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'The fatherland perished in the frozen wastes of Russia': West-Germans in search of the European soldier, 1940–1967

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ABSTRACT

Although the European Union is today largely understood as the guarantor of peace and prosperity on the continent, a continued but neglected aspect of discourses of European integration has been military integration. The idea of a European army appealed in particular to West-German military elites. European military integration, they understood in part as a pragmatic response to technological and geopolitical developments. But they also sought to conceive of a way to safeguard both the West-German state and the Christian Occident from Bolshevik invasion. The solution was a European soldier, who embodied a set of masculine, Christian values. Such an image was a result of experiences gathered on the Eastern Front during the Second World War, which continued to shape the West-German military elite's thinking about European integration into the late 1960s.

KEYWORDS

European Union; European integration; Second World War; Eastern Front; military history; intellectual history

1. Introduction

'European Ideas were', writes the historian Vanessa Conze, 'in general, until the latter half of the 20th century, always much more than plans for political or economic integration'. Rather, they were 'complex visions of the world and conceptions of order which touched upon all facets of political, social, economic, and cultural life'.¹ The first part of Conze's statement is a familiar restatement of narratives of European integration, but her account is noteworthy given its focus on concepts of Europe which did not win out once integration began in earnest, in particular, that of the *Abendland*, the Christian Occident (the translation used henceforth). There are, broadly speaking, two foundational narratives of the European Union (EU). The EU is either regarded as the source of Europe's post-war prosperity, or the reason for over 70 years of peace. The former narrative has withstood repeated economic crises, the latter military confrontation in the Balkans in the 1990s and Ukraine from 2014. The European Union is, in both of these narratives, a civilian project.²

Nevertheless, there is an aspect of European integration which haunts both these discourses, and yet is absent even from Conze's more expansive view.³ European integration has been marked by recurrent debates about the need for European military capacity, the need for a European army.

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¹Conze, 'Abendland gegen Amerikal' "Europa" als antiamerikanisches Konzept im westeuropäischen Konservatismus, 1950–1970', in *Antiamerikanismus im 20. Jahrhundert. Studien zu Ost- und Westeuropa*, ed. Jan C. Behrends, Árpád von Klimó, and Patrice G. Poutrous (Bonn: Dietz, 2005), 204–5. Translations from French and German are my own. Dieter Gosewinkel, ed., *Anti-Liberal Europe: A Neglected Story of Europeanization* (Oxford: Berghahn, 2014) for general overview of anti- or illiberal visions of Europe.

²Herman Van Rompuy, 'From War to Peace: A European Tale', 2012, <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/2012/eu/26124-european-union-eu-nobel-lecture-2012/>; Kiran Klaus Patel, *Projekt Europa. Eine kritische Geschichte* (München: C.H. Beck, 2018), 65–148 for a critical view.

³Conze, *Das Europa der Deutschen. Ideen von Europa in Deutschland zwischen Reichstradition und Westorientierung, 1920–1970* (München: Oldenbourg, 2005), 63–71 on *Oberstleutnant i.G. Friedrich August Freiherr von der Heyte*, who she misidentifies as a 'Wehrmachtsgeneral', is the exception.

This article argues that concerns about military power have been a long-standing feature of European integration, but have been neglected, beyond histories of the failed European Defence Community (EDC). In particular, German military writers have struggled with the role of armed force and its place in the creation of a European identity and European institutions. These writers did not generally suggest that war might make a European state, but rather that any European polity, and any sense of a shared European identity, would have to have a military component. Across various models of European integration, these writers consistently considered military power an integral part of a European identity. In particular, such military power was regarded as a central feature of European integration by those whom it concerned directly, that is, current or former German soldiers. West-German military elites were in the unique position that their army had been disbanded. Although they believed this to be a distinct disadvantage, they also believed themselves to be able to imagine the structure and nature of a European army free from given institutional constraints, unlike, for example, their French counterparts. However, as we will see, their experiences, particularly those gathered on the Eastern Front, heavily influenced their thinking.

Intellectual histories of European integration should be expanded to encompass an element of military integration.⁴ To that end, this article draws upon the writings of a number of German military thinkers. Of those, almost all saw combat during the First or Second World War, though few fought in both. Few served in the West after 1940, thus many experienced the collapse of the Eastern Front. All but one became West-Germans after 1949, though not all hail from the West. Some imagined European military integration as a matter of keeping the peace, though when they did so, they conceived of this as a defence against Soviet invasion. Others endorsed a European political project as way of searching for inner-European peace, even if this might not proliferate beyond Europe's strictly defined and heavily ideologically inflected borders. A European army nearly took institutional form in the EDC before the French Parliament failed to ratify the treaty in 1954. But thinking about a European army was neither limited to the EDC, nor did it end with West-Germany's (FRG) entry into NATO.⁵ West-German military thinkers imagined other, often far more wide-ranging or fundamental, ways military integration might proceed, and had profound reasons for doing so. The contours of the constitution of European military force imagined by these military thinkers were largely dependent upon the broader European ideas to which they subscribed.

In this sense, this article is an expansion of, rather than a corrective to the existing scholarship. It argues that, given both historical and contemporary concerns, taking account of visions of European military integration is beneficial for understanding both the intellectual history of European integration and Europe's geopolitical positioning during and after the Cold War. The article proceeds in six sections. The first engages the idea of the Christian Occident, which was crucial for West-German military writers when considering the reasons for or background to European military integration, even beyond the transformation of German Catholicism and the rise of Christian Democracy in the late 1940s. It then engages ideas formulated by groups opposed to the Nazi regime, in particular the group of conspirators who engaged in the 20 July 1944 attempted coup and the *Kreisauer Kreis*. Next, the article outlines the importance of thinking about European military integration in the context of West-German military planning before rearmament was completed. From there, the article proceeds thematically, outlining three sets of reasons West-German military writers called for a European army throughout the 1950s and 1960s. First, time and space had been compressed due to technological developments. The products of such progress could only be purchased at

⁴Conze, 'Abendland gegen Amerikal!'; Conze, *Das Europa der Deutschen*; Conze, 'Facing the Future Backwards: "Abendland" as an Anti-Liberal Idea of Europe in Germany Between the First World War and the 1960s', in *Anti-Liberal Europe: A Neglected Story of Europeanization*, ed. Dieter Gosewinkel (Oxford: Berghahn, 2015); Christian Bailey, 'The Continuities of West German History: Conceptions of Europe, Democracy and the West', *Geschichte Und Gesellschaft* 36, no. 4 (2010): 567–96; Bailey, *Between Yesterday and Tomorrow: German Visions of Europe, 1926–1950* (Oxford: Berghahn, 2013).

⁵Timothy Andrews Sayle, *Enduring Alliance: A History of NATO and the Postwar Global Order* (London: Cornell University Press, 2019); Stanley Sloan, *Defense of the West: NATO, the European Union and the Transatlantic Bargain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

extreme cost and it was unlikely that any nation-state, even a superpower, would be able to bear such costs alone.⁶ Second, the United States and Europe had vastly different interests and Europe's interests could only be guaranteed if it was able to assert them against and independently of the United States by means of a European army. Third, just as armies had served as schools of the nation for the modern nation-state, a European army could serve as the basis for a European identity which may become the basis for a European state.

The writings drawn on come from publications situated in what I call the military public sphere, that is the space within which the former, current, and future military elite and interested civilians discussed topics broadly related to military issues and military thought.⁷ In West-Germany, the journals *Wehrkunde* and *Wehrwissenschaftliche Rundschau* played a central part. They were published by associations founded in the early 1950s and dedicated to the promotion of military issues in West-Germany, the *Arbeitskreis für Wehrforschung* (AfW) and the *Gesellschaft für Wehrkunde* (GfW).⁸ Both were linked to American intelligence services and the West-German government. These associations, and by extension the journals, also functioned as a way for ideas to be floated by the West-German defence ministry to the wider military public sphere, to test their viability and popularity.⁹ The article concludes in the late 1960s when West-German priorities started to shift. The founding generation of the *Bundeswehr* was drifting towards retirement and in late 1969 Willy Brandt became Chancellor to lead the first post-war SPD government. Between Brandt's election, student protests, and the war in Vietnam,¹⁰ more attention was paid to alleged Soviet efforts to undermine the Federal Republic, and less to a European army.¹¹

2. The Abendland

Among the various illiberal concepts which were at the heart of competing visions of European integration,¹² the idea of the Christian Occident, was by far the most influential among military writers. Rosario Forlenza describes this as 'a supranational and symbolic space between Bolshevik Russia and capitalist America', which was understood to be 'anti-materialist, anti-socialist and anti-liberal'.¹³ A rabid anti-Communism was defining of approaches to the Christian Occident favoured by West-German military writers. The concept was based on a highly mythologised reading of the mediaeval period, with the genealogy of the West sometimes extended to classical Greece or Rome. But it was not until after the First World War that the concept became fused with a philosophy of history, one

⁶Arnold Gehlen, *Die Seele im technischen Zeitalter. Sozialpsychologische Probleme in der industriellen Gesellschaft* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1957) for a classic account. For the wider resonance of this idea, Monika Boll, *Nachtprogramm. Intellektuelle Gründungsdebatten in der frühen Bundesrepublik* (Münster: Lit, 2004); Martina Steber, *Die Hüter der Begriffe. Politische Sprachen des Konservativen in Großbritannien und der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 1945–1980* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017).

⁷Frank Reichherzer, 'Alles ist Front!' *Wehrwissenschaften und die Bellifizierung der Gesellschaft im Zeitalter der Weltkriege* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2012).

⁸Jörg Echternkamp, *Soldaten im Nachkrieg. Historische Deutungskonflikte und westdeutsche Demokratisierung 1945–1955* (München: Oldenbourg, 2014), 195–206; Frank Reichherzer, 'Zwischen Atomgewittern und Stadtguerilla. Gedanken zum Kriegsbild westdeutscher Wehrexperthen von den 1950er Jahren bis zum NATO-Doppelbeschluss', in *Den Kalten Krieg denken. Beiträge zur sozialen Ideengeschichte seit 1945*, ed. Patrick Bernhard and Holger Nehring (2014), 133–41.

⁹Tobias Schmitt, 'U.S. Intelligence and the Nascent Transatlantic Security Architecture of the Cold War – The Case of the "Gesellschaft Für Wehrkunde"', *Journal of Intelligence History* (Forthcoming): 1–24 is an example that historiography is increasingly viewing these organisations as paramilitary formations themselves and integrating them better into the landscape of West-German rearmament; Agilolf Keßlering, *Die Organisation Gehlen und die Neuformierung des Militärs in der Bundesrepublik* (Berlin: Ch. Links, 2017), 124–33.

¹⁰Julia von Dannenberg, *The Foundations of Ostpolitik: The Making of the Moscow Treaty between West Germany and the USSR* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

¹¹Reichherzer, 'Zwischen Atomgewittern und Stadtguerilla', 154–8.

¹²Małgorzata Morawiec, 'Antiliberaler Europäisierung? Autoritäre Europakonzeptionen im Polen der Zwischenkriegszeit', *Zeithistorische Forschungen* 9, no. 3 (2012): 409–27.

¹³Rosario Forlenza, 'The Politics of the Abendland: Christian Democracy and the Idea of Europe after the Second World War', *Contemporary European History* 26, no. 2 (2017): 261; Axel Schildt, *Zwischen Abendland und Amerika. Studien zur westdeutschen Ideenlandschaft der 50er Jahre* (München: De Gruyter, 1999).

example being the publication of Oswald Spengler's *The Decline of the West*.¹⁴ Linked to an illiberal Catholicism, the concept became a central political device for charting a way towards some form of European organisation understood to be independent of both American consumerism and Soviet materialism.¹⁵

The Third Reich's hegemonic ambitions led to affinities with adherents of the idea of a Christian Occident as a natural foundation of European order. This kinship was keenly felt in the early years of the war and galvanised by the German invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941.¹⁶ The battle of Stalingrad proved an apex of National Socialist reliance on the idea of the Christian Occident. In his *Tagesbefehl* of 24 January 1943, Adolf Hitler proclaimed that 'The [6th] army holds its position to the last man and the last bullet and through its heroic stand makes an unforgettable contribution to the defence and salvation of the Christian Occident'.¹⁷ Within National Socialist ideology, the term evoked a similar idea of an Asiatic and Bolshevik enemy threatening the West, and both Catholic and Protestant churches phrased their support for Hitler's war in the East in those terms.¹⁸ Throughout the 1940s and 1950s, moments of confrontation between the Christian Occident and the East played an important political role in West-Germany and beyond. In 1955, nearly 60,000 gathered in Augsburg to celebrate the millennium of the Battle on the Lechfeld, where Otto the Great had been victorious over a Hungarian army.¹⁹ Although Hungary was, by then, understood to belong to the Christian Occident, albeit currently under Eastern occupation, that victory had apparently signalled an end to Eastern incursions of the West.²⁰

And yet, in the middle of the 1950s, the political power of the Christian Occident seemed to be waning amid the rise of Christian Democracy as a more liberal form of political Catholicism.²¹ FRG Foreign Minister Heinrich von Brentano found himself amidst controversy for appearing at the Lechfeld celebrations where he, explicitly in the name of Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, drew a parallel between the situation in 955 and that of 1955.

Then, before the gates of the Christian Occident, before the gates of the very city we are in, the nomadic heathen hordes of the East; ruin and decline loomed. Now again, not much further from this city, stand the masses of the East.²²

Although Conze is right to identify this as a moment where mass support for the movement was lost,²³ such support endured within the military public sphere. As we will see, the Christian Occident remained, until the late 1960s, an important concept of political order for factions within the West-German military public sphere. The ideological contours remained similar, with a focus on the

¹⁴Paola Cattani, 'Europe as a Nation? Intellectuals and Debate on Europe in the Inter-War Period', *History of European Ideas* 43, no. 6 (2017): 674–82.

¹⁵James Chappel, *Catholic Modern: The Challenge of Totalitarianism and the Remaking of the Church* (London: Harvard University Press, 2018), 22–107.

¹⁶Conze, *Das Europa der Deutschen*, 392–3.

¹⁷Axel Schildt, 'Eine Ideologie im Kalten Krieg. Ambivalenzen der abendländischen Gedankenwelt im ersten Jahrzehnt nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg', in *Von der Kriegskultur zur Friedenskultur? Zum Mentalitätenwandel in Deutschland seit 1945*, ed. Thomas Kühne (Münster: Lit, 2000), 51.

¹⁸Dagmar Pöpping, *Kriegspfarrer an der Ostfront. Evangelische und katholische Wehrmachtseelsorge im Vernichtungskrieg 1941–1945* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2017).

¹⁹'Die missionäre Monarchie', *Spiegel*, 1955; Conze, *Das Europa der Deutschen*, 162–9; Conze, 'Facing the Future Backwards', 72–3.

²⁰Rosario Forlenza and Bryan S. Turner, 'Das Abendland: The Politics of Europe's Religious Borders', *Critical Research on Religion* 7, no. 1 (2018): 6–23; Paul Hanebrink, *In Defense of Christian Hungary: Religion, Nationalism, and Antisemitism, 1890–1944* (London: Cornell University Press, 2006).

²¹Maria D. Mitchell, *The Origins of Christian Democracy: Politics and Confession in Modern Germany* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2012).

²²'Die missionäre Monarchie'; Corinna Franz, '"Wir wählen die Freiheit!": Antikommunistisches Denken und politisches Handeln Konrad Adenauers', in *'Geistige Gefahr' und 'Immunisierung der Gesellschaft', Antikommunismus und politische Kultur in der frühen Bundesrepublik*, ed. Stefan Creuzberger and Dierk Hoffmann (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014), 145–60 on Adenauer; Robert Dale, '"For What and for Whom Were We Fighting?": Red Army Soldiers, Combat Motivation and Survival Strategies on the Eastern Front in the Second World War', in *A World At War, 1911–1949 Explorations in the Cultural History of War*, ed. Catriona Pennell and Filipe Ribeiro de Menezes (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 133–58 on the combat motivation of Soviet troops.

²³Conze, 'Abendland gegen Amerika', 216.

political utility of the concept in supporting European military integration. Perhaps tales of the nobility, honour, and justice of the defenders of European civilisation appealed most to those defenders themselves. In the West-German military public sphere, this self-perception, including a virulent anti-Communism, found broad appeal.²⁴

3. The conservative opposition against Hitler and a European army

A European army played an important role in the European order imagined by two prominent opposition groups within Nazi Germany.²⁵ The first revolved around Ludwig Beck and Carl Friedrich Goerdeler. Beck as Chief of the Army General Staff (OKH) from 1935 had attempted to mobilise a mass resignation on the part of the generals in opposition to Hitler's foreign policy but failed and stepped down privately in 1938. Goerdeler had been Mayor of Leipzig from 1933 to 1937, before he resigned after the removal of a monument to the composer Felix Mendelssohn. Goerdeler was executed in early 1945, Beck had been killed in the immediate aftermath of the attempted coup, when Claus Graf Schenk von Stauffenberg failed to assassinate Hitler.²⁶ By summer 1941, the conspirators around Beck and Goerdeler had developed a programme, entitled *Das Ziel*, which they hoped would become the basis of a new German and European order. Sketching the rise of the nation-state in the nineteenth century, they argued that it was yet unclear whether nation-states could peacefully co-exist in the long-term, or whether one was bound to attempt to establish hegemony sooner or later. And though they argued that '[economic] development practically drives man towards *Großraumentwicklung*', what was necessary was to reunite the idea of the nation-state and that of the *Großraum*.²⁷ This was the space which they imagined European integration would fill, necessitated by the concentration of economic power. And although Russia was not in principle to be excluded, 'fruitful economic and political cooperation' were unimaginable with a 'Bolshevik Russia', though they warned against a war, as 'unforeseen national strength' might be unleashed as a result.²⁸

Although expressing latent anti-Americanism which came to define much of the post-war West-German thinking about the Christian Occident, the group around Beck and Goerdeler argued that Europe needed to be secured against Russian aggression. Only the British Empire (*England*) and Germany would be able to do so, as it was by no means certain that the United States would do so indefinitely.²⁹ At the heart of a new European order, therefore, was to be an alliance between Germany and Britain. And though the programme asserted that 'every European war is suicide', the Europe imagined here defined itself in part against the Soviet Union, and in addition to a finance and foreign ministry, a *Wehrmacht* was to be the third pillar upon which a European order was to be built. British forces would form the core of a European navy, while the German *Wehrmacht* would do the same for the European land army.³⁰ What role, if any, French forces or

²⁴Axel Schildt, 'Antikommunismus von Hitler zu Adenauer', in *Der Antikommunismus in seiner Epoche. Weltanschauung und Politik in Deutschland, Europa und den USA*, ed. Norbert Frei and Dominik Rigoll (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2017), 186–203.

²⁵On National Socialist visions of Europe, Monica Fiovaranzo, 'Die Europakonzeptionen von Faschismus und Nationalsozialismus (1939–1943)', *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 4 (2010): 509–41; Robert Grunert, 'Autoritärer Staatenbund oder nationalsozialistischer Großraum? "Europa" in der Ideenwelt faschistischer Bewegungen', *Zeithistorische Forschungen* 9, no. 3 (2012): 442–8.

²⁶Christian Gerlach, 'Männer des 20. Juli und der Krieg gegen die Sowjetunion', in *Vernichtungskrieg. Verbrechen der Wehrmacht 1941–1944*, ed. Hannes Heer and Klaus Naumann (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 1995), 427–46 on their complicity in Nazi extermination politics.

²⁷Wilhelm Ritter von Schramm, ed., 'Das Ziel', in *Beck und Goerdeler. Gemeinschaftsdokumente für den Frieden, 1941–1944* (München: Gotthold Müller, 1965), 87–90; on the resonance of the idea of the 'Großraum', Holger H. Herwig, *The Demon of Geopolitics: How Karl Haushofer 'Educated' Hitler and Hess* (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016); Ian Klink, *Cryptic Concrete: A Subterranean Journey Into Cold War Germany* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2018).

²⁸Erica L. Fraser, *Military Masculinity and Postwar Recovery in the Soviet Union* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2019).

²⁹Dirk van Laak, 'Raum-Revolutionen. Geopolitischen Denken in Deutschland um 1930 und nach 1945', in *Rückblickend in die Zukunft. Politische Öffentlichkeit und intellektuelle Positionen in Deutschland um 1950 und um 1930*, ed. Alexander Gallus and Axel Schildt (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2011), 92–108.

³⁰Until the middle of the 1950s, 'Wehrmacht' was a generic term for military forces, with the West-German *Bundeswehr* often referred to as the 'new German Wehrmacht'; Walter Lippgens, ed., *Europa-Föderationspläne der Widerstandsbewegungen 1940–1945* (München: R. Oldenbourg, 1968), 143–6, 155–8.

indeed France as a whole would play in the European order imagined by Goerdeler and his circle remains unclear.³¹ Beck and Goerdeler called for an immediate cessation of hostilities, both in the East and the West, and believed that if Germany pursued a European course it might, within a decade or two, become a leading power within a new European political system.³² It is worth noting that this may well have been the result of a degree of pragmatism on the part of the conspirators, given that Beck had long believed that a wider European war would lead to a German defeat.³³

The *Kreisauer Kreis*, an opposition group led by Helmuth James Graf von Moltke, his wife Freya, and Peter Graf Yorck von Wartenburg, and named for the Moltkes' Kreisau estate, too, concerned itself with plans for European integration. In Moltke's view, a European army featured less prominently, mainly to control European borders on land and at sea.³⁴ A new European order would have to follow a new order of the *Reich* itself, as Moltke and his co-conspirators acknowledged.³⁵ The programme which was developed to this end by August 1943 focused primarily on political, social, economic, and cultural reconstruction based on a Christian moral order. The group could not possibly disregard military planning, given a string of Wehrmacht defeats on the Eastern Front following the destruction of Friedrich Paulus' 6th Army at Stalingrad in early 1943.³⁶ Although the plans developed by the circle around Moltke aimed at the creation of a stable and peaceful European order, it was apparent as early as June 1941, around the time of the German invasion of the Soviet Union, that Europe would face 'most important military tasks', the concrete configuration of which would be the result of negotiation once peace had been achieved.³⁷

The opposition groups aimed at largely peaceful European and global orders,³⁸ though the plans made were often fantastic and based on the assumption of a natural German hegemony in Europe. They were forced to reckon with the possibility of recurring military conflict on the European periphery, even if their plans for a new German order and European integration were to be successful. The aim of European integration was to be peace within Europe, while the world beyond Europe's borders remained threatening and thus military instruments were to be maintained and integrated. The opposition to the National Socialist regime was war-weary, though they were vigilant with regards to a potential future war with the Soviet Union.

4. European armies and West-German military planning

From the beginning, the existence of the FRG was intertwined with the question how it might be defended,³⁹ as the new state could not hope to repel a possible Soviet attack alone.⁴⁰ Hence, the language around a new West-German army was one of united defence. The new army was referred to as a 'defence contribution' to that of the West against the East. Adenauer viewed a new army as a means to full West-German sovereignty.⁴¹ There was a confluence of interests, with American planners keen to draw on German military expertise. German officers, they regarded as exceptionally

³¹ Alya Aglan, *Le Temps de la Résistance* (Arles: Actes Sud, 2008) on the French resistance and the idea of Europe.

³² Schramm, 'Das Ziel', 100; Lipgens, *Europa-Föderationspläne*, 170–2.

³³ Ludwig Beck, *Studien*, ed. Hans Speidel (Stuttgart: K.F. Koehler, 1955).

³⁴ Ger van Roon, *Neuordnung im Widerstand. Der Kreisauer Kreis innerhalb der deutschen Widerstandsbewegung* (München: Oldenbourg, 1967), 507–17.

³⁵ Lipgens, *Europa-Föderationspläne*, 153; van Roon, *Neuordnung*, 253–6, 542–7, 562–6.

³⁶ Christina Morina, *Legacies of Stalingrad: Remembering the Eastern Front in Germany Since 1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

³⁷ Lipgens, *Europa-Föderationspläne*, 119.

³⁸ Hans Mommsen, *Alternative zu Hitler. Studien zur Geschichte des deutschen Widerstandes* (München: C.H. Beck, 2000), especially 159–228.

³⁹ Echternkamp, *Soldaten im Nachkrieg*, 338–46.

⁴⁰ Konrad Adenauer, 'Deutschland und die Europa-Armee', *Wehrwissenschaftliche Rundschau* 1, no. 1 (1951); An overview in James S. Corum, 'Adenauer, Amt Blank, and the Founding of the Bundeswehr 1950–1956', in *Rearming Germany*, ed. James S. Corum (London: Brill, 2011), 29–52.

⁴¹ Norbert Wiggershaus, 'Die Entscheidung für einen westdeutschen Verteidigungsbeitrag, 1950', in *Von der Kapitulation bis zum Plevén-Plan.*, ed. Roland G. Foerster et al., *Anfänge westdeutscher Sicherheitspolitik, 1945–1956*, 4 vols (München: R. Oldenbourg, 1982), 325–402.

well-trained and experienced, and, pragmatically, if West-Germans bore some of the burden of their own defence, fewer U.S. forces might be required.

Until recently, the 1950 *Himmerod Memorandum* was regarded as *the* central document for understanding subsequent West-German defence planning.⁴² The memorandum was drafted at a secret conference convened at a monastery by the future West-German defence ministry, the *Amt Blank*, with a number of former senior officers in attendance. As a first step, the German soldier had to be rehabilitated. This meant declarations of honour by FRG and Allied politicians,⁴³ and a promise to stop the ‘defamation’ of those who had formerly served in both the *Wehrmacht* and *Waffen-SS*. The ‘war criminals’ (quotation marks and emphasis in the original), too, were to be freed.⁴⁴ ‘Western Europe’, the authors declared, ‘has to defended *as far eastward* as possible’.⁴⁵ Habbo Knoch argues that the memorandum allowed part of the former *Wehrmacht* elite to found the new army upon old stratagems deployed with disastrous effects on the Eastern Front. This further insulated military elites from political control.⁴⁶ But, beyond more general planning, the memorandum served as a programmatic document for the West-German military elite’s stance towards European military integration.

Former German officers were keen to peddle their own expertise to the Americans, styling themselves as more capable than they really had been.⁴⁷ Their defeats in the East, in their own telling, had occurred due to Hitler’s misguided interventions, or due to the overwhelming number, rather than the skill, of Soviet troops.⁴⁸ This might be read as a military-strategic operationalisation of more generally circulating racialised discourses around ‘Asiatic hordes’ threatening the West.⁴⁹ As an aspect of military history, this story has proven remarkably enduring.⁵⁰ A pivotal role in these processes was played by Franz Halder, former Chief of the OKH. Halder was imprisoned after the failed 20 July 1944 attempted coup not due to association with the plot, but because he and others had conspired to depose Hitler in 1938. After the war, he became instrumental in the cooperation between the U.S. Army and the former German military elite.⁵¹ Some soldiers claimed that it had in fact been a European army which had invaded the Soviet Union to defend the Christian Occident, noting foreign volunteers in the *Waffen-SS* and allied formations in German army groups.⁵² Yet, this emphasis on foreign troops was distinctly a post-war development.⁵³

⁴²Hans-Jürgen Rautenberg and Norbert Wiggershaus, ‘Die Himmeroder Denkschrift von Oktober 1950’, *Militärgeschichtliche Mitteilungen* 21, no. 1977 (1977): 135–206; The full title of the memorandum was ‘A Study Concerning the Establishment of a German Contingent in the Framework of a Supranational Force for Western European Defense’, Thomas Vogel, ‘The Himmerod Memorandum and the Beginning of West German Security Policy’, in *Rearming Germany*, ed. James S. Corum (London: Brill, 2011), 3.

⁴³Bert-Oliver Manig, *Die Politik der Ehre. Die Rehabilitierung der Berufssoldaten in der frühen Bundesrepublik* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2004). Declarations of the honour of the German soldier were given by both Chancellor Konrad Adenauer and President Dwight D. Eisenhower.

⁴⁴Rautenberg and Wiggershaus, ‘Himmeroder Denkschrift’, 169.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, 171.

⁴⁶Habbo Knoch, ‘“Gewissenlose Führung” und “anständige Landser”. Die Wehrmacht im Wandel bundesrepublikanischer Erinnerungspolitik’, in *Verräter? Vorbilder? Verbrecher? Kontroverse Deutungen des 20. Juli 1944 seit 1945*, ed. Haus der Geschichte Baden-Württemberg (Berlin: Frank & Timme, 2016), 43–71.

⁴⁷Erich von Manstein, *Verlorene Siege* (Bonn: Athenäum, 1955) most notoriously.

⁴⁸Gerhard P. Groß, *The Myth and Reality of German Warfare: Operational Thinking from Moltke the Elder to Heusinger* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2016), 210, generally 189–275 notes on Halder and the planning for the German invasion of the Soviet Union, ‘Very rarely had a chief of the German General Staff assessed the situation as glaringly wrong as did Halder in those days’; David Stahel, ‘The Wehrmacht and National Socialist Military Thinking’, *War in History* 24, no. 3 (2017): 336–61 for a survey of the influence of National Socialist ideology on the German military.

⁴⁹Paul Hanebrink, *A Specter Haunting Europe: The Myth of Judeo-Bolshevism* (London: Harvard University Press, 2018), 200–36.

⁵⁰Alfons Dalma, ‘Grenzen der sowjetischen weltpolitischen Strategie’, *Wehrkunde* 11, no. 8 (1962): 405–12; Esther-Julia Howell, *Von den Besiegten lernen? Die kriegsgeschichtliche Kooperation der U.S. Armee und der ehemaligen Wehrmachtselite 1945–1961* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015).

⁵¹Christian Hartmann, *Halder. Generalstabschef Hitlers, 1938–1942* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2012).

⁵²Notoriously, Felix M. Steiner, *Die Wehridee des Abendlandes* (Frankfurt am Main: Parma-Edition, 1951); Felix M. Steiner, *Die Freiwilligen der Waffen-SS. Idee und Opfergang* (Göttingen: Plesse, 1958); Felix M. Steiner, *Die Armee der Geächteten* (Göttingen: Plesse, 1961).

⁵³Jochen Böhrer and Robert Gerwarth, eds., *The Waffen-SS: A European History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

Before the Himmerod memorandum was drafted a meeting was held on 5 January 1950 between Hans Speidel, Adolf Heusinger, and Herman Foertsch.⁵⁴ Minutes from that meeting suggest that German rearmament was not, as older historiography had it, occasioned by the outbreak of the Korean War. Rather, it seems the Korean War provided, if anything, the impetus to push for rearmament more publicly, and made public support more likely.⁵⁵ As Agilolf Keßelring makes clear, the minutes were meant to provide a central set of arguments around which the various groups vying for influence upon rearmament could coalesce.⁵⁶ Therefore, they might be understood to provide a set of shared aspirations of the former, and future, military elite. Speidel had been Erwin Rommel's chief of staff in Normandy, before being imprisoned for his alleged links to the 20 July attempted coup. Later, Speidel skilfully emphasised these links and used them to his political advantage, becoming Commander-in-Chief of Allied Land Forces Central Europe (NATO COMLANDCENT) in 1957. Heusinger had been head of the Operations Staff at the OKH where, a 1956 *Spiegel* portrait claimed, he would lock himself in his office, 'with some maps, scale 1:1 000 000, soft pencils, eraser, and *Boenicke* cigars', emerging with a draft operations plan at the end of the day. After the war, Heusinger became Inspector General of the *Bundeswehr* and Chairman of the NATO Military Committee.⁵⁷ Foertsch had served the bulk of the war on the Eastern Front, mainly as chief of the general staff of various formations, and he too would become Inspector General of the *Bundeswehr*.⁵⁸

The minutes demonstrate they could imagine any kind of rearmament being sponsored by the Allies, from supplying West-German 'cannon fodder', to full integration into a European army. They expected a number of concessions be made by the Allies, including a rejection of the Oder-Neisse line, and a cessation of accusations of 'militarism' towards the former military elite.⁵⁹ Whether an army could be raised in West-Germany was unclear. It might, the trio worried, provoke war. Should the risk be too high, troops might be trained in 'Africa, [the] United States, or distributed across multiple Atlantic partners'.⁶⁰ If a Soviet invasion were to take place, it was suggested that any soldiers and potential conscripts be evacuated to Spain. This echoes ideas expressed by West-German military thinkers such as Burkhart Mueller-Hillebrand, who viewed the entire European continent as the geopolitical space where the Christian Occident would be defended. Mueller-Hillebrand had served at the OKH early in the Second World War, becoming chief-of-staff of various tank formations on the Eastern Front until the end of the war, after the war, he ultimately served in a senior planning capacity at NATO's Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe. For Mueller-Hillebrand, as for Speidel, Heusinger, and Foertsch, West-German rearmament, and the integration of a new West-German army into some sort of European army, were conditions to be leveraged for political and economic gain on the road to West-Germany's political normalisation and European integration.

5. The European soldier in the technical age

European integration was also understood as a strategic means towards greater economic power which would enable the more effective and 'up to date' conduct of war. Just like Beck and Goerdeler,

⁵⁴ Agilolf Keßelring and Thorsten Loch, 'Der "Besprechungsplan" vom 5. Januar 1950 Gründungsdokument der Bundeswehr? Eine Dokumentation zu den Anfängen westdeutscher Sicherheitspolitik', *Historisch-Politische Mitteilungen* 22, no. 1 (2015): 199–230.

⁵⁵ Keßelring and Loch, 'Himmerod war nicht der Anfang. Bundesminister Eberhard Wildermuth und die Anfänge westdeutscher Sicherheitspolitik', *Militärgeschichtliche Zeitschrift* 74, no. 1–2 (2015): 60–96; Previously, the definitive account of West-German rearmament in Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt, *Anfänge westdeutscher Sicherheitspolitik*, 4 vols (München: Oldenbourg, 1982).

⁵⁶ Keßelring, *Neuformierung*, 115–24.

⁵⁷ 'Die tragische Laufbahn', *Spiegel*, 1956; Georg Meyer, *Adolf Heusinger. Dienst eines deutschen Soldaten, 1915–1964* (Berlin: Mittler, 2001).

⁵⁸ Keßelring and Loch, 'Besprechungsplan', 206–9.

⁵⁹ Keßelring, *Neuformierung*, 123, 133–42.

⁶⁰ Keßelring and Loch, 'Besprechungsplan', 225.

Mueller-Hillebrand argued that since 1945, the economic and technological cost of war had increased exponentially. Therefore, only large blocks of states or superpowers were able to afford the most recent technologies which were critical for the conduct of war. Even superpowers, Mueller-Hillebrand argued, came up against economic and financial limits. For instance, available technologies allowed for the transport of entire armies quickly over vast distances and might even enable their deployment in the enemy's rear with little warning. And yet, neither superpower would do so, given extraordinary costs associated with such manoeuvres.⁶¹

It was this technical progress which necessitated military integration on a European level. Mueller-Hillebrand argued that space had been compressed. In face of that development alone, European defence ought to be integrated.⁶² Implied here was an idea that the next war, like the Second World War, would be one of manoeuvre. Given the vast speeds of new weapons systems, distance became crucial, necessitating a wider strategic and geopolitical vision. If a new jet fighter could cross West-Germany within a quarter of an hour, defence in depth became critical.⁶³ The jet aircraft, in particular, became one central technical development by means of which technological acceleration and shrinking geostrategic space in Europe was communicated, being a feature of a number of accounts, with its capacity to cross borders in minutes and, given potential nuclear capability, annihilate cities within seconds.⁶⁴

In a further emphasis of the need for European integration arising from technological developments and the resulting geopolitical changes, Mueller-Hillebrand argued that even if national armies were to attempt to hold a front between the Alps and the Baltic Sea, modern motorised warfare would mean the armies would quickly intermingle. Unless peacetime accommodations for such an event had been made, it would lead to even greater inefficiencies. This encompassed both the organisation of military staffs, but also basic processes on all levels, including tactics and logistics. Indirectly, Mueller-Hillebrand argued that military integration was a necessity and no alternatives existed, if armies were to be able to defend against a Soviet invasion. An endorsement of a European army was just a logical step, as it would consolidate the solutions to these various problems. The Soviets already had an overwhelming conventional military superiority in Europe. They had more divisions, more men, more tanks, and more aircraft.⁶⁵ NATO could command more nuclear warheads, though for a long time this played only a minor role for West-German military thinkers.⁶⁶ An endorsement of a European army was a pragmatic peacetime preparation for the eventual war, which would no doubt be the result of hegemonic tendencies inherent within 'Marxism-Leninism'.

But Europe's new geopolitical alignment, too, proved a point of contestation. Erich von Manstein was not the only one who endorsed the idea of Europe as a third pole in international politics, backed by a strong European army, independent of the United States' armed forces.⁶⁷ But against those like Manstein, who signalled that they might be willing to accept a unified Germany in exchange for German neutrality, Mueller-Hillebrand and others argued that there was no practical or realistic way

⁶¹ Mueller-Hillebrand, 'Nationale Armee oder Europaarmee?', *Wehrwissenschaftliche Rundschau* 3, no. 4 (1953): 165–8.

⁶² Hans Kissel, 'Zur Verteidigung Westeuropas', *Wehrkunde* 7, no. 6 (1958): 289–95.

⁶³ Mueller-Hillebrand, 'Nationale Armee oder Europaarmee?', 166; for a history of this idea in relation to the tank, Alaric Searle, *Armoured Warfare: A Military, Political and Global History* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017); philosophically Paul Virilio, *Speed and Politics: An Essay on Dromology*, trans. Mark Polizzotti (New York: Semiotext(e), 1986).

⁶⁴ Jean Bloch, 'Die Luftverteidigung in Westeuropa', *Wehrkunde* 6, no. 1 (1957): 17–21; Mueller-Hillebrand, 'Nationale Armee oder Europaarmee?'; Wolfgang Pickert, 'Gedanken über eine europäische Luftverteidigung', *Wehrkunde* 2, no. 1 (1953): 8–10; Pickert, 'Europäische Luftverteidigung', *Wehrkunde* 5, no. 2 (1956); Georg Wilhelm Freiherr von Rheinbaben, 'Probleme der Luftverteidigung heute', *Wehrkunde* 10, no. 5 (1961); Gerd Schmücke, 'Brauchen die Militärs Europa?', *Wehrkunde* 6, no. 1 (1957): 13–17.

⁶⁵ Naval capacity played a secondary role, perhaps not surprising given none of the writers here discussed came from the navy. Exemplary is Fritz Berendsen, 'Die Pariser Verträge im Blickfeld des Soldaten', *Wehrwissenschaftliche Rundschau* 5, no. 5 (1955): 193–8.

⁶⁶ Hans Speier, *German Rearmament and Atomic War: The Views of German Military and Political Leaders* (Evanston, IL: Row, Peterson, 1957), 111–31 for a critical American perspective; recently on the role of Speier, Daniel Bessner, *Democracy in Exile: Hans Speier and the Rise of the Defense Intellectual* (London: Cornell University Press, 2018).

⁶⁷ Rüdiger von Manstein and Theodor Fuchs, eds., *Erich von Manstein, Soldat im 20. Jahrhundert. Militärisch-politische Nachlese* (München: Bernard & Graefe, 2002), 361–71.

that such a Germany might be defended. The costs of defence had become too high even for the superpowers to bear by themselves. The Soviets could not be counted upon.⁶⁸ There was no state but the United States which could guarantee German neutrality. To anyone who still would argue for German neutrality, another writer responded that this simply meant a perpetual status of occupation.⁶⁹ Just as with the argument made by Mueller-Hillebrand about the organisation of a European army, integration into a Western alliance more broadly emerged as an utterly pragmatic step without serious alternatives.⁷⁰ A lack of military integration, Mueller-Hillebrand argued, would signal to the Soviet Union that Europe was not ready to defend itself without support from the United States. 'An insincere resolve to defend Europe is an invitation for a violent neighbour to destroy it at a time of *his* choosing', he wrote.⁷¹ Demonstrating the will to fight, on the other hand, by creating a European army, might bring about a more stable peace.

6. The military public sphere and European military institutions

In the broader former officer corps, too, that question was addressed, and there, ideas were more fluid, more ambitious. Waldemar Erfurth, one of a number of former German generals working with Halder in service of the U.S. Army after the war, argued that the 'protection of the Christian Occident from the danger of Soviet hegemony', was the most important problem facing the world in 1952.⁷² NATO and the *Europaarmee* were not enough, but only small first steps, albeit in the right direction. Erfurth was not at all certain that Europe could count on American aid in the event of a Soviet invasion and thus advocated for West-German rearmament. And though Europe was only one front in a global conflict against the Soviet Union, Erfurth wrote that its defence had to be integrated with that of the other fronts in the Pacific, South-East Asia, and the Middle East. In a display of the sometimes transnational nature of debates within the West-German military public sphere, Erfurth endorsed a proposal by Pierre Billotte, of a 'Federal Union of the Atlantic World', which would encompass the 'free' European states, the British Empire, and the United States.⁷³ The new super-state would become economically and militarily integrated on the basis of a new constitution.⁷⁴ There was, in these wide-ranging proposals, some appearance of urgency, and Erfurth seems to have believed that, however unlikely they were to succeed, they were necessary to safeguard peace on a global scale.

In 1952, an anonymous author published a 'critical appraisal' of the EDC treaty under the title *German Soldiery and European Revival*. The EDC was the obvious and natural military analogue to the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), with these organisations providing for advancing conjoined European military and economic interests. Given the immense complexity of this challenge, the author argued that the perceived delay in West-German rearmament might be seen in this light.⁷⁵ If a European army was to function well in a potential armed conflict, its organisation needed to avoid the mistakes made by previous coalition forces, and thus careful planning was required. But it was not clear that the conflict would be with the Soviet Union, though that was of course most likely. Rather, a European army might guarantee a return to a 'concert of powers', which 'must not be made up of two voices only'.⁷⁶ It was this position, an idea of a Germany between the superpowers, that many, including Georg von Sodenstern, who had commanded an army in Italy from 1943 and worked under Halder with the U.S. Army, and Mueller-Hillebrand, thought

⁶⁸G. de Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, 'Der Krieg des 20. Jahrhunderts', *Wehrkunde* 6, no. 1 (1957): 10.

⁶⁹Robert Knauss, 'Vom Geist des deutschen Kontingents', *Wehrwissenschaftliche Rundschau* 1, no. 3 (1951): 4.

⁷⁰Mueller-Hillebrand, 'Nationale Armee oder Europaarmee?'.
⁷¹*Ibid.*, 168.

⁷²Erfurth, 'Europaunion oder Atlantikbund?', *Wehrwissenschaftliche Rundschau* 2, no. 3 (1952): 92–9.

⁷³Billotte, *Le temps du choix* (Paris: Laffont, 1950).

⁷⁴Or Rosenboim, *The Emergence of Globalism: Visions of World Order in Britain and the United States, 1939–1950* (London: Princeton University Press, 2017) on such ideas in the Anglosphere.

⁷⁵Anon, 'Deutsches Soldatentum und europäische Wiedergeburt', *Wehrwissenschaftliche Rundschau* 2, no. 6 (1952): 260.

⁷⁶*Ibid.*, 264.

imminently dangerous. The former had railed against the 'division of the West' as the result of Soviet machinations and believed neither West-Germany nor Europe could stand alone. After all, the Soviet Union had pushed the Christian Occident back to the frontiers from which '1200 years ago Charlemagne had started, to win the East!'.⁷⁷

Henry Kissinger, then head of Defense Studies at Harvard, also intervened in these debates, making clear the stakes and potential American interests at play. In a 1962 article published in *Wehrkunde*, he argued that Europeans must, given the potential devastation of nuclear war, be more interested in nuclear strategy than Americans, given their existence was more closely linked to it.⁷⁸ The number of NATO divisions in Europe would have little bearing on a Soviet attack, it was only through sufficient nuclear superiority that they could be deterred.⁷⁹ Kissinger's argument revolved around the assumption, which he called unreasonable, that the Soviets might launch a large-scale conventional offensive across the North German plain. Yet, this was long the main assumption of West-German military planning, exposing a strategic gap.⁸⁰ What large sections of the German military elite expected was based on the war they had experienced.⁸¹ The Americans, though they had commissioned the aforementioned work by Halder and others, had come to different strategic conclusions. If it was true that 'the defeated is more inclined to critically examine the reasons for defeat than the victor', the German military elite possessed not just experience in the fight against the Soviet Union, but also the unique benefit of having been defeated. Victors were likely to become complacent.⁸² The military elite thus retained a degree of relevance. They had, after all, fought a war, like the one to come, before. It was their combat experience that they believed made them valuable allies to the U.S. Army and a vital asset to the West-German state.⁸³

By the latter half of the 1960s, even after nearly two decades of NATO, France having left the organisation in 1966, there was in some quarters dissatisfaction with the post-war settlement. Fernand-Thiébaud Schneider, a French military officer and regular contributor within the West-German military public sphere, expressed some dismay at De Gaulle's decision. Schneider argued that, although the reasons for which France had exited NATO were understandable, the situation of the Christian Occident seemed bleak. American preponderance was unacceptable in the long term, the interests of the Europeans and the Americans diverged, and thus American strategy could potentially endanger European security.⁸⁴ The demand which followed was one for a European grouping *within* NATO, at the core of which was to be a new EDC, though, 'in keeping with the national character of the armies'. A more ambitious European military identity seemed no longer on the cards, as it was deemed to distract from the serious work required to safeguard the West. What was required until then, Schneider concluded, was a preliminary approach of 'crisis management'. And what was offered in the medium term was 'Europe of nations', as a sort of lowest common denominator both West-German elites, Gaullists, and de Gaulle himself could agree on.⁸⁵

⁷⁷Georg von Sodenstern, 'Strategische Gedanken zur Gegenwart', *Wehrwissenschaftliche Rundschau* 1, no. 5 (1951): 4, 6–8; Anon, 'Die Verteidigung der westlichen Welt', *Wehrwissenschaftliche Rundschau* 1, no. 3 (1951): 1–3.

⁷⁸Henry A. Kissinger, 'Probleme der europäischen Verteidigung', *Wehrkunde* 11, no. 11 (1962): 574–82.

⁷⁹*Ibid.*, 577.

⁸⁰Heinz Guderian, *Kann Westeuropa verteidigt werden?* (Göttingen: Plesse, 1950) for instance, also see above; a critical contemporary perspective in Speier, *German Rearmament and Atomic War*.

⁸¹Lothar Rendulic, 'Über Kriegserfahrung', *Wehrkunde* 1, no. 10 (1952): 5–13.

⁸²*Ibid.*, 13; Better known versions of this argument also in Reinhart Koselleck, 'Transformations of Experience and Methodological Change: A Historical-Anthropological Essay', in *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History, Spacing Concepts*, trans. Jobst Welge (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002), 45–83; Carl Schmitt, *Ex Captivitate Salus: Experiences, 1945–47*, trans. Matthew Hannah (Cambridge: Polity, 2017).

⁸³Experience on the Eastern Front remained an essential criterion for promotion of senior officers long into the post-war period, Helmut R. Hammerich, 'Ostfronterfahrungen und Landesverteidigung im Kalten Krieg: Oberst Gerd Ruge und Oberst Josef Rettemeier', in *Militärische Aufbaugenerationen der Bundeswehr 1955–1970. Ausgewählte Biographien*, ed. Helmut R. Hammerich and Rudolf J. Schlaffer (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010), 237–63, see also notes 48 and 54 above.

⁸⁴Fernand-Thiébaud Schneider, 'La politique militaire Allemande', *Revue des Deux Mondes* 15 (1967): 502–10.

⁸⁵Fernand-Thiébaud Schneider, 'Zur Suche nach einer neuen Strategie des Abendlandes', *Wehrwissenschaftliche Rundschau* 17, no. 10 (1967): 544–65.

7. The identity of the European soldier

In the looming conflict between East and West most military thinkers saw not just a geopolitical or geostrategic conflict. Rather, these concepts simply described the dimensions of a much more fundamental confrontation between 'Christian Occidental individualism' and 'Bolshevik concentration'. In the West, the state was an organisation which was to serve its citizens, guaranteeing their rights. In the East, the state was but a vehicle for terror, which made demands of ostensibly 'voluntary' participation in collective efforts.⁸⁶ That state, argued Sodenstern in 1952, appealed no longer to 'the revolutionary potential of the Red Guards, but the warlike nature of the Soviet soldier'.⁸⁷ The latter was characterised as the cumulative evolution of many generations of Russian soldiers. In the West, on the other hand, and in West-Germany in particular, debates were flaring up about the soldier as citizen. To Sodenstern, such arguments were equivalent to collective suicide. While he was not opposed to such ideas in principle, this was simply not the time for idealistic pursuits.

What was to be defended by the European soldier was not just his nation-state, but European culture and civilisation at large.⁸⁸ 'The brotherhood of arms, has always been the strongest glue. Out of the brotherhood of arms of the European soldiers, will, we hope, Europe arise'.⁸⁹ Gerd Schmückle, who had served under Rommel in France, then in the East, and later became Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe at NATO, argued in 1957 that a certain 'military cosmopolitanism' might easily be expected from a small officer elite who would be able to move beyond 'provincial nationalism'. To those who might expect soldiers to have some common feeling,⁹⁰ Schmückle replied, 'this remains a self-deception. Indeed, the soil from which our armies grow is of Occidental quality (*abendländischer Güteklasse*), but it has been fertilised with chemicals of varying compositions'.⁹¹ Schmückle argued that, given the weak sentiment currently attached to Europe, a materialist case for Europe may be more convincing. What emerged here was the ECSC as a necessary precondition for a European army. Only after material benefits had been attached to Europe, and a European identity more firmly settled, would most be ready to fight to defend them.

In 1952, Erich Hildebrand had argued that in the seven years without an army, West-Germany had not just fallen behind in technological, but also in moral terms. Hildebrand argued that this resulted in part from the civil-military conceptions many believed appropriate for a new army, which would be one 'without pathos'.⁹² Yet the soldier could not be simply integrated into the civilian world, a 'citizen in uniform' as the new German army would have it.⁹³ According to Hildebrand, the identity of the soldier was more ancient than that of the citizen. He was the bearer of the history of his nation, and, in Europe, also tied intimately to the history of Christianity. Had not the belt buckles of German soldiers in both World Wars proclaimed 'God with us'? The soldier emerged as the repository of timeless communitarian values, separate from the individualistic world of the citizen. It was the soldier who guarded and guaranteed the existence of the state. It was the soldier who, by means of drill, became as one with his comrades, and who would give his life for the nation, if required. The German soldier was an outstanding example of all these values, and to infuse them into a European army would be his role, and those who denied it guaranteed that he would be ill equipped to face the Soviet threat.⁹⁴

⁸⁶Anon, 'Staatsinteresse und bewaffnete Macht in Ost und West', *Wehrkunde* 11, no. 10 (1962): 535–9.

⁸⁷Sodenstern, 'Bürgersoldaten?', *Wehrwissenschaftliche Rundschau* 2, no. 6 (1952): 247, 253.

⁸⁸Raddatz, 'Soldaten Europas in einer Einheit', *Wehrkunde* 6, no. 10 (1957): 590–1; Gottfried Greiner, 'Zum Aufsatz von Major Raddatz: "Soldaten Europas in einer Einheit"', *Wehrkunde* 6, no. 11 (1957): 641–2.

⁸⁹Knauss, 'Geist', 9.

⁹⁰Rolf Elble, 'Gemeinsames in der Berufsauffassung europäischen Offiziertums', *Wehrwissenschaftliche Rundschau* 7, no. 8 (1958): 475–82; Oldwig von Natzmer, 'REDE, die zur Eröffnung einer europäischen Wehrakademie gehalten werden könnte', *Wehrkunde* 3, no. 4 (1954): 106–8.

⁹¹Schmückle, 'Brauchen die Militärs Europa?', 16.

⁹²Adelbert Weinstein, *Armee ohne Pathos. Die deutsche Wiederbewaffnung im Urteil ehemaliger Soldaten* (Bonn: Köllen, 1951).

⁹³Pamela E. Swett, 'Neither Too Hard, nor Too Soft: Hellmuth Heye, the Quick Controversy and West Germany's "Citizens in Uniform"', *German History* 37, no. 1 (2019): 54–76.

⁹⁴Hildebrand, 'Wandelbare und unwandelbare Werte in der Welt des Soldaten', *Wehrwissenschaftliche Rundschau* 2, no. 7 (1952): 305–27.

Thinking about a European army, however, was not merely the privilege of a few military leaders, and not just of the conservative older generations. In 1961 a feature in *Information für die Truppe*, a magazine associated with a more liberal and left-leaning group within the *Bundeswehr*,⁹⁵ addressed the question of the *Fatherland and the Tradition of the Armies of the Christian Occident*. Identity was here approached with caution in relation to the nation, as

who is committed to this cause, to put one's life on the line in service of the Fatherland, must support everything which is done in the name of that Fatherland, for he acts according to the principle 'justice or injustice, it is my fatherland'.⁹⁶

Service to the nation, therefore, had to be linked to greater moral qualities, and the connection was made to the Christian Occident and the tradition of its soldiers. For the meaning of the fatherland was only intelligible with reference to the Christian Occident, and the Christian Occident only intelligible through tradition. The Christian Occident here referred to a 'spiritual, eternal domain of values', but unlike in many other publications, 'Marxism-Leninism', too, was identified as a product of the Christian Occident. And it was precisely from this Western nature that the problems with Marxism-Leninism originated, as Others were trying to make something that originated within the Christian Occident their own. In Africa, for instance, where 'old culture has been decapitated and, through a sort of brain surgery, has received an Occidental head'.⁹⁷ But the fault did not lie with the 'developing peoples', but Europeans themselves, who viewed their ideas as self-evident truths.

The Christian Occident was described as having three geographical points of origin: Jerusalem, Athens, and Rome. Each of the three geographical centres in turn was associated with a moral virtue: freedom, justice, truth, the last in this sequence being identified as religious truth. These virtues defined the tradition of Christian Occidental soldier (*abendländisches Soldatentum*),⁹⁸ and were linked to 'knighthood' (*Rittertum*), defined by 'the idea of the selfless sacrifice in service of the good'.⁹⁹ This rather simplistic lineage was drawn straight from Arthurian legend, Percival in particular. It was by means of this shared identity that West-German soldiers were meant to integrate into a European army.¹⁰⁰ The discussion in a following issue raised some interesting points.¹⁰¹ Both the submissions published were written by junior officers who were unlikely to have fought in the Second World War, perhaps belonging to the *Flakhelfer* generation, the youths who had been recruited to man anti-aircraft guns in German cities in the last months of the war.¹⁰² The journal in which their submissions were published situated them among those who were in search of a modern concept of civil-military relations, and who Hildebrand had attacked above.¹⁰³ The first submission argued that the current ideal soldiers ought to risk their lives for, the nation-state, was crumbling. 'The fatherland perished in the frozen wastes of Russia', the author wrote, 'it burned in the firestorms of the cities, it was mistreated, beaten to death, and gassed in the concentration camps'.¹⁰⁴ In search of a new ideal, the author echoed the values evoked by the original article. Faced with communist ideology which sought to dominate the globe, freedom and justice were at risk. All '*national obstacles*' (original emphasis) had to fall to defend against this threat, and the German nation

⁹⁵Rudolf J. Schlaffer and Wolfgang Schmidt, eds., *Wolf Graf von Baudissin, 1907–1993. Modernisierer zwischen totaler Herrschaft und freiheitlicher Ordnung* (Münster: Oldenbourg, 2007).

⁹⁶Ulrich Mann, 'Das Vaterland und die Tradition der abendländischen Heere', *Information für die Truppe*, no. 9 (1961): 566.

⁹⁷*Ibid.*, 568.

⁹⁸*Ibid.*, 574.

⁹⁹*Ibid.*, 577.

¹⁰⁰Anon, 'Europa', *Information für die Truppe*, no. 12 (1961): 820–34.

¹⁰¹Siegfried Sgries, 'Der Soldat muss die Werte kennen, die er verteidigt', *Information für die Truppe*, no. 12 (1961): 817–19.

¹⁰²Rolf Schörken, *Die Niederlage als Generationserfahrung. Jugendliche nach dem Zusammenbruch der NS-Herrschaft* (Weinheim: Juventa, 2004).

¹⁰³Jörg Echternkamp et al., 'Deutsche Militärgeschichte von 1945–1990 im internationalen Kontext', *Militärgeschichtliche Zeitschrift* 76, no. 1 (2017): 139.

¹⁰⁴Reinhard Schmeltzkopf, 'Wofür setzen wir unser Leben ein?', *Information für die Truppe*, no. 11 (1961): 730.

was well equipped due to a post-war focus on the eternal values of unity, justice, and freedom (*Einigkeit und Recht und Freiheit*).¹⁰⁵

A second respondent wrote that belief in a national fatherland was no longer enough. He evoked the spirit of the 20 July 1944, by no means an uncontroversial move within the *Bundeswehr*, even in the 1960s.¹⁰⁶ The role of the soldier now was to, if necessary, put the common interest of the Christian Occident ahead of narrow national interest. The role of the politician was to, with a great degree of patience, encourage the love for a European fatherland.¹⁰⁷ What was summoned in these texts was a Christian Occidental soldier ready to defend the West, and the values associated with it, against Eastern incursion. The soldier was universally imagined to be male, and he was to be a Christian head of household, which would inoculate him against Soviet ideology. In such imaginings, Friederike Brühöfener argues, 'the West-German bulwark against Communism depended as much on the healthy unity of Christian families as it did on the strength of its troops'.¹⁰⁸ Although there was no clear form of European military organisation suggested here, both submissions show that the idea of a Christian Occidental soldier endured into the 1960s, and filtered down into broader, younger military circles associated with both active duty soldiers and the reserves.

8. Conclusion

By the mid-1960s, it became less common for West-German military thinkers to envisage a European army outside the confines of NATO.¹⁰⁹ In the United States, this process had occurred earlier, and as Kissinger had alluded to, a different strategic vision had developed as a result, but few of the former military elite in West-Germany had taken significant note, mainly for two reasons. The first was that nuclear war, in their minds, entailed the destruction of much of the West-German state and so became, in a sense, unthinkable. One commentator even wondered whether nuclear war should still be called a war at all.¹¹⁰ As horizons of expectation became foreclosed upon given the ever-firmer reality of the processes of European integration, more ambitious schemes and ideas for a European army, or even more fundamental European military integration, became largely irrelevant. NATO, too, seemed to provide an effective framework for national armies, and thus the desire for a European army became less immediate. Within NATO, wider ideological considerations took a back seat to the technical integration of national armies.

In the late 1960s, those West-German military thinkers to whom the idea of a Christian Occident appealed most as the basis for a European identity and European army began to move towards retirement. Many had been born around the start of the closing decade of the nineteenth century and socialised in the Imperial German armies, having experienced mass death and brutal positional warfare during the First World War and the ensuing pessimism during the Interwar period, before their hopes for German renewal ended in defeat and genocide. Following generations, though they made some of the same experiences, found different intellectual frames of reference. Those socialised in the interwar *Reichswehr*, for instance, are often said to have had an easier relationship to liberal democracy.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁵Ibid., 730–1.

¹⁰⁶Alaric Searle, 'Die unheilbare Wunde. Der 20. Juli 1944 im kollektiven Gedächtnis der Wehrmachtsgeneralität, 1949–1969', in *Verräter? Vorbilder? Verbrecher? Kontroverse Deutungen des 20. Juli 1944 seit 1945*, ed. Haus der Geschichte Baden-Württemberg (Berlin: Frank & Timme, 2016), 97–128.

¹⁰⁷Ernst Peter Kaiser, 'Der Weg zu einer abendländischen Vaterlandsliebe', *Information für die Truppe*, no. 11 (1961): 730–2.

¹⁰⁸Brühöfener, 'Sex and the Soldier: The Discourse about the Moral Conduct of Bundeswehr Soldiers and Officers during the Adenauer Era', *Central European History* 48, no. 4 (2015): 537.

¹⁰⁹Raban Freiherr von Canstein, 'Gedanken zum modernen Kriegsbild', *Wehrwissenschaftliche Rundschau* 15, no. 9 (1965): 513–23.

¹¹⁰Albert Kentner, 'Atomkrieg und bodenständige Verteidigung', *Wehrkunde* 5, no. 9 (1956): 463–4.

¹¹¹John Zimmermann, 'Der Prototyp: General Ulrich de Maizières', in *Militärische Aufbaugenerationen der Bundeswehr 1955–1970. Ausgewählte Biographien*, ed. Helmut R. Hammerich and Rudolf J. Schlaffer (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010), 409–36.

To this day, questions around a European army are interpreted as a kind of barometer of the seriousness of Europe's integration. This reflects in some ways a nation-state ontology, for what defines a state if not the Weberian exercise of the monopoly of force within a given territory, whether that territory be national or near-continental?

Taking seriously ideas about European military integration here outlined contributes to a number of wider debates. It raises the question of a focus of the history of European integration on endeavours which succeeded, rather than those that failed. But taking such failures seriously, and making them productive, might allow for a better understanding of not just the way the various processes of European integration proceeded, but the abortive futures left by the wayside. As Kiran Klaus Patel argues, writing the history of European integration runs the risk of creating a teleological narrative, oriented around the nigh inevitable progress of widening and deepening integration, propelled beyond occasional inertia by the heroic powers of great men.¹¹² Thinking historically about European military integration allows us to account for intellectual lineages, as both Conze and Patel challenge us to do, which might help us to better understand contemporary processes of European military integration, for instance technical integration, which came about in part due to economic reasons, just as West-German military thinkers had envisioned.

In the specific case of European military integration, a focus on failures allows us to make sense of the fact that, to this day, a European army is invoked again and again as the pinnacle of European integration. If the endeavour was, as the relative lack of engagement with this question might suggest, largely abandoned after the failure of the EDC in 1954, the contemporary resonance of the idea may seem odd. But in the context of the deeper, longer-lasting debates here outlined, it may seem less surprising, in spite of the article's limited focus on the West-German military public sphere. As has been hinted at above, similar debates were taking place elsewhere, in particular in France and the United States. In France, discussions around European defence took place among military elites conscious of the country's precarious status as a great power, unable to satisfy both its nuclear and colonial ambitions with limited resources.¹¹³ The view of the American military establishment was naturally more global still. Wars in Korea, Vietnam, and elsewhere, as well as domestic financial considerations occasioned a serious look at the superpower's commitments around the world, including in Europe. Strong, integrated allied European military forces would allow for a smaller American involvement there, though a reliance on long-range nuclear strikes brought its own political and strategic problems.¹¹⁴

Returning to West-Germany, an engagement with continued and serious thinking about a European army suggests a broad continuity of concerns across German military thinking in the twentieth century, in spite of radically changing ideological and political institutional landscapes. Although former *Wehrmacht* elites adjusted their thinking in important ways, West-German leadership within a European army, though few came close to saying so explicitly, might have given them another, better chance in the next war against the Soviet Union. This time, unlike last time, they might win.

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¹¹²Patel, *Projekt Europa*, 7–21.

¹¹³Claude d'Abzac-Epezy and Philippe Vial, 'In Search of a European Consciousness: French Military Elites and the Idea of Europe, 1947–54', in *Building Postwar Europe: National Decision-Makers and European Institutions, 1948–63*, ed. Anne Deighton (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995), 1–20; Frédéric Mérand, 'Les militaires français et la construction européenne, 1972–1998. Représentations sociales de l'Europe de la défense dans «Armées d'aujourd'hui»', *Politique européenne* 9, no. 1 (2003): 165–92.

¹¹⁴Sayle, *Enduring Alliance*, 167–90.

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