

Guide to
the Microfilm Edition
of the

REPORTS OF THE
MILITARY GOVERNMENT
FOR GERMANY, U.S. ZONE,
1945-53

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INTRODUCTION

From August 1945 through September 1949, the American Military Governor of Germany prepared and published an extensive series of monthly reports that chronicled the transformation of occupied Germany from a defeated and devastated Nazi *Reich* to a revitalized, democratic *Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Federal Republic of Germany). These reports constitute a basic source for the study of the American military government of occupied Germany, the overall policies and practices of the Allied occupation, the escalating rift with the Soviet Union in Germany that resulted in the Berlin Blockade and deepening of the Cold War, the miracle of the German economic recovery, and the eventual birth of the Federal Republic in 1949.

In a letter to Assistant Secretary of War John J. McCloy on 3 September 1945, General Lucius D. Clay, the American Military Governor from May 1945 to May 1949 and the U.S. official most closely identified with the rebirth of Germany, outlined the purpose and approach for his monthly reports:

By now you should have received copies of the first Monthly Report of the Military Governor. As the initial effort, this still has certain weak spots and inadequacies, and will have until the German information agencies are functioning more fully. We will be most interested in comments and suggestions from the War Department for improving the report as time goes on.

At this end, I am doing all I can to make available full information on our activities. The military government directives have been unclassified, and I have instructed the Division Directors not to classify any of our material unless it is genuinely necessary. Furthermore, they have been encouraged to talk freely with the press and to give them any available information about our work, whether good or bad.¹

¹. Jean Edward Smith, ed., *The Papers of General Lucius D. Clay: Germany 1945–1949* (Bloomington, 1974), 1: 66–67.

The monthly reports began in 1945 as a short narrative account of the major activities, policies, and programs of the Office of Military Government for Germany (U.S.), more commonly known as OMGUS, throughout the American occupation zone in Bavaria, Württemberg-Baden, Hesse, Bremen, and Berlin. As Clay predicted in his letter, the progress of the German recovery and the improvement in German data sources pushed the narrative reports from the average of 20 to 30 pages in 1945-46 to well toward 200 pages by 1949. Until March 1947, the monthly reports contained some, but not much, statistical information that charted the general course of the American occupation and German recovery. That month a cumulative statistical annex was published, covering the period of the American occupation since May 1945 in nearly 100 pages of tables and charts. A separate Statistical Annex to the Monthly Report was then published monthly from April 1947 to July 1949. By the time the final statistical annexes appeared, they had grown to almost 300 pages and reflected the rejuvenation of the German economy and nation in the Western zones.

After an opening discussion of the actions of the Allied Control Authority and the other Allies, the reports consistently focused on the same major subject areas. Monthly coverage was provided on the reestablishment of local and *Länder* governments, drafting and approval of basic laws and statutes, the military government's ordinances and laws, economic recovery, industry, trade and commerce, finance and currency reform, food and agriculture, transportation, political development, labor and manpower, religious affairs, police and fire protection, de-Nazification, demilitarization, public health and welfare, displaced persons, public utilities, telephone and postal services, civil service reform, reparations, education, and so on.

Virtually every facet of the occupation government's activities in managing the reconstitution of a viable, democratic Germany is covered in sufficient detail to provide the general researcher with a good knowledge of the overall progress of the occupation and reconstruction of Germany. The narrative and statistical reports also give those interested in more specific aspects, such as the rebuilding of the transportation system or the administration of public health activities, a month-by-month account of the principal problems or achievements that provides a sound starting point for more detailed research in the voluminous

records and official histories of OMGUS and its subordinate elements.

New subjects and more detailed information were constantly being added to the monthly reports and statistical annexes. The principal new section of the reports appeared in 1947 and dealt with the progress of the "bizonal" development of the American and British zones of occupation into a single economic and, later, political entity. In addition to showing the development of "Bizonia," the reports also clearly indicated the problems and issues that developed within the Allied Control Authority among the four occupying powers. Not all of General Clay's anxieties and difficulties stemmed from Soviet intransigence and hostility, for the French provided just about as much trouble for the Americans and British as their Eastern counterparts. The Berlin Blockade, currency reform of 1948, and development of a unified government in the Western zones in 1948-49 are all well covered. With the emergence of the Federal Republic in 1949, the civilian Office of the High Commissioner of Germany (HICOG) under McCloy was established on 21 September to replace the American military government, which had ceased operations the previous day. OMGUS had fulfilled its mission.

The 50 monthly narrative reports and 29 statistical annexes of the American Military Governor of Germany provide extensive, detailed information on the development and activities of OMGUS and its pivotal role in the rebuilding of the German nation in the Western zones of occupation. As such, they are a principal source for, and make a fundamental contribution to, the study and understanding of this critical period in modern history.

John T. Greenwood
Annandale, Virginia

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