"Women Always Drew the Short Straw": Military Power and Sexual Exploitation in the American Occupation of Koblenz, 1918–1923

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Despite the United States repeatedly occupying foreign territory militarily from the early nineteenth century, participation in the Allies' post–World War I occupation of the German Rhineland had special importance. Conducted to enforce the armistice during peace negotiations and German demilitarization thereafter, that occupation was the first time that American forces had been stationed in Europe, had operated within an international coalition, or had controlled territory of another great power.[1] American participation has nonetheless received little scholarly attention.[2] The consensus has been, following Keith Nelson, that American rule was "benign."[3] This article explores some of the more difficult realities of German-American relations, particularly, the sexual economy created by martial rule and Germany's economic distress.

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[1] David R. Woodward, *The American Army and the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 381. See also Alexander F. Barnes, "'Representative of a Victorious People': The Doughboy Watch on the Rhine," *Army History* 77 (2010): 7.

[2] The notable monographs are Alexander Barnes, *In a Strange Land: The American Occupation of Germany, 1918–1923* (Atglen, PA: Schiffer Military History, 2011); Keith L. Nelson, *Victors Divided: America and the Allies in Germany, 1918–1923* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975). There are a few histories of the US army in World War I that end with brief discussions of the occupation, for example, Woodward, *The American Army*, 381–85; John Votaw, *The American Expeditionary Forces in World War I* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2013), 84–87.

[3] Nelson, *Victors Divided*, 256. According to Alexander Barnes, "in spite of the temptations" of "loose women" and "intoxicating liquors," overall "the general behavior of the American soldier was exemplary" (*In a Strange Land*, 311). Walter Hudson also calls the occupation benign and largely sees German-American relationships as peaceful: *Army Diplomacy: American Military Occupation and Foreign Policy after World War II* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2015), 38.

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The scholarly consensus is that the American zone, centered on Koblenz at the juncture of the Rhine and Mosel Rivers, was mostly spared the social and political turmoil experienced elsewhere in Germany during the four years of the zone's existence between December 1918 and January 1923.[4] This consensus obscures the more complex social and sexual relations that existed between occupation soldiers and the local population, as is clear in a 1920 US military report conducted by the officer in charge of civil affairs for the American Forces in Germany (AFG), Colonel Irvin L. Hunt. Colloquially known as the Hunt Report, the document describes a disorganized American administration and the disorderly soldiers who were antagonizing Germans.[5] Although Hunt meaningfully contributed to the US Army's interwar formulation of military government doctrines, the deeper social implications of life during the occupation and sexual relations in particular indicated in the report have received scant attention.[6]

A lack of illustrative examples in the Hunt Report may have discouraged close analysis. Moreover, the report also skirted mention of the tensions, though critical, arising from what Susan Carruthers calls the "*embodied* experience" of occupation, tensions that have now an extensive literature.[7] To live under foreign military rule is to be disempowered and denied sovereignty under an alien power structure. Yet to occupy also comes with unique challenges, and successful governance is often "harder than winning the war."[8]

[4] Erika Kuhlman, "American Doughboys and German Fräuleins: Sexuality, Patriarchy, and Privilege in the American-Occupied Rhineland, 1918–1923," *Journal of Military History* 71, no. 4 (2007): 1086.

[5] Irvin L. Hunt, *American Military Government of Occupied Germany 1918–1920: Report of the Officer in Charge of Civil Affairs, Third Army and American Forces in Germany* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1943). Other reports were also commissioned at the same time. See, for example, H. A. Smith, *Military Government* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: General Service Schools Press, 1920).

[6] Hudson, *Army Diplomacy*, 49–51. The Rhineland operation appears quite frequently in World War II training materials. For example, see the direct reference to the importance of good relations between "American commanders and high German officials" learned post–World War I Germany in the lecture notes from the World War II School of Military Government: Paul Shipman Andrews, "Course VII, Class III, Liaison—Preliminary," 16 January 1943, 2–3, box 2 (47121), RG 6/34/1.131, School of Military Government Records, University of Virginia Archives.

[7] Susan L. Carruthers, *The Good Occupation: American Soldiers and the Hazards of Peace* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016), 12. For a discussion of the various challenges and difficulties of occupation, see David M. Edelstein's opening discussion and his table showing the results of various operations beginning in 1815 in *Occupational Hazards: Success and Failure in Military Occupation* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008), 5. For a recent discussion of the viability of operations given conditions in the occupied territory, see Benjamin Denison, "Strategies of Domination: Uncertainty, Local Institutions, and the Politics of Foreign Rule," paper presented at the Harvard International Security Conference, 28 September 2017. For a discussion of transformative occupation versus more straightforward missions resulting from war, see Simon Jackson and A. Dirk Moses, "Transformative Occupations in the Modern Middle East," *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development* 8, no. 2 (2017): 231–46, esp. 231–32.

[8] Carruthers, *The Good Occupation*, 12.

This grittier reality almost certainly applies to the American-controlled Rhineland, though sources illuminating the phenomenon have been elusive. Heavy censorship of the press and of postal, telegraph, and telephone communication hindered contemporary commentary.[9] However, the Koblenz city archives (Stadtarchiv Koblenz) contain a rich collection of local government reports and memos, communications between the Americans and their allies, police reports, and court records, which together provide a new window into the history of the city during American rule. This article, using similar new materials from other German archives in the Rhineland and the—albeit limited—coverage available in local American occupation newspapers, explores heretofore historically unexamined dynamics in sexual and social relations.

Sexual relations in particular illuminate the darker dimensions of American rule. Sex figures prominently in broader historical narratives of the Rhineland occupation. Nationalist propaganda in Germany touted the specter of French colonial soldiers sexually abusing German women during the infamous episode known in German as the *schwarze Schmach* (black shame).[10] As Julia Sneeringer argues, widespread German anger at the French deployment of African soldiers to occupy Germany also revealed "acute anxieties about race and female sexuality," and it represented a "full-fledged crisis of masculinity that permeated Weimar."[11] While considerable attention has been paid to American soldiers' sexual proclivities during World War II and thereafter,[12] these social currents have not been explored with reference to the American-controlled Rhineland during World War I.

[9] Hunt states that the Americans censored all press and post, telephone, and telegraph communications in order to ensure control (*American Military Government*, 47–48). Kuhlman encountered a similar issue in attempting to find journalistic sources speaking to contemporary feelings about the occupation ("American Doughboys," 1078–79).

[10] See Julia Roos, "Nationalism, Racism, and Propaganda in Early Weimar Germany: Contradictions in the Campaign against the 'Black Horror on the Rhine,'" *German History* 30, no. 1 (2012): 46, 73. For more on the use of the "Black Horror on the Rhine" by the Nazis and other radical right-wing parties, see Raffael Scheck, "Women on the Weimar Right: The Role of Female Politicians in the Deutschnationale Volkspartei (DNVP)," *Journal of Contemporary History* 36, no. 4 (2001): 553. For an extensive recent study, see Iris Wigger, *The "Black Horror on the Rhine": Intersections of Race, Nation, Gender, and Class in 1920s Germany* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

[11] Julia Sneeringer, *Winning Women's Votes: Propaganda and Politics in Weimar Germany* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 67–68.

[12] Carruthers, *The Good Occupation*, 111–50; on the murky issue of consent between civilians and occupation soldiers, see 128–29. See also Miriam Gebhardt, *Crimes Unspoken: The Rape of German Women at the End of the Second World War* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2017); Klaus-Dietmar Henke, *Die amerikanische Besetzung Deutschlands* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1995), 199–202; Thomas J. Kehoe and E. James Kehoe, "Crimes Committed by US Soldiers in Europe 1945–1946," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 47, no. 1 (Summer 2016): 53–84; Thomas J. Kehoe and E. James Kehoe, "A Reply to Robert Dykstra's 'Evident Bias in Crimes Committed by US Soldiers in Europe 1945–1946,'" *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 47, no. 3 (Winter 2017): 385–96; and J. Robert Lilly, *Taken by Force: Rape and American GIs in Europe during World War II* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

Erika Kuhlman's study linking the control of sexuality to systems of power and male privilege within the structures of the American occupation of this region is the notable exception. I extend her work by exploring American-German sexual interactions within the power imbalances of martial rule, patriarchal structures, and the economic and social upheaval sweeping Germany, forces that together challenged traditionally gendered concepts of morality. The nature of the occupation and its historical context created a new sexual economy. As we shall see, both prostitution and romantic relationships reflected army-enforced power structures and Germany's economic distress. American privilege shaped local behaviors, and necessity drove many women to view their sexuality entrepreneurially. Venereal disease (VD), births to unwed mothers, and sexual assault were the results, as were community-wide moral adaptations, such as the promotion of bordello-like "dance halls" for soldiers, which Germans believed provided a bulwark against more wanton disorder and moral debasement.[13]

Americans in the Rhineland, 1918–1923

The Rhineland operation followed a brief but dramatic US involvement in World War I. Though they entered the war late, in 1917 US forces changed the balance of power on the Western Front. German offensives in mid-1918 were briefly successful, but by autumn German military defeat was imminent as supplies dwindled, domestic unrest increased, and war-weary troops on the Western Front more frequently surrendered to advancing Allied forces.[14] In October the alliance of the Central powers collapsed, dooming the German war effort, and the High Command sued for an armistice, which went into effect on 11 November 1918. Occupation of the Rhineland was an Allied condition of the cease-fire and a precondition for beginning the formal peace negotiations that occurred at Versailles from 1919 to 1920.

Occupation created an Allied-enforced demilitarized zone inside Germany after the war was fought entirely outside its borders. The occupation centered on four bridgeheads at Cologne, Koblenz, Mainz, and Kehl. Each was central to an occupation zone controlled by a different major power, respectively, British, American, and French; the Belgians controlled an area north of Cologne centered on the inland port of Duisburg. When established at the beginning of December 1918, the American zone extended from the German-Luxembourg border to thirty kilometers east of the Rhine. American headquarters were initially in Trier. However, as the regional administrative capital that controlled the "German Corner" (Deutsches Eck), where the Rhine and Mosel Rivers meet, Koblenz was from the outset the critical focus of the occupation. And in June 1919 General John J. Pershing,

[13] Kuhlman, "American Doughboys," 1104.

[14] Mark Jones, *Founding Weimar: Violence and the German Revolution of 1918–1919* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 9.

commander of the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF), moved the American headquarters to the city.

The American operation changed rapidly over the first half of 1919. Beginning with approximately 250,000 men, the deployment shrank quickly as discharged veterans returned home and the AEF was reconfigured into the Third Army, commanded by Major General Joseph T. Dickman.[15] By July 1919 the Third Army consisted of just 6,800 men and was renamed as the AFG under Major General Henry Allen.[16] Allen was military governor until resurgent isolationism and the prospect of another European war, which the Americans feared might be precipitated by the French Ruhr incursion on 11 January 1923, caused the Americans to withdraw. The AFG left Germany on 24 January.[17]

The American occupation spanned four turbulent years in Germany. Most Germans had not expected to lose the war. As late as October 1918, the imperial government maintained that they were winning, and the abrupt capitulation had devastating psychological effects.[18] It exposed the government's false narrative, and, according to Detlev Peukert, the surrender "was . . . particularly humiliating" for a nation "founded on military strength and a militarist posture."[19] That revolution and economic crisis accompanied the armistice only made matters worse. The German Revolution began with protests and riots in Kiel on 3–4 November and spread rapidly thereafter. On 9 November the leader of the Social Democratic Party, Friedrich Ebert, was appointed chancellor in Berlin, and Kaiser Wilhelm II fled to Holland. Over the following weeks, political conflicts destabilized the highest levels

[15] The precise number of American soldiers who entered Germany is a little unclear. Margaret Pawley cites Keith Nelson's number of 240,000 (*The Watch on the Rhine: The Military Occupation of the Rhineland* [London: I. B. Tauris, 2007], 32; Nelson, *Victors Divided*, 30). The Hunt Report suggests 250,000 (*American Military Government*, 208).

[16] Woodward, *The American Army*, 384. There is some debate about the number of soldiers in the American zone. Kuhlman suggests it was fifteen thousand, based on Nelson, whereas Woodward bases his number on army documents from the late 1930s. See Kuhlman, "American Doughboys," 1096. Henry T. Allen wrote a memoir on the occupation published in 1927: *The Rhineland Occupation* (Brooklyn, NY: Braunworth, 1927).

[17] Despite German hopes that the Americans would intervene to support them against the French and President Woodrow Wilson's new international order, neither Congress nor the new Warren Harding administration was willing to oppose resurgent domestic isolationism. It had led the Senate to vote against ratifying the treaties underpinning Wilson's League of Nations, and the Rhineland operation had lost popular and political support. See Conan Fischer, *The Ruhr Crisis, 1923–1924* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 31, 80. See Nelson, *Victors Divided*, 243–53, for an original study of American thinking on French actions. On isolationism, see Robert J. Art, *A Grand Strategy for America* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003), 173. On Harding's pledge to the occupation, see Nelson, *Victors Divided*, 181.

[18] Jones, *Founding Weimar*, 9.

[19] Detlev J. K. Peukert, *The Weimar Republic: The Crisis of Classical Modernity* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1987), 46; and Matthew Stibbe, *Germany, 1914–1933: Politics, Society and Culture* (London: Longman, 2010), 66.

of government. The first elections on 19 January 1919 produced a bare majority of centrist representatives who supported the new republic, but this did not end the political and social upheaval gripping the country. Revolutionaries and counterrevolutionaries battled in the streets, including throughout the Rhineland and Ruhr in February 1919.[20]

Economic instability was intensified by inflation, which helped define the years following the war. Profligate spending and inadequate taxation during the war had ballooned the national debt, and the economy had been further weakened by the Allied blockade, which had created an ersatz economy and a rampant black market. Defeat shattered any prospect that war reparations could alleviate these financial woes, and the Reichsmark's (RM) value steadily fell.[21] By 1918 it was worth half of its 1914 value on the world currency market. It had halved again by mid-1919, and it had only one-fortieth of its overseas purchasing power by 1920. It collapsed to virtual worthlessness in 1923.[22]

Defeat, political and social upheaval, and economic distress are important contexts for the American occupation and certainly shaped American-German relations. In 1929 Karl Russell, the mayor of Koblenz, provided a sweeping account of American rule for the Hamburg-based English-language newspaper *American News* (though it is unclear whether the piece was ever published). Written a few years after the American occupation, though still during the subsequent French occupation, Russell's memories and perceptions were no doubt shaped by his personal values and the political crises developing in Germany during 1929. Russell was a lawyer by training who served as mayor of Koblenz between 1919 and 1931. He represented the socially conservative (Catholic) Center Party in that staunchly Catholic city,[23] and his 1929 assessment can be viewed as that of a moderate, socially conservative, career politician.[24] In his article, Russell explains that most of

[20] Jones, *Founding Weimar*, 14–19. On violence in the Ruhr, see Dirk Schumann, *Political Violence in the Weimar Republic, 1918–1933: Fight for the Streets and Fear of Civil War* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009), 6.

[21] Peukert, *The Weimar Republic*, 61–62.

[22] Adam Fergusson, *When Money Dies: The Nightmare of the Weimar Hyper-inflation* (Melbourne: Scribe Publications, 1975), 1.

[23] Peukert, *The Weimar Republic*, 155. The Center Party received 57.9 percent of the vote in the Koblenz-Trier region in January 1919 and 56.1 percent in 1920. For the voting statistics, see "Weimarer Republik 1918–1933. Reichstagwahlen. Wahlkreis Koblenz-Trier," *Wahlen in Deutschland*, http://www.wahlen-in-deutschland.de/wrtwkoblenztrier.htm/. On their opposition to radical social reforms for women, including abortion, see Cornelie Usborne, *Cultures of Abortion in Weimar Germany* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007), 5.

[24] I have relied here on the first German draft of the article because the records of the newspaper could not be located. See Karl Russell, "Die Stadt Koblenz in der amerikanischen Besatzungszeit," n.d. (ca. February 1929), Stadtarchiv Koblenz (StAK), Best. 623, Nr. 4635, Docs. 1–10. For the date and intended location of the article, see in the same file American News Company, "Sehr geehrter Herr Oberbürgermeister!," 7 March 1929, StAK, Best. 623, Nr. 4635, Doc. 11.

the citizens of Koblenz disliked American occupation. They believed that Berlin had sacrificed the Rhineland in the vain hope of negotiating a favorable peace, and they therefore felt "hopeless and abandoned." Moreover, a persistently weak economy and political unrest made "great bitterness towards the American occupation . . . more or less inevitable."[25] These feelings were shared by other Germans. Although it was elements on the political Right who had spread the belief that German soldiers had been "stabbed in the back" by traitors on the home front, Germany's acquiescence to Versailles's harsh terms was condemned across the political spectrum when it was publicized in May 1919.[26] But according to Russell, locals also had specific complaints about the Americans, whom they considered to be too aggressively imposing martial law. American military authorities ordered "the commandeering of . . . halls, schools, apartments," they were billeting soldiers in German homes, and they were taking an overly oppressive approach to ensuring order. Russell noted that Germans were struggling with "the harsh orders of the military commanders," and "the threat and [pursuit] of legal proceedings [for] . . . small, harmless offenses, or even completely innocent behavior . . . aroused fear and terror" in the "entire population."[27]

Such feelings almost certainly echoed reinvigorated folk memories of French rule during the revolutionary and Napoleonic wars (1794–1822), not to mention the fears that had been awakened by German propaganda during the war.[28] Nevertheless, the Americans certainly did impose a strident form of martial governance, which sought to disempower the German population and assert American authority. They followed what Geoffrey Best has called an "arch-occupier" approach, which was common in Europe in the nineteenth century and which was a contractual concept of foreign occupation that expected occupied people to accept foreign authority and the occupier to respect local institutions and culture.[29] According to the Hunt Report, the American army avoided significant intrusion in local affairs, but German "wishes" were "held in abeyance whenever they ran contrary" to army priorities. Consequently, "many German and Prussian laws and regulations were forbidden," and local German police were subordinated to the dictates of the Americans.[30]

American control of the German police particularly bothered Russell. The importance of Koblenz as an administrative center meant that "a much

[25] Russell, "Die Stadt Koblenz," 1.

[26] Bernhard Fulda, *Press and Politics in the Weimar Republic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 48–50.

[27] Russell, "Die Stadt Koblenz," 2.

[28] Koblenz was occupied in 1794 and ceded to Prussia in 1822. On occupation, see Michael Rowe, *From Reich to State: The Rhineland in the Revolutionary Age, 1780–1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 77–78.

[29] Geoffrey Best, *Humanity in Warfare: The Modern History of the International Law of Armed Conflicts* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1980), 180–82.

[30] Hunt, *American Military Government*, 275.

closer supervision of the city police [was] exercised . . . than in the outlying districts."[31] In January 1921 he complained to the AFG that the maintenance of a "state of war," even if "de jure," and continuation of "war-like regulations in regard to the supervision of German police" created a "rather painful impression [among] the population and [his] administration." Though he acknowledged that the Americans had theoretically granted the Koblenz police greater powers in December 1920—including the power to arrest American soldiers—they were relegated to minor duties and had virtually no genuine authority. Russell felt that this treatment hindered effective policing and endangered the peace and that it seemed abnormal compared to policies in the other three Allied zones of occupation.[32] His comparisons were not entirely accurate; the British, Belgians, and French privileged their own military police and soldiers over local German authorities.[33] But his report points to the reality that disempowering Germans meant empowering Americans. Until late 1920, German police could not arrest any American citizen, nor could Americans be prosecuted in German courts.[34]

For Russell, American disregard for German administrative structures and local government further exacerbated negative feelings about the power imbalance created by occupation. Following the Hunt Report, it became accepted wisdom in US Army command in Washington that insufficient planning and inadequate knowledge of German administration had hindered the functioning of the military government,[35] resulting in frequent misunderstandings and administrative problems. Policing was especially complicated by what Russell described as a lack of "connection" with the "ideas and sentiments of the population," despite the fact that "the American military police . . . [were] well disciplined." Poor German-American coordination also permitted abuse by American soldiers, whose attitude and behavior—particularly when drunk—frequently demonstrated their feelings of superiority over Germans, leading to "unpleasant incidents" and even to "disgusting brawls [that] often ended with death."[36]

Without providing examples of this violence, Russell's report simply describes the prevailing sentiment of Koblenz residents. Though American restrictions on Germans did ease over the course of the occupation, the

[31] Hunt, 275, 280–81.

[32] Karl Russell, "Re: Supervision of German Police," 9 January 1921, StAK, Best. 623, Nr. 5103, Docs. 136–37. For the granting of greater powers to the German police, see Henry C. McLean on behalf of the Office of the Provost Marshal, "Bericht an den: Überwacher der deutschen Polizei Lieut. Dodd," 9 December 1920, StAK, Best. 623, Nr. 5534, Doc. 120; "Der Polizei—Inspektor," 22 December 1920, StAK, Best. 623, Nr. 5534, Doc. 120.

[33] On British occupation, see Elspeth O'Riordan, "The British Zone of Occupation in the Rhineland," in *After the Versailles Treaty: Enforcement, Compliance, Contested Identities*, ed. Conan Fischer and Alan Sharp (Oxford: Routledge, 2008).

[34] Ernst Fraenkel, *Military Occupation and the Rule of Law: Occupation Government in the Rhineland, 1918–1923* (London: Oxford University Press, 1944), 150.

[35] Hudson, *Army Diplomacy*, 50.

[36] Russell, "Die Stadt Koblenz," 2.

structural power imbalance remained. American soldiers remained free to drink, carouse, and engage in other disorderly behavior without significant fear of the consequences and often at the expense of local Germans, who complained about the abuse of privilege and the flouting of German laws and moral standards. American anti-German propaganda during the war that depicted Germans as violent and evil may have contributed to soldiers' disregard for locals.[37] The local population was outraged that such behavior could be tolerated, while Germans could be prosecuted for the minor offense of "using disrespectful language" toward AFG members and could be punished with heavy fines or even lengthy prison terms.[38] Overall, these efforts at social control were milder than in previous American occupations but still look harsh in comparison to the policies of American occupation in post–World War II Germany, by which time military authorities had learned some lessons about governing in collaboration with occupied peoples and keeping regular soldiers separate from the civilian population.[39]

Whether Russell's view of the occupation was common is difficult to determine, because the contemporary German press was censored. However, despite obvious pro-American leanings, stories in the army's *Amaroc News* suggest something of the tense atmosphere. One cartoon from 29 December 1919 (fig. 1) depicts common American frustration with the German police, who were blamed for impeding soldiers' enjoyment of Koblenz. Noting that "police are the same, all over the world," the cartoon shows a German officer disingenuously claiming not to know the location of a "party hall" (*Festehalle*) when asked by an American soldier.

Russell devotes nearly 70 percent of his 1929 reflection to the occupation's effects on German women. Their treatment antagonized occupied Germans, and they were more acutely affected by occupation. Quartering soldiers, for instance, invaded private space and therefore burdened "house wives." These women "always drew the short straw," he writes, because alongside the tasks expected of a wife, they were forced to undertake

[37] On wartime propaganda, see Robert H. Zieger, *America's Great War: World War I and the American Experience* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000), 81–82. Emergent hostility during warfare has been used to explain wartime rape; see the discussion in Lilly, *Taken by Force*, 20–30, esp. 23–27; Christopher W. Mullins, "Sexual Violence during Armed Conflict," in *The Palgrave Handbook of Criminology and War*, ed. Ross McGarry and Sandra Walklate (Hampshire: Palgrave, 2016), 119; Martin Shaw, *War and Genocide: Organized Killing in Modern Society* (Cambridge: Polity, 2003), 4.

[38] These punishments also spurred repeated official German complaints, including from the judiciary and, in one case, the president of the Board of Pardons. Theodore F. Fieker, "Plea for Adalbert Schuster," 5 May 1922, StAK, Best. 623, Nr. 4579, Doc. 43.

[39] On the harsh treatment of civilians during the occupation of the Philippines, see Richard E. Welch Jr., "American Atrocities in the Philippines: The Indictment and the Response," *Pacific Historical Review* 43, no. 2 (1974): 233–53. On crime management in post–World War II Germany and lessons learned, see Thomas J. Kehoe, *The Art of Occupation: Crime and Governance in American-Controlled Germany, 1944–1949* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2019), 211–17.

Figure 1. Knox, "It Always Happens," *Amaroc News*, 29 December 1919, 2.

"servant's duties." Additionally, soldiers were difficult to manage. Simply having another person in the home consumed limited resources and necessitated more work.[40] The fear and anger Russell describes Germans having felt align with feelings common to people under occupation, which results from what Yasuhiro Okada calls the "highly asymmetrical power relationship that exists between occupiers and the occupied" which the inflation of the RM further exacerbated.[41]

[40] Russell, "Die Stadt Koblenz," 2–3. On how billeting led to strained relations between Americans and occupied peoples, including Germans after World War II, and anger in the occupied communities, see Carruthers, *The Good Occupation*, 120–21.

[41] During the post–World War II occupation, Germans expressed similar hostility toward the Americans into the 1950s. For a case study, see Kehoe, *The Art of Occupation*, 195–97. See also Yasuhiro Okada, "Race, Masculinity, and Military Occupation: African American

Americans were paid in US dollars, which Russell claimed was a boon for the local economy welcomed by local businesses.[42] But comparative wealth further enhanced soldiers' privilege. Russell describes people "eagerly harassing American soldiers" for the "leftovers from their meals" and the "small scraps they threw away," while children "begged for chocolate."[43] Soldiers' wealth also attracted desperate German women who were seeking to trade sex for food and money. Unlike in the rest of Germany, where, as Victoria Harris notes, the increasing worthlessness of the RM made prostitution less attractive, socializing with the Americans had prospects.[44] Russell describes the result as socially and morally toxic, and he shared the common belief that moral debasement accompanied hyperinflation.[45] As Hans Ostwald lamented, "The family . . . seemed to [go into] rapid decline" during this period, and "many [sexual] things that otherwise took place in secret appeared openly." Russell argued that the occupation hastened this corruption by creating a market for needy German women.[46]

Despite recognizing the economic motivators that drove the sex trade in occupied Koblenz, Russell took a pejorative view of the "girls" (*Mädchen*), as he calls them, who interacted with soldiers. The contact often followed heavy drinking and drunken violence, but he primarily holds the women to blame.[47] The emergence of this sexual economy arose from the profound social changes occurring in Weimar Germany, and they stood in stark tension with traditional values. As Kate Lacey notes, during the war women had taken on many traditionally male jobs, a phenomenon that did not end after the war. The "symbolic shock waves . . . [of this social shift] rumbled on throughout the new republic," affecting men like Russell who opposed them. Lacey argues that the result was mixed for women because the new republic enshrined equality in its constitution while preserving "repressive legislation on abortion, birth control, marriage, and divorce."[48]

Soldiers' Encounters with the Japanese at Camp Gifu, 1947–1951," *Journal of African American History* 96, no. 2 (2011): 187.

[42] Russell, "Die Stadt Koblenz," 4–5.

[43] Russell, 4.

[44] Victoria Harris, *Selling Sex in the Reich: Prostitutes in German Society, 1914–1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 122.

[45] David C. Durst, *Weimar Modernism: Philosophy, Politics, and Culture in Germany, 1918–1933* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2004), 82–83; and Kuhlman, "American Doughboys," 1091.

[46] Hans Ostwald, "A Moral History of the Inflation," *German History in Documents and Images*, http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=3844/. On the conservative backlash to this debasement of morals, particularly in relation to prostitution, see Julia Roos, "Backlash against Prostitutes' Rights: Origins and Dynamics of Nazi Prostitution Policies," special issue, "Sexuality and German Fascism," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 11, no. 1/2 (2002): 67–94.

[47] Russell, "Die Stadt Koblenz," 3.

[48] Kate Lacey, *Feminine Frequencies: Gender, German Radio, and the Public Sphere, 1923–1945* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 19.

Traditional Catholic and patriarchal values likely shaped this misogyny, which was intensified in Koblenz as a result of public frustration with the administrative challenges caused by the influx of desperate women from outside the city, even from as far afield as France.[49] This combination of feelings helps explain Russell's concern about public morals and public health. Presumably referring to the full four years of the occupation (though he does not specify), he writes that between "2,500 and 3,000 German girls" were arrested and received forcible hospital treatment for VD. These figures are partially confirmed in AFG reports at the time. In May 1920 348 women were arrested for being in the city without proper paperwork, and most were detained for forced VD treatment.[50] These detentions were motivated by the acute fear that Germans and Americans held for sexually transmitted bacterial diseases, which were exceptionally difficult to treat prior to the discovery of penicillin, including syphilis, gonorrhea, chancroids, and lymphogranuloma inguinale. The treatments that did exist had limited rates of success and terrible side effects and could even be lethal.[51]

It is difficult to contextualize Russell's or the AFG's figures on VD in relation to the rest of Germany, though they likely indicate a more significant problem than elsewhere, where, as Julia Roos points out, greater police enforcement of antiprostitution regulations and gender bias in "anti-VD policies tended to [artificially] inflate prostitution statistics," by which she means that the equation that police and administrators drew at the time between VD and prostitution led to the unwarranted assumption that any woman with VD was also a prostitute.[52] Of course, this was not the case. As Richard Bessel and Annette Timm show, a husband could easily infect his wife, especially if he was a returning soldier, which in turn may also account for perceptions that rates of VD increased dramatically after the war, even if the reality of an increase remains harder to determine. Moreover, these perceptions were also driven by misogynistic ideas about uncontrolled female sexuality.[53] In line with their thinking, Roos notes that the problematic links drawn at the time between statistics on VD and those on prostitution were highlighted in March 1925 by Berlin's postwar chief of police, who suggested that any growth in prostitution was "less substantial than commonly

[49] Ostwald, "A Moral History."

[50] Russell, "Die Stadt Koblenz," 5–6; on the hospitalization of women, see 6. For the American report, see A.C. of S., G-4, A.F.G., "Report of Activities, General Staff, for May 1920," 7 June 1920, 24, entry NM-91 1313, box 12, RG 120, United States National Archives, College Park, Maryland (NACP).

[51] Annette F. Timm, *The Politics of Fertility in Twentieth-Century Berlin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 36–37.

[52] Julia Roos, *Weimar through the Lens of Gender: Prostitution Reform, Woman's Emancipation, and German Democracy* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010), 60.

[53] Richard Bessel, *Germany after the First World War* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 238–39; Timm, *The Politics of Fertility*, 44–46.

assumed."[54] Similar issues no doubt existed in Koblenz, though the prospect of acquiring American wealth certainly appears to have fostered an increase in the sex trade, which Russell believed was evidenced by a dramatic increase in the number of children born to unwed mothers in Koblenz, from between 90 and 100 per year before the occupation to between 250 and 360. His belief that this increase resulted from prostitution cannot be substantiated. There were plenty of consensual romantic relationships that likely ended in unwed women becoming pregnant; therefore, we cannot easily determine whether the children resulted from financially or emotionally motivated sex. For Russell, however, these births indicated the moral turpitude of women in occupied Koblenz and were also the "greatest damage" caused by the Americans. He alleged that in 1929, 285 so-called illegitimate offspring of soldiers still lived in the city.[55]

Russell embodied the complex and often contradictory patriarchy of the early twentieth century. Women could be considered property and currency, as well as autonomous actors, the last of which permitted men to blame them for untoward relationships. Men like Russell lamented that during the Weimar era, the "new woman," who wore makeup, smoked in public, and shaved her legs, was challenging traditional gender norms, blurring boundaries that had previously clearly distinguished "honest women" from "whores."[56] Russell believed that good men could rescue the wayward woman, a logic that allowed him to see marriage as a panacea for the occupation's sexual ills. In that vein, he was proud that his government and the AFG encouraged soldiers to marry the mothers of their children, thus resolving the moral conflict of illegitimacy. In his estimation, approximately 1,200 Americans married German women from Koblenz. Whether or not all of these women had been impregnated, marriage reinstated the traditional moral order.[57]

Concern about illegitimacy reveals the extent to which German social mores were challenged during the occupation, but Russell's patriarchal views are also evident in his description of American soldiers. He was not universally critical of their relationships with German women. They were well groomed, typically polite, and likely to do things for a woman, "not . . . a matter for the [German] man," which were presumably niceties of some

[54] See the table charting the comparatively stable number of prostitutes in five major cities provided by Roos, *Weimar*, 60–61.

[55] Russell, "Die Stadt Koblenz," 8.

[56] Atina Grossmann, "The New Woman and the Rationalization of Sexuality in Weimar Germany," in *Powers of Desire: The Politics of Sexuality*, ed. Ann Snitow, Christine Stansell, and Sharon Thompson (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1983), 156.

[57] Russell, "Die Stadt Koblenz," 6. On early requests by soldiers for permission to marry Germans, see Hunt, *American Military Government*, 209. On women and the importance of marriage in Weimar Germany, see Helen Boak, *Women in the Weimar Republic* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), 205–6.

sort, though he does not specify what they were.[58] He even asserts that "as far as can be judged today . . . the Koblenz girls married in America have generally been well kept by their husbands." Given that he really could not have known about relationships that took place an ocean away and behind closed doors, this assertion presents a stark contrast with his complaints about soldiers' drunkenness, belligerence, sexual impropriety, and violence on German soil.[59] It does, however, align with his ambivalent assessment of the overall impact of the American occupation. Despite some problems, he notes that the Americans "valued" German "military attitudes, cleanliness, and orderliness," a reflection by Russell that suggests the extent of Germans' psychological and cultural adaptation to American occupation.[60]

Under US Army orders for its soldiers occupying Germany, sexual relations with Germans fell under the broad category of "fraternization," which included any friendly engagement. On 28 November 1918, just prior to the AEF's arrival in Germany, Pershing issued General Orders No. 218 banning all fraternization.[61] Yet from the outset, American commanders knew soldiers were likely to ignore the ban and generally turned a blind eye to soldiers' actions. This was particularly true of sex. As was the case during and after World War II, army command mostly tolerated soldiers' assumption that sex was a reward for their military service.[62] The army therefore confined its concerns to operational problems when it came to sex between soldiers and civilian women, primarily seeking to manage the extent to which it affected soldiers' discipline and in turn the military's ability to maintain authority over occupied Germans. According to Hunt, army command in the Rhineland was worried that unduly friendly relations would weaken soldiers' ability and willingness to regulate Germans. Command's solution was to regulate the behavior of civilian women. While the fraternization ban was in place, soldiers were permitted to marry women they had impregnated in order to legitimize soldiers' transgressions of military ordinances, but the army's

[58] Russell, "Die Stadt Koblenz," 2.

[59] Russell, 6–7. For a comprehensive study of domestic violence in the United States, see Elizabeth Pleck, *Domestic Tyranny: The Making of Social Policy against Family Violence from Colonial Times to the Present* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

[60] Russell, "Die Stadt Koblenz," 4.

[61] Kuhlman, "American Doughboys," 1088. The entirety of General Orders No. 218 is reproduced in US Army Center of Military History, *United States Army in the World War, 1917–1919: American Occupation of Germany* (Washington, DC, 1991), 2:202–4. For a reproduction of the orders, see *United States Army in the World War, 1917–1919: General Orders, CHQ, AEF* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1992), 16:549–50.

[62] For an extensive analysis of the "mapping of sexual relations onto war aims" during World War II, see Mary Louise Roberts, *What Soldiers Do: Sex and the American GI in World War II France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 62–67. Roberts also discusses the army's attempt to keep the sexualized nature of the American military presence in France quiet (229–37).

other efforts to control sex between soldiers and German women aimed at keeping the women separate from American men.[63]

The army's tacit acceptance that soldiers' drive for sex was uncontrollable contributed to the sexual economy that Russell describes. It is therefore likely that in hindsight he paints too rosy a picture of American-German relations. His later views were at least partially refracted through his experience of French occupation, which spanned the economic crisis of 1923 and the political turmoil that began to overtake Weimar Germany in 1929. Russell argued that Germans had "always seen the American nation as a nonpolitical opponent," in comparison to France, which had been a long-running German adversary.[64] The French deployment of African colonial soldiers ignited existing tensions. By contrast, while the Americans deployed African American combat units on the Western Front, they did not station them as occupiers of German territory in Europe. In fact, in 1918 the very prospect was condemned in the American press, which later joined the German press in lambasting the French use of African colonial soldiers in Germany. Though the AFG rejected as exaggerations stories about French colonial soldiers abusing German women, General Allen viewed their deployment as deliberately provocative and designed to sow chaos, an assessment later confirmed by the French incursion in the Ruhr and support for Rhenish separatism.[65] In hindsight, Russell believed that even if Koblenzers had "longed for freedom" between 1918 and January 1923, the American occupation had not undermined initial German trust, as the later French occupation did, and was comparatively better.[66]

American-German Relations in Occupied Koblenz

Together, local government records, police assessments, and US Army reports reveal the darker reality of American-German relations. Though there was considerable overlap between different categories of relationships between the occupiers and the occupied during this period, they can be heuristically categorized into three groups: the "immoral," such as prostitution and other forms of transactional sex; the criminal, including rape and sexual assault; and consensual relations, extending from dating to marriage.

[63] Hunt, *American Military Government*, 209.

[64] Russell, "Die Stadt Koblenz," 10.

[65] Fischer, *The Ruhr Crisis*, 80.

[66] Assistant Chief of Staff G-2, *American Representation in Occupied Germany 1920–1921* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Library, 1922), 1:94–98; Russell, "Die Stadt Koblenz," 10. On German attitudes toward the French and the Americans' repeated objections to the use of African soldiers inside Germany, see Keith L. Nelson, "The 'Black Horror on the Rhine': Race as a Factor in Post–World War I Diplomacy," *Journal of Modern History* 42, no. 4 (1970): 608–11. On how Germans in the American zone felt relieved to be living under American rather than French or Belgian rule, see a reporter from the *Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung*, 10 December 1918, cited in Kuhlman, "American Doughboys," 1086.

"Immoral" Relations

Prostitution of course existed in Koblenz before the occupation period. Before German unification in 1871, prostitutes were confined to certain areas of the city and were regulated by the local police. The new German Criminal Code of 1871, formulated at the founding of the empire, criminalized prostitution under two provisions: Clause 361/6 made suspected prostitutes subject to forced medical examination, and Clause 180 outlawed the facilitation of prostitution by brothel keepers and procurers. Clause 180 also provided greater power to the Morals Police (Sittenpolizei) and ammunition for moral critics. Despite these laws, local governments and police mostly tolerated prostitution, preferring to confine, monitor, and register prostitutes to ensure public health.[67]

City officials began to consider the practice of registering prostitutes more urgent when Germany went to war in 1914. According to a classic study of sex during the war by medical doctor and contemporary Magnus Hirschfeld, "numerous" German doctors hoped to prevent VD by advocating that "the widest prohibition of sexual intercourse" be applied to soldiers.[68] German military officials believed that banning prostitution was impossible, but they prohibited it outside military-regulated brothels. These were established in nearly every city, especially those with military garrisons.[69] Koblenz had a major military installation, and there were several military brothels throughout the war and into the period of American occupation.[70]

Laws on prostitution were lax in the United States during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, though by the time of the occupation of the Rhineland concerns about disease and immorality were motivating stricter regulations. Beginning with expanded interpretations of the Page Act of 1875 (which criminalized prostitution by immigrants) and the 1910 Mann Act (which targeted the transport of women across state lines for the purposes of "prostitution, or debauchery, or any other immoral purpose"),[71]

[67] Richard J. Evans, "Prostitution, State, and Society in Imperial Germany," *Past & Present* 70 (1976): 108–14. Unregistered prostitution became a major issue in some of Germany's cities, including Dresden, Hamburg, Frankfurt, and Berlin. See Evans's account of the Dresden police chief's complaints about resistance in the city administration to enforcing Clause 180 on this basis (111).

[68] Magnus Hirschfeld, *The Sexual History of the World War* (New York: Cadillac Publishing Co., 1946), 124. It is important to note that this book was in reality multiauthored and was written in an explicit effort to earn money for Hirschfeld's institute. The claims it makes about the history should be taken with a grain of salt.

[69] Hirschfeld, 126, 134–35.

[70] Boak, *Women*, 30. The issue is also briefly discussed in Joshua S. Goldstein, *War and Gender: How Gender Shapes the War System and Vice Versa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 344.

[71] On the political and cultural factors leading to the Mann Act and its extensive legal ramifications, see David J. Langum, *Crossing over the Line: Legislating Morality and the Mann Act* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 1–4, 15–18.

a series of federal laws attacked the foundations of the sex trade in the first decade of the twentieth century.[72] However, opponents of legalized prostitution recognized that the threat of VD provided a stronger basis for legislation, and they helped to bring about the 1918 Chamberlain-Kahn Act, which empowered the federal government acting through the US Army and Navy to quarantine any person suspected of having VD to protect combat readiness, though its enforcement overwhelmingly targeted women.[73] Antiprostitution campaigners also urged state and local governments to pass their own laws restricting prostitution, ostensibly to prevent disease but primarily to achieve its complete prohibition.[74] Similar political calculations were made by opponents of prostitution in Germany. Many of those who opposed the sex trade purely on moral grounds argued instead that the danger of VD necessitated stricter regulation.[75]

Prostitution in Koblenz therefore existed in a semilegal space during the American occupation. Because army command fixated on VD, they found common ground with moral opponents like Russell, who were shocked by the explosion of the sex trade during the war. Economic crisis was the primary reason for this explosion, and up until 1918 the Prussian and imperial governments increasingly worried that poverty was pushing greater numbers of women—including married women—into prostitution.[76] Bessel argues that it is unclear how far these concerns reflected reality. The unemployment crisis of 1918–19 was not as deep or as prolonged as it appeared at the time, even if German fear was real and widespread. For many Germans at the time, prostitution, like the expanding black market, revealed their country's social and moral unraveling.[77]

[72] Barbara Antoniazzi, *The Wayward Woman: Progressivism, Prostitution, and Performance in the United States, 1888–1917* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2014), 106.

[73] For an in-depth explanation of the Chamberlain-Kahn Act, see David J. Pivar, "Cleansing the Nation: The War on Prostitution, 1917–21," *Prologue* 12, no. 1 (1980): 29–40. Scholars have tended to report that the act targeted women specifically, but the text actually reads: "The Secretary of War and the Secretary of the Navy are hereby authorized and directed to adopt measures for the purpose of assisting the various States in caring for civilian persons whose detention, isolation, quarantine, or commitment to institutions may be found necessary for the protection of the military and naval forces of the United States against venereal diseases" (An Act Making Appropriations for the Support of the Army for the Fiscal Year Ending June Thirtieth, Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen, Pub. L. No. 193, *US Statutes at Large* [1918]: 886).

[74] On vice squads and enforcement of local ordinances against prostitution, see Langum, *Crossing*, 24–25.

[75] Ann Taylor Allen, "Venereal Disease and the State in Germany, 1890–1918," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 4, no. 1 (1993): 32.

[76] Hirschfeld, *The Sexual History*, 126, 134–35.

[77] Bessel, *Germany*, 25–26. On unemployment after World War I, see Richard Bessel, "Unemployment and Demobilization in Germany after the First World War," in *The German Unemployed: Experiences and Consequences of Mass Unemployment from the Weimar Republic to the Third Reich*, ed. Richard Evans and Dick Geary (Oxford: Routledge, 2015), 23–43, esp. 28–29.

The American army's ban on fraternization was meant to prevent all friendly relations between occupation soldiers and Germans, including every form of sexual activity. Kuhlman argues that when the ban was lifted on 27 September 1919 it led to a rise in prostitution, presumably on the logic that previously forbidden sexual activity was thereafter permitted.[78] But this reading of events fails to consider the extent to which the fraternization ban was enforced by lower-level American officers and also the range of sexual activity that occurred when it was in place, which ran the gamut from romantic and consensual relations to transactional sex. Due to exceedingly lax enforcement by the army overall, in reality lifting the ban revealed that all these types of sexual activity between American soldiers and Germans had occurred since the very beginning of the occupation. For instance, many occupation soldiers had become romantically involved with German women, which was forbidden, but sought to formalize these relationships once it was legal to do so. The assistant chief of staff for the AFG reported that soldiers made "a great number of applications" for marriage "immediately after [the ban's] revocation."[79] Lifting the ban did, however, allow soldiers to more openly engage prostitutes, and AFG command was also able to identify prostitution as a discrete form of sexual interaction and attempt to control it. Prophylactics were distributed to soldiers to help prevent the spread of disease, which the prevailing wisdom within command regarded as a problem very tightly linked to transactional sex. At the same time as the ban was lifted, the AFG's Department of Sanitation and Public Health also began to regulate German prostitutes, requiring them to have medical examinations and forcibly confining potentially infected women to hospitals. Nonlocal women were deported, a step that first targeted French prostitutes who had followed the Americans into Germany, though the deportations quickly expanded to all non-Koblenz residents.[80]

The Koblenz government cooperated with these efforts, associating prostitution with an influx of morally questionable nonresidents. Other cities in the Rhineland took a similar view and routinely expelled nonlocals in an effort to curtail the sex trade. These efforts had little effect; the women simply returned.[81] In response, on 15 October 1919 the AFG outlawed selling sex to soldiers under Section 2, Part B of the AFG Ordinance on "Vagrants and Juveniles," which defined "a vagrant" as "any woman who

[78] Kuhlman, "American Doughboys," 1091. The antifraternization restrictions were rescinded on 27 September 1919; see Hunt, *American Military Government*, 206. Also reported by Alexander F. Barnes using other contemporary army documents; see "'Representative,'" 16n41.

[79] Assistant Chief of Staff, American Forces in Germany, "Annual Report of Operations for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1920," 3 November 1920, 6, entry NM-91 1313, box 2, RG 120, NACP.

[80] Hunt, *American Military Government*, 74–75.

[81] Hunt, 149. For extensive documentation of expulsions from Duisburg in the Belgian zone, see Stadtarchiv Duisburg, Best. 52, Nr. 184.

solicits or has illicit sexual intercourse with any person serving the United States or any associated government."[82] The law followed repeated recommendations by the AFG's Civil Affairs Office to "have prostitution be declared a crime punishable by military tribunals" or to control it in some other way to "lessen its evil effects."[83] Hunt viewed the action as a stroke of genius, because it "made actual proof of prostitution unnecessary."[84]

Soldiers' comparative wealth greatly hindered prostitution control efforts. Prior to the escalation of inflation in 1922, the exchange rate of the American dollar to the Reichsmark ranged between one to forty and one to four hundred, with yearly averages of one to thirty-three in 1919, one to fifty-seven in 1920, and one to eighty-three in 1921.[85] An American private's starting pay was $21.00 per month in 1922, and a second lieutenant's was $208.33.[86] Even the enlisted soldier's pay therefore became a relative fortune when compared to an industry worker's average earnings of 25 RM per week.[87] Such wealth transformed the local economy, as Maria Höhn shows also occurred after World War II.[88] Hunt thought that an unfortunate side effect of the vagrancy laws was that they "prevented only the better class of women from associating with soldiers" rather than "the worst class of dissolute women," for whom the prospect of money outweighed the risk of prosecution. Higher-class women could pursue more discrete forms of transactional sex.[89] Money also drove more insidious corruption. In April 1919, before the antifraternization ban was lifted, the arrest of two prostitutes with an unspecified "venereal disease" (*Geschlechtskrankheit*) drew the army's attention. The district doctor (*Kreisarzt*) had previously certified their health, presumably after receiving

[82] *Civil Affairs Bulletin No. 34*, 15 October 1919, in Hunt, *American Military Government*, 148.

[83] Hunt, 95.

[84] Hunt, 74–75.

[85] Robin Leonard Bidwell, *Currency Conversion Tables: A Hundred Years of Change* (London: Rex Collings, 1970), 22–24. The History Department at the University of California Santa Barbara reproduced these tables: Harold Marcuse, "Historical Dollars-to-Marks Currency Conversion Page," Prof. Marcuse's Homepage, http://www.history.ucsb.edu/faculty/marcuse/projects/currency.htm/.

[86] These rates are drawn from the 1922 pay adjustment but are commensurate with wartime rates. For officer pay, see Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Official Register of the United States 1926: Containing a List of Persons Occupying Administrative and Supervisory Positions in Each Executive and Judicial Department of the Government Including the District of Columbia* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1926), 146. Military website Navy CyberSpace has documented the historic per-month pay rates for enlisted personnel and officers: "Enlisted Pay Chart 1922–1940," Navy CyberSpace, https://www.navycs.com/charts/1922-enlisted-pay-chart.html/.

[87] Gerhard Bry and Charlotte Boshan, *Wages in Germany, 1871–1945* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1960), 51.

[88] Maria Höhn, *GIs and Fräuleins: The German-American Encounter in 1950s West Germany* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 39–44, 109.

[89] Hunt, *American Military Government*, 149.

a bribe. American command worried such corruption was contributing to the spread of VD.[90]

That prostitution existed on a spectrum of transactional sex ranging from straightforward payment to more opaque forms of barter posed a greater obstacle to its control. The problem was exacerbated by the dance halls that emerged to serve occupation soldiers. Dance halls offering genuine instruction existed prior to the occupation and were advertised in German newspapers.[91] They were at times sites for prostitution, and moral critics often condemned all dancing as a vice and any halls offering it as sites of iniquity.[92] But the halls in Koblenz were different. They were semilegal institutions, technically licensed by the city as "dance schools, dance institutes, or dancing academies," and the women working in them were officially called "dance instructors." As Russell complained in early 1921, few if any of the halls conformed to the wholesome standard of providing a "well-lit" space where soldiers could mingle with local women and where "immorality [could] not go on."[93] Soldiers bought tickets for "dance instruction," which usually lasted one song, and sex was clearly sold or traded in some fashion in the halls. On average, the "dance instructors" earned between "50 and 80 marks per night," approximately double to triple an average German's weekly earnings.[94]

In Koblenz the halls steadily gained popularity, and by March 1921 they were so ubiquitous that Russell began forwarding the complaints of his members of government to the AFG. Russell condemned the halls as "detrimental to a high degree to the purity of [local] morals."[95] Not only did they debase local women, he insisted, but the lure of high incomes also contributed to the influx of nonlocals, drawing "girls of very easy virtue" from the broader region. The halls also attracted many underage women (under twenty-one), and police had discovered that soldiers had "seduced and led to immoral actions" girls as young as fifteen or sixteen.[96] The city's VD problem and moral ills, Russell continued, were thus "doubtlessly due to . . . the occupying forces and especially to the dance halls." By way of example, Russell recounted how police discovered a fifteen-year-old girl working in a hall who was five months pregnant and who was also infected with gonorrhea and syphilis. Noting that closing the halls "would be welcomed" by the community,[97] he nevertheless argued that they should be kept open because it had proven virtually impossible to

[90] Janssen, "Abschrift," 29 April 1919, StAK, Best. 623, Nr. 5525, Doc. 497.
[91] "Tanz-Schule" (advertisement), *Briesetal-Bote*, 7 January 1919, 4.
[92] Harris, *Selling Sex*, 106–7.
[93] Karl Russell, "Re: Opinion on Dance-Halls," 31 March 1921, 3, StAK, Bt. 623, Nr. 5103, Docs. 19–22.
[94] Bry and Boshan, *Wages in Germany*, 51.
[95] Russell, "Re: Opinion on Dance-Halls," 2–3.
[96] Russell, 3.
[97] Russell, 2.

curtail this type of entertainment. He believed that closure posed greater risks to the community because "immorality would find . . . some other direction" with "more serious consequences."[98] He cited the arguments of the German police, who similarly believed that the halls prevented serious crime and that closing them would lead to "assaults on girls and loving couples, and fights between soldiers and German lads."[99] Russell had evidence. Dance halls for occupation soldiers existed throughout the Allied zones, and other cities had minimized harm by tightly regulating them. In Belgian-controlled Mülheim, the mayor made a woman's entry conditional on showing police a "doctor's certificate stating that she was free from venereal disease."[100] Russell suggested similar restrictions, including identification proving age and Koblenz residency. He also requested that German police oversee the halls, which remained entirely under American control. Anticipating the reflexive American objection to extending German power, he added that the Americans and Germans should collaborate in policing soldiers.[101]

Russell's response was similar to that of local governments across Germany. Bars, clip joints, and some dance halls were sites for prostitution in major German cities, and in December 1919 the national government, led by the Social Democratic Party, passed legislation granting police extensive powers to protect morals by closing establishments thought to promote prostitution. Local police and the public sometimes resisted the implementation of these policies; like Russell, they viewed police-controlled sites of prostitution as better for maintaining the peace than abolition.[102] Similar processes of weighing control efforts against community standards affected American military responses to prostitution throughout the twentieth century. As Sarah Kovner has argued for the case of American bases in post–World War II Japan, pursuit of harm minimization in the Rhineland cannot be attributed to systematic decisions and should be seen as a cultural adaptation and community response to the structural power imbalance and potential threat created by martial rule.[103]

[98] He did float the option of decreasing soldiers' pay, thereby reducing the appeal of the halls for women, though he recognized that the War Department set pay and that it could not be changed by the AFG. See Russell, 3.

[99] Russell, 3.

[100] Russell, 3–4.

[101] Russell, 4.

[102] Harris, *Selling Sex*, 105–6.

[103] According to Sarah Kovner, for example, the Japanese established brothels and dance halls around American bases to service soldiers and limit indiscriminate sexual exploitation. She attributes the comparatively low rate of sexual offenses by soldiers to these policies. See *Occupying Power: Sex Workers and Servicemen in Postwar Japan* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2012), 52–54, 152–54. On dance halls in Japan after World War II, see Mark McClelland, "'Kissing Is a Symbol of Democracy!': Dating, Democracy, and Romance in Occupied Japan, 1945–1952," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 19, no. 3 (2010): 508–35.

Criminality

The power imbalance created by martial power also permitted crime by soldiers, though there are few details in the documents I examined. The best examples come from German police case files in which Germans were investigated. Maria Erdmann, for instance, was arrested for theft in 1922, and her police file documents multiple violent crimes committed by two different American soldiers. Erdmann was engaged to be married to a discharged soldier referred to in the documents as "a certain Antonio" (no last name is provided). According to German police, he "mistreated" Erdmann "in an inhuman manner," routinely beating her and taking her earnings from washing clothes, while he survived on petty crime. Despite the unhappy situation, Erdmann felt compelled to stay. In moments of kindness Antonio "promised marriage." One evening in September, Erdmann was returning from work when another soldier, whom she vaguely knew through Antonio, propositioned her. Because he "was very drunk," she could not dissuade him from following her home. It is unclear what occurred between them once they were in her apartment. Antonio was not home, but he found them in the bedroom when he returned. Furious, he attacked them both. He knew the man carried large sums of money, and he beat Erdmann until she revealed the location of a cash-filled envelope in the bedside table. After retrieving it, Antonio demanded she leave Koblenz with him to avoid arrest, because she would be implicated in the theft. She refused to leave and was arrested by German police. She was then tried in an American military court, which convicted her and sentenced her to one year in prison and a 10,000 RM fine, following which the city administrator for Koblenz petitioned the AFG for leniency. He argued that while she was "doubtlessly guilty of having aided the culprit," "she acted under [the] constraint" of Antonio's threats. She even asked police to send her to Cologne to be with Antonio, which demonstrated how he had "corrupted her thinking." Antonio was not as loyal to Erdmann. Once in custody, he laid responsibility for the robbery on her shoulders. Angered by his betrayal, which presumably followed sustained mistreatment, she testified against him.

The claim that culpability was mitigated by spousal abuse was virtually unheard-of in Germany or the United States in the early 1920s.[104] In Erdmann's case it derived from a desire to protect Erdmann from abuse by an American military legal system that nearly always more harshly punished Germans.[105] This was especially true for German women. The hyperpatriarchal

[104] The concept of the "battered woman syndrome" is most often thought to have originated in the late 1960s or early 1970s. See Lenore E. A. Walker, *The Battered Woman Syndrome*, 4th ed. (New York: Springer Publishing Company, 2017), 29–38; David L. Faigman, "The Battered Woman Syndrome and Self-Defense: A Legal and Empirical Dissent," *Virginia Law Review* 72, no. 3 (1986): 619–20.

[105] Schwink, "To: Kreis-Representative, I.A.R.H.C., Captain Fieker, Coblenz," 27 September 1922, StAK, Best. 623, Nr. 4736, Docs. 18–20.

military structure of the occupation empowered male soldiers, who had little fear of legal repercussions, and it disempowered women. That American soldiers in Koblenz were free to compel women to accompany them, as occurred in the Erdmann case, is disturbing and indicative of their privilege. Even when soldiers collaborated with locals to commit crimes, the Germans bore a disproportionate burden of the blame and punishment. For instance, in a different case, Maria Zils was convicted on 22 April 1922 for "match making" between soldiers and local women and sentenced to one year in prison. The city administrator again appealed to the compassion of the AFG and requested clemency for Zils, who was caring for her adult daughter, who had one illegitimate child born to a soldier and was pregnant with a second.[106] The blaming of German women for illegal behavior that also involved Americans is better revealed in the prosecution of Jean Weitzel, who was charged with "endangering the safety of the troops of occupation by procuring women for the AFG for immoral purposes."[107] This reasoning complemented a consistent effort through the occupation by American military command to lay responsibility for disorder and crime in Koblenz on Germans rather than American soldiers.

Consensual Relationships

Occupation also shaped romantic relationships, and Americans dating local women provoked everything from concern to outrage among the German population of Koblenz, which echoed the opinions of Germans outside the occupied territories. Germans worried that the power exercised by soldiers meant women could never willingly consent. According to Kuhlman, such fears partly arose from a strident nationalism, which is best evidenced by articles in newspapers from across Germany at the time that encouraged German men to view dating and marrying a foreigner as a violation of the German nation. Some American newspapers agreed and condemned soldiers bringing foreign women back to the United States.[108] American army command in Koblenz predicted these objections to allowing soldiers to marry German women and ignored them. Some of the objections were unexpected. One such objection occurred in late 1921, when Germans queried the Inter-Allied Rhineland Commission about whether the German wives of American soldiers could be arrested by German police and prosecuted in German courts. Through marriage to an American, a German woman ostensibly became a member of the Allied forces, which made her exempt from arrest and prosecution by Germans just like Allied soldiers. The Allies were not keen to grant any German such extensive liberty,

[106] Schwink, "To: The Kreis Representative, IARHC., Captain Theodore F. Fieker, Coblenz," 17 November 1922, StAK, Best. 623, Nr. 4739, Doc. 25.

[107] Army of the United States, "Charge Sheet: Jean Weitzel," 4 April 1922, StAK, Best. 623, Nr. 4739, Doc. 6.

[108] Kuhlman, "American Doughboys," 1093.

though neither could they delegitimize soldiers' marriages. The commission therefore decided that German wives could be considered exempt, but, unlike their husbands, they bore the burden of proving their status as women married to Allied soldiers. In the event that German police sought to arrest the German wife of an Allied soldier, she was exempt from arrest if she had identity papers indicating her married status. If she did not have adequate papers, German police were free to arrest her, and she could be prosecuted in a German court.[109]

Such reasoning highlights the complexity of occupation power structures and the resulting potential for coercion by authorities and legal ambiguity that existed in ordinary citizens' everyday life. Privilege allowed soldiers to push moral and legal boundaries, especially in pursuit of women. In late 1921 Private William H. Sargent wrote a formal letter to the Koblenz government seeking permission to marry his eighteen-year-old German girlfriend after her parents refused their consent. Except in extraordinary circumstances, German law required a father to give permission for a daughter under twenty-one to marry. Sargent's letter was addressed to the mayor's office, and in it he asked whether he could "buy a birth certificate stating that she is twenty-one years old."[110] Deputy Mayor Wirtz could not believe that Sargent had so brazenly suggested bribery. In a report to the AFG he suggested that the man "obviously . . . did not know what he was asking" and attributed the request to ignorance of "German affairs."[111] The army saw it differently. Sargent was clear, writing that he "would pay any price" and assuring that "there would be nothing said [to] cause you any trouble."[112] He was prosecuted and convicted for attempted bribery and sentenced to one month in prison and the forfeiture of two-thirds of one month's pay.[113]

Punishments for Germans were notably harsher. An American supply officer found guilty of bartering army medical supplies for cognac received a sentence similar to Sargent's.[114] A fourteen-year-old local boy caught acquiring one bottle of cognac for an American was sentenced to six months in prison.[115] These inequities were more glaring when there was a sexual component. Klara Poppel's six-month sentence for supplying cognac to

[109] Brandt, "Betrifft: Rechtsstellung deutscher Frauen alliierter Militärpersonen," 6 October 1921, StAK, Bt. 623, Nr. 5525, Doc. 328.

[110] William H. Sargent, "Subject: Marriage," 9 December 1921, 1, StAK, Bt. 623, Nr. 4588, Docs. 283–84.

[111] Wirtz, "Response," 15 December 1921, StAK, Bt. 623, Nr. 4588, Doc. 285. Wirtz cited Sections 1305, 3, and 4 of the Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch (BGB, Civil Law) of 1 January 1900.

[112] Sargent, "Subject: Marriage," 1.

[113] S. D. Downs, "Deputy Burgermeister, Coblenz; (Through, The Kreis Representative I.A.R.H.C., Coblenz)," 19 January 1922, StAK, Bt. 623, Nr. 4588, Doc. 287.

[114] "Herrn Oberbürgermeister," 16 June 1920, StAK, Bt. 623, Nr. 4738, Doc. 17.

[115] Schwink, "To: Colonel David L. Stone, I.A.R.H.C.," 10 March 1922, StAK, Bt. 623, Nr. 4737, Doc. 13.

soldiers provoked official complaint from the Koblenz government. Poppel did laundry for the Americans, and one night seven of her customers held a party in her apartment and drank her alcohol "with two German girls." The Germans complained that in order to impose the sentence the judge was required "to suppose" that Poppel had deliberately supplied the cognac.[116] Such willing complicity was impossible, they argued. Poppel lived in "poor circumstances" and was obliged to "tolerate the party" because the soldiers controlled her income. Left unstated are the more disturbing aspects of the party itself, which nonetheless underlay the request for justice: How was it reasonable for Poppel to be prosecuted for a drunken party forced on her by men who then stole her possessions?[117]

Poppel's prosecution is an egregious example of the burden the US Army in Germany placed on German women, casting them as purveyors of sex, alcohol, and VD. Although the army recognized soldiers' complicity when engaging with local people, Germans—particularly German women—bore the brunt of the punishment and the weight of responsibility for the relationships. In one case, for example, the AFG published advisories in newspapers warning German women against accepting marriage proposals from ordinary American soldiers. These advisories asserted that it was the responsibility of each woman to determine whether a soldier could support her in the United States because "the common soldier's pay [was] insufficient to support a wife" and that on arrival in the United States, immigration officials would question the wife about whether the couple had adequate resources. This claim by the AFG inverted the traditionally male-dominated responsibility for family finances. It is not clear if these claims were true, but they highlighted the risks German women could face when engaging in sexual and romantic relationships with soldiers. Not only could a woman contract VD, be labeled "easy" or of "low virtue," be arrested for endangering the occupation, or have her children labeled "illegitimate" if born out of wedlock, but the US Army even tried make the recourse to marriage (which would ameliorate all but the first problem) unappealing.[118]

Crimes, Tensions, and Antagonism

Though the writers of the Hunt Report lauded the American occupation, framing it in Wilsonian terms as an effort to secure international peace and liberty, they admitted that improvements could be made to the American approach. Crime by soldiers was a major problem for American-German relations. On this point, the report aligned with the AFG's internal reporting.

[116] Schwink, "To: Kreis Representative, Capt. Theodore F. Fieker, Coblenz," 11 April 1922, StAK, Best. 623, Nr. 4577, Doc. 21.

[117] Schwink.

[118] "German Girls Warned to Have Dot if Wedding Our Soldiers," 13 September (unknown year between 1919 and 1922), loose in StAK, Best. 623, Nr. 4588.

In a July 1920 operational report, Hunt's Civil Affairs Office identified soldier crime as a major hindrance to effective American governance. "Homicide was committed frequently by our soldiers," Hunt reported, which (understandably) undermined positive relations with Germans. Court-martial statistics list 256 trials resulting from 800 German complaints between the beginning of the occupation in December 1918 and 1 October 1919.[119] The serious charges (table 1) include twenty-five trials for murder, seventeen for rape, seventeen for attempted rape, and fourteen for unspecified "misconduct towards women."[120]

The figures in table 1 are difficult to contextualize because we cannot know precisely when the crimes occurred or where in the zone they occurred, and the number of American soldiers in the zone rapidly declined from 250,000 in December 1918 to 6,800 in July 1919. The report also notes that the figures do not cover all German complaints or the prosecutions of soldiers that occurred in special summary courts.[121] Highlighting the ambiguity in these figures, the Hunt Report records 367 German complaints about "common assault" by soldiers for which there are no other records. Together, these issues mean that the number of unreported crimes is virtually impossible to assess. The absence of qualitative information, including incident descriptions and even defendants' names, further complicates conclusions about the extent and nature of crime and disorder by American soldiers.[122]

Nevertheless, these statistics, along with the other evidence I have presented, certainly suggest considerable tension in American-German relations. Censorship prevented German newspapers from reporting on these tensions, but signs of the hypersexualized and very negative American discourse on the German population can be found in the *Amaroc News.*

[119] Assistant Chief of Staff, "Annual Report."

[120] Hunt, *American Military Government*, 212. Hunt suggests that offenses counted in the last category were all nonsexual. And though we cannot know for sure, there is an extensive criminological literature suggesting that many crimes by males on females include an unreported sexual component. There is also an extensive literature on the consistent underreporting and misidentification by authorities of sex crimes. For a recent study showing the ambiguities in the categorization of particular incidents as a result of the person assessing it, see Susan M. Seibold-Simpson, Allison M. McKinnon, Richard E. Mattson, Edwin Ortiz, Ann M. Merriwether, Sean G. Massey, and Ian Chiu, "Person- and Incident-Level Predictors of Blame, Disclosure, and Reporting to Authorities in Rape Scenarios," *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* (2018), https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260518795171/.

[121] According to Hunt, "A great many American soldiers were tried by special and summary courts," the records of which were unavailable at the time, making it "impossible to compile statistics based on them" (*American Military Government*, 213).

[122] In criminology, a crime that is undetected in the available statistics is called the dark number problem. There are many attempts to calculate it, but the essential issue is that there is always more crime than is detected. For discussion of this problem, see Matthieu de Castelbajac, "Brooding over the Dark Figure of Crime: The Home Office and the Cambridge Institute of Criminology in the Run-up to the British Crime Survey," *British Journal of Criminology* 54, no. 5 (2014): 928–45.

Table 1. Courts-Martial in the American Zone Recorded in the Hunt Report, 1 December 1918–1 October 1919

Offense	No. of courts-martial
Homicide	25
Rape	17
Attempted rape	17
Misconduct toward women	14
Inducing children to sodomy	2
Burglary	13
Robbery	79
Larceny	53
Assault with deadly weapons	36
Total	256

Note: These figures are derived from eight hundred German complaints. The crimes are listed per the Hunt Report and in order of what the writers saw as the offenses' level of criminal severity. *Source*: Hunt, *American Military Government*, 212.

Each issue contains numerous stories objectifying women. One declared that the Second Division "had been captured! . . . not at the point of the bayonet" but rather by "five pretty, dashing, enchanting, clever little girls." These women drove the men wilder than the "Sirens of ancient days."[123] German stories about Americans were lambasted. One story titled "Hun Propaganda" stated that American soldiers "as individuals, have a good head on their shoulders that is not so easily swayed" by the temptations in Germany or claims of American impropriety. It ironically finished by commanding the American reader to "Keep cool! Don't lose your head!"[124]

In keeping with this diminishing of German reporting about American misdeeds, the Hunt Report used the data it presented on soldier crime to praise the army's vigorous prosecution of offending soldiers.[125] Given that occupation power and military culture likely created something like a police "blue wall of silence" that hindered investigations and limited the number of prosecutions, we should be skeptical of such claims, which were clearly an attempt to deflect blame from American soldiers.[126] The report

[123] "Second Division Captured by the 'Just Girls' Five," *Amaroc News*, 22 May 1919.

[124] "Hun Propaganda," *Amaroc News*, 13 June 1919.

[125] American commanders endeavored "to prosecute their soldiers for crimes against German citizens with as much energy as they would have shown had the crimes been committed against American citizens" (Hunt, *American Military Government*, 212).

[126] The "blue wall of silence" is a well-documented phenomenon in policing and exists in other tightly structured institutions. A similar culture almost certainly existed within the US Army in Germany. See Johnny Nhan, "Police Culture," in *The Encyclopedia of Criminology and Criminal Justice*, ed. Jay S. Albanese, https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118517383

acknowledged that inadequate discipline, soldiers' drunkenness, and an attitude of superiority aggrieved Germans. Soldiers further aggravated the local population by "reacting violently" to Germans showing "an insubordinate spirit," creating tensions that led to "numerous fights." But the writers also blamed these conflicts on Germans in equal measure, attributing open brawling, for example, to "disorderly elements . . . among the young demobilized German soldiers" and to German "drunkenness" and "jealousy over German girls." The report writers' and US Army command's blaming of both Germans and Americans for conflicts created a logic in which German anger over Americans' romantic and sexual relations with German women could be dismissed as almost childish. This mode of infantilizing the local population is common to military occupations.[127]

Even though US Army command was in their own view able to rationalize soldiers' behavior, the impact of their misdeeds was impossible to ignore. Military Governor Allen's 1927 memoir expresses views similar to those recorded in the Hunt Report, attributing conflicts to "drink" and German "jealousy over women."[128] But he also notes that "every military force occupying a hostile country" commits crimes and that despite a concerted effort to investigate German complaints, "the number of trials of Americans for alleged offenses against Germans were few in comparison with the number of complaints." American inaction led "German officials" to keep "a record of all crimes and offenses" by Americans, a practice that irritated him but that also revealed the extent of local anger.[129]

The AFG did make an effort to address crime by soldiers. On 9 December 1920 the AFG granted the German police "the full power to arrest every American soldier" who had committed a crime. They could even use weapons, though only as a last resort and after shouting "stop" three times.[130] The effect of these powers is unclear, given that Russell complained about their ineffectiveness in 1921. Part of the problem lay in the types of crimes targeted. In line with Hunt's and the AFG's concerns about murder, soldier-perpetrated violence was the priority. German police could enforce the ordinance against homicide, which was specially covered under Article 92 of the Articles of War. Their powers also extended to the offenses prohibited under Article 93, including theft, robbery, and assault.[131] Sexual offenses were noticeably absent. Yet if the data on crime by soldiers dramatically underreport the number of complaints, as Allen suggests, then we begin to gain a sense of a more pernicious current of soldier-perpetrated

.wbeccj371/. Allen notes that it was difficult to develop evidence and find perpetrators, hindering prosecutions (*The Rhineland Occupation*, 75).

[127] Hunt, *American Military Government*, 207.

[128] Allen, *The Rhineland Occupation*, 72.

[129] Allen, 74–75.

[130] McLean, "Bericht an den"; "Der Polizei—Inspektor."

[131] McLean, "Bericht an den"; "Der Polizei—Inspektor."

sex crimes.[132] Rapes and sexual crimes are a large proportion of the violent offenses recorded in the available data, and the underreporting of sex crimes is a well-documented phenomenon.[133] The sexual abuse of civilians by American soldiers requires further investigation because at the moment the available evidence is circumstantial and at best suggests darker interactions, but it does not prove them. Nonetheless, even this opaque picture helps better explain the fraught nature of German-American relations and some of the frustration felt by Russell and other Germans at the AFG's priorities in policing its soldiers.[134]

Conclusions and Future Directions

As the end of World War II approached in 1945, the US Army produced an instructional film for its soldiers about how to occupy Nazi Germany. It opened with a warning that if the occupation were poorly handled, a future generation of American soldiers could again be forced to return to Germany, "just like men did twenty-five years ago."[135] Soldiers were warned to "obey [German] laws, respect their customs and religion, and respect their property rights," and they were told to be courteous and respectful. They were "not to ridicule Germans" or "argue with them," though they were also instructed not to be friendly. Instead, they were told "to be aloof, watchful, and suspicious." Social separation, it was implied, was essential to the maintenance of order and authority. It was also meant to prevent sex with German women. Over the images of German women, the narrator explained: "Every German is a potential source of trouble. Therefore, there must be no fraternization." As in World War I, the army defined "fraternization" broadly as any friendly relationship, though the primary concern was clearly sex, which risked pregnancy, VD, and the co-option of soldiers by enemy agents.[136]

The film highlights the extent to which the Rhineland informed later military government doctrine, which was described in the army's 1940

[132] Allen, *The Rhineland Occupation*, 75.

[133] For a comprehensive examination of rates of reporting for sexual assault and rape, see Tia Palermo, Jennifer Black, and Amber Peterman, "Tip of the Iceberg: Reporting and Gender-Based Violence in Developing Countries," *American Journal of Epidemiology* 179, no. 5 (2013): 602–12.

[134] Hunt, *American Military Government*, 214.

[135] Thomas Kehoe, "Control, Disempowerment, Fear, and Fantasy: Violent Criminality during the Early American Occupation of Germany, March–July 1945," *Australian Journal of Politics & History* 62, no. 4 (2016): 564–65.

[136] Frank Capra, Theodor Geisel, John Beal, and Dimitri Tiomkin, "Your Job in Germany, 1945," 1945, reels 1 and 2, RG 111: Records of the Office of the Chief Signal Officer, 1860—1985111-OF-8, NACP, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=821R0lGUL6A/. On the US Army's concern about pro-Nazi women and VD during World War II, see Carruthers, *The Good Occupation,* 118. On the ban on fraternization in World War I and during the Rhineland occupation, see Kuhlman, "American Doughboys," 1088.

handbook for military government (*FM 27-5*) and its specialized training program for military government officers.[137] These materials reflected lessons from the Rhineland. There was pride throughout the army that the Rhineland had not devolved into social disorder, as occurred in Cuba and the Philippines at the turn of the twentieth century. But there had been mistakes, beginning with a failure to appreciate lessons for occupation from American history. In the occupation of Mexico (1846–48), General Winfield Scott had shown the importance of respecting local culture and institutions. These principles were propounded by Columbia University professor Francis Lieber during the Civil War and promulgated as General Orders 100 for the Union army by President Abraham Lincoln.[138] But in the Rhineland, the US Army used ordinary "doughboys" for governance, and they were not trained in the diplomacy required to respectfully manage occupied civilians.[139] The Hunt Report and AFG documentation suggest that lack of the use of ordinary soldiers stemmed from a lack of preparation for occupation. As demonstrated in American history and by the British in their neighboring occupation zone in the Rhineland, an effective military government requires specially trained officers who are able to collaborate with the occupied people. Ordinary soldiers, by contrast, tend to lack training in the delicate use of the power afforded a military occupier and antagonize local people as a consequence. According to the Hunt Report and contemporary AFG reports, the American soldiers tended to maintain a combat-like posture and were too willing to resort to violence.[140] Additionally, soldiers' inadequate discipline, their drinking, and their sexual proclivities exacerbated the antagonism caused by the normal challenges of occupation, such as cross-cultural confusions and language barriers.[141] When the United States entered World War II, there was consensus in army command that these mistakes would not be repeated. Military occupation (known in the army as civil affairs) was given a new level of priority, and a program was developed for specially training military government officers.[142]

[137] David A. Mueller, "Civil Order and Governance as Military Responsibilities," *Joint Force Quarterly* 84 (2017): 48. The handbook is readily available: War Department, *FM 27-5. Basic Field Manual. Military Government*, 30 July 1940, https://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/Military_Law/pdf/mil_gov-civil_affairs.pdf/.

[138] General Orders 100 are published in Richard Shelly Hartigan, *Lieber's Code and the Law of War* (Chicago: Transaction Publishers, 1995). On historic cases, see Ralph H. Gabriel, "American Experience with Military Government," *American Historical Review* 49, no. 4 (1944): 633. See also Hudson, *Army Diplomacy*, 28–29, 39.

[139] Hunt, *American Military Government*, 333–34.

[140] Assistant Chief of Staff G-2, *American Representation*, 67–69.

[141] Hudson, *Army Diplomacy*, 49–53. On rape and American atrocities in the Philippines, see Welch, "American Atrocities," 234.

[142] On selection of military government officers during World War II, see Carruthers, *The Good Occupation*, 18–19. The most important work on military government in Germany after World War II is Rebecca Boehling, *A Question of Priorities: Democratic Reform and Economic Recovery in Postwar Germany; Frankfurt, Munich, and Stuttgart under US*

The US Army during World War II did not, however, address sex between soldiers and occupied peoples beyond banning fraternization and warning soldiers about VD. Failure to learn important lessons about the complexity and consequences of sex between soldiers and occupied people carried forward the US Army command's blind spot during the Rhineland occupation. Though aware of prostitution, dance halls, and other overt consequences of soldiers' sexual activity, US Army command, and even German authorities to an extent, largely overlooked the more oppressive and insidious dimensions of the sexualized environment that existed during the occupation. This blindness partly derived from a dominant patriarchal viewpoint, which simplistically categorized women as either victims or sexual predators. Assumptions about class also informed these groupings. Morally upstanding women required protection by good men, while immoral, "lower-class" women endangered soldiers. Within the occupier/occupied dynamic, respectable Germans aided the occupation, while the disreputable attempted to undermine it by luring soldiers astray. On these grounds, the Americans felt a justified anger at German "incivility" and condemned "insulting remarks" aimed at "woman [*sic*] welfare workers."[143] The Hunt Report similarly differentiates between German women from "better families" and of a "better class" who had "friendly" relationships with soldiers and the women who engaged in transactional sex.[144] For American and German authorities in the Rhineland, this simple dichotomization of morality versus licentiousness obscured connections between economic insecurity, occupation power, the transactional sexual economy, and the disorderly conduct of soldiers. Beyond visible consequences such as VD and pregnancy and the supposed danger of immorality, neither the army nor German administrators questioned that soldiers should seek all forms of sex with occupied women.[145]

Occupied Koblenz provided rich opportunities for American soldiers to satisfy their sexual whims. Though the army recognized some of its mistakes in the occupation of the Rhineland during the post–World War I period, corrective steps focused mostly on curtailing soldiers' involvement in public disorder. Left unaddressed were the more pernicious consequences of a sexualized environment created by military occupation and the extreme empowerment of ordinary American soldiers, rather than specially trained officers, over disempowered Germans, alongside Germany's dire economic, political, and social conditions after World War I. At the time, the US Army did not consider prostitution, VD, and children born to unwed mothers

Occupation 1945–1949 (New York: Berghahn Books, 1996). She discusses officer selections on pages 30–33.

[143] Hunt, *American Military Government*, 207.

[144] Hunt, 206.

[145] On the behavior of American soldiers in various overseas engagements, see Alex J. Bellamy, *Massacres & Morality: Mass Atrocities in an Age of Civilian Immunity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 76.

through the broader lens of occupation and Germany's plight, which help explain American soldiers' sexual relations with German women. The army instead treated these issues in isolation and for the most part blamed German women for them. The army particularly blamed women who engaged in transactional sex, chastising them as immoral, which was often attributed to their being from the lower classes.

That Germans held similar views may help explain why historians have tended to overlook the more complicated social and sexual dynamics of the American occupation of the Rhineland. Even when Germans criticized American behavior in Koblenz, they tended to view soldiers' pursuit of sex as a fact of military life and therefore of military occupation. Military brothels were established during the war for German servicemen. Moreover, the sexual power hierarchy created by occupation was not unique to the American zone, nor was the economic strain that drove women to Koblenz and into the arms of American soldiers. Similar patterns are evident in the other zones; the so-called French black shame is especially well documented for the racial and nationalist tensions it sparked. The infamy of this event and the more profound unrest produced by the French and Belgian occupation of the Ruhr help explain why the comparatively calm American occupation has received little scholarly attention. But the events explored here show that the American occupation was far from "benign," as historians such as Alexander Barnes, Walter Hudson, Erika Kuhlman, and Keith Nelson have maintained.[146]

Future research should provide a quantitative assessment of American- and German-perpetrated crime and of prostitution in Koblenz to complement existing studies of other German cities during this period.[147] For the moment, however, we may conclude that American occupation created a sexualized environment that was exacerbated by Germany's economic and political upheaval. Desperation drove women to Koblenz to trade sex in return for a semblance of economic security, and comparatively wealthy and powerful American soldiers in pursuit of pleasure reshaped the local economy.

About the Author

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[146] Barnes, *In a Strange Land*, 311; Hudson, *Army Diplomacy*, 38–39; Kuhlman, "American Doughboys," 1080; and Nelson, *Victors Divided*, 256.

[147] Harris, *Selling Sex*; and Roos, *Weimar*, 61.