration camp inmates and slave
laborers. The shortage of building material continued until after the currency
reform of 1948, and the housing situation remained difficult until the founding of
the Federal Republic. The later a person arrived in the Western zones, the smaller
would be their allocated living space: “for those who arrived last remained only
the secondary rooms that had not yet been in use [as housing].\textsuperscript{72} It is obvious that
among returnees, this situation created feelings of resentment and of having
arrived too late—a genuine feeling of having been disadvantaged because of the
service rendered to the country, both in the form of military service and of cap-
tivity as prisoners of war. This attitude was reflected by the attitude of the
Ausschuss, which sought to accommodate and support returnees tirelessly, and
which never ceased to assure the veterans that everything in the Ausschuss’ power
was being done for them.\textsuperscript{73} The psychological effects also extended to the
families who were awaiting the return of husbands, fathers, and brothers, as the
vacancy of their housing served to maintain a spiritual connection and keep alive
the hope for their return, whereas the occupation of the living space with other
persons severed these external ties vis-à-vis the POW.\textsuperscript{74} Translated to German
society, the practical occupation of the living space of POWs still held in captivity

\textsuperscript{71} E. Bach, “Letter to Ausschuß für Wohnungswesen,” December 6, 1948, BMVt B150/330 Bd.2, BAK.
\textsuperscript{72} Führer, “Wohnungen,” 207.
\textsuperscript{73} Bach, “Letter to Ausschuß für Wohnungswesen.”
\textsuperscript{74} Schönwandt, “Der Wohnraum des Kriegsgefangenen,” 3.
meant the relief of society from acknowledging the responsibility it had toward returning ex-soldiers—which was not only unlawful in the terms of the Wohnungsge
setz but also a means to alienate the population from returnees. When returnees found their living space occupied at their return, they sensed that their return was not welcome and that their presence was not desired; that they had lost their place in society. Their calls for more consideration and lenience by the bureaucracy appear all the more pressing in that light.

After having the Entlassungsort confirmed in the discharge papers, the now demobilized soldier would have to report to the police upon arrival in order to register and to fill in the denazification papers—the Meldebogen mentioned earlier—so he would receive his identification card after the paperwork was processed. It has already been mentioned that absentee denazification procedures, carried out by the public prosecutor, received much criticism for not allowing former soldiers to present their own account of the case. In addition, it became increasingly clear that the conduct of POWs in captivity should be included in the denazification evaluation. There were two aspects to this issue; one was the conduct of former Nazis who had retained their rank and abused their position in captivity to oppress or harass other, lower-ranking POWs. The other was that due to the development of the Cold War, not denazification but collaboration with the Soviet regime in POW camps, and ensuing acts of harassment, were understood as punishable acts, and were prosecuted beginning in the late 1940s and

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75 Schönwandt, “Politische Säuberung der Kriegsgefangenen??,” 5.
through the late 1950s.\textsuperscript{76} This demonstrates the shift from the discourse of the immediate postwar, which focused on the legacy of Nazism and the necessity of creating a democratic and non-militaristic Germany, to the Cold War, in which Communism became a much more significant antipode to the democratic and liberal West than Nazism. Even before this shift happened, it became apparent that attitudes toward POWs and returning soldiers among the German population were rather conciliatory: not only returnees themselves but also representatives of the committee of POW questions, the LAG, and media voiced the opinion that returnees should be credited for the time they had spent as POWs, because it had in essence already exonerated them, at least in part.\textsuperscript{77} The rationale behind this reasoning was not that a returnee should not undergo denazification procedures or be absolved from any involvement in the Nazi regime, but rather that the responsibility vis-à-vis Germany was at least partly credited by the service they had performed by way of war imprisonment, because this service represented a sort of recompense.

Once the registration and denazification paperwork were completed, returnees then needed to obtain the actual \textit{Zuzugsgenehmigung}, a formal acceptance of their wish to move to the city or town noted on the discharge papers, from the housing agency, which then allowed to apply for having a room allocated. The registration papers from the police and the \textit{Zuzugsgenehmigung} were necessary to receive stamps for food and fuel, and while it was possible to

\textsuperscript{76} Biess, \textit{Homecomings}, 154-155. Biess explains that this process could be observed in the Western zones of occupation and the Federal Republic; and that the same process existed in the Soviet zone, where returnees who had collaborated with the Western regime and acted as proponents of Western democracy were tried.

\textsuperscript{77} Schönwandt, “Politische Säuberung der Kriegsgefangenen??,” 5.
receive these stamps on a temporary basis when the papers were not complete or if decisions were still pending, the German bureaucracy was careful to observe the rules and avoided granting exceptions that would have favored a returnee’s plight.  

Food stamps were an important item with the continued shortages that existed until the currency reform; however, former POWs’ health could only be taken into account after 1946. Beginning in 1947, returnees received the same rations as heavy laborers or additional food stamps for sick persons for the first four weeks after their return; from 1948 onwards, they received additional rations of milk and dairy products, sugar, and white bread. It was particularly the poor health of returnees from Soviet camps that emphasized the urgency of good nutrition for returnees; however, even earlier, guidelines on the proper nutrition of malnourished persons had been included in publications geared toward returnees and their families. These explained in some detail the number of meals and the kinds of foods that would help returnees recover, and described the consequences of unhealthy food and overeating.

The health of returnees—particularly from Soviet camps and with the various physical deficits that were summarily categorized as “dystrophy”—became an increasing concern for doctors in the discharge camps, and subsequently for the LAG, the charities that provided material support for the camps,

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78 These procedures are described in some detail in Landesarbeitsgemeinschaften für Kriegsgefangenenfragen in der amerikanischen Besatzungszone, “Informationen für Heimkehrer,” 7-8.
79 “Tagung der Landesernährungsämter [Convention of the state food offices],” November 21, 1947, BMVt B150/309 Heft 2, BAK. Various other pieces of correspondence between the offices for nutrition, agriculture, and forestry, and the Länderrat in the first half of 1948 also mention these special rations. BMVt B150/309, Heft 2, BAK.
80 Daelen, “Hinweis an die Ärzteschaft auf die Behandlung der Heimkehrer [Advice to doctors regarding the treatment of returnees],” November 6, 1947, 2, HMI 503/184a, HHSAW.
and for the state governments. The apparent need for returnees’ physical recovery appears in archival documents in 1947, in negotiations about the financing of returnees’ health care in hospitals and convalescent homes. The declared goal of the committee for POW questions was “the reconstitution of the full capability to work of all returnees, but especially of the returnees from the East, in order to prevent the worsening of their health and a subsequent lessening of their abilities to earn a living.” In the archival documentation, it becomes increasingly evident that the states should bear the cost for the recovery of returning POWs, because of the financial benefit that the states (and later on, the German state) would draw from the restitution of returnees’ physical recovery, in the form of taxes and because this would mean that returnees and their families would not depend on welfare; further, future medical expenses would be reduced. On the other hand, Germany’s responsibility for the returnees who had worked in POW camps and had thus indirectly paid reparations for Germany also accounted for this motivation. The state of Hesse introduced partly sponsored sojourns at convalescent homes and hospitals in late 1948 and subsequently cooperated with the state social security offices and the charities in order to extend the services to more returnees, as well as to make them entirely free. The Hessian state government

81 Mugdan, “Erholungsaufenthalt für Heimkehrer [Reconvalescence sojourns for returnees],” October 25, 1947, BMVt B150/334, BAK.
82 Engler, “Urlaub für Russlandheimkehrer [Vacations for returnees from Russia],” September 10, 1949, HMI 503/184a, HHSAW.
was the first to offer all-inclusive recovery programs of four to six weeks for the late returnees in 1953 and 1954.\textsuperscript{84}

Once the initial formalities were completed, housing found, and the returnee’s health at least in part recovered, the search for work began, and with it arguably the most difficult problem of the return. Some confusion existed in the early days of the employment agencies about the validity of the pre-war employment law that had guaranteed the former members of the \textit{Wehrmacht} the return to their former workplace. The British military government emphasized in a 1947 directive that the Control Council Law 34, which effectively dissolved the \textit{Wehrmacht} along with its auxiliaries and all other military organizations in Germany, also eliminated any legal rights connected to membership—drafted or not—in the military.\textsuperscript{85} The directive was subsequently criticized on many levels: it was perceived as opposing the rule of law that a \textit{directive} should interpret the law and not the judges applying the law; and the goal of eradicating militarism was understood as contrary to the effects of the directive, because the return of former soldiers into their previous civil employment would be hindered, for example.\textsuperscript{86}

As a consequence of the varied critiques of the directive, it was revoked retroactively in the summer of 1948. In the American zone, it took almost as long to clarify that the drafted members of the \textit{Wehrmacht} were entitled to their former

\textsuperscript{84} Heinrich Zinnkann, “Letter to Regierungspräsidenten Darmstadt, Kassel, Wiesbaden. Erholungskuren für die nach dem 1.9.1953 aus der Kriegsgefangenschaft entlassenen Spätheimkehrer [Reconvalescence sojourns for returnees released after September 1, 1953],” October 27, 1953, HMI 508/3734, HHSAW.

\textsuperscript{85} E.V. Eves, “Arbeitsvermittlungsdirektive Nr. 33 [Directive 33, employment agencies],” December 9, 1947, BMVt B150/331, BAK.

\textsuperscript{86} Lorenz Höcker, “Kritik an Arbeitsvermittlungsdirektive Nr. 33 [Criticism of directive 33, employment agencies],” 1947, BMVt B150/331, BAK. Höcker was a German lawyer, ties to any ministry or governmental entity could not be established; the document is a letter that was preserved in the files of the BMVt. In addition, the file contains a shorter version of his paper that appeared to have been intended for publication.
jobs. The law was of little use, however, for those whose companies or workplaces had ceased to exist. Most industrial and administrative jobs had been fallen victim to the war, and while labor was much needed in agriculture and mining, many returnees were unwilling to take on work below their profession. Attempts to address the problems of housing and work in a combined manner resulted in the creation of so-called “work camps,” basically dormitories for mostly industrial workers without families or other housing opportunities. Churches and charities as well as the LAG took care of their socialization with reading material, through visits of the dormitories by groups of children, and through special discussion meetings at the parish to discuss the workers’ problems and concerns. With the increased communication between the LAG and the POWs in Western captivity and work contracts, returnees could be relatively easily instructed about the difficult job situation in Germany; in order to prepare for the job market in Germany, some POW camps even offered preparatory courses for apprenticeships and university studying, as well as high school diplomas. Guidelines were then set up in Germany to streamline these courses and to accredit them with educational institutions. The necessity to adapt skills and interests to the “great shifts in all job markets and the subsequent impossibility to find work in a small number of overcrowded professions” was also emphasized in publications intended to support the returnees’ new beginning. Turning previous hobbies or pastimes into

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87 Referat für Kriegsgefangenenfragen (Länderrat), “Informationsdienst [Information service],” 1948, BMVt B150/331, BAK.
89 Berufsausbildungsausschuss der Handwerkskammern und Fachverbände in der britischen und amerikanischen Besatzungszone, “Richtlinien für die Berufsausbildung von Kriegsgefangenen [Guidelines for the vocational training of POWs],” September 16, 1947, BMVt B150/309 Heft 2, BAK.
viable work, or even into one’s own company, was especially encouraged—also as an inspiration for creativity, to avoid helpless passivity, and to remedy the “alarming apathy” that could be seen particularly in the young returnees.\textsuperscript{90} It was not the scarcity of available jobs that concerned returnees most; rather, it was the fact that they felt they had come too late, and other, more opportunistic persons who had not suffered and worked as POWs, vicariously for all of Germany, had occupied their place at work or in the available housing.\textsuperscript{91} This realization, which was not necessarily based on resentment but on a sentiment of disillusionment with the inflexibility of German bureaucracy and the apparent lack of interest of the administration to the veterans’ plight, resulted in a flood of letters to the various administrative branches that dealt with returnees. The way the growing German bureaucracy was dealing with returnees was criticized as early as 1946. Political parties, the state governments and the \textit{Länderrat} emphasized the necessity to welcome returning soldiers and make the bureaucratic steps for them as easy as possible, and to avoid that they be disadvantaged because they were further behind in the queues for housing, jobs, and welfare. Advocates for the returnees went even further and called for the employment and housing agencies to cooperate in order to allow returnees without families to settle where they


\textsuperscript{91} For example “Heimkehrer und ihr Schicksal [Returnees and their fate],” \textit{Stuttgarter Nachrichten}, May 27, 1949.
could find work, and where their professional qualifications were needed.\textsuperscript{92} As a consequence, the LAG and the state committees for POW questions pressed the local employment and housing agencies hard to be more considerate with regard to returnees, and finally created central offices, so-called offices for the assistance of returnees, \textit{Heimkehrerbetreuungsstellen}, that simplified the returnees’ interaction with the local authorities and enabled officers to coordinate their services for returnees to a greater degree.\textsuperscript{93} From the dynamics between the offices on the state and \textit{Länderrat} level, the local offices, and the returnees themselves, we can understand how important returning soldiers were for the German administration. The creation of so many offices that dealt with them, and the permanent effort to accommodate their economic, material, and even educational needs, testifies to the enormous significance that these men had for the German states. This is definitely an economic significance—as has been said earlier, the use of their work force, their taxes, and the prevention of their reliance on welfare was an incentive—but also a moral obligation toward the men who had spent years in captivity for Germany, and a genuine care for fellow Germans.

Given the rather chaotic administrative situation of Germany after defeat and occupation, it is quite surprising how quickly administration on the local,
state, and zonal level were created and attained functionality. The necessity for the speedy establishment of administration lay in the need to carry out day-to-day business, even more so in a situation of overall material scarcity, in which additional persons had to be accommodated and processed, and a situation in which the military government exerted power and control at large. While the German administrations were thus necessary to maintain minimal order and livelihood for people in Germany, their role with regard to demobilized soldiers comprised more than the basic assurance of livelihood. The creation of offices that were responsible for all questions relating to POWs still held abroad, and to returning and former POWs who were back in Germany, testifies to the significance of this group of people for postwar Germany. The extension of their field of activity from the discharge camps to legal and practical questions of housing, work, denazification, and health, and ultimately to the creation of information offices and recovery programs intended solely for returnees reflects not only the ever-increasing numbers of veterans returning to Germany, but also the basic acknowledgement—on a human, though not on an official or legal basis—of their service for Germany. When these demobilized soldiers left the discharge camps, however, they were less seen as former soldiers, but rather as former POWs. Not only had their military deployment been longer ago and thus further removed in memory than the more recent POW experience, but the membership in the Wehrmacht and the participation in warfare was, in the context of defeat and occupation, deeply discredited. The military government’s policies, denazification, the ban on military associations and pensions, and the dissolution of the Wehrmacht
brought this idea home to the former soldiers if they had not realized it or become disillusioned with the Third Reich’s military.

The German administration’s work as regarding returnees need to be understood as an effort to facilitate their return into a civil—non-military—environment. It does not appear correct to term this process “reintegration,” as I had thought in the earlier stages of this project. Reintegration would imply the existence of a functioning civil society into which veterans could have been assimilated. We may doubt that this was the case; still in 1948, for example, the Protestant Relief Organization (*Hilfswerk der Evangelischen Kirchen in Deutschland*) lamented that “the tasks that can only be accomplished through legislation and the measures of a superior national agency offer a picture of complete disarray or are at the very beginning of slow recovery—and this is 2 ¾ years after the end of the war.” The persistent economic difficulties and material shortages, the lack of national sovereignty, the processes of demilitarization and democratization that every German had to undergo after the entire population had been mobilized for the war effort at the military or home front, and the material and personal losses everybody had to cope with—all these things prevented German society in the few years after the war from being a cohesive and functioning civil society. We can see in the creation of memory during the first postwar decade, however, that returnees and the rest of German society commonly worked

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together to make sense of the war, of defeat, and of the task of reconstruction;\textsuperscript{95} this demonstrates that returnees were not reintegrated into an existing civil society, but that they in fact contributed to its creation. The German administration’s achievement for returnees was, in this context, the creation of an equal footing for the former members of the military: by informing them about the situation they would be confronted with at their return, by facilitating their interaction with the various local branches of German bureaucracy, by helping their physical recovery, and by advocating the recognition of the POWs’ suffering and work on Germany’s behalf during their absence. The LAGs’ work for returnees before and after their arrival in the Western zones of Germany was, to some extent, an expression of gratitude; but more importantly, it resulted from the realization that former soldiers constituted a large and important part of German society that could and should not be alienated but whose contributions to the reconstruction of Germany were needed urgently.\textsuperscript{96} The help and support that returnees received from the various state and zonal committees was a means to facilitate the returnees’ transition into civilian life, with the goal of benefiting from their contributions to reconstruction.

\textsuperscript{95} Biess, \textit{Homecomings}, 97-99. Much has been and can be said about the creation of memory in general and in postwar Germany specifically; as the creation of memory is not in the focus of this dissertation, it must suffice to say that the creation of a common public memory can be roughly equated with the creation of identity, and that this process makes sense of the past by emphasizing or neglecting certain events, developments, or social groups. I agree with Biess that the character of these newly created memories in West Germany was redemptive; but while he writes that “these memories crucially shaped social strategies of transforming former soldiers and POWs into posttotalitarian citizens,” I think that this process was not limited to former soldiers and POWs but affected all of German society, because all had been subject to totalitarianism and all had been mobilized for total war.

\textsuperscript{96} Cramer, “Das Problem der Betreuung heimkehrender Kriegsgefangener,” 2-4.
Japan: Alleviating distress

In Japan, once the members of the former military had been screened and formally released at the reception centers, they were civilians—at no point were there special offices or agencies whose responsibility were demobilized soldiers and former POWs. The Demobilization Ministries, later combined and reduced to the Demobilization Bureau, and the part of the Repatriation Bureau, which was part of the Welfare Ministry, were responsible for the repatriation of former soldiers and of the civilians located outside of the Japanese main islands; however, once their “repatriation” was complete, there was only the Welfare Ministry in charge to address their questions and issues. The repatriation of civilians was, overall, a larger issue in Japan than the repatriation of soldiers; however, both are closely linked to each other. Repatriates, hikiagesha, came to constitute a symbol of the deconstruction of the Japanese empire, and were as a consequence stigmatized by parts of the population of the Japanese main islands—metropolitan Japan—as a means to distance themselves from the venture of Japanese imperialism in Asia.97 Through the close links of imperial expansion and military ventures, repatriates from Japan’s former Asian empire cannot be neatly separated into civilian and military repatriates; further, if we look at imperial expansion as an extension of total war, then the notion of civilian and military repatriates from the empire become inseparable. This inextricable linkage of former soldiers and former civilian colonists found its expression in the competence of the Welfare Ministry—and the Bureau of Repatriate Welfare (Hikiage engo kyoku), for both

97 Watt, When Empire Comes Home, 17-18.
of these groups. This bureau was in charge of all affairs relating to repatriates, for which it had specifically been created. Under its aegis were the regional offices that ran the reception centers and took care of disinfection procedures, registration and enquiries, and the distribution of clothing and train tickets for the repatriates’ homeward journey. In the cities, the bureau’s tasks were separated into emergency relief and settlement relief (ōkyū engo and teichaku engo). Emergency relief entailed immediate care for the sick, the provision of short-term housing, and the creation of consultation offices in the train stations—Shinagawa, Tokyo, and Ueno in Tokyo. Settlement relief also included short-term housing, for which former military barracks, factory dormitories, and temple buildings were repaired and occupied under the “Urgent housing measures Law,” which created living space for 5,285 families, or a total of 19,387 persons. In fact, the space provided through housing was adjusted to the numbers of returnees arriving in Japan; there were nine different housing estates in Tokyo in 1949, but the number was reduced to six in 1950 and to one in 1951 as the repatriation of Japanese from the Soviet Union China and North Korea came to a halt. When repatriation resumed from 1953 onward, facilities were extended again to six in 1954.

These estates were under the supervision and funded by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government; however, especially in the beginning, all welfare measures depended heavily on charities and welfare associations, such as the Ai no undō

98 Tōkyōto, Tosei jūnenshi, 220.
100 Hikiagesha ichiji shukuhakujo tōkyō tokiwarō gojūgōnen no ayumi: 1945-2001 [The steps of fifty years of Tokyo's Tokiwa ward in temporary accommodation for returnees: 1945-2001] (Tokyo: Tōkyōto Fukushikyoku Seikatsufukushibu Engofukushika, 2001), 2-3. Katō lists a total of seventy-eight estates in greater Tokyo, but does not explain at what point in time they existed, or how large they were.
kyōgikai (Love of Sports Convention), and the Onshi zaidan dōhō engokai\textsuperscript{101} (a foundation created in March 1946 for the support of war victims, wounded soldiers, and bereaved families\textsuperscript{102}). It has to be emphasized, however, that the housing provided was set to accommodate civilian as well as military repatriates, in addition to persons who had lost their homes in the war; the provision of housing was not a measure exclusively for demobilized soldiers.

Limited amounts of money were distributed to demobilized soldiers and demobilized civilian personnel of the military forces (\textit{gunjin gunzoku}) by the local welfare offices between 1947 and 1950. These included a sum of one hundred fifty Yen of family support in 1947, which was subsequently raised to six hundred Yen for wives and four hundred for children in 1949; travel funds to return home of three hundred (1947) to one thousand five hundred Yen (1950), and money to pay for families to have the ashes of their deceased military family members shipped to them.\textsuperscript{103} These sums were, however, not meant to survive on them. A survey published by the Demobilization Ministries in early 1946 shows the economic situation of demobilized soldiers and bereaved families. The report states that only approximately twenty-five percent of demobilized personnel were employed in late 1945 or early 1946;\textsuperscript{104} the employment situation was considerably more distressing for higher-ranking personnel than for enlisted men.

Similarly, as can be inferred from Table 6 (located at the end of the chapter), it

\textsuperscript{101} Tōkyōto, Tosei jūnenshi, 220-221; Hikiagesha ichiji shukuhakajo, 2.
\textsuperscript{103} Katō, Kaigai hikiage kankei shiryō shūsei, 13.
\textsuperscript{104} Research Material Section, First Demobilization Ministry, “Enquiry of Living Conditions and Other Circumstances of Families of Demobilized and Other Military Personnel Awaiting Demobilization and Survivors of Deceased Servicemen,” May 6, 1946, 5, GHQ/SCAP RG 331, Box 3329 (4) 030, NDL.
was difficult for skilled professionals and white-collar workers to find work, which can be attributed to Japan’s economic situation. The physical reconstruction of the communication infrastructure and of commodity production required more labor to be employed in agriculture, mining (which is excluded in the statistic probably because the mining sector was not significant in Hiroshima Prefecture, from which the data were taken), construction, and factory work.

The report itself only provides a sketchy picture of the economic situation and living conditions of demobilized soldiers; however, it successfully creates the impression that this group of people was in considerable economic distress. This situation extended to their families and the families of deceased service personnel, which receives some mention in the report. After the military government had had effectively cut all military pensions with the implementation of JCS 1328, the number of families of deceased servicemen in some or extreme distress was increasing; further, the number of wounded and sick (though the report fails to make clear whether they were curably ill or permanently disabled) in distress was between fifty and sixty percent. In the city of Tokyo, sick and wounded veterans in extreme distress and experiencing grave difficulties in their livelihood constituted seventy-eight percent of the veteran population. In addition, a considerable number of demobilized soldiers engaged in black market activity, and “in some instances, the women … of deceased servicemen and families of military personnel awaiting demobilization have been forced into prostitution and

105 Ibid., 25.
other professions of ill-fame.”¹⁰⁶ Black market activity was criticized very early on by contemporaries,¹⁰⁷ who were quick to condemn the criminal activities of returnees in distress and deprived of means of livelihood.¹⁰⁸

The Japanese state financed the construction or reconstruction of two and a half thousand community housing projects in 1946, 227 in 1947, and another nine in 1948; over the following four years, the government contributed between seventy and eighty percent of the funding for fifty-eight such projects. The treasury further financed almost thirty thousand individual houses between 1948 and 1953 with a total of almost two million Yen. The shift of expenses demonstrates that in the first two or three years after the war, larger group housing projects were deemed as a quick and efficient alternative to the construction of individual homes. The target group for these projects was outlined as war victims and returnees.¹⁰⁹ Low-interest government loans of up to thirty thousand Yen, termed at five years, were also given out for the construction of homes, again for war victims, bereaved families, wounded ex-soldiers, and repatriates.¹¹⁰

The 1946 report about the situation of demobilized military personnel noted the lack of employment agencies and of possibilities for vocational training, in rural areas.¹¹¹ Although agricultural labor was arguably what made these rural areas most attractive, the lack of a tightly knit country-wide network of employment agencies severely limited the possibilities of returnees to rural

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 4, 9-10.
¹⁰⁸ Kimura, “Fukuin,” 100.
¹¹⁰ Ibid., 138-139.
areas—and of those whose families had relocated to the countryside because of the wartime danger and destruction, and the lack of food supply, in cities. Professional development was available in the cities; the government provided funds amounting to up to three thousand Yen per person.\footnote{Hikiagesha ichiji shukuhakujo, 221. This is the only source mentioning this kind of funding; it does not provide any details about the conditions, scope, or duration of this program. The general tenor in the material is that vocational guidance and training was insufficient. ATIS, “Review of the Japanese Press: Social Conditions Among Demobilized Men - Asahi Shimbun,” January 13, 1946, GHQ/SCAP RG 331, Box 3329 (2) 030, NDL; ATIS, “Note Vocational Guidance Through War Ministry,” September 1945, GHQ/SCAP RG 331, Box 3329 (2) 030, NDL.}

Support for homeless and destitute persons, the sick and wounded, and unemployed was introduced as early as 1945; SCAP issued a memorandum on December 15, 1945 about relief and Welfare that essentially permitted the Tokyo Metropolitan Government to reopen local assistance branch offices that had been closed in 1944. In addition, legislation for the relief of mothers and children, as well as war victims was passed, which determined the payment of relief funds to the city’s destitute persons.\footnote{Tōkyōto, Tosei jūnenshi, 222-223.} Civilian returnees formed associations for mutual support and to maintain their particular group consciousness, such as the Brethren from Manchuria and Mongolia Support Association (Manmō dōhō engokaï), the Fujin renmei (Women’s League), and the Gakusei dōmei (Students’ alliance). Generally, support and welfare came from the national government, the city governments, and private associations.\footnote{Ibid., 221, 223.}

The afore-mentioned Zaidan hōjin kyōjokai, which had sought to support wounded and sick demobilized soldiers in order to make up for their loss of pensions, was banned within a year of its foundation. An unusual demonstration of popular support was, however, the fact
that the ban sparked a nation-wide fundraising for wounded ex-servicemen. While there were many demobilized soldiers among the groups supported by public welfare, ex-servicemen were not targeted by the laws—and not by the SCAP memorandum, of course—and were not the main target group of the relief. The goal was to alleviate poverty, to lower crimes, black market activity, and other irregular activities, and to provide for those who had lost their livelihood and sources of support through the war. Demobilized soldiers were included in these groups, but not in their role as demobilized soldiers but as destitute civilians.

The lack of specific information pertaining to support or welfare measures specifically for returnees or demobilized soldiers in the archival and the published material is striking. Generally speaking, the welfare measures always included them because they were geared toward any destitute civilians; the military government’s ban on military or veterans’ associations, or any group that specifically supported veterans as such, naturally contributed to the absence of support for veterans. It is rather surprising, however, that the specific needs of demobilized soldiers—employment and vocational training, and physical recovery, most importantly—were apparently completely ignored by the Welfare Ministry and its regional offices. It would be wrong to conclude that veterans were not an issue in postwar Japan. The yearly reports of the Bureau of Social Affairs of the Tokyo Metropolitan Government show the payments that it made to returning soldiers for the compensation of war damage (see Table 5).

\footnote{Ibid., 236.}
Table 5: Compensation for war damage by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, 1945-1949

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Number of cases</th>
<th>Amount Spent (in Yen)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 1945 – March 1946</td>
<td>7.498</td>
<td>45,980,299.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 1946 – March 1947</td>
<td>5.293</td>
<td>35,582,710.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 1947 – March 1948</td>
<td>5.254</td>
<td>40,490,563.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 1948 – March 1949</td>
<td>4.521</td>
<td>36,564,394.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


While the yearly records from which the information originates do not provide any context for these numbers (in fact, the parts of the reports that deal with issues pertaining to demobilized soldiers are entirely void of text; they only provide statistics), they indicate the significance of the population of demobilized soldiers—in their numbers and in the amount of money disbursed to them—but also the difficulty of dealing with them, caught between the ideas of demilitarization and reconstruction, and being responsible for the well-being of all needy yet being reluctant to support veterans as a potentially militaristic group. The Enquiry of Living Conditions Report provides important clues as to the administration’s perception of returnees and their role and treatment in Japan. It observes that more empirical material would need to be collected in order to make more qualified reflections and to assist them more effectively, and concludes:

The correspondence and verbal opinions of the demobilized military personnel indicate they were bitter about the reception given to them on returning. We feel that the improvement … of the reception at the
port of return should be emphasized in an effort to give the demobilized personnel a better first impression.

... If the demobilized persons were given cold reception or were practically ignored upon setting foot on home soil, they would become apprehensive about our government and develop an exaggerated view of our national collapse. This would have ... effects in the future.

We feel that the officials handling relief, employment assistance, and other forms of aid should stop to consider that demobilized persons comprise the major section of the national population; that these officials should be made to realize the grave error they will be committing by harboring the narrow viewpoint [sic] that relief is sponsored as mere relief for the ex-servicemen and their dependants; that they should be educated to acquire a broader viewpoint and implanted with the conviction that the way in which demobilization is handled will decide the future of the nation.\textsuperscript{116}

This conclusion demonstrates that the issue of demobilized soldiers, even though it was hardly ever mentioned in other official records, was not underestimated. Government officials were aware of their potential—both of substantial contribution to the democratic reconstruction of Japan and of the military threat they could become if alienated—and called for a respectful and reasonable treatment of ex-servicemen.

It is interesting that even over the course of the postwar years, it does not appear that much effort was made to accommodate the particular needs of returnees. At the same time, returning soldiers largely failed to express their needs clearly or purposefully. The “cold reception” was lamented by returning soldiers, however,\textsuperscript{117} and the demobilized themselves asked to be treated in the same manner as other civilians rather than “demobilized soldiers.”\textsuperscript{118} This suggests the rejection of special treatment, in whatever form, by officials, but also implies the

\footnotesize{\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{118} ATIS, “Demobilized Soldiers.”
\end{flushright}}
wish not to be linked to the military anymore. As the public attitude toward
demobilized soldiers was divided between empathy for the endured hardship and
criticism of the military endeavor,\textsuperscript{119} it is understandable that returnees wished not
to be singled out as ersatz scapegoats for a lost war they had had no choice but to
join. While the administration called for a more understanding and ultimately
friendly attitude toward ex-soldiers, the latters’ own lack of expressing this wish
explains the absence of specific projects and measures targeted to former soldiers.

COMPETING FOR SUPPORT: WAR VICTIMS AND DISPLACED PERSONS

Demobilized soldiers and the policies that the occupation and the Japanese
and German governments created for them did not exist in a void; their evaluation
is not complete without an examination of the policies toward other groups of
people who were in an economically or politically similar situation as returnees.
In terms of material support or welfare, these groups comprised the people who
had suffered material and or physical damage through the war—who had been
bombed out or lost their homes and belongings to fire caused by incendiary
bombings or the atomic bombs; and who had lost limbs or other bodily functions
due to the war—as well as those whose provider had been killed in the war, such
as orphans and bereaved families; and the large group of displaced persons,
repatriates, expellees, freed slave laborers and prison and concentration camp
inmates.

\textsuperscript{119} Kimura, “Fukuin,” 91-92.
In Germany, several millions of inmates of concentration camps were freed but had no place to go; many of the Polish and Soviet slave laborers whom the Allies had freed refused to return home to a country with whose political system they disagreed or, in the case of the Soviet Union, which condemned their forced labor as treason and awaited them with a death warrant or the outlook of reeducation at the GULAG. During the second half of 1945 and 1946, ethnic Germans from all over Eastern Europe were expelled from their homes and forced to migrate to Germany, regardless if they had been living in the Reich’s Eastern territories since the Third Reich’s Nazi policies of Lebensraum or since the times of the Kaiserreich, or longer.

In Japan, emigration of Japanese nationals had begun simultaneously with the creation of her Asian empire in the Sino-Japanese War (1894/95) and the Russo-Japanese War (1904/05), when settlers and businessmen accompanied the army and administrators who were to guard the Japanese colonies of Manchuria, Korea, and Taiwan. All of them were to return to the Japanese main islands, while the ethnic Koreans, Taiwanese, and Chinese who had settled in Japan were to be repatriated to their country of origin.

What the Allies had in mind was an immense act of ethnic streamlining, an understandable pursuit after the racial excrescences that the war had brought to light; however, it was an exceptionally unsettling and disruptive enterprise that ultimately demanded not just the material effort of the physical relocation but also a human toll through eruptions of racial—or should we say national—discrimination, such as in Northern China against the Japanese waiting to be
repatriated and in Poland, Slovakia, and Hungary against the Germans living there. The UNRRA (United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, 1943-1947) provided relief for refugees and displaced persons in areas liberated by the Allies in both Europe and some parts of Asia, and assisted in the resumption of economic activity. It proved unable to guarantee and maintain “that any transfers that take place should be effected in an orderly and humane manner.”

About twelve million Germans migrated to Germany as refugees, more than three million Japanese civilians returned to Japan from her former imperial territories. To accommodate these people with housing, clothing and food in the postwar scarcity proved a formidable challenge to the military governments which provided the framework for their treatment (such as the interdict of association of refugees in the Western zones of Germany, for example), for the national, regional, and local administrations that had to implement the practicalities of the accommodation, and society.

Of the eight to ten million Displaced Persons—freed concentration camp inmates, slave laborers, and civilians displaced by the war—that had been in Germany at the end of the war, more than four and a half million were repatriated within the first four months of the occupation. In addition, the repatriation of forced laborers from Western Europe was carried out with great efficiency: almost all of the French, Belgian, Dutch, and Luxembourg workers were sent

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home within months of German surrender. Most of the Soviet laborers were
turned over to Soviet authorities as well in an effort to reduce the number of
persons that had to be provided for.\textsuperscript{122} DPs had constituted a threat to peace and
public security because they had been difficult to control; particularly former
agricultural and industrial laborers from Eastern Europe had roamed the
countryside freely and had been involved in cases of robbery, acts of revenge
against Germans, black market activity, and rape.\textsuperscript{123} The occupation’s attitude
soon became less understanding toward them, and the wish to get rid of banditry
combined with the fear of a repetition of post-World War One typhoid epidemics
accelerated the process of repatriation considerably.\textsuperscript{124}

In Japan, the largest group of displaced persons was \textit{hikiagesha}, Japanese
civilians returning to Japan from her former colonies. Between August 1945 and
December 1946, most of them were brought back to Japan; however, repatriation
from China and the Soviet Union was only completed in 1953. In addition, about
1.3 million Korean, 40,000 Chinese and 18,000 Taiwanese POWs and labor
conscripts were repatriated by early 1946, although several thousand decided to
remain in Japan.\textsuperscript{125} For Asia, the Allies had not devised the same ethnic
streamlining as they had thought out for Europe; rather, the breaking up of the
Japanese empire and the repatriation of its civilians happened without planning,
though the idea of putting one’s geographical location in relation to one’s national

\textsuperscript{124} Bessel, \textit{Germany 1945}, 259-260.
\textsuperscript{125} Kōseishō engokyoku, \textit{Hikiage to engo sanjūnen no ayumi}, 151-152.
identity was a factor in the development of civilian relocation. Further, although the thirty-some thousand American POWs were processed and released within three months of Japan’s surrender, they must also be counted among the displaced persons.

In Japan as in Germany, the administration had to take care of destitute persons. During the first three to four years after the end of the war, this support was generally material or financial support intended to help an individual or a family to make ends meet: food stamps were distributed for increased rations for sick persons, clothing and blankets given out in winter from military stockpiles, and with the revival of the economy and production, money was distributed increasingly. It was only with the return of national sovereignty to the German and Japanese governments in 1949 and 1952, respectively, that the political stage witnessed the emergence of interest groups and the creation of legislation for particular segments of the population. In Japan, this included the reintroduction of military pensions, the “Relief Law for the Wounded and Bereaved Families,” and the “Atomic Bomb Survivors Relief Law”; in Germany, the creation of the “Returnees’ Law” that financially compensated former POWs, and the “Lastenausgleichsgesetz” that compensated Germans who had lost their possessions through expulsion in the East by redistributing a share of the resident West German population, are among the most important pieces of domestic postwar victim compensation legislation.

126 Watt, When Empire Comes Home, 2-3.
127 Dower, Embracing Defeat, 54.
It is fair to say that demobilized soldiers who returned from deployment or POW internment competed with other Germans and Japanese nationals and displaced persons in Germany and Japan for relief and for accommodation. This does not mean, however, that the competition was necessarily felt as such; rather, competition was material in character in that scarce resources had to be distributed to a large and diverse group of people. German returnees felt indeed disadvantaged vis-à-vis other applicants for state support. They did not seek special privileges, but lamented the absence of empathy by the bureaucracy, the reluctance to give them the benefit of the doubt, and the thoughtlessness with which they were greeted on their odyssey through the world of German bureaucracy. German returnees did not feel entitled to bonuses or extra benefits, but their behavior suggested that they should not be disadvantaged materially because they had spent years in imprisonment for Germany. The administration did what it could to accommodate them, which is apparent in the creation of special consultation offices for returnees and in the support in terms of recovery programs and education that the LAG worked for and negotiated with the military government.

Japan was, in a sense, the opposite. Returnees wanted to disappear in the anonymous mass of civilians, and did not wish to be explicitly referred to as “demobilized,” fukuinsha, or “demobilized soldiers,” fukuin (shita) gunjin. The

As many returnees also belonged to other victims’ groups, such as expellees, or the bombed-out, they felt little rivalry with regard to these groups; however, former concentration camp inmates were routinely—though not publicly—badmouthed because the government “throws all the money at them, … while [returnees] have to beg for every penny.” Institut für Sozialforschung an der Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität, Zum politischen Bewusstsein ehemaliger Kriegsgefangener: Eine soziologische Untersuchung im Verband der Heimkehrer [About former POWs’ political consciousness: A sociological study in the Returnees' Association] (Frankfurt am Main, 1957), 13.
social perception—or stigma—of defeat very likely contributed to this perception, as did the weariness about the war. The psychological difficulty of the return in the cases of all those who had been declared dead to their families might also have been part of the issue. In any event, returnees in both countries wanted to return to some kind of normalcy, and while this wish was uttered in different manners, its foundation of returning to civil life after years of military engagement is apparent in both approaches. In both countries, the competition with other groups of needy persons did not create an actual situation of vying for recognition, albeit the vying for resources was discernible especially in Germany. The ambiguous status of returnees as the losers of the war, as the victims of militarism, as perpetrators of aggressive expansion and warfare, as collaborators of the militaristic and ultra-nationalistic regimes, as individuals who had suffered from the fighting themselves, and who might have lost their families and homes through the war, created a difficult situation for the occupation, the Japanese and German governments, and for the returnees themselves. They did not pass as victims the same way expellees from Germany’s former East and Japan’s Asian territories could; neither were they clearly to be held responsible for the war—the lost war at that—because they had followed orders that their superiors were now put on trial for. No other social group possessed such an ambiguous status. The way the American and indigenous authorities treated returnees reflects the very difficulty inherent in that status; the difficulty of reconciling individual responsibility and suffering, punishment and prevention. Supporting the needs of the demobilized and at the same time preventing them from maintaining the
militaristic outlook they had been taught in the military was a precarious balance, and a balance that ultimately the entire German and Japanese population had to undergo because in total war, not only the military is mobilized but the entire population. Prevention and punishment were therefore not uniquely applied to demobilized soldiers but to the whole of Germany and of Japan. Demobilized soldiers, in between the demilitarization measures of the American occupation and the reconstruction effort carried out by the Japanese and German governments, ultimately embodied that balance, just as they embodied victimhood and perpetration.
Table 6: Chart showing the employment situation according to type of occupation and rank of personnel, from the end of February 1946 to present date; Hiroshima Prefecture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification / Employed Personnel</th>
<th>Farmers</th>
<th>Business Men</th>
<th>Industrial workers</th>
<th>Laborers</th>
<th>(TH: illegible)</th>
<th>Technicians</th>
<th>Police-men*</th>
<th>Clerks</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage employed</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Unempl.</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>685</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Empl.</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>176</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Grade Officers</td>
<td>Unempl.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Empl.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Grade Officers</td>
<td>Unempl.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Empl.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company Grade Officers</td>
<td>Unempl.</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Empl.</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-commissioned Officers</td>
<td>Unempl.</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Empl.</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>43</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Privates</td>
<td>Unempl.</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Empl.</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civilians attached to military service and others</td>
<td>Unempl.</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>61</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Empl.</td>
<td>59</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Numbers for Police-men incomplete

Source: Adapted from Research Material Section, First Demobilization Ministry, “Living Conditions Report,” 16.
INTERLUDE: UPROOTING AND DISLOCATION

When will our husbands, sons, and brothers return, who are pining for us in captivity as we are for them? This is the painful worry of millions of wives and mothers, which is followed after their return by the equally anxious question of how to begin to integrate those into normal life who have been estranged from peaceful work. … It is not the same people who return to us. The years of warfare have left their marks on all of them. They have especially attacked physically, emotionally, and mentally those among them who were forced into the war machine as boys lacking religious and democratic footing, and have made them completely lose their balance. … On the other hand, returnees must give up on all exaggerated hopes. A country that has barely any substance left except the will to work and for order cannot give more than it possesses. It can in no case satisfy ‘vested rights,’ but it will distribute equally what is left to everybody.¹

Demobilized soldiers who returned from captivity were not the same persons who had left, voluntarily or because of the draft or both, at the beginning of the war. They had been shaped by the experience of years of warfare and the conditions of imprisonment. These conditions and experiences were widely disparate—depending on the fronts on which they had fought, the length of their engagement, age, previous experience, their company’s surroundings, and also depending on the location and conditions of captivity. Soviet camps held much harsher conditions for German soldiers than British or American ones, and French working camps differed very much from the makeshift camps on the Rhine meadows—but the results upon Heimkehr (homecoming) were the same: contemporaries called it Entwurzelung,² uprooting. The uprooting was both spiritual and

¹ “Heimkehr der Kriegsgefangenen [The return of POWs],” Agitationsmaterial der Christlich-Demokratischen Union Deutschlands, 1945, 2.
² Willi Hammelrath, “Entwurzelung und Eingliederung [Uprooting and integration],” Frankfurter Hefte, no. 1 (1946): 754-762. The article argues that Entwurzelung is only an outwardly sign for the religious and moral insecurities and the lack of social connections that had developed, more or less unnoticed, within society for the past few generations, and which was now made apparent by the chaos and confusion of postwar society. Hammelrath sees religiosity and “silent work” as the remedy for uprooting.
material in character, manifesting itself in the physical environment and affecting the psyche: “Insecurity in life in every possible regard (work, food, old age pensions, money and money value, official regulations, political measures) cause the paralyzation and inhibition of the will to live, of procreation, health, entrepreneurial spirit. … Insecurity: nothing is constant but change. We are living in a continuous ‘temporary.’ We have no terra firma [under our feet], are up in the air, —that is uprooting.”\(^3\)

The uprooting did not only take place for German returnees; rather, it was an experience that many if not most people in Germany encountered in some form if they had lost their home due to the war, or had been forced to resettle because their home region had ceased to be German territory; further the survivors of concentration camps, former slave laborers, and refugees from the Soviet zone occupation had all lost their geographical “roots,” while many had lost family members, their livelihood, and social backing and experienced a more emotional or economic loss of their roots. While Heimkehr was a unique experience for demobilized soldiers, Entwurzelung was not. Experienced as a consequence and by-product of destruction, war, and defeat, uprooting applied to the majority of the German population. It was, nevertheless, experienced stronger by returnees: having idealized the ideas of Heimat and family during at the front and in captivity, the tangible gap between what they had left, what they had imagined, and what they found upon their return, appeared impossible to bridge.

The uprooting was a condition that could equally be observed in Japan. Critic Nakano Yoshino assessed the situation of 1945 as “an experience of the collapse of the foundation of values and of beliefs,”\(^4\) although the foundations of this collapse were

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3 Ibid., 759.
4 Yoshio Nakano, “Mohaya sengo de ha nai [It is no longer postwar],” Bungei Shunjū, February 1956, 56.
rooted in the material conditions of the war and postwar. The enormous destruction of the war resulted in economic difficulties that accompanied the occupation and the policies of the Potsdam Declaration, in the sheer necessity of the black market, and further in the political purge of officials and the influx of millions of military and civilian returnees from across Asia. It was further necessary to attend to the traumata of the millions of victims of the strategic fire bombings and the hundreds of thousands of survivors of the atomic bombings. These abysmal conditions were exacerbated by the realization that the war was lost and that the entire legacy of Japan’s greatness, the emperor, and the capability of the Japanese people were destroyed. While no specific word comparable to the German Entwurzelung existed in Japanese, the term sengo (postwar, as a noun and with all the substance that this grammatical twist implies)\(^5\) with its connotations of konran (disorder or chaos) and hōkai (collapse) refers to a similar idea of loosing one’s footing.\(^6\) In addition, the Japanese had, as the emperor put it in his radio broadcast on August 15, to “endure the unendurable and bear the unbearable;” their lives were shattered and in a state of exhaustion and despair.\(^7\) The psychological toll and emotional uprooting due to defeat might have been greater in Japan, given that the ideologically leading figure—emperor Hirohito—was much less compromised and criticized than was the Third Reich’s leader Hitler toward the end of the war.

It might be appropriate to say that both German and Japanese postwar societies, at least during the initial three or four years—until the economic situation improved—were societies of uprooted in various ways and on various levels. The lack of security in all daily affairs, the persistent scarcity of foodstuffs and all other material, the difficulties in

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\(^6\) Nakano, “Mohaya sengo de hana i,” 57-58.

\(^7\) Dower, *Embracing Defeat*. 
transportation and communication, the arduous recreation of communal ties, and the
necessity for political reorientation, all served to uproot and unsettle the largest part of
the population. If German and Japanese postwar societies were uprooted as a whole, and
not only demobilized returning soldiers, we have to examine in what ways returnees
played a particular role and occupied a particular place in these societies that nobody else
played and occupied. Were returnees, once they had been demobilized and reached home,
civilians just like anybody else, or—as this entire dissertation suggests—did they
contribute something unique to postwar Germany and Japan?

Contemporaries involved in returnees’ affairs in Germany lamented that “the
reintegration into civilian life from the isolation in foreign lands, and from the
deprivation of human dignity and the communities of marriage, family and congregation,
are gravely exacerbated by our people’s struggle for [its] existence.”8 While the material
situation was generally judged as significant—either conducive or detrimental—for the
returnees, it was also realized that it only constituted the framework for their actual, their
mental situation, and their task of reconstruction,

The returnee has brought with him the firm wish to recreate
material and spiritual life. … In order to accomplish that, a mindset that
recognizes the value of a personality independent of the person, their
political opinion, and their spiritual attitude is necessary. This particular
mindset is as typical for returnees as it is untypical for the situation in
which he arrives. It is therefore the duty of the returnees to work for the
spiritual renewal, and this task is almost greater than the spiritual tasks of
the Heimat vis-à-vis the returnees.9

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8 Bott, “Begrüßungsansprache von Herrn Oberregierungsrat Bott, Kultusministerium Stuttgart, zur
Eröffnung der Tagung auf der Comburg (Schwäb. Hall) über die Notstände der entlassenen
Kriegsgefangenen und Wege zu ihrer Behebung [Opening speech at the conference at the Comburg near
Schwäbisch Hall about the emergencies of released POWs and means for their resolve by Senior
Government Councillor Bott, Stuttgart Ministry of Culture],” June 9, 1948, 2, HMI 503/184a, HHSAW.
9 Ludwig Preller, “Die geistige Situation in Deutschland und der Heimkehrer: Vortrag von Prof. Dr. Preller,
Stuttgart, gehalten bei der Tagung über die Notstände der Heimkehrer, auf der Comburg (Schwäb. Hall)
[The mental situation in Germany and of the returnees: Presentation by Prof. Dr. Preller, Stuttgart, at the
As we can see, returnees and the country they returned to had complementary duties: while the returnees were to make use of the spiritual experience of captivity for the spiritual recreation and reconstruction of Germany, the Heimat was to provide materially for them. On the other hand, the isolation and suffering in POW and work camps had sensitized returnees in a way that made it difficult for them to bear the emotional coldness and focus on material things in Germany. Seeking understanding and compassion rather than material goods, and being repelled by bureaucracy and all kinds of hindrances that opposed their ideas of reconstructing Germany, many returnees were quickly disillusioned and their ideals about postwar Germany, which they had formed in captivity, unsettled.  

In Japan, newspapers encouraged the contribution of returnees to the reconstruction of the country as early as in August 1945, and the government called on them to support particularly the efforts of the state to revive the economy and restore people’s livelihood. Due to the economic situation, but more importantly the cold reception and treatment they received from the population, sometimes even from their own families, Japanese returnees became disillusioned.

What is the average experience of a repatriated soldier? He returns home after a voyage fraught [sic] with discomfort and no little danger, but that he considers only natural and justly due to him, He expects, however,
at least some recognition of his past efforts, though misguided, on behalf of his country. He sees his native land in chaos, but that is understandable. … His first reaction is that something must be done. His initial bewilderment comes when he sees the scores of boxes and ashes of fallen comrades, unluckier than he, lying with no claimants in repatriation centers. … A warm welcome home was far from his mind, except perhaps from close kin, but the cold shoulder turned to him wherever he goes, together with an ‘it’s all your fault’ attitude wounds and shocks him as a shell burst… 13

Retirees’ contribution to the reconstruction was desired and necessary, yet the public’s negative attitude toward them created a level of alienation that was rooted in the population’s criticism with regard to the military leadership, essentially blaming the soldiers for what their leaders had done. 14

In a situation of total defeat and uprooting of much of German and Japanese society, returnees were not always welcomed by the population and politicians; in addition to the understandably severe treatment they received from the occupation authorities, distrust and criticism for the lost war was thrust upon them. On the other hand, given the large proportion of the population that soldiers in their families, returnees were welcomed in their role as fathers, husbands, sons, and bread winners. Among the uprooted and destitute, returnees made a difference first and foremost in their families; even if they were uprooted themselves, the family as a core social institution provided ground for reestablishment. Economic and political roots were not as easy to grow for many; however, this was the case not only for returnees but also for many other people who had lost their material and spiritual security. What distinguishes demobilized


14 ATIS, “Review of the Japanese Press: Pitiful Demobilized Soldiers - Jiji Shimpo,” March 31, 1946, GHQ/SCAP RG 331, Box 3329 (2) 030, NDL. See also Kimura, “Fukuin.” Further, the lack of distinction between soldiers and militarists was criticized in Germany as well: “Der Soldat und der Militarist [The soldier and the militarist],” CDU-Mitteilungen, Christlich-Demokratische Union Groß-Hessen, August 8, 1946.
soldiers from all the other uprooted, then, is their double role as perpetrators and victims; their participation in the war and their equal participation in reconstruction. The soldiers of the Imperial Japanese Army and of the German Wehrmacht fought the war, lost the war, and then moved on to rebuild. They exemplify the responsibility of the nation for the ultra-nationalist, fascist, and genocidal aggressive war, but at the same time symbolize the creative and democratic force that rebuilt the two countries, in Germany enhanced by the rhetoric of redemption through captivity put forward by spokesmen for returnees. They personify the caesura of 1945 and connections across the 1945 divide, because 1945 meant considerable changes in their lives, yet they remained the same persons—albeit arguably changed from their prewar identity—that had to carry on. Demobilized soldiers occupy a special place in postwar history; while they are perpetrators among many other groups of perpetrators, victims among many other groups of victims, and supplicants among many other groups of supplicants, no other group of people represents both perpetration and victimhood, and the breaks between and connections across the 1945 divide.
CHAPTER 3

REINTEGRATION?

VETERANS’ ASSOCIATIONS AND THEIR INFLUENCE IN RETURNEES’ LEGISLATION

Germany: The Verband der Heimkehrer

When the Verband der Heimkehrer, Kriegsgefangenen und Vermisstenangehörigen Deutschlands, e.V. (VdH; Germany’s Association of Returnees, Prisoners of War (POWs) and Family Members of Missing in Action (MIAs)) was officially founded in March 1950, it had in fact existed for several years in the form of many smaller, local returnees’ associations. The different occupations and geographical locations of the founding members demonstrate that their origins had been indeed very different associations. The VdH’s president, Karl Supper, was an attorney from Stuttgart; vice-president Werner Noack was also an attorney, but from Hildesheim. Treasurer Hans Scholz was a clerk from Stuttgart; the extraordinary members of the executive board comprised Ulrich Kirchgeorg, Munich, previously president of the Bavaria Returnees’ Association; Anton Bücheler, auto mechanic from Tübingen, and attorney Brigitte Kurreck from Munich.¹ The diversity of social and geographical backgrounds across all of Southern Germany is an indication for the diversity of goals and opinions of the newly founded VdH, which indeed resulted in continual heated debates about a vast array of

topics. The VdH declared to have a non-material and a material program; the non-material efforts included initiatives for the release of current POWs, negotiations with the state and national governments for material support for returnees and the families of POWs and MIAs, and the cooperation with other national and international POW and veterans’ associations as well as all other groups that had an interest in these matters. The material program mainly focused on legislation that would acknowledge the forced labor and resulting medical and insurance issues of POWs, establish equal treatment of returnees seeking work, housing, and welfare support, and provide financial aid to the returnees trying to establish a livelihood.

By the end of its second year, in 1951, 160,000 people had joined the VdH; by the summer of 1954, it had grown to almost half a million. The initial creation of the association as a unification of local groups led to a clearly defined hierarchy with organizations at the state, district, sub-district, and communal levels; which established good communication channels between the association’s leadership, its members, and the regional and local leaders. The association’s publication, the newsletter *Der Heimkehrer* (*The Returnee*) demonstrates the support that the association had in the West German population. 10,000 copies were printed of the first issue in March 1950, by the end of 1950, circulation had doubled. In December 1950, circulation had risen to 60,000 copies and the editorial staff was employed and did not need to volunteer anymore. The newsletter appeared twice a month and contained mainly information on political issues.

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3 August Fischer, “Macht keine Politik, aber denkt politisch! [Do not make politics, but think politically!],” *VdH Rednerdienst*, July 1954.
pertaining to returnees, association matters, opinion pieces, and reports of association meetings.

While the VdH was by no means the only veterans’ association that existed in West Germany, it was the largest and arguably the most important and inclusive one. A number of other veterans’ associations was created or re-created between 1946 and the early years of the Federal Republic, including the *Kyffhäuserbund* (founded in 1786, Germany’s oldest veterans’ association was named after the Kyffhäuser mountain range and monument in Thuringia) whose mission focused on the material provisions of veterans and whose development has brought it closer to a shooting sports association today; the *Verband Deutscher Soldaten* (German Soldiers’ Association), whose goal was and is to communicate to the German public the respectability of the German soldier; and the *Reichsbund der Kriegs- und Zivilbeschädigten, Sozialrentner und Hinterbliebenen* (Reich Association for Civil and War Injured, Social Security Recipients, and Bereaved), which has focused its activities primarily on the care for the handicapped and recipients of pensions in Germany. Overall, considering that more than ten million former members of the *Wehrmacht* were living in Germany, the number of them organized in actual veterans’ associations—Soldatenverbände—was quite small. A contemporary newspaper article calculated that the membership of these veterans’ associations (excluding the VdH) did not exceed 160,000 and thus was less than two percent of all former soldiers, arguing that most of those who had joined those associations had been professional officers, NCOs (non-commissioned officers) and

The significance of the VdH therefore lies in its inclusiveness—the association’s interests were not limited to former professional soldiers, to the bodily injured, or to veterans, but included essentially everybody who was in some way affected by captivity as POW, return from captivity, and the families of soldiers whose whereabouts were unknown (as in the case of MIAs)—and in the focus on the return to Germany, along with all material and spiritual aspects of that return. The VdH was not a Soldatenverband but an association that was essentially civilian in its conception, outlook, and targets. Nowhere in its program can the preservation or maintenance of military spirit or honor be found; rather, despite the continuous invocation of comradeship and the POW experience, the VdH emphasized the civilian nature of its work. The association’s name indicates that the experience of imprisonment was more important than the experience of the war itself (although the experience of imprisonment was likely a more important experience for returnees from the long Soviet or Eastern European captivity under harsh conditions, than for those who spent time either in the makeshift camps or enclosures in Germany or in the relatively comfortable camps in the West). The name is also an indication for the focus on the recreation of civil society and the political integration of returnees into the democratic social system that was being established in West Germany. The word Heimkehrer, returnee, as the first descriptive word in the name, also points toward the significance the association attributed to the process of “returning,” which ultimately included not only the material situation but more importantly the spiritual process of arriving in a civilian setting.

8 Peter Miska, “Der deutsche Soldat als Wahlobjekt [The German soldier as a target in the election],” Frankfurter Rundschau, August 28, 1953. It is difficult to assess the actual numbers provided in the article, but the general argument is of significance, notwithstanding the accuracy of the calculation.
Given that the VdH was created as a national association only in 1951, the material support it could and needed to provide to its members was extremely limited. An area in which the VdH was able to provide support was construction. Under the guidance of the VdH’s precursors, a construction self-help group was organized in 1950; using their own manpower, this group of former POWs responded to excessively high rent and a scarcity of housing space by constructing homes for themselves. Aptly named *Glaube und Tat*, (faith and deed) the group overcame administrative and economic difficulties and succeeded to build 1010 apartments in 53 cities of the Federal Republic. The success of the project then allowed *Glaube und Tat* to present themselves as “mature in terms of character and politically, economically thinking and socially reasonable, having completed the transition from men [depending on] welfare to responsible citizens of democracy.”

To be sure, the creation of material value did not automatically transform the participating returnees into good and loyal citizens but meant first and foremost an improvement of their own housing situation. The project could in fact contribute to the creation of a stronger group consciousness, particularly in a situation in which many unemployed returnees tended to become lethargic about their situation; the structured activity of regular work and the possibility of creating lasting values ultimately might have contributed to the creation of more active and conscious citizens.

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9 SPD Parteivorstand, Vertriebenen-Referat, “Rundschreiben 10/54 [Newsletter 10/1954],” April 28, 1954, 2, VdH B433/335, BA-MA; Peter Marquardt, “Wir haben nicht auf ein Wunder gewartet [We didn't wait for a miracle],” *Der Heimkehrer*, October 1953. Neither document clarifies where the money for building material originated. The VdH’s social work office is mentioned as the organizer of the *Glaube und Tat* project; it is therefore likely that it also financed the bulk of it. Participants were committed to contribute forty-eight hours per week, but as more workers were required to complete the projects than they created apartments, the recipients would be determined by a lucky draw once construction was complete. A similar, though smaller project with sixteen apartments was completed in Baden-Württemberg in 1953.

“Dokument des sozialen Aufbawillens*: Die erste Heimkehrersiedlung in Süddeutschland [Documentation for the will to social reconstruction: The first returnees housing estate in Southern Germany],” *Der Heimkehrer*, June 1953.
The support the VdH was able to provide to its members was generally of intangible nature, yet not less important than material provisions. As the association perceived itself as an instrument in urging the German state to provide materially for returnees and the families of those who had not yet returned (or whose fate was unknown), its activities with regard to its members were mostly directed toward providing information about the current state of affairs of state support. The VdH defied, however, the idea of *Staatsrentnertum*,\(^{10}\) the dependence on state welfare and pensions; while the material provision for returnees were crucial to the work of the VdH, they merely served as a basis and a precondition for the successful *Heimkehr* of the returnees. Rather, the association’s leadership strongly encouraged political engagement, advocating that its members actively seek to be useful members of society.\(^{11}\)

At the time of the creation of the VdH, the administrative situation in Germany had improved to a point where the measures for newly arrived returnees were firmly in place; nevertheless, the VdH worked tirelessly to improve state support and to ease the arrival and transition for returnees. It stipulated the creation of a *Heimkehrergesetz* (returnees’ law) that would create a legally binding situation for the state vis-à-vis returnees and end their dependence on regular welfare and on the good will of the officials they encountered at the local and state agencies. The creation of a *Heimkehrergesetz* became even more urgent after it had become clear that returnees would neither be included in the *Lastenausgleichsgesetz* (Equalization of Burdens Law) nor in the *Soforthilfegesetz* (Emergency Assistance Law), which had been created to accommodate victims of the postwar forced migrations and war victims, respectively. The demands of

\(^{10}\) Marquardt, “Wir haben nicht auf ein Wunder gewartet.”

\(^{11}\) SPD Parteivorstand, Vertriebenen-Referat, “Rundschreiben 10/54,” 3.
the returnees in general and of the VdH in particular included three areas for which legislation should provide: “material support to ease the transition to civilian life, assistance in finding employment, and compensation for time spent in captivity. The latter demand was justified on the grounds that the labor performed as POWs was a reparations payment for which the entire German people were liable but which in practice had been paid only by the POWs who should now be compensated.” The VdH perceived itself—and its members—as victims of the war and by extension of Nazism; this is evidenced in the failed attempts of the VdH to have returnees included in the Lastenausgleichsgesetz and the Soforthilfegesetz, both of which were intended to compensate people for damages sustained by the war. The VdH shifted relatively quickly from discourses of pure victimization to “redemptive memories,” emphasizing that the effect of suffering in the POW camps had transformed returnees into more responsible, aware, and peace-loving citizens.

Even before the creation of the Federal Republic, the Committee for POW Issues (Ausschuss für Kriegsgefangenenfragen) had conducted lengthy negotiations with the VdH, other interest groups and veterans’ associations, and charities about a Heimkehrergesetz. However, it would have made little sense to create such a piece of legislation right before the creation of the Federal Republic; therefore, the deliberations were postponed until after the creation of the federal government, and after months of negotiations, the Gesetz über Hilfsmaßnahmen für Heimkehrer (Heimkehrergesetz) was passed in the

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12 Diehl, Thanks of the Fatherland, 101.
13 Biess, Homecomings, 111.
summer of 1950. There had never been a fundamental disagreement about the necessity
to provide material support for returnees, nor about the elements the law should include:
assistance at the time of release, provisions to support returnees in establishing residency
and in finding work, and stipulations to guarantee returnees’ admittance in social
insurance programs on an equal level. What made the negotiations difficult was the
specific amounts payable to returnees, and the conciliation of different political inter-
pretations of the Heimkehrer across the political spectrum, from the very conservative
Center Party to the Communist Party. 16 The SPD proved to be a vital force in the
creation of the law, petitioning in the Bundestag and aggressively pushing the issue,
making sure that the government responded to all of the material demands. 17 As the
Heimkehrergesetz proved to be insufficient in a number of areas, amendments were
negotiated that came into effect in the fall of 1951. These extended coverage to internees
within the borders of the German Reich of 1938 and to West Berlin, increased the sums
paid, facilitated employment, and improved insurance coverage for the returnees. 18 What
the Heimkehrergesetz and its 1951 amendment failed to address entirely, however, was
the issue of compensation for the time spent in imprisonment and the labor performed.
The VdH used this as a rallying point, and was able to attract more members. “Precisely
because it was not linked to social need, the demand for compensation appealed to all
former POWs irrespective of their material situation.” 19 Considerable delay in creating
such legislation was caused by a simple lack of funding. A general compensation of all

16 Diehl, Thanks of the Fatherland, 102.
17 3. Sitzung des Ausschusses für Kriegsopfer und Kriegsgefangenenfragen [Third meeting of the
Committee for War Victims and POW Issues] (Bonn, 1949).
18 Kurt Draeger, Heimkehrergesetz: Kommentar und sonstiges Heimkehrerrecht [Returnees' Law:
Commentary and other returnees' legislation], 2nd ed. (Berlin [u.a.]: Vahlen, 1953), 2-5.
19 Biess, Homecomings, 111.

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labor performed in captivity—the VdH had initially lobbied for DM 1 per day of captivity—appeared undesirable for the government, which was “already burdened with the enormous outlays for war victims, LAG [Lastenausgleichsgesetz] recipients, and beneficiaries of other social legislation.”\(^{20}\) The increasing political clout of the growing membership of the VdH, the principal interest group for POW compensation, resulted in several proposals by the SPD in 1952 and early 1953; the governing CDU had planned on extending the existing Heimkehrergesetz to address compensation, but the pressure on the Bundestag increased in the summer of 1953, and the SPD bill for a compensation law, which closely followed a proposition by the VdH, was passed. “The impending elections (set for early September) made the outcome inevitable. Few deputies were willing to go on record as opposing the law, and it passed easily.”\(^{21}\) Even if the law, named Kriegsgefangenenentschädigungsgesetz (Law for the Compensation of POWs; KgEG) had been passed, it was not enacted for almost an entire year. A loophole installed in the text of the law allowed its promulgation to be postponed indefinitely based on the lack of funding, which meant that until the Finance Ministry approved the law, the KgEG would not be enacted. The VdH sent a letter to the Members of Parliament, writing

> It is inconceivable for the Verband der Heimkehrer that, even after the Bundestag urged the government again in the last plenary session to finally promulgate the law, the Federal Government ignores in such a manner against the legislation’s will. … It is with regret that the Returnees’ Association realizes the apparent misjudgment and abuse of the present decency and modest restraint displayed by the returnees. The VdH claims the successful prevention of all radicalization of returnees, which is a national-political achievement. The VdH’s executive committee awaits the future development [of the argument] with great worry…”\(^{22}\)

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\(^{20}\) Diehl, *Thanks of the Fatherland*, 172-173.  
\(^{21}\) Ibid., 173.  
Eventually, Finance Minister Fritz Schäffer gave in and promulgated the KgEG in January 1954, which compensated every month spent in foreign custody after January 1, 1947 and even allowed low-interest loans that would help returnees rebuild their economic existence.\(^{23}\)

With the basic material demands of the returnees fulfilled, the VdH was able to celebrate its greatest success, but subsequently faced an existential crisis, given that its essential mission—the fight for the recognition and compensation of returnees—was fulfilled. While the ensuing debate about the future of the association will be the subject of the next part of this chapter, it appears necessary to look at the motivations of the Federal Government to pass this law, which attributed veterans of the *Wehrmacht* the status of victims, similar to the victims of Nazi persecution and the victims of expulsion from the former German territories in Eastern Europe. The negotiation protocols of the German Bundestag reveal the argumentation—of the VdH, but also of the bill’s supporters—in favor of a compensation law. Any request for a compensation of POW labor from the Allies would have been futile. Therefore, it was understood as the task of the German government to provide for returnees and to compensate for their labor.\(^{24}\)

The German POWs have ... acted vicariously for the German people when they were coerced to complete work projects in a situation of heaviest physical and emotional deprivation, which cannot be measured in terms of their material value, and without adequate compensation by the country keeping them in custody. The parliamentary group of the FDP is of the opinion that these deprivations cannot be compensated with material advantages. We should feel obliged, however, to respond to the claim for compensation through a special law ... It is not only a political issue to integrate the released POWs as quickly as possible into the normal economic life, which is only unsatisfactorily accomplished by the

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\(^{23}\) “Gesetz über die Entschädigung ehem. deutscher Kriegsgefangener [Law about the compensation of former German POWs],” *Der Heimkehrer*, July 1953.

Heimkehrergesetz, but it is also our duty to repay part of our debts to these people.\(^{25}\)

Both motivations for the creation of a compensation law for returnees, economic reintegration and a sense of duty to acknowledge returnees’ forced labor, despite their origin from parties with quite opposed political views, demonstrate that the West German state felt a clear obligation toward returnees who had, as the government acknowledged, performed a service—essentially reparations—to the whole of Germany, which was ultimately impossible to be fully compensated. The KgEG was therefore not simply a response to the lobbying of the VdH; neither can it be seen as solely a material compensation for returnees comparable to the compensation legislation that the evolving social state granted to other victims groups or a measure to improve the standard of living of most of the working (or unemployed) population. The law has to be understood as the fulfillment of the West German state’s responsibility vis-à-vis those who suffered and worked for the country, making up for the suffering that Nazi Germany—the legal predecessor of the West German state—had inflicted on Europe. The KgEG was therefore fundamentally yet another compensation for the evil that National Socialism had created and for which the Federal Government took on responsibility.

**Japan: The Gun’onren and the absence of non-professional soldiers’ associations**

During the last months of the occupation of Japan, the initial policies of the military government were relaxed due to the evolving Cold War, which had caused the so-called “reverse course” in which a number of the initial democratizing policies were

\(^{25}\) Member of the Bundestag Margarete Hütter (FDP), Ibid., 10674.
reversed to the disadvantage of the political far left because of their association, true or alleged, with the Soviet Union, and due to the consequent necessity of having Japan as an ally in Asia rather than a former adversary. This shift in policy allowed, among many other things, the creation of veterans’ organizations. The first to form were groups of professional and high-ranking soldiers: the kaikōsha and the suikōkai, both established in 1951, were associations of former officers of the Japanese Army and Navy, respectively. Ultimately, these associations became the pool for the recruitment of personnel for the Reserve Police, from which the Japanese Self-Defense Forces were later created.²⁶ In the fall of 1952, a more inclusive veterans’ organization was founded, with the goal of reestablishing military pensions. Named Gun’onren, (short for Kyūgunjin kankeisha onkyūken yōgo zenkoku renrakukai; National Association of Former Soldiers and Military Affiliates for the Protection of Pension Rights), it constituted an interest organization rather than a veterans’ association (in which the common experience and the creation of community would have been in the foreground of the activities). In fact, the Gun’onren is seen as the one association that exerted most pressure on the Japanese government with regard to the reestablishment of military pensions.²⁷ Representatives of the association gained access to both Houses of the National Diet and were allowed to participate in the debates surrounding the reintroduction of the Pensions Law. The association’s argument was that the payment of lifelong pensions had been guaranteed for professional soldiers, and that it remained the obligation of the Japanese state as the

employer of the former armed forces to attend to this duty. The negotiations about the reintroduction of a Pensions Law were closely linked to the Law for the Support of the War Wounded and War Dead (Senshōbyōsha senbotsusha izoku nado engōhō, abbreviated Engōhō), which reestablished pensions for the persons wounded through the war and for the families of deceased servicemen in the spring of 1952. While the Prime Minister’s office had advocated the passing of the law, the Welfare Ministry’s concerns over the financing of the law had delayed its passing; however, the strong opposition of the American occupation authorities to the restitution of pensions also prevented the passing of legislation that would have benefited veterans and war wounded.

The negotiations for the Pensions Law (Gunjin onkyūhō; the name remained the same as the initial Military Pensions Law of 1875) were more difficult, as they involved more variables that had to be taken into account. It was decided early on that military rank and duration of service should not be part of the calculation because neither of them figured in the Engōhō, and because it would leave a poor impression on the populace and the international community.

The burden for the economy that the restitution of military pensions constituted remained in the consciousness of the legislators, and ultimately caused them to stop short of reestablishing pensions for all military personnel: conscripts, civilian employees of the Army and Navy, as well as former state officials associated with the military would not be covered by the law. With these two pieces of legislation, the Engōhō and the Gunjin onkyūhō, the Japanese acknowledged the war wounded, war bereaved, and the military as

having “a special status relationship with the country.” While this certainly does not imply a militarist nature or inclinations of the Japanese government of the 1950s, it can be considered an important step toward the acknowledgement of the service that these groups had provided to the country. It would be far-fetched to read an evaluation of the war into these laws that were first and foremost intended to provide material support to people who had lost their livelihood through the war—a livelihood that would have been guaranteed to them before the occupation abolished military pensions. On the other hand, much criticism existed in the Japanese population about the restitution of military pensions symbolizing the reestablishment of economic privileges. In fact, this criticism was unfounded because the majority of recipients of pensions under the Engohō were non-commissioned officers, sergeants, and professional soldiers, and the majority of recipients of pensions under the Gunjin onkyūhō were the families of deceased personnel and wounded and disabled men; therefore, the Engohō and the Gunjin onkyūhō actually benefited a similar clientele and served to secure a minimal standard of living for a destitute group of people. When the Gun’onren continued to work and even petitioned for increased rates, for the consideration of the numbers of years served and for factoring in service in dangerous locations, however, public criticism with regard to the movement increased. The three main points of criticism were the preferential treatment of veterans over other victims of the war; the exorbitant yearly cost of pensions, summarized under the slogan Onkyū bōkokuron, “National ruin through pensions argument;” and the reemergence and presumed political support of militarism. It appears, however, that the

32 Kimura, “Kyūgunjin shūdan.”
34 Ibid., 366-367.
35 Ibid., 369.
composition of the Gun’onren’s membership and subsequently the association’s goals triggered the criticism by the rest of the population, given that only the professional military was represented among its members. With more members from the general public—former drafted soldiers in particular—and a more inclusive agenda, the Gun’onren and its projects might have enjoyed more support among the general public.\textsuperscript{36} The Gun’onren was clearly a veterans’ association similar to the German Soldatenverbände—focused on military pensions for professional soldiers and on their employment relation with the state; they saw pensions as rightfully theirs to claim. It lacked the breadth among veterans of the Pacific War, despite the inclusion of veterans of earlier wars, to constitute a movement that would have represented a significant portion of those who fought in the Pacific War. Given that most of the members were at the level of NCO or below, the Gun’onren was certainly not elitist, and most likely not militarist in character, either; however, the lack of non-professional veterans among its membership also caused a lack in diversity—and ultimately reduced the association to an interest group that did little more than fight for their pensions, and remained insignificant for the issue of integrating former military personnel into civilian life.

To be sure, other veterans’ associations and more support associations existed in postwar Japan. Particularly during the late 1940s, a host of different mutual assistance organizations were founded; most of them existed on a local and geographically confined level, and many were at the same time professional associations that included veterans but focused more on economic and material issues than the engagement with the past.

\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., 371.
war. Only the numerous Repatriates’ (hikiagesha) associations possessed and retained some social significance during the decades after the end of the war. They served not so much the integration of hikiagesha into Japanese society, but rather as a means to rebuild communities that had been lost through the move back into Japan. While economic reasons were a predominant motivation to assemble in an effort to both secure assets in the former colonies and establish a new livelihood in Japan in the immediate postwar years, associations became more important for establishing communication with other repatriates and creating a meaningful public space for repatriates later.

“The greatest single aid in the social rehabilitation of the repatriate has been, as might be expected, the cohesive force exerted by the Japanese family.” Given the high value placed in the family by Japanese society, this was at the time a great achievement and a weakness of postwar society. The absorption of demobilized soldiers into Japanese society can therefore not be considered a collective and social effort, but a private one, in which the family provided the material, physical, and emotional environment that enabled the veterans’ return into civilian life. In that sense, the families of returning soldiers rendered a great service to the Japanese state: by taking care of the former soldier or soldiers in the family, they ensured their (more or less) smooth transition into civilian life, and into some socially constructed sense of “normalcy.” However, the economic situation particularly in the early postwar years did not allow for that normalcy to be established soon; the reports of black market activities, of prostitution, and of a host of

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37 F. W. Warner, “Repatriate Organizations in Japan,” *Pacific Affairs* 22, no. 3 (1949): 274-275. Warner refers to both military and civilian repatriates in his article, so his statement is applicable to demobilized soldiers.
40 Warner, “Repatriate Organizations in Japan,” 274.
criminal activities testify to that. Nevertheless, the ideal of the functioning family that served as an economic as well as moral center and stronghold of the individual undeniably existed within Japanese society, and must be seen as a strong force in the recreation of Japanese civil society. This significant role of the family is underscored by the family as a keeper of the memories and the experiences of repatriation and demobilization. A gap of knowledge existed between those parts of Japanese society who experienced repatriation and demobilization, and those who did not; as a consequence of this gap and of the complex political situation of postwar Japan, a discourse about repatriation and demobilization failed to evolve.\textsuperscript{41} Thus, not society but the Japanese family became the keeper of the memories of these experiences; as women were crucial in this process, the discourse about the integration of returnees—husbands, but also wives and entire families—was more or less limited to the points of interest of women’s magazines.\textsuperscript{42}

The support Japanese families provided during and after the return of their fathers, husbands, and sons into civilian life were significant and praiseworthy, and demand the highest respect. However, these efforts were limited, by the very nature of the family, to the private sphere, and could not result in the creation of a public space for veterans, nor in the establishment of a truly public discourse about them. While I do not question the social and public functions of the family, the absence of a truly public engagement with the return—physical, economic, and mental—of demobilized soldiers into civilian life means that their return was not processed by society, publicly; rather, it was only

\textsuperscript{41} Chisa Amano, “‘Kioku’ no chinsen to futatsu no ‘sengo’: hikiage, fukuin hyōshō to Saijō Yaso [The depth of memory and two ‘postwars’: The recognition of repatriation and Saijō Yaso],” \textit{Nihon Bungaku} 641, no. 55 (November 2006): 14.

\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., 18.
processed on the private level. The lack of veterans’ associations that focused on former drafted soldiers pertains to the same problem: while veterans were visible in society through associational activities such as the fight for military pensions, non-professional soldiers were not included in the discussion—neither were they included in the compensation, unless they had been wounded during the war. They were certainly not ignored; particularly during the early years of the occupation, media coverage about demobilized soldiers, though mostly without distinction between professional or drafted ex-soldiers, was plentiful and covered the whole spectrum of opinions from harsh criticism to the realization that their contribution to the rebuilding of Japan was vital. However, while the general perception of returnees improved during the first half of the 1950s, a large scale, consistent dialogue between the demobilized soldiers and the rest of society failed to develop, simply because an association that the demobilized could have used as a medium, or that could have provided representatives or spokespersons to conduct such dialogue, did not exist. It is both difficult and futile to think about why this was the case; most likely, both Japan’s social structure and lack of experience with civilian and democratic associations and a general lack of interest might have contributed to the failure to establish non-professional veterans’ associations. Maybe the simple wish to be a civilian and a general disillusionment with regard to the military experience were reason enough to turn the back on everything that would remind former soldiers of their war experience.

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43 As was lamented in ATIS, “Niigata Nippon.”
44 “Hikiagesha no enjo wo kyōka seyo.”
TOWARD A VETERAN IDENTITY

Germany: Veterans’ identity as POW identity

Despite the existence of numerous veterans’ associations after the establishment of the Federal Republic, the Verband der Heimkehrer remained the strongest and most attractive formation for former drafted soldiers, particularly because it consciously avoided military elements; however, this orientation did not exist from the inception of the VdH. After the KgEG had been passed, the association was in an existential crisis because it had achieved its material goals and was thus forced to redefine its mission and goals. Beginning in early 1954, the VdH probed the possibility of repositioning itself as a “soldiers’ association” (Soldatenverband) through a merger with several of the existing veterans’ associations, creating one general veterans’ association or at least an umbrella organization that would streamline the associations’ activities and connections to the Federal Government. The initial cause for this consideration was the fact that the Federal Government attempted to unify the existing veterans’ associations (excluding the VdH), providing funding as well as a relationship to the government, in order to be able to exert more control over them.46 The VdH feared to lose significance and members if other associations received government support, and an exchange of letters and a number of meetings between Wolfgang Gläser of the Federal Office for Press and Information (BPA) and members of the executive committee of the VdH ensued. In essence, the VdH threatened to halt the moderating influence on its members it claimed to continually exert,

46 Harold Boldt, “Aktennotiz: Besprechung mit MdB Kiesinger [Note: meeting with MP Kiesinger],” July 30, 1955, VdH B433/335, BA-MA. The back side of the document contains a note by Mr. Marcks, member of the Bundespresse- und Informationsamt (Federal Office for Press and Information, BPA), revealing the intention of the government, which was ultimately not realized.
and let them turn radical and against the government. The VdH also attempted to push forward the idea of a unified German veterans’ association, hoping to gain influence through its high membership; however, discrepancies in goals and visions precluded the creation of a unified veterans’ association or even an umbrella association. Ultimately, the bone of contention was funding: the Kyffhäuserbund as well as the Deutsche Soldatenzeitung, the publication of the Verband Deutscher Soldaten, received government support—and had to allow some government influence on the publications—and the VdH was eager to receive a piece of the pie, too.

In the course of 1955, the relationship between the VdH and the Federal Government eventually improved because the association had concluded not only its argument with the BPA, but also the internal debate about future goals, motivations, and course of action that had followed the successful passing of the Compensation Law. While the eventual return of all POWs and political pressure to achieve this goal remained the most important legacy of the VdH, the by-laws stipulated that the association should “activate the experience gained during the war, imprisonment, and return for the use of the entire German people and to foster the mutual understanding with its neighbors.” In an appeal, the VdH actively encouraged its members to discuss the future of the association and the significance of specific topics such as the limitation of its membership to veterans and their families, the reunification of the two German states, the participation in the political discussion about the reestablishment of a German

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50 “Grundsatzdebatte im Verband der Heimkehrer [Debate of the principles of the VdH],” Der Heimkehrer, September 1954, 3.
military, the topical cooperation with other associations, the cultural tasks of the VdH, and the participation of and work with women [Frauenarbeit] and with youth.\textsuperscript{51} What eventually emerged was a program that focused on the political education of the members by the leaders, using the experience of imprisonment as a unifying element that also underlined the redemption and the democratic attitude of the returnees.\textsuperscript{52} This is represented by the organization of the Mehlem Diskussionswochen, discussion weeks in the town of Mehlem (close to Bonn), at which around a dozen presentations were given by members of the executive committee of the VdH, politicians, and representatives of the cultural and economic realm. The topics ranged from the political situation of Germany and Europe after the war, social legislation, rearmament, the return of the remaining POWs, and the political responsibility of returnees, to more general introductions to law, military matters, history, and economy. The presentations were tailored to the audience—who came from all over the Federal Republic and had been chosen by their local branch to attend, in order to then present the material to their fellow members at home—and the sessions were structured in a way that allowed the participants to engage in discussions with the presenters and with each other. The slogan “We want to tell each other the truth” (Wir wollen uns die Wahrheit sagen) was meant to encourage attendees to engage in a dialogue with the presenters and each others, and symbolized the honesty with which the VdH’s civil education program was carried out.\textsuperscript{53} The VdH collected some of the reactions of participants, which confirm that the openness of the discussions and the honesty and critical approach of the speakers was much

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{52} Diehl, \textit{Thanks of the Fatherland}, 175.
\textsuperscript{53} Verband der Heimkehrer, Kriegsgefangenen und Vermisstenangehörigen Deutschlands e.V., \textit{Freiheit ohne Furcht}, 162.
appreciated by the audience, and that the educational message found its way to the base: “Particularly our call for the use of the experience of war, imprisonment, and return with the goal of [re]gaining the resigning war generation for the democratic development of the [Federal] Republic were expressed. … Ways were presented in which we can lead our members through political encouragement to [acknowledging their] share of responsibility in democracy without falling victim to party [or partisan] politics.”

“My personal opinion about Mehlem [is] that I have thoroughly revised my political indifference.”

“The responsibility that we have voluntarily committed to in the new bylaws [of the VdH] demands from us that we fulfill a duty for the German people that [still] has to be shown to us. Mehlem is the right place!”

Between April 1954 and June 1960, fifty-nine discussion weeks were held, most of them wholly or partly funded by the BPA. The possibility to influence or guide the choice of topics and thus the direction that the political education of returnees through the VdH would take was an important factor in the subsidies provided by the Federal Government. After the 1954 reorientation of the VdH, it claimed in an ever louder voice that the experience of war and imprisonment, virtually the double dose of totalitarianism (particularly with regard to imprisonment in the Soviet Union) and the resulting suffering, had thoroughly transformed the association’s members’ minds and installed in them the

54 Hans Clausen, “Bericht über die 7. Diskussionswoche in Mehlem [Report about the 7th discussion week in Mehlem].” April 30, 1955, VdH B433/384, BA-MA.
noblest democratic goals: freedom, peace, humanity, and political responsibility.\textsuperscript{58} Thus, the release of POWs into freedom and their homecoming constituted their legacy: to use the experience of captivity as their task to transform and enrich the Germany to which they returned.\textsuperscript{59} The irony lies in the contradiction between the claim that returnees were by virtue of captivity democratic and politically responsible, and the reality of the utter necessity of political education evident in the testimonials about the Mehlem discussion weeks.\textsuperscript{60} On the other hand, it is not unlikely that the contradiction was merely the result of the actual desire of the VdH’s leadership to educate returnees so the experience of war and captivity combined with the education provided through the VdH would make them peace-loving and democratic citizens. This might not have been part of the initial cluster of goals of the VdH; rather, it developed as a useful tool for the interaction with both the Federal government and returnees themselves. While in the beginning of the VdH, material demands—the provision for returnees and the return of all POWs still in captivity—had been in the foreground of its agenda and ideological issues were of secondary importance, the fulfillment of the material demands—the creation of two pieces of legislation specifically to accommodate *Heimkehrer*—and the efforts of the government in general and of Chancellor Konrad Adenauer in particular to secure the return of the remaining POWs from camps in the Soviet Union had necessitated this ideological shift in the goals (and the bylaws) of the VdH toward a more pedagogical role. The economic success led to the emergence of less tangible goals, after which the


\textsuperscript{59} v.L., “Entwicklung und Sinn des Gefangenenschicksals.”

\textsuperscript{60} Diehl, *Thanks of the Fatherland*, 176.
membership dropped steeply: returnees were less interested in this kind of associational activities, despite the participants’ support of the Mehlem Discussion Weeks. During the early years of the VdH, its leadership pursued a rather confrontational line vis-à-vis the government, pressing for material support and compensation. The inadequacy of the proposed and implemented legislation was taken by the association’s leadership as a ground to lobby for more and improved legislation; on the other hand, the evident successes were presented as the achievements of the VdH and not of the government. With the actual improvement of the economic situation of West Germany in general and of the returnees in particular, however, the VdH “had to face the fact that the very success of their organization threatened its future.” The shift to a more pedagogical role has therefore to be seen not only as a result of the material improvements brought forward by the general economic development and the legislation, but more important as a structural necessity that would serve to keep the association alive and justify its existence.

In essence, the demands of the VdH had been fulfilled only four years after its foundation. Had its goals been too narrow? I argue that was not the case. The official establishment of the VdH in 1950 was not its initial inception, but only the formal association of a number of different local and regional groups that had, broadly defined, similar goals: the material improvement of returnees, and the return of POWs still in captivity. The motives of the creation of the VdH were thus older than the association itself, and while not outdated, the association could not have foreseen how quickly the newly established Federal government would be able to tackle the socio-economic problems of its needy. The VdH’s lobbying served to speed up legislation, especially

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because its leaders continually threatened with the imminent radicalization of the members if the fulfillment of material demands were delayed. The tug-of-war that characterized the first four years of the association all but ceased with the creation of the KgEG; and after the VdH’s focus shifted to the democratic education of the members of the VdH, its relationship with the government dramatically improved. Government support and funding were made possible by this new convergence of aims, that is, by the VdH’s new goal to educate its members to become ideal citizens of the democratic Federal Republic.

It is, finally, significant to mention that the creation of a distinct “returnees’ culture” (Heimkehrerkultur) was not in the interest of the Verband der Heimkehrer, nor did it lie in the interest of the returnees themselves. Despite the attempts to portray returnees as men who had undergone profound transformations through the experience of captivity, and despite the returnees’ status as redeemed perpetrators and essentially victims of two totalitarian systems—National Socialism and Stalinist Communism—the VdH did not intend to create returnees as a separate social entity. On the contrary, by emphasizing that the experience of captivity had installed peaceful and democratic values in the POWs, the association’s leaders emphasized the links between returnees and the general population, and offered avenues to integrate returnees into civil society. The Mehlem education programs particularly served that purpose, defining the place of the “generation of returnees,” conveying to them the significance of democracy and the tasks associated with it. While these tasks were not specific to returnees but applicable to the entirety of the German population, or the population of any democratic country, given the

63 This attitude can be found, for example, in the report about a meeting with VdH executive director Werner Kiessling and secretary Harold Boldt: Drews, “Notiz für General Heusinger und Herrn Marcks.”
previous indoctrination particularly of soldiers, the creation of democratic education programs specifically for returnees had the potential to integrate returnees into democratic civil society more easily than would have been the case without these programs.

**Japan: Yasukuni Mondai**

An analysis of the development of a “veterans’ mentality” in Japan is difficult because of the absence of a large and inclusive veterans’ association that could have shaped such a consciousness. Further, it has been shown earlier that the returnees’ families bore the brunt of the work of helping them find their ways again in civilian life and civil society. In a manner similar to what happened in Germany, once pensions had been reestablished and the material bases covered, everyday life became more important than the experience of a past war. It appears, however, that the issue of the abolishment of public funeral services and commemoration, and what more recently has been termed the *Yasukuni mondai*, the Problem of Yasukuni Shrine, remained in the consciousness of veterans and their families as these were issues of great symbolic, cultural, and emotional importance, even if they did not necessarily agree on the issues.

During the Pacific War and before, it had been customary that the burial ceremonies and memorial services for the war dead were attended by a local official, in order to acknowledge publicly their service for the country. The Shōwa emperor himself attended a “solemn, and possibly final, rite for all the Japanese war dead who were as yet

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64 Unlike in Germany, the Japanese government did not create a legislation to compensate for time spent in captivity. Pensions were only reestablished for former professional soldiers, the war wounded, and bereaved families. See Chapter 2.
unidentified” in November 1945. The American occupation instituted the separation of state and religion and particularly the abolition of State Shintō, which was seen as one of militarism’s most fervent promoter, as well as the end of state sponsoring of Shintō through education and funding, with the issuance of the so-called “Shintō Directive” on December 15, 1945. The occupation further banned both public memorial services and the presence of officials at private ceremonies in November 1946; which caused “bereaved families and demobilized officers and soldiers to perceive that their service for the country was no [longer] acknowledged.” The policy was reversed in September 1951, though only verbally, in a “perfect volte-face” by the occupation’s Religions Division, which allowed the “‘appropriate commemoration’ of the war dead by the government”. The reversal was strongly criticized by Buddhist and Christian groups as well as the Religions League of Japan as being partial toward Shintō. However, even the reversal did not recreate the possibility for state funding for Shintō shrines, and the privatization of shrines and their grounds followed as a consequence of the initial occupation policy of freedom of religion and the abolition of State Shintō. On a small scale, this affected practically every community and the neighborhood associations (tonarigumi) into which practically all of Japan had been organized during the war, because shrines had to rely on private donations to cover their costs, and at times used the still existing structures of the tonarigumi to extort money. While this was illegal and reprimanded, the motivation especially of bereaved families to support Shintō shrines is

68 Takemae, The Allied Occupation of Japan, 381.
69 Ibid.
apparent in the ties between the emperor, in whose name the war had been fought and for whom soldiers had given their lives; deceased soldiers; and Shintō, which had provided the militarist and elitist rhetoric that had justified the war. To maintain Shintō shrines might simply have constituted a tangible link between dead soldiers and their surviving families. This connection is most apparent in Yasukuni Shrine, which had been established in 1869 in order to accommodate and honor the spirits of soldiers who died during warfare for the emperor. The shrine was, until 1945, a government institution. In Yasukuni Shrine, the souls of deceased soldiers of the Pacific War (and all previous wars since its foundation) are enshrined as deities (kami) and honored in the name of the emperor. During the first postwar decade, the shrine had not yet become controversial; rather, it constituted a rallying point for the Nihon Izokukai (Japan Society for the War Bereaved) and therefore a connection between the economically deprived bereaved families and veterans on the one hand and the imperial family on the other, given that an imperial princess served as president of the Yasukuni jinja hōsankai (Yasukuni Worshippers’ Society).70

The two controversial points about Yasukuni are the fact that war criminals have been enshrined along with other, non-convicted soldiers since 1959 (1,068 Class-B and C war criminals) and 1978 (fourteen Class-A war criminals); this symbolizes that the Tokyo Trials, in which these criminals were convicted, were rejected as victor’s justice, but also that the memory of other soldiers has since become tainted. The second point is the increasing number of visits of Japanese Prime Ministers and other officials which have caused diplomatic crises and rendered the international relations between Japan, China,

These issues were not present in the first postwar decade; at that time, Yasukuni shrine constituted a less contested spiritual entity that primarily served to mourn and honor the war dead. The narrative that Yasukuni has constructed in the decades since the end of the war appears at first glance somewhat simplistic: the soldiers “died embodying those hallowed imperial virtues of loyalty, patriotism and self-sacrifice. Their deaths were thus noble and honourable before they were ever tragic. The war, which created so many heroes, is by definition a heroic and noble undertaking.”

The existence of a smaller shrine, the Chūnrei shūgū (literally “the Spirit pacifying shrine”), renders the narrative more complex, as this small structure comprises one seat for the spirits of those military men who lost their lives in the revolutionary wars of the 1860s and 1870s; the other seat is dedicated to the enemies against which Japan fought. Therefore, Yasukuni can provide a much more ambiguous and complex interpretation of the war than is generally acknowledged—particularly by vexed Chinese and Korean politicians at the occasion of yet another Japanese Prime Minister visiting Yasukuni Shrine. The complexity of the war and the memory is further exemplified in the understanding of veterans. In the foreword of his recent book about the complexities of the “Yasukuni problem,” John Breen presents an anecdote about a conversation among veterans of a suicide squadron in the Japanese Navy after the spring ceremony at

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71 Mark Selden, “Japan, the United States and Yasukuni Nationalism: War, Historical Memory and the Future of the Asia Pacific,” Japan Focus, 2008, http://japanfocus.org/-Mark_Selden/2892 (accessed March 9, 2010). provides a good overview of the Yasukuni mondai. He also emphasizes that among the enshrined are several thousands of Koreans, Taiwanese, and Chinese who fought for the Japanese empire in the Pacific War, and whose families have been fighting to have their relatives’ souls removed from Yasukuni without success.


73 Ibid., 150.
Yasukuni Shrine, at a Kamakura restaurant. It was, as Breen clarifies, a conversation that they had every year.

‘It is no good to be alive’; ‘No, I wish I had died; I think so every year in March [at the Yasukuni ceremony]’; ‘No, that is an absurd thing to say.’

‘The Pacific war was a stupid war from start to finish’; ‘No, it was just a war; it was just war because it freed Asia from the shackles of British and American imperialism’; ‘That is an absurd statement. We were conned into fighting by the militarists; our comrades were victims of the militaristic Japanese state.’

‘One would have sufficed, but there was nothing; the emperor should have apologized to us for what we all had to endure; he should have said sorry.’ ‘No, that is absurd; leave the emperor out of it.’

The conversation, albeit held in 1987, demonstrates the awareness of these specific veterans about the controversies and contradictions surrounding the Pacific War. Nevertheless, they came to Yasukuni Shrine every year to mourn and honor the spirits of their deceased comrades.

**RETURNEOES – ADVOCATES FOR DEMOCRACY?**

While returnees definitely constituted a significant portion of postwar society and were very visible in postwar society, their claims for uniqueness did not go unchallenged. Critical voices in Germany warned that the experience of captivity should not be overestimated: “Today, I ask myself, ‘What permitted my assumption that—as I have to state, merely—the existence of external deprivation behind barbed wire should cause [such] a special transformation?’ The circumstances might assist [this transformation], but they are no prerequisite and certainly not a constraint.” On the other side, “the POW

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74 John Breen, “Foreword,” in *Yasukuni, the War Dead and the Struggle for Japan's Past* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), xiii.
has realized more than anybody else that his personal fate depends on the fate of his people, and that he consequently has to mind in a different and more intensive way the fate of this—his—society.”

Thus, while the experience of captivity did not necessarily or automatically transform returnees into picture-book pacifists and democrats, it had the potential to make the POW realize the necessity of political participation in order to influence his people’s fate in a way that would preclude further tragedy. Returnees did not create their own sub-culture (called *Heimkehrerkultur*, returnees’ culture), as some critics feared, nor did their associational and political actions subvert the democratic political systems of either country. In Germany, more than fifty members of the VdH ran for the *Bundestag* campaign of 1957; in 1960, forty-three returnees were members of the *Bundestag*, forty-seven sat in state parliaments, 436 were representatives of district parliaments, and 2682 were members of city and town parliaments. In Japan, a number of former higher military officials were voted into the government during the first half of the 1950s, with their political spectrum ranging from the conservative to outspokenly democratic. Did these men join the government in their role as former soldiers? Because their experience as POWs (if they had had any) had purified them from the militaristic spirit of the Imperial Japanese Army and the *Wehrmacht*? We have no way of

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75 Harald Ingensand, “Der Spätheimkehrer. Referat für die evangelische Akademie in Loccum in der Arbeitstagung "Geist und Technik im soldatischen Bereich" [The late returnee: Presentation at the protestant academy at the convention "Spirit and technology in the soldier's realm" in Loccum],” April 11, 1954, 9-10, VdH B433/385, BA-MA.
76 Verband der Heimkehrer, Kriegsgefangenen und Vermisstenangehörigen Deutschlands e.V., Landesverband Bayern, "Bericht zur Kulturarbeitswoche des VdH in Mehlem [Report about the cultural work week of the VdH in Mehlem],” November 1954, 9, VdH B433/83, BA-MA.
77 “Auf dem Weg zur Verantwortung: VdH stellt auch für den neuen Bundestag über 50 Kandidaten [On its way to responsibility: 50 members of the VdH candidates for the new Parliament],” *Der Heimkehrer*, September 10, 1957. All political parties were present among the candidates.
78 Verband der Heimkehrer, Kriegsgefangenen und Vermisstenangehörigen Deutschlands e.V., *Freiheit ohne Furcht*, 46-47. Neither statistic indicates the motivation or goals of the politically active returnees, nor if their identity as former soldiers influenced their political activities.
79 Wilson, “War, Soldier and Nation,” 195.
knowing, for most of these men, how important their military and post-military experiences figured in their decisions to actively participate in politics. The active participation of returnees who had occupied a wide range of military ranks during the war demonstrates, however, that returnees engaged in the political processes and dialogues and participated in democracy. They did not remain separate from the political space, or form alliances that worked to subvert the new governments of Germany and Japan. As this had been the case in Germany after the end of the First World War, a justified fear that demobilized soldiers, particularly of higher ranks, would develop similar tendencies existed particularly in the occupation forces, but also in the German and Japanese governments. This fear did not materialize, as is demonstrated by the presence of demobilized military personnel in the national, regional, and communal assemblies.

While my focus in this chapter has been on the associations that returnees formed, it appears necessary to emphasize the significance of the family. As I have mentioned earlier in the context of Japan, the family was the most important means of (re)integration, because its structures proved to be relatively stable in the insecurities and instabilities of the postwar years. The same can be said about Germany, where the conservative political parties emphasized the family as the core social element and pledged to support families in their politics. After the total mobilization for a total war followed the total demobilization, in which essentially all social structures were dissolved, because they had served to support the war. What remained was the family as the single social institution capable of reconstituting a cohesive social fabric. The contribution of the family to postwar

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reconstruction and to the integration of former soldiers into civilian life can therefore not be overestimated.\footnote{The role of the family Heinemann’s book mentioned in the previous note covers a lot of ground in this regard; yet the history of the role of the family in the reconstruction of postwar society still has to be written, for both Germany and Japan.}

The Frankfurt Institute for Social Research, part of the J. W. Goethe University, conducted a study in the name of the Federal Government’s \textit{Bundesministerium für Heimatdienst} about the political consciousness of returnees in the late 1950s. The study was based on group interviews with almost four hundred members of the VdH, conducted at the Mehlem Discussion Weeks. The project was intended to “explain the structures and motives of the perceptions and attitudes that have a relevant meaning for the position about the political present and past of former POWs united in the VdH” and discovered that few of the experiences made in captivity significantly influenced their political perceptions; rather, the socioeconomic standing of the individual proved of importance. Consequently, “a unified political consciousness of returnees does not exist.”\footnote{Ibid., 163-164. For the reaction of VdH president Werner Kießling about the study, see Werner Kießling, “Letter to Theodor Adorno, Institut für Sozialforschung,” April 7, 1960, VdH B433/17, BA-MA. In an internal note, Kießling called Adorno a “twilight sociologist and test technician.” 200 copies of the study were printed and distributed to research institutions, ministries, and members of the Bundestag; however, it was not made publicly available.} The VdH was from the beginning critical of the study and outright furious when the results testified that both the “realists” and the “idealists” within the studied groups questioned the realizations and effectiveness of the democratic state, and that most of the returnees had an essentially authoritarian disposition.\footnote{Institut für Sozialforschung an der Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität, \textit{Zum politischen Bewusstsein ehemaliger Kriegsgefangener}, i.} The difficulties that returnees had had after their return were generally not described as too difficult in the interviews, yet the \textit{Heimkehr} of POWs in general was perceived as a very difficult process materially and socially.

Statistics illustrate, however, that the specific difficulties that returnees encountered could
be solved relatively quickly.\textsuperscript{84} For example, fifteen percent of the interviewees said that
difficulties in their marriage after their return had not been solved; nineteen percent had
overcome the difficulties, and fifty-six percent had not experienced any difficulties at all.
Sixty-one percent of the questioned returnees found work within a period of six months
after their return, another fourteen percent within one year.\textsuperscript{85} A comparable study for
Japan has not been found, or might not exist due to the lack of a large returnees’
association. The statistics provided by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, however,
describing the staggering lack of housing, the need to provide shelter, food, and clothing
for incoming repatriates and medical assistance to a host of different sick and war
wounded people,\textsuperscript{86} lead to a similar conclusion, that is, that the differences between
returning POWs or demobilized soldiers and the civilian population of Germany and
Japan were not all that great.

If it is indeed the case that the economic and social situation of returnees was
similar to the situation of their civilian compatriots, if everybody was equally uprooted,
as I have suggested at the beginning of this chapter, then we have to rethink the idea of
reintegration. Reintegration is not possible when an entire society is displaced; uprooting,
migration, material scarcity and emotional distress and political reorientation affected the
entire populations of Germany and Japan. When demobilized soldiers returned home—or
to what used to be home—they could not be reintegrated because the social structures
were weakened to a point that necessitated first that social and economic structures be

\textsuperscript{84} Institut für Sozialforschung an der Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität, \textit{Zum politischen Bewusstsein
ehemaliger Kriegsgefangener}, 16.
\textsuperscript{85} Ibid., 20.
\textsuperscript{86} Tōkyōto, \textit{Tōkyōto sensaishi} [History of war damage in the Tokyo Metropolitan Area] (Tokyo: Tōkyōto,
1953), 519-526.
recreated. Returnees had to participate in this process of reconstruction, and they did so on the level of the family, economically, and also politically.

While the transformations of postwar society were profound, particularly in the political and the economic sector, it is significant to note that particularly returnees, demobilized soldiers, constituted a very tangible link with the past, serving as a constant reminder of the past war. Their presence and visibility in society, through associations, in politics as the object of legislation and as policy-makers, and their social and cultural presence in the media, in public discourse in general, and in particular among most people’s acquaintances (after all, there were few families whose father, sons, and brothers had not been soldiers), kept the war close in people’s minds—which caused Nakano Yoshio to write his article *Mohaya sengo de ha nai*, “It is no longer postwar,” “as a call for Japan to move on from a preoccupation with the war.”\(^{87}\) The same tendency can be seen in the debate about the redefinition of the VdH, and in the KgEG, which equally symbolized to a certain degree the coming to terms with the immediate past. Demobilized soldiers and their presence in postwar society therefore serve as a link between the war and the postwar, and a link across the 1945 divide that defies the concept of the postwar as a break with the past and a new beginning.

Veterans might not have been the best citizens of all; their war-time experience did not cause their across-the-board transformation into pure democrats. Veterans and their presence in postwar society, politics, and discourse, was a reminder of the war and its consequences, and at the same time a warning for the future that the democratic transformation needed to succeed. Their double role as perpetrators of the war and as victims of militarism, but also (at least in Germany) their discursive redemption through

\(^{87}\) Wilson, “War, Soldier and Nation,” 189-190.
the suffering in captivity\textsuperscript{88} is emblematic for the whole of postwar German and Japanese societies. This duality defined the politics of the postwar: at the time response and complement to occupation policies, the national governments’ policies demonstrated the consciousness of having to accommodate both the victims and the perpetrators of the war in order to establish a functioning society. The establishment of support structures for those who had experienced material or immaterial losses can be seen, for example, in Germany in the \textit{Lastenausgleichsgesetz}, the \textit{Heimkehrergesetz}, and the creation of a ministry for Displaced Persons, Refugees and War Victims; and in Japan in the “Atomic Bomb Survivors Relief Law,” and the afore-mentioned \textit{Engohō} and \textit{Gunjin onkyūhō}. On the other hand, the long-term accommodation with perpetrators can be seen in the efforts of the German Federal Government to attain the release of all war criminals detained abroad, in Japan in the inclusion of war criminals in Yasukuni Shrine, and in general in the creation of national narratives of suffering and in the recreation of professional militaries.

Returnees possessed a stronger voice—and made it heard, too—in Germany than in Japan. While it is difficult and speculative to think about why this might be the case, the mindset in which they were received by their contemporaries certainly played an important part in the will to associate and to maintain a common identity as veterans. In Germany, the discourses about redemption based on the suffering as POWs particularly in Soviet camps facilitated the association process, because it enabled the veterans to portray themselves as victims and to emphasize their merits—in the form of forced labor—vis-à-vis their country. In Japan, the media published quite extensively about atrocities committed by Japanese soldiers, such as violence against Chinese civilians and

\textsuperscript{88} Biess, \textit{Homecomings}, 228-229.
the rape of Manila in 1945, which appalled the Japanese public and created a hostile environment toward returnees.\textsuperscript{89} In Germany, the \textit{Wehrmacht} retained its untarnished image until Daniel Goldhagen and the \textit{Wehrmacht} exhibit shattered it in the late 1980s and 1990s. In Japan, the Imperial Army was blamed for defeat and atrocities, which would have lowered former soldiers’ motivation to form veterans’ associations. By dissociating themselves from the military, Japanese drafted soldiers sought the return into civilian life and the family rather than pursuing the avenue of lobbying for legislation and compensation. In Germany, National Socialism and its military wings, the SS and SA, were held responsible for the atrocities committed across Europe and the killing of six million Jews, gypsies, and other racially “undesirable” people in Concentration Camps. Denazification procedures made clear that Nazism was the evil that had to be uprooted. In Japan, militarist and ultra-nationalist inclinations could not be discovered by checking for the membership in a political party; rather, militarism in general was declared to be at the root of aggressive expansionism. Therefore, the image of the military after the war appears to have been a decisive factor in the use of the experience of former soldiers as a means to attract political and social attention, to position themselves in society, and to recreate their identities within the new German and Japanese states.

\textsuperscript{89} Dower, “An Aptitude for Being Unloved”; ATIS, “Demobilized Soldiers.”
CONCLUSION

Based on sheer numbers, returning soldiers were a significant group of people: At the end of the war, eleven million German and seven and a half million Japanese soldiers and sailors had been taken prisoners by the Allies, and were gradually released during the following years. For most, captivity only lasted two or three years or even less, but several thousands of them could only return home after a decade or more of Soviet captivity. Both in Germany and Japan, the heterogeneity of the demobilized soldiers makes it difficult to evaluate them as a group, and to evaluate their thoughts and actions. For this reason, this dissertation mostly deals with demobilized soldiers as objects of policy-making, in the space between the American occupation and the Japanese and German governmental and administrative bodies. Both were faced with the great and unprecedented challenge of entirely transforming countries of defeated authoritarian ultra-nationalism into peaceful and stable democracies that would eventually—in the developments accompanying the Cold War—become allies against the newly emerging enemy, communism. Japan and West Germany were therefore important for the United States, and for the rest of the Allies, as significant international players to have on one’s side. Using sources from various archives in Germany and Japan, this dissertation has shown that although punishment was part of the American occupation policy, the more forward-looking goals of reconstruction and democratization evolved as being more important during the years of occupation.

The first chapter emphasized that the most important goals of the American occupation in Germany and Japan were demilitarization and democratization. The
abolition of industrial capacity usable for military purposes and the removal of outspoken militarists from influential positions in politics, the economy, and society were essential components of the policy of demilitarization. However, demilitarization affects, first and foremost, the military forces. Thus, the German Wehrmacht and the Japanese Imperial Forces were, at least theoretically, at the center of demilitarization policies. In practice, however, few specific policies with regard to the German and Japanese military forces were created by the American occupation.

The unprecedented task of demobilization was rendered difficult in Germany through the necessary coordination of all measures with the commanders of the other three occupation zones, and in both countries through the utter destruction and disruption of every aspect of civilian life. Adding to the logistical difficulties related to withdrawing the troops and rebuilding the occupied counties was the rather unexpected confrontation of the Allies with millions of German and Japanese soldiers that were to be demobilized. Despite all the wartime planning at and beyond international conferences during the war, no definitive plans had been established on the actual disbandment of the Axis militaries. It had been agreed upon that the Axis militaries should be abolished and Germany and Japan rendered incapable of waging aggressive war ever again, but blueprints for the implementation of this demobilization were not created during the war. The result was that the bulk of the German Wehrmacht had to be held in makeshift camps that, for weeks after surrender until ad-hoc demobilization procedures were established, consisted of little more than fallow land and fields enclosed by barbed-wire fences. In Japan, demobilization plans had been created during the war, to prepare for the expected victory
of the Japanese Empire. After its defeat, the Allies happily used these plans to dissolve the Japanese Imperial Army and Navy.

The use of German and Japanese prisoners of war for labor in a host of different countries further testifies to the chaotic situation in 1945 and 1946: although prohibited by the Geneva Convention of 1927, many countries perceived POWs as a convenient source of much-needed cheap labor and a form of rightfully deserved reparations. Further, they abused the unprecedented international situation of concluding a war with occupation and loss of sovereignty of Germany and Japan (rather than with a peace treaty) to circumvent the Convention.

In Japan, demobilization was mostly complete by the end of 1947, despite grave difficulties associated with bringing soldiers back from the Pacific islands and the Asian mainland, and despite the fact that as many civilians as soldiers had to be repatriated from Asia in what is best described as imposed decolonization. In Germany, the implementation of the release of all military personnel dragged on until the end of 1948, mainly because of the use of POWs for labor. No central authority existed in Germany that could have put pressure on the governments who held POWs, or which could have coordinated the return of demobilized soldiers. Similar to the Japanese civilians returning from China, Manchuria, and Korea, millions of Germans were expelled from Eastern Europe; however, their status as expellees indicates that their return to Germany was characterized by the chaotic situation of postwar Europe rather than the comparatively orderly repatriation organized by the Japanese government.

In sum, the first chapter, by describing the difficult logistical and legal situation following Germany’s and Japan’s defeat, set the stage for the dissertation by asserting the
manifold unexpected situations that confronted the American. The combination of the ideological goals of the occupation, demilitarization and democratization, which had been established over the long course of wartime planning, with the realities of the postwar situation, proved difficult to say the least. Hence, the atmosphere of improvisation and of creativity during demobilization, embodied in SCAP lacking plans of its own and allowing the Japanese demobilization plans to be implemented, was indicative of the policies of the occupation, but also the national governments, with regard to returnees.

Once demobilized soldiers arrived home, they were considered demobilized. The occupation administration banned military pensions, taking away many professional and conscripted soldiers’ livelihood, as well as state support for bereaved families. Aside from the cutting of military pensions, no occupation measures exclusively targeted demobilized soldiers. A number of occupation policies such as reeducation, denazification (in Germany), and the purge of militarists from public office affected them; yet these policies were geared toward the entirety of the German and Japanese population and not devised specifically for demobilized servicemen. Not even re-education measures were devised solely for former soldiers, which is surprising given the level of indoctrination to which they had been subjected. This apparent gap between the umbrella policy of demilitarization and the lack of specific policies with regard to demobilized military personnel is striking. This reflects again the occupation’s lack of preparedness and its inadequate staff: both SCAP and OMGUS were too small to govern effectively and had to rely on national, in Germany local and regional administrations.

The alienation of Germany and Japan was explicitly to be avoided. The Allies had learned from the German interwar years that severe punishment and international
isolation could lead to the very development of ultra-nationalism and authoritarianism that had caused the Second World War. Further, with militarism at the root of German Nazism and Japanese Fascism, the policy of demilitarization was the most prominent and also the one most coherently implemented. Therefore, Allied policies with regard to demobilized soldiers displayed some level of ambiguity, combining demilitarization with the avoidance of too harsh policies.

The German state governments and the zonal administration in the American occupation zone created advisory bodies for POW issues that spent much effort and thought in achieving the equal positioning of returnees in terms of housing, finding work, and insurance matters. In Germany’s highly regulated and astoundingly bureaucratic postwar administrative landscape, returning demobilized soldiers lamented that despite their time spent in captivity for Germany, they were now treated as if it were their own fault that they had come “too late.” The offices for POW issues therefore worked to achieve that returnees would be on par with other needy Germans applying for housing, food stamps, and medical rehabilitation treatment.

In Japan, the Bureau of Repatriate Welfare, part of the Welfare Ministry, was responsible for the provision for and care of returnees, both military and civilian. The government publications with regard to the Bureau’s activities and achievements and other elements of public welfare mostly do not clearly distinguish between the recipients of their work; therefore, it is very difficult to determine what the needs of returnees were, and how the Bureau responded to them. The few numbers that explicitly mention returnees indicate, however, that they were targeted by relief measures; just the scope is all but impossible to determine.

1 Diehl, Thanks of the Fatherland, 54-5.
The second chapter of this dissertation contrasted the lack of occupation measures with the efforts made by the national and regional administrations with regard to demobilized soldiers. Material and structural difficulties notwithstanding, former soldiers received material support in various ways in order to facilitate their integration into postwar society and, perhaps at least equally important for the national governments, into the economic system. At the same time that the German and Japanese administrations were establishing measures of assistance for demobilized soldiers, other groups of victims also clamored for support. The most important difference between demobilized soldiers and other groups of victims was the ambiguous status of demobilized soldiers as both victims and perpetrators of the wartime regimes. While returnees definitely competed for material support in the initial postwar years, it would be misleading to claim that they competed on a more ideological level for victim status. Rather, they sought equal footing with other civilians, as well as sufficient material support to reestablish their livelihood. In this competitive situation, the ambiguous status of demobilized soldiers becomes evident: the occupation banned military pensions but otherwise hardly dealt with returnees at all, whereas the regional and national administrations tried to accommodate the most pressing material needs of all of its citizens. For the occupation, returnees clearly constituted perpetrators, while for the regional and national administrations, they were a political and economic asset, in a more forward-looking (rather than retributive) way.

The German efforts to support returnees culminated in the creation of two pieces of legislation for returnees in 1950 and 1951: the Returnees’ Law (Heimkehrergesetz) and the Compensation Law (KgEG). These laws ensured administrative support for finding
work and housing, returnees’ admittance to social insurance programs on an equal footing with non-returnees, and monetary compensation for forced labor in captivity after January 1, 1947. The lobbying of the large German Returnees’ Association increased the political clout of demobilized soldiers in the Bonn government; however, the association’s importance ebbed away after these two legislative successes.

Unlike in Germany, no large lobby existed in Japan to pressure the government to enact a law for compensation. Former drafted and low-ranking professional soldiers did not associate on a large scale, and did not attempt to put their material plight before the government. Former professional soldiers’ associations attained the reenactment of the pensions law; pensions for bereaved families were also reestablished. The absence of large-scale veterans’ associations in Japan has been explained with the retreat of demobilized soldiers into private life; a choice which appears all the more convincing given that captivity as a POW had been heavily stigmatized in Japan.

In the third chapter, I analyzed in some depth the issues of uprooting, reintegration, and veterans’ identity. Specifically, I argued that not even in Germany, where the veterans’ association boosted almost half a million members at its zenith, did a “returnees’ culture” take root. Even if we take the Association’s efforts at political education seriously and appreciate the inherent value of convincing former POWs that their experience had in fact transformed them into peace-loving democrats, the members of the association (not its leadership) were mostly interested in the improvement of their own material situation. The decreasing membership after the KgEG confirms that thesis.

In Japan, veterans’ identity is much more difficult to locate. I have chosen to use the location of Yasukuni Shrine to demonstrate some of the elements of veterans’ identity,
even if the shrine is highly contested both nationally and internationally. Yasukuni Shrine is the place where the spirits of the war dead are enshrined. It is, therefore, among the most important places for remembrance in Japan, and a place of assembly for bereaved families as well as survivors of the Pacific War during and beyond the yearly shrine festival.

The place of the family and the retreat into private life is an important feature in Japanese and German society. In Japan, veterans’ association failed to come into being because of the social significance of the family. In Germany, the family and associations existed side by side, with the family being stylized as the core social institution of the state (evidencing conservative politics). The total mobilization—of all parts of society—was thus followed by a total demobilization and the return of the demobilized to the private sphere. Hence, a returnees’ culture did not materialize, nor did demobilized soldiers emerge as a threat to democracy or social stability.

The theme of uprooting, which is central to the third chapter, provides the explanation for this phenomenon. In essence, the entirety of German and Japanese society was uprooted in some way after the end of the war. Therefore, the reintegration of returnees was rendered impossible; instead, they had to contribute actively to the recreation of civil society. Returnees were a constant reminder of the war; their presence in postwar society constituted an important element of reconstruction because it included the elements of defeat and responsibility, elements that postwar society succeeded in pushing ever further away over time.

The seemingly natural transfer of the millions of demobilized soldiers from the care of the war ministries to the oversight of a host of civilian administrative offices,
none of which was truly in charge of demobilized soldiers, and none of which was solely in charge of them, and all of which had to take care of many more people, has been an unexpected finding for the curious and unsuspecting graduate student that I was, searching for archival material for my topic. If demilitarization was the most important occupation policy, and if the workforce of demobilized soldiers was needed to rebuild the economy, I thought, more specific and tangible policies for returnees—for their reintegration in the work force, for reeducation, for their readjustment to civilian life—should have been created, according to my expectations. The reintegration of demobilized soldiers would have required the concerted effort of the occupation, the administration, and the German and Japanese population in order to be successful, and in order to prevent the alienation and exclusion of returnees from those parts of the populations that remained at home during the war, or so I thought. The process of writing this dissertation and to make sense of the archival documents forced me to rethink these preconceptions on a number of levels.

No reintegration was possible because of the extent of destruction and uprooting caused by the war. An intact society that would have been able to absorb ex-servicemen, to facilitate their return, and to help them overcome their physical, psychological, and social difficulties, simply did not exist. The Second World War had been a total war in which all parts of the population had been mobilized for the war effort—able-bodied men on the front, women and girls in factories and hospitals, children in their education; different kinds of associations through exerting power and ensuring conformity, etc.—and therefore, not only the military forces needed to be “demobilized,” but the entirety of German and Japanese society. Obviously, this did not involve a formal process, nor
would such formalities have been necessary. Associations were dissolved, factories producing for the war closed down and their employees laid off, school textbook passages blacked out until new books were available, and the military dissolved. Demobilization and the return of ex-soldiers was only one of many profound changes that the American (and Allied) occupation(s) initiated. The sum of these changes, combined with the destruction and disruptions that the war and defeat had caused constitute the backdrop of the uprooting described in Chapter 3, which ultimately precluded the reintegration I had assumed when formulating my topic. Given the frequency with which the smooth reintegration of returnees was mentioned by German and Japanese sources as the goal of official efforts, however, it is obvious that the return of demobilized soldiers was indeed seen as a crucial process in postwar Germany and Japan.

Reintegration was not possible because German and Japanese society were in a process of such profound transformation that reintegration—in the sense of the absorption of returning soldiers into the existing social structures—was not possible to begin with, at least not in the formative years between the end of the war and the beginning of the Cold War.\footnote{For reasons of simplicity, I am assuming the Korean War as the starting point of the Cold War, because it constitutes its first military manifestation in Asia; in Europe, the creation of the two separate German states in the fall of 1949 should serve as a more tangible starting point than the rising tensions caused by the exchange of diplomatic notes.} Many of the returnees had no home to return to in the first place. The social fabric of both countries was deeply disturbed by the various effects of the war: the prolonged separation of the male from the female members of the population through conscription, and the destruction of human life both at the military and the home fronts through warfare; the strategic bombing of cities and the ensuing destruction of private (family) space; and the enlargement of warfare to total war, which entailed the
militarization of the civilian population and the influence of the state into people’s private lives through the penetration of society with state-sponsored and state-controlled associations—such as the tonari-gumi (neighborhood associations) in Japan and the Hitler Youth or the Frauenschaft (Women’s League) in Nazi Germany.  

Returning ex-soldiers could not be reintegrated into an existing social fabric; rather, the return of veterans enabled the recreation of the social fabric that had been damaged by the war. The efforts of the German and Japanese administrations were geared toward the integration of demobilized soldiers who were returning from deployment or from POW camps into the ranks of all of those who reconstructed society. The administrations’ achievement was not the reintegration of veterans into an existing, stable society, but the negotiation with the occupation forces—direct or indirect—that the veterans be on an equal footing with the rest of Japanese and German society in the reconstruction of the country and the society. The situation of the German and Japanese government also elucidates the impossibility of reintegration: with the loss of national sovereignty, all German administrative structures were abolished, and only rebuilt gradually, helped by the American realization that an occupying power was not in a position to meaningfully replace a national government. In Japan, the government remained in place, but the ministries that would have been in charge of the former military were disbanded little by little, leaving no specific institution in place to take care of returnees. The support that returnees received from the offices for POW issues in Germany, and from the Demobilization and Welfare Ministries in Japan, is therefore an indication for the

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\(^3\) Yamanouchi describes total war as an acceleration of the development of societies from a class structure to what he calls a “system society,” a society characterized by functionality and based on an enforced homogeneity with the end of uniting national strength in order to conduct total war. He also argues that the system society remained intact after the end of the war, and that most societies involved in the war reshaped their societies that way. Yamanouchi, “Total-War and System Integration,” 3-5.
ambiguous nature of demobilization in general and the undefined status of demobilized soldiers in German and Japanese postwar societies in particular. The German offices possessed an astounding degree of autonomy and were remarkably active during their existence between 1947 and 1952; on the other hand, their efforts were limited to the communication with other ministries, and to the never-ending call upon the local offices to treat returnees with respect and sympathy. Given that the possibilities for material support were limited during the first postwar years in any event, there was not much that the offices for POW issues could do, except calling for the equal treatment of returnees and condemning the disadvantages that inevitably ensued their delayed return after the war. In Japan, the Demobilization Ministries, created from the reduced War Ministries, were only responsible for the process of demobilization—transportation to reception centers, provisions and medical treatment in the facilities, and provisions for the way home. Once they had arrived home, returnees were considered “demobilized” and treated as civilians: they received material and medical support via the same channels as other civilians, and were essentially left alone in arranging themselves with their new situation.

From the initial goals of the occupation, demilitarization and democratization, followed the occupation’s policies with regard to demobilized soldiers. These were not clearly formulated in the overall policies, at least not beyond the physical demobilization of the military forces. Demobilized soldiers and returning POWs were not explicitly targeted in most of the occupation’s policies; once demobilized, they were considered significant enough to be denied state support as a group—which could be seen in the cutting of pensions and the abolishment of veterans’ organizations—yet not threatening
enough to warrant summary punishment or more thorough measures than the background checks carried out at the discharge camps. It would have been impossible from a logistical point of view to implement a summary punishment of the entire military forces, let alone the whole German or Japanese nation; besides, the changes that were effected through the occupation were intended as a combination of punishment and, in the light of the developing Cold War, a contribution to reconstruction and thus as a protection from the influence of Communism. This meant for returnees from the war fronts the same as for the home front: the task to rebuild the country. Depending on the point in time of return, on the individual’s background, and on his family and economic situation upon his return, this task and its success could turn out very differently. Nevertheless, the process of *integration* was, and in fact needed to be, an active one on the part of returnees, as they contributed to the recreation of civil society—a civil society that had ceased to exist during the wartime regimes due to the mobilization of all parts of society for “total war,” and the creation of which was very much in line with the democratization that the Allies, and specifically the United States, sought to create through their occupation. Postwar German and Japanese civil societies have to be understood therefore as a concerted effort of the occupation and the native governments, along with all parts of the German and Japanese populations. The long-national goals, of course, differed from each other, but the ultimate outcome of the Japanese and the German states as they existed during the 1950s can be understood as the consensus, or the common denominator, of the occupation and the indigenous forces the occupation allowed and supported during the postwar years.
The research presented in this dissertation has confirmed that the return of former military men after the Second World War was indeed a difficult process that was not taken lightly by the local and national governments, nor by the occupation governments. It has further demonstrated how the occupation’s and the national and regional governments’ policies with regard to demobilized soldiers show that these institutions were well aware about the importance of the returnees’ current and future role in society. It was not a process of reintegration that returnees underwent upon their return to Germany or Japan; rather, I would like to term it (re)integration. Neither in Japan nor in Germany could the demobilized soldiers return to an established, functional civil society. What demobilized soldiers returned to was a society that had yet to be reestablished, and which depended on the returnees’ contributions; therefore, we cannot term their return a reintegration. The returnees were absorbed into postwar societies characterized by reconstruction and a discourse about how to deal with the legacy of the war. In this sense, their ambiguous status as victims and perpetrators of militarism and, more generally, war, constitutes a starker version of the entire German and Japanese population, among which existed victims and perpetrators as well. The occupation’s and the national governments’ efforts to facilitate the return of former soldiers into civil society and the parallel effort to prevent the strengthening of their supposed political disposition toward militarism resulted in the initially surprising lack of specific measures with regard to returnees, and in the absence of public offices specifically focusing on the care for returnees. The policies of demilitarization, however, the scarcity of resources, and the need for the returnees’ participation in reconstruction serve to explain this lack of measures and absence of specific offices for returnees: they emphasize the situation of uprooting of the
entire societies of Germany and Japan, and mark the creativity necessary to face such a situation.4

The demobilization of military personnel after the Second World War was unique in its scale, form, and political nature. Demobilization resulted in the existence of an enormous yet heterogeneous social group in German and Japanese postwar societies whose roles and tasks remained largely undefined in the initial situation of defeat. However, the above-mentioned creativity and the drive to improve the material situation can be counted as the strongest motivations for the returnees’ contribution to reconstruction. The shared experiences of warfare and life in the military, and of captivity and return, ultimately did not suffice to establish a community of veterans with a meaningful role in postwar society beyond material demands. Once the demands for pensions and compensation were responded to by the governments, veterans’ associations lost the significance they had initially enjoyed when they represented the massive plight of the demobilized soldiers. This was particularly visible in Germany, where the membership of the VdH dropped sharply after the passing of the KgEG (the POW Compensation Law), notwithstanding the massive efforts that the VdH made for political education of veterans and the suggestion that the experience of captivity had caused the fundamental transformation of veterans to peaceful democratic citizens. In Japan, the movement for the reestablishment of pensions never had as many followers as the VdH, mainly because its lobbying never included conscripts. Given how unthinkable captivity

4 Despite the level of physical destruction, the uprooting, and the complete political overhaul in Germany and Japan in 1945, I profoundly doubt the applicability of the concept of Stunde Null in either of the two countries. Rather, I would argue that notwithstanding the profundity of the changes that the postwar brought, most of these changes were effected gradually and not overnight. In the perspective of the contemporaries, however, I am certain that the end of the war brought about a perception of the possibility of a new beginning. In this sense, the Stunde Null constitutes a valuable approach.
was for soldiers—and the public—until the end of the Pacific War, the absence of large and inclusive veterans’ associations that would have emphasized the purifying and redemptive experience of captivity is logical.

Unlike in the German interwar years, a veterans’ culture developed neither in Germany nor in Japan after the Second World War, and militarism did not reemerge as a characteristic of the group of demobilized soldiers, regardless if they had been professional or drafted. Demobilized soldiers were important participants in the process of reconstruction, and unlike in Germany after the First World War, they actively contributed to reconstructing the newly established democratic frameworks instead of hampering and undermining it. The all-encompassing defeat and social uprooting were important factors for this behavior, as were the pervasive material difficulties that affected all of Germany and of Japan. Therefore, the scale of defeat and destruction, along with the ideological motivation of the occupation and the profound discrediting of the wartime regimes served to assure the cooperation of demobilized soldiers in the reconstruction of Germany and Japan. Demobilized soldiers did not remain apart from the rest of society, and the ultimate failure of veterans’ associations in the long run is an indication for the successful integration of returnees into civil society—and the prevention of the establishment of a veterans’ sub- or counterculture.

Demobilized soldiers constituted significant contestants in Germany’s and Japan’s national public discourse in the first postwar decade, as they were victims and perpetrators at the same time. In a public discourse that was increasingly dominated by

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5 By no means do I wish to imply that total destruction and defeat necessarily results in winning the support of the defeated. Rather, the argument at hand refers to the First World War, when conspiracy theories flourished after a negotiated surrender and not, as in 1945, complete military defeat. These theories greatly enhanced the politically subversive activities of militarists in the interwar years.
victimization and redemption, in an international setting in which Germany’s and Japan’s role as perpetrators shifted with the evolving Cold War to allies of the non-Communist world, demobilized soldiers were the group that nevertheless constituted a link to the military past. Yet despite its personified ambiguity and multi-faceted nature, demobilization and the (re)integration of the demobilized has not received the deserved attention in the manifold historical examinations of the postwar era. Historians of the postwar have increasingly analyzed “the postwar,” although often times the decade or half-decade immediately following the end of the war is spared. They have used lenses that have not been used before, social groups and categories that enable more critical, more accurate, and more multi-faceted analyses of postwar history than the more traditional approaches—political, economic, military, top-down. By examining gender, youth, media, memory, and the forms and contents of artistic and cultural expression, a more colorful and more complex picture emerges. Demobilized soldiers have made an appearance in a number of recent national studies, but so far, no larger work has addressed the issues of demobilization and (re)integration focused on in this dissertation. My study therefore constitutes one more piece in the jigsaw puzzle of postwar history; a contribution to the color and complexity that characterizes postwar society. Demobilized soldiers do not constitute the ultimate approach to postwar history, but they serve to demonstrate the persistence of the war in the postwar, and the practical meaning of Vergangenheitsbewältigung. The examination of youth, music, or involuntary migrants serves a similar purpose; that is, examining postwar history while not losing sight of the

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6 Moeller, War Stories, ch. 4; Trefalt, Japanese Army Stragglers, ch. 4.
8 Poiger, Jazz, Rock, and Rebels; Monod, Settling Scores.
9 Watt, When Empire Comes Home.
intertwined theme of the war. The legacies of the war constitute the most important feature of the postwar; through the process of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, through confrontation and consciousness,\(^\text{10}\) and through the shedding of the binaries of victimhood and perpetration,\(^\text{11}\) the creation of national identity aware of this past is made possible. The demobilized soldiers of Germany and Japan were not more or less apt in coming to terms with their past than their civilian compatriots. Yet by embodying the antipodes of having suffered and having inflicted suffering, they were required to process this contradiction more than those who were able to classify themselves more easily in one of the two categories—if not publicly, then at least for themselves. My dissertation has not been able to get to this level of analysis, if it is at all achievable. However, the inherent contradiction of victimhood and perpetration embodied in demobilized soldiers, and the sometimes opposing, sometimes complementing measures of the occupation and the national governments with regard to the demobilized have allowed me to maintain a perspective that bridges the war and the postwar.

What have we gained from the inclusion of two countries, of Germany and Japan, in this dissertation? By avoiding direct comparison and emphasis on similarities and differences, I have inevitably explained the various topics of this dissertation separately, shifting my focus back and forth between Germany and Japan. However, at times I have shown parallels of particularly stark contrasts, and the sections of this work dealing with both countries at the same time have made clear the larger, transnational picture of

\(^{10}\) Theodor W. Adorno, “Was bedeutet: Aufarbeitung der Vergangenheit [What means: Working through the past],” in *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 10 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1977), 555-7. Germans, attested Adorno, were unable to come to terms with their past.
\(^{11}\) Moeller, *War Stories*, 198.
demobilization and (re)integration. As this is a historical dissertation, the goal of this dissertation is not to make sweeping generalizations or to offer readily applicable solutions aiding the processes of demobilization and integration in the aftermath of past, current, or future armed conflicts. Rather, to examine a particular set of topics—demobilization and (re)integration of former soldiers—in two different countries yields more than the sum of its parts. It allows a broader, yet more nuanced perspective that shows the possibilities, motivations, and limitations of the players of postwar history more clearly than national history. Further, the perspective also enables an evaluation of the developments that have resulted from particular national conditions, and thus allows us to reach more informed conclusions about the rationales and reasons behind decisions, while also highlighting that there can be no universal recipe, as shown by the different measures undertaken by occupation forces belonging to the same allies, and the different national responses to demobilized soldiers. It permits the simultaneous evaluation of historical processes in different locations, which then leads to larger, more general conclusions not only about the specific topic in a particular place, but on a higher, trans-national level. This enhances our understanding of the overall workings of post-World War Two demobilization and (re)integration and permits a more faceted interpretation of occupation history under U.S. auspices, the democratization process, and the situation of demobilized soldiers in defeated postwar countries. Finally, the trans-national approach goes beyond the socially constructed\textsuperscript{12} national boundaries that are being carefully maintained by historians and other scholars, even if many historically relevant issues often transcend the borders of the nation state: gender, identity, culture, religion, and

artistic expressions, to name just a few. My dissertation, therefore, attempts to set an example for the feasibility of a trans-national study, and for the usefulness of such an approach.

A number of themes have not been addressed to their fullest in this study, both for reasons of availability of archival documents, and because their inclusion would have by far exceeded the scope of a doctoral dissertation. The findings of this dissertation provide a basis as well as ample directions for future research on the general theme of returnees and their (re)integration after the Second World War. For example, a focus on contemporary media can provide additional insights by helping to unearth German and Japanese societies’, rather than the governments’ or occupation’s perspective on returnees. Newspapers and popular magazines (including articles, editorials, letters to the editor, and even advertisements) as well as movies can be used as indications for popular sentiment and generally provide much information about how the public perceives a topic. In this dissertation, only few newspaper articles and editorials from archival files have been used. More extensive research of media will enable me to develop a clearer picture about how societies responded to returnees, and also how returnees used media as an avenue to publish their points of view.

Relatedly, a more focused regional study might aid in understanding the connections and interactions between the administration, society, and returnees more profoundly. A host of different cities and regions—to which a large proportion of soldiers returned, or which possess extensive archival material—would offer themselves. The difficulty with this kind of study lies in the combination of a German and a Japanese location, because the difficulties and pitfalls of a comparative study would be much more
immediate. To draw broader, trans-national conclusions from regional or local studies in two countries is much more difficult because the gap between the object of study and the abstract level of the trans-national is much wider than from the national (and zonal) level. On the other hand, it might be worthwhile to locate a small, regional veterans’ association in each country—or several—and broaden the perspective of my studies to include the positions of veterans in a more pronounced way. This would also make my work more relevant to the field of postwar history, because the perspective from the grassroots would allow a deeper understanding of the veterans themselves. Instead of focusing on the political and decision-making level, as this dissertation does, such a study could put more emphasis on the agency of demobilized soldiers in postwar Germany and Japan.

Finally, the most exciting but also most difficult avenue for future research is oral history. While explaining my dissertation project to other historians I met at conferences and in archives, many responded with the question if I was doing oral history. The thought is intriguing, particularly because the generation of soldiers of the Second World War is slowly passing away. Oral history would have been too difficult to combine with the host of archival material I wanted to use in this dissertation. To unite archival documents and interviews in a study that also involves two countries would have resulted in difficulties in the conceptualization and presentation of the material in a clear and manageable manner. The two constraints of such a project, the methodology I am unfamiliar with and the temporal constraint, are daring, but the prospect of interviewing the people I have now, conceptually, spent so much time with, is indeed intriguing.
Demobilized soldiers constituted important elements in the reconstruction of postwar societies in Germany and Japan. Multi-faceted as their backgrounds, war experiences and identities were, they were unified in their initial material distress immediately after return. The threat of a revival of militarism, which the Allies and the Japanese and German governments had initially perceived, did not materialize because of the heterogeneity of the veterans; because the members of the armies had been drafted and considered themselves at least in part victims of militarism rather than its proponents; because the wartime regimes had been thoroughly discredited in public opinion; and because the material plight of the veterans was answered. The contribution of demobilized soldiers to postwar reconstruction differed greatly depending on their backgrounds and motivation. The social uprooting, however, and the overall destruction of the social fabric caused by the war necessitated their participation, through the reestablishment of their own civilian lives, in the recreation of postwar civil society. Demobilized soldiers did not develop a veterans’ culture that would have precluded their participation in reconstruction. Rather, the responses to their material demands, facilitated by the improving economic situation, and the absence of summary punishment or retributive measures in the context of the evolving Cold War made this participation possible. In a time when the ambiguity of their double role as perpetrators and victims could also have resulted in condemnation, the combination of political decisions and external, international political developments eventually enabled their integration and redemption.
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