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Abstract

Denise Kathrin Tscharntke

Educating German Women: The Work of the Women's Affairs Section of British Military Government 1946-1951

This dissertation examines the influence British women exercised in the reconstruction of gender roles in Germany after the Second World War, as officers in the Women's Affairs Section of the British Military Government, and as Visiting Experts in women's affairs invited by the Foreign Office. The British saw that women were the majority of the German workforce and electorate, whose active citizenship and labour was necessary for stabilising the German economy and introducing democracy.

British middle-class women suggested that their German counterparts play societal roles according to a British middle-class view of democratic society. German women, who were considered to have been previously confined to *Kinder, Küche, Kirche*, were to be 're-educated' by British women's voluntary organisations which had closely co-operated with the government during the war. 're-education' centred more on the fulfilment of civic duties than on the extension of women's civic or social rights.

However, the implementation of British women's ideas about 're-education' was ineffectual because of obstacles presented by the (male-dominated) Military Government. Although the British recognised that the traditional attitude of German women and employers towards women's employment had to be changed, employment policy continued to maintain the traditional division of labour by sex. During this time, no discernible progress was made in either Germany or in Britain in redefining gender roles.

A tangible result of occupation policy, motivated by the Cold War, was to promote the *Frauenring* as an alternative to the *Demokratischer Frauenbund Deutschlands* in the Russian Zone. German women were less willing to adopt British organisations, such as the Women's Institutes or the Townswomen's Guilds. Only a small educated middle-class elite, mostly professionals or *Frauenring* leaders, profited from British contact. In the final analysis, women's policy responded to political and economic necessities of occupation rather than to the ideal of raising women's status.

EDUCATING GERMAN WOMEN: THE WORK OF THE WOMEN'S AFFAIRS SECTION OF BRITISH MILITARY GOVERNMENT 1946-1951

by

Denise Kathrin Tscharntke

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

Ph.D

University of Durham, Department of History

2001

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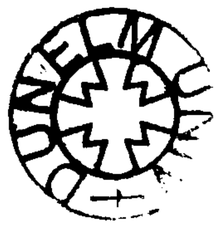

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1. Introduction

For the past three decades historians have been discussing whether the years shortly after the Second World War presented a missed chance of more equality for women.[1] Despite the fact that women during and after the war played a more public role than before, the traditional definition of gender roles became reinforced. Debates about women's proper role in society also occurred in other European countries and in the United States. In all countries the disruption of gender roles during the war was followed by a resurrection of the nuclear family as the foundation of society. Historians claim however that this question is of particular interest to German history. Robert Moeller has pointed out that the German debates provide insights into the ways in which West Germans sought to reconstitute the social order after the trauma of National Socialism and defeat in war. He claims that in analysing the social policy in post-war Germany it is possible to illuminate the extent to which post war West Germans viewed a careful evaluation of gender relations and a distinct break with the ideology of *Kinder, Küche, Kirche* as essential parts of a general commitment to change in the aftermath of Fascism. [2] Moeller argues that in the late 1940s and in the 1950s, policies that ostensibly protected the family were in fact policies that defined the social and political status of women. In the case of post-war Germany, laws aimed at protecting the family ultimately protected and preserved much else besides: patriarchal authority; women's economic dependence on men; the ideology of motherhood; pronatalist sentiments; and the normative conception of the 'family' as a social unit transcending class division. The Federal Republic was neither Weimar nor the Third Reich, but it did embody

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[1] Anna-Elisabeth Freier and Annette Kuhn, eds., *Das Schicksal Deutschlands liegt in der Hand seiner Frauen. Frauen in der deutschen Nachkriegsgeschichte* (Düsseldorf, 1984); Ute Gerhard, 'Fern von jedem Suffragettentum. Frauenpolitik in Deutschland nach 1945, eine Bewegung der Frauen?', in Bandauer-Schöffmann and Claire Duchen, eds., *Nach dem Krieg. Frauenleben und Geschlechterkonstruktion in Europa nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Herbolzheim, 2000); Annette Kuhn, 'Der Refamilialisierungsdiskurs nach '45', *Blätter zur Geschichte*, 5 (1991); Nori Möding, 'Die Stunde der Frauen? Frauen und Frauenorganisationen des bürgerlichen Lagers', in Martin Broszat, Klaus-Dieter Henke, and Hans Woller, eds., *Von Stalingrad zur Währungsreform. Zur Sozialgeschichte des Umbruches in Deutschland* (Munich, 1988).

[2] Robert G. Moeller, 'Reconstructing the Family in Reconstruction Germany: Women and Social Policy in the Federal Republic, 1949-1955', in Robert G. Moeller, ed., *West Germany under Construction. Politics, Society and Culture in the Adenauer Era* (Michigan, 1997), p. 109.

certain elements that linked it to its own most recent history. In the language of pronatalist motherhood, the sanctity of family relations, and in the state's attempt to shape these private relations there were striking continuities across the divide of 1945. The new German constitution guaranteed equality for men and women and the rights to self-fulfilment, but the message of family policy in the 1950s for women was that self-fulfilment was to be found in the home. [3]

The evaluation of gender roles in Germany took place at the time of military defeat and occupation. This dissertation attempts to illuminate the role British Military Government played in the process of reconstruction of gender roles in post-war Germany which led to the conservatism of the Adenauer era. Historians such as Moeller or Höhn seem to assume that the Allies purposely did not intervene in this discourse or that the effect of their intervention was only small.[4] In fact, German women became a major target group for the policy of 're-education', both of the British and American Military Governments. Both established a special Women's Affairs Section to concern themselves with this task. This thesis will examine what 're-education' of German women meant. Did it contribute to changing women's place in German society? Some of the official memoranda of the British Military Government claim that this was intended, especially at the beginning of occupation. Following these statements, some historians believed that 're-education' did improve the status of German women. [5] Other historians of post-war women's history who do not focus especially on policy of the occupying forces have denied this and have concluded, however, that the British supported the common view of the German administration. [6]

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[3] For discussion about the restoration of the patriarchal family see for example Maria Höhn, 'Frau im Haus und Girl im Spiegel: Discourse on Women in the Interregnum period of 1945-1949 and the Question of German Identity', *Central European History* 26 (1993).
Annette Kuhn, 'Power and Powerlessness', *German History* 7, 1 (1985).

[4] "..the web of power relations, the institutionalised one of the state and the cultural conditioned ones of society had proved more resistant to Allied influence than Germany's medieval cities had to Allied bombings". Höhn, 'Frau im Haus und Girl im Spiegel: Discourse on Women in the Interregnum period of 1945-1949 and the Question of German Identity', p. 88.

[5] Pia Grundhöfer, 'Ausländerinnen reichen die Hand'-britische und amerikanische Frauenpolitik in Deutschland im Rahmen der demokratischen Re-education nach 1945, Ph.D., University Trier, 1995, and 'Britische und amerikanische Frauenpolitik in der Nachkriegszeit - "To help German women to think for themselves".', in Kurt Düwell, ed., Soviel Anfang war nie? (Trier, 1996); Hermann-Josef Rupieper, 'Bringing Democracy to the Frauleins. Frauen als Zielgruppe der amerikanischen Demokratisierungspolitik in Deutschland 1946-1951', Geschichte und Gesellschaft 17 (1991); Christl Ziegler, Lernziel Demokratie. Politische Frauenbildung in der britischen und amerikanischen Besatzungszone 1945-1949, Studien zur Internationalen Erwachsenenbildung; Bd.11 (Köln and Weimar, 1997).

[6] Anna-Elisabeth Freier and Annette Kuhn, eds., *Das Schicksal Deutschlands liegt in der Hand*

In approaching the topic, I pose the following questions: Why did women become a special target group of CCG policy and why was a Women's Affairs Section established? Is it likely that a largely male administration of former military personnel and of civil servants were willing to pursue a policy that aimed to raise the status of German women in family and society? Was there a parallel to such a policy in Great Britain at the time? What was the place of Women's Affairs Section within the hierarchy of the CCG? How did Women's Affairs Section work and with what success? What influence were British women as Visiting Experts able to exercise on policy making in the British Zone? What motivated British women's organisations to get involved in 're-education' and helping German women to re-establish women's organisations? What conceptions did the British have for the role women should play in a democratic society and what did they therefore try to teach German women? To what extent did the British perception of the situation of German women reflect reality? Were the methods chosen to approach German women appropriate and were they successful? How did German women react to the policy of 're-education'? In answering these questions I hope to make a contribution to post-war women's history in Germany and Britain.

My research is focussed on British policy towards German women as it was reflected and commented on by Women's Affairs Section of British Military Government. It is limited to the years between 1946 and 1951 which mark the beginning and the end of the work of this Section. The dissertation is based on a thorough and systematic analysis of the files of the Women's Affairs Section but also of other Sections of the British Military Government such as Manpower Division. British Military Government was, as is true of other large organisations, not monolithic and did not pursue a homogeneous policy in all of its Branches and Divisions. On the contrary, objects and interests of some of its Branches and Divisions contradicted each other and at the beginning of occupation much was improvised. Therefore it seems important to set measures applied by different Branches in relation to each other.

In contrast to the research on women's affairs policy of the American Military Government the development and activities of the British Section must be deduced from a vast collection of minutes and correspondence because there is no extensive account,

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seiner Frauen. Frauen in der deutschen Nachkriegsgeschichte (Düsseldorf, 1984); Andrea Hauser, 'Alle Frauen unter einen Hut? Zur Geschichte des Stuttgarter Frauenausschusses', in Annette Kuhn, ed., *Frauen in der deutschen Nachkriegszeit* (Düsseldorf, 1986); Kuhn, 'Power and Powerlessness'.

such as Pilgert's brochure of the American policy.[7] Large parts of the files of the Women's Affairs Section were destroyed shortly after the end of occupation, as were the files of the Office of the Educational Adviser which would certainly have been of interest. [8] Only for North Rhine-Westphalia (the largest of the *Länder* within the British Zone) are the files nearly complete, allowing an assessment of the work of Women's Affairs down to Kreis levels. Files of Regional offices in Schleswig-Holstein and Lower Saxony no longer exist and from Berlin and Hamburg only a few papers are preserved. Private papers of Visiting Experts and files of British women's organisations involved in the process of 're-education' of German women cast a further light on British views and influence. Of great importance here are the papers of Helena Deneke, the most influential of the British Visiting Experts in women's affairs, who visited Germany seven times during the time of occupation. Herself of German descent, she spoke German fluently and made contact with nearly all German women of importance in public life at the time. Fortunately, she recorded her memoirs in the early 1950s in a typewritten book *The women of Germany* and her papers contain several volumes of hand-written preparatory work for this volume as well as correspondence. Also informative are the papers of the Women's Group on Public Welfare, which organised Exchange Programmes with German women, as well as papers of British women who were actively engaged in the matter such as Violet Markham and Nancy Astor.

Several other scholarly works have approached this topic, albeit from a narrower base of primary research. Research into the influence of occupation policy on women in post-war Germany, however, is still scarce. Closest to the line of argument presented in this work is Helen Jones' unpublished paper on British attitudes towards women in occupied Germany.[9] Hermann-Josef Rupieper first drew attention to the influence of American occupation on women by publishing an article in 1991 on the work done by the Women's Affairs Section of OMGUS which had – so he claimed – been largely overlooked in the literature on post-war Germany. [10] Rupieper argues that the

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[7] Henry P. Pilgert and (with assistance of Hildegard Waschke), Women in West Germany. With Special Reference to the Policies and Programs of the Women's Affairs Branch Office of Public Affairs Office of the U.S. High Commissioner for Germany, 1952).
[8] Adolf M. Birke, Akten der britischen Militärregierung in Deutschland. Sachinventar 1945-1955 = Control Commission for Germany, British Element (Munich, 1993).
[9] Helen Jones, "Creating Good Citizens: British Attitudes towards Women in Occupied Germany (unpublished paper)," (University of Liverpool, 1992), partly published in Helen Jones, *Women in British Public Life, 1914-1950* (London, 2000).
[10] Rupieper, 'Bringing Democracy to the Frauleins. Frauen als Zielgruppe der amerikanischen Demokratisierungspolitik in Deutschland 1946-1951'. Two years later his book was published

programme of Women's Affairs OMGUS was directed towards the political, economical and legal emancipation of women. He mainly describes the educational work done from the viewpoint of Women's Affairs Section and therefore regards it as a major success. Pia Grundhöfer's dissertation, submitted in 1995 at University of Trier, is a thorough and very detailed study of women's policy in the American and British Zones of occupation. In nearly 700 pages, of which 200 contain original documents, she gives a complete record of the files of both Women's Affairs Sections, and can therefore provide an useful insight into the existing material.[11] Grundhöfer's argumentation which is closely related to Rupieper's lacks clarity and consistency and in many instances does not support her thesis. She found that Americans and British contributed a great deal to the formation of a new women's movement in Germany, to the establishment of a public arena for women and to the creation of a large umbrella organisation of women's groups. She points out that the British did not transfer feminist ideas to Germany. Women were not to understand themselves as sex-specific 'pressure group' but they were to develop their consciousness as citizens and assert their interests while participating in democratic government. Christl Ziegler approached the 're-education' of German women in her 1997 dissertation mainly from an educational point of view, focussing on special methods of adult education.[12]

Rebecca Boehling's critique [13] of Rupieper's article applies also to the other pieces of scholarly work. They especially lack a critical discussion of the reason why a Women's Affairs Section had been established, what influence it had within the Military Government and how successful the policy of democratisation was. Boehling argues for a critical examination of the gender implications and intentions of occupation policy. Rupieper along with Ziegler does not examine the distribution of power within Military Government, nor does he give any idea of what role women were to play in a democratic society. The question remains whether democratisation necessarily includes a change of gender roles. Boehling also stresses that no such change occurred either in Great Britain nor in the United States at that time.

I will show that the British claim of raising the status of German women in

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which contained also a chapter on women's policy. Hermann-Josef Rupieper, *Die Wurzeln der westdeutschen Nachkriegsdemokratie. Der amerikanische Beitrag 1945-1952* (Opladen, 1993).

[11] Grundhöfer, 'Ausländerinnen reichen die Hand'-britische und amerikanische Frauenpolitik in Deutschland im Rahmen der demokratischen Re-education nach 1945. This dissertation is only available on microfiche.

[12] Ziegler, Lernziel Demokratie. Politische Frauenbildung in der britischen und amerikanischen Besatzungszone 1945-1949.

[13] Rebecca Boehling, "Mütter' in die Politik: Amerikanische Demokratisierungsbemühungen

society in order to enable Germany to develop towards a democratic peace-loving society conflicted with pragmatic interests of a mainly political and economic nature. The emancipation of women was hardly an issue of British occupation. German women were encouraged to take up their civic duties, but not to seek an enhancement of legal, political or social rights. The state of emergency which continued after the war with food rationing, destroyed homes, and the black market weighed heavily on housewives. Women as good democratic citizens were expected to do what they had already been doing during and after the war: to enter the labour market in times when there was a lack of male labour, to manage household problems and to do voluntary work. From the beginning the occupying powers regarded areas of policy which had an impact on women's housework in the broadest sense, in particular the urgent food question, as extra – or sub-political issues that could be left to the Germans and the German authorities.[14] Women were to organise themselves in an all-embracing, non-political women's organisation which did not intervene in men's policy but complemented it in fields that were defined as 'female' such as welfare work, health and education. Within such a type of organisation, which excluded all ideological friction, women could learn to tolerate and co-operate, but could also be ideologically equipped to meet the danger of Communist infiltration. Women's activities in political parties were not welcomed by British Military Government, which claimed that the parties barred women from leading positions and did not contribute towards their civic education. According to Women's Affairs Section, women within political parties could not make policy in the interest of women but had to follow the party line strictly. Women's public work and women's interests were defined as being welfare work (portrayed as the extension of their 'natural duties' arising in the private sphere) and this was the field where women had to increase their efforts. Appropriate action for women in pursuing policy was to take place through lobbying and petitions – as exercised by mostly middle-class leaders of the supposedly non-political women's organisations in Great Britain.

I will argue that democratisation did not necessarily go hand-in-hand with women's emancipation as some scholars like to assume. It is correct that the British pursued the aim of encouraging women to participate more in public life. But we must examine what kind of participation was intended. The main task of British occupation policy was to secure a peaceful and democratic development of West-Germany and to

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nach 1945. Eine Antwort auf Hermann-Josef Rupieper', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 19 (1993).
[14] Kuhn, 'Power and Powerlessness'.

get production going in order to relieve the British economy. For this the participation of German women seemed to be crucial. As soon as the economy had been stabilised (the Marshall Plan and the currency reform being important steps) and as soon as West Germany became part of the Anti-Communist alliance, the interest in the status of German women and their civic education eased. What remained was a vague programme for a special Women's Affairs Section as part of the Military Government which built friendly contacts to a handful of leading middle-class women representing a rather small conservative elite. The mass of working women and housewives in Germany never heard of a British Women's Affairs programme.

2. The genesis of Women's Affairs Section and its policy towards German women

German women and British occupation policy

The success of British occupation policy in Germany after the Second World War was to depend to no small extent on the right approach towards women. What made the issue of German women's behaviour so important was that post-war Germany was a mainly female society, a fact seemingly overlooked in the planning of occupation policy. The first post-war census conducted in October 1946 recorded that for every 100 men there were 121 women in the British Zone.[1] Within Germany's borders there were thought to be nearly 7 million ‚surplus' women and in the British Zone there were 2 million more women resident than men. In the 20 to 30 age group the ratio was 170 to 100. Even as late as 1950, when prisoners of war had returned, there were still more than 130 women for every 100 men aged 25 to 40.[2] Women formed the majority of the electorate and of the work force and many of them were as single parents responsible for the bringing up of the next generation of Germans.

The view of Military Government in the British Zone on women's role in reconstruction of the country was of a very practical nature. The British were faced with serious economic difficulties. Out of a population of nearly 23 million people in the British Zone, about 7 million lived in cities with over 200,000 inhabitants where destruction ranged from 50% to 90%. There were 2.5 million refugees, mainly old people, women and children. Food, housing and transport problems were enormous. The delegation of responsibility to German authorities was at the beginning of the occupation far less advanced than had been anticipated, not only because of the unexpected extent of destruction but also because of the shortage of available German officials. Therefore the British undertook their administration in the British Zone down to the lowest level.

In summer of 1945 the first priority of British Military Government had been to get industry going again without much considering restrictions, restitution and

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[1] According to this census 9.916 million men lived in the British Zone of whom 4.764 million were single and 463,000 divorced. Of the 12 million women 5.225 million were single and 1.525 million were widowed or divorced. (PRO FO1030-94, Memorandum on Women's Affairs 1948-1949, by R. Ostermann).

[2] Robert G. Moeller, Protecting Motherhood: Woman and the Family in the Politics of Postwar

dismantling, which led to a modest economic recovery. In early 1946, however, all stocks of raw material were used up and at the same time the policy of restitution and dismantling stiffened considerably. Since the main industrial area of Germany - the Ruhr area - was situated in the British Zone, the British became the main targets of German protests. At the beginning of 1946 the food situation also worsened. During the first winter 1,500 calories per person per day were available, but in the spring of 1946 despite the massive food imports, the rations had to be cut to 1015 calories and in the Ruhr the food distributed actually fell below this level. The Germans regarded this as a deliberate punitive measure.[3] A Public Opinion Research entitled *Situation of German Women* carried out in March 1946 in order to find out what the Germans thought of occupation policy, revealed that the British were accused of practising starvation and of adulterating grain to produce sterility.[4] Only in 1948 was the food situation finally stabilised.

The overwhelming majority of Germans placed all blame for their problems and miseries on those in power. The bitter feelings of the German population had already led to anti-British demonstrations, hunger marches, strikes and other forms of protest in many of the larger cities and industrial areas in 1946.[5] These continued on a much more vigorous and widespread scale after the bitter winter of 1946/47, and once again following the publication of the dismantling list of the British and American zones in October 1947. Germans believed that the main reason for the dismantling programme was to exploit Germany economically and to eliminate German competition for years to come. British Military Government officials, on the other hand, became increasingly

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West-Germany (Berkeley, 1993), p. 27.

[3] For the food situation in the British and American Zone see James Bacque, *Verschwiegene Schuld. Die alliierte Besatzungspolitik in Deutschland nach 1945* (Berlin and Frankfurt am Main, 1995); Günter Trittel, *Hunger und Politik: Die Ernährungskrise in der Bizone (1945-1949)* (Frankfurt am Main, 1990), pp. 224-230. Neither UNRRA (United National Relief and Rehabilitation Administration) nor the International Red Cross were allowed to operate in Germany for the German population in 1946. In spring 1947 an Anglo-American food-aid was organised; from summer 1947 direct food imports came almost exclusively from the United States, paid for by GARIOA Fond of the War Department. This help was supplemented by private, voluntary and church organisations of the Western countries (but their contributions made up only 10 per cent of the government imports). Within four years 2.5 billion Dollars worth of food had been imported into the Bizone.

[4] PRO FO1049-1246, Special Report No 169; Public Opinion Research, Situation of women in Germany, March 1946, Political Division, Bielefeld.

[5] Barbara Marshall, 'German Attitudes to British Military Government 1945-47', *Journal of Contemporary History* 15 (1980); Rainer Schulze, 'A Difficult Interlude: Relations between British Military Government and the German Population and their effects for the Constitution of a Democratic Society', in Alan Bance, ed., *The Cultural Legacy of the British Occupation in Germany. The London Symposium* (Stuttgart, 1997).

annoyed at the self-pity of the German population and their exaggerated demands and excessive expectations. They were also irritated and disappointed that the Germans refused to acknowledge the extent to which Great Britain was indeed supporting her occupation zone in order to ameliorate the situation. Furthermore, the Germans did not seem to notice the burden this placed on the whole British nation where food rationing had to be continued after the war.

In economic reconstruction priority went to basic industries such as coal, gas and steel in order to boost production. As had already been the case both before and during the war, production of consumer goods lagged behind. Therefore the bargaining or growing of food and the production and repair of clothes and household goods as an extended form of women's housework were of immense importance.[6] Women took the brunt of the nerve-racking fight against hunger and deprivation. Furthermore, with many men killed, missing or still prisoners of war, women were needed in the labour force. It was also in the interest of occupation forces to clear streets and railways for transportation and to maintain the level of production. This necessitated reconstruction work and the removal of rubble in cities. Women were encouraged and, in part compelled by British Military Government depriving them of other sources of income, to continue doing unskilled work in factories or at the lower levels of the Civil Service. But German women remained reluctant to enter employment, especially since money could not buy much. Up to 1948 one important function of women's affairs policy was to keep up women's morale.

'The true place of women in education and in the home' was the title of a British radio programme broadcast in February 1946 by radio Hamburg. Based on a message from the then Commander-in-Chief, Major General Brownjohn, from August 1945, it reminded German women of their duties.[7] Women's place was in the home, the address stated, but the housewife must be trained for her responsibilities. These responsibilities were to be found in three major areas, all of which were in some way connected to the housewife's duties. The first task was the moral support and education of her children: 'If you show yourself full of self-pity, embittered and uncertain of what the future will hold, then you cannot be the sheet-anchor on which the adolescent child with its

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[6] Doris Schubert, 'Frauenarbeit 1945-1949', *Frauen in der deutschen Nachkriegszeit; 1* (1984), p. 35.

[7] PRO FO1050-1298, Broadcasting of aims and intentions of Military Government to the Germans, Hamburg, 16.2.1946; written by HQ Administration & Local Government Branch, read by Miss E. Davies of Education Branch.

shattered ideals depends. It is for you to set ideals in place of these - Christian ideals which teach that all nations are kin and which preclude the denouncing of brother and brother.' Secondly, women were expected to participate in the reconstruction of their country by taking an active interest in its civic life since 'it is a great heritage of woman to help in social misery'. Now there was the opportunity for the woman not only to take a lead in the affairs of her country as breadwinner, but in those spheres were she should rightly lead - as principal of institutions in which women's influence was paramount - welfare homes, hospitals and girls schools. Thirdly, British Military Government demanded that German women had to learn how to use their right to vote, because the present misery of Germany was in no small measure the fault of the political apathy of her women. (It was commonly believed that it was mainly women's vote that had brought Hitler to power.) [8] The German woman was not equipped for her educational, economical and political duties until 'she equipped herself spiritually and intellectually to meet the demands which must ever-increasingly be made on her'. To this end Military Government supported non-party-political and non-religious women's organisations which promoted the civic, social and economic rehabilitation of Germany. There women of all political creeds were able to discuss the many problems common to the community and 'learn in a congenial atmosphere how to take their place in civic life and to serve the community without thought of reward'.[9] In a more practical sense, Military Government suggested that women should join or help to form a voluntary organisation, that they should attend courses at the nearest *Volkshochschule*, read widely and find out about other countries and in this way learn how to respect their peoples. This appeal was especially made to the younger age group of women.

The formation of a Section for women's affairs

In April/May 1946 a new Civic Development Section which later became Women's Affairs Section was established within the Military Government. With this Section the

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[8] Richard J. Evans, *The Feminist Movement in Germany 1894-1933* (London, 1976), p. 253, pointed out that the enfranchisement of women probably did little to help the Nazis. Though there were over a million more women than men voters in the Weimar Republic, the difference was greatest in the older age groups, where female support for clerical and conservative parties was most overwhelming. It was the younger age groups, where the numbers of women and men were roughly equal, that Hitler's support was strongest.

[9] PRO FO1050-1298, Broadcasting of aims and intentions of Military Government to the Germans, 16.2.1946.

women's problem in Germany became officially an issue for British occupation policy. In order to understand the place and status of women's affairs within the structure of British Military Government it is necessary to give a brief overview of the latter, before exploring why this Section had been established. [10] The British Military Government had two arms, one in London and one in the British Zone. The objectives and interests of both were not always identical, nor was there a clear line of command, and many decisions had to be pushed through debates lasting several weeks or months. [11] There was a German Department of the Foreign Office (Norfolk House) in London, which originally had been an independent office called Control Office for Austria and Germany (COGA), and which was transferred to the Foreign Office in 1947. It was supervised by the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, who was the Minister in Britain responsible for Germany. Until 1947 this was John Burns Hynd and after that Lord Pakenham. In the Foreign Office there were three Departments concerned with German affairs, one of which was German Education Department. This Department, led by Mr Crawford, was responsible for women's affairs in Germany.

Within the British Zone the Control Commission for Germany (CCG), British Element, operated, consisting of many Branches and Sections. CCG basically shadowed a 'real' German government. Each Division was led by an official known as Adviser to the Military Governor. The Branches relevant for Women's Affairs were at different stages Administration & Local Government Branch and Education Branch, both of which belonged to Internal Affairs & Communication Division. There were two headquarters, one in Berlin and one based in the British Zone in small towns near Hanover. In summer 1947 Internal & Communication Division was dissolved and Education Branch became an independent Branch under the supervision of an Educational Adviser, from spring 1947 to August 1949 Robert Birley, after him came Prof. Thomas Marshall.

The British occupation policy in Germany was designed less by the Military Governor and Commander in Chief, Sir Sholto Douglas, than by its deputy General

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[10] For CCG see Peter Hüttenberger, *Nordrhein-Westfalen und die Entstehung seiner parlamentarischen Demokratie* (Siegburg, 1973), p. 46; Ulrich Reusch, 'Briten und Deutsche in der Besatzungszeit', *Geschichte im Westen* 2 (1987); Ulrich Schneider, 'Grundzüge britischer Deutschland-und Besatzungspolitik', *Zeitgeschichte* 9 (1981); Ian Turner, ed., *Reconstruction in Post-War Germany: British Occupation Policy and the Western Zones 1945-1955* (Oxford, New York and Munich, 1989), p. 360.

[11] For details of the organisation of CCG see Ulrich Reusch, 'Die Londoner Institutionen der britischen Deutschlandpolitik. Eine behördengeschichtliche Untersuchung', *Historisches*

Brian Robertson who became Military Governor in November 1947. Within the administrative regions of the British Zone and from 1947 within the German *Länder* there were Regional Governors - later *Land* Governors - heading a separate strand of Regional administration. The British Control Commission in the zone employed 26,000 officers in 1947. This number was reduced to 10,000 by 1949. [12] Most Divisions, including Education Branch, had their own representatives on all staffs down to the *Regierungsbezirk* (of which were 13 in the zone) level. Women's Affairs Officers worked mainly at the *Länder* Headquarters. There were, however, no officers at the lower *Kreis* level. In each of the 150 to 200 *Kreise* of the British Zone a *Kreis* Resident Officer was responsible for the growth of a representative local government. Most of them were retired regular military officers and 'whatever their personal qualities, they are men whose lives have given them less opportunity than almost anyone else to gain experience of local government', as one British journalist put it. [13] In the first months of occupation the local administration remained without connection to the administration at *Regierungsbezirk* level and officers had unlimited authority over the German administration. They nominated mayor and *Landräte* who were then responsible for the realisation of policy and they decided the inclusion of women into local administration.

A Section especially for women's affairs was established not at the request of the Foreign Office nor according to a plan but was instead the creation of two different Branches of CCG: of Administration & Local Government Branch which was concerned with the licensing of political organisations and the reform of the local government system; and of Education Branch which was mainly concerned with the transformation of the German schools and universities into democratic institutions. Both Branches were independently confronted with women's problems, arriving at different solutions. Whereas Administration & Local Government Branch focussed in November 1945 on bringing more women into Local Government and into the Civil Service and to this end provided a sort of formal education in local government procedures, Education Branch met the problem of the uneducated 'mass of women', the unpolitical housewives, who had to be encouraged to participate in public life.

A special *Committee on German Women's Education*, which consisted of four female and two male Education Control Officers at CCG headquarters at Bünde was

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Jahrbuch 100 (1980), pp. 378-432.

[12] Michael Derrick, 'The Task in Germany: Impressions of the British Zone', *Soundings* May (1949).

[13] Ibid.

concerned from October 1945 with the civic education of German women. [14] Its main activity (which grew naturally from their tasks as officers of the Education Branch) was to look into reform of school education and vocational training for girls and women. In spring 1946 the topic came up at a Committee meeting of how to encourage political interest among German women, especially housewives, and how to prepare them for the coming local elections in autumn of the same year. [15] It was also this Committee which first looked for advice and help from British women's organisations in the matter of civic education for women. The chairwoman Jeanne Gemmel established the first contacts with the Women's Group on Public Welfare, the umbrella organisation for voluntary British women's organisations, and urged the invitation for the first British Visiting Experts to help with women's organisations in Germany. Gemmel had met German women and was well-informed on their aim to restart women's societies. She was convinced that it was important for CCG to meet this situation in an understanding way and to co-operate with the 'right' women. According to the memoirs of Helena Deneke, who was the first delegate of the Women's Group on Public Welfare to Germany in summer 1946, Gemmel had especially close contact to Agnes von Zahn-Harnack.[16] The Committee on German Women's Education ceased to exist when Jeanne Gemmel left Germany for private reasons in summer 1946. Deneke, who clearly admired Gemmel's work, wrote in later years of her contribution to the formulation of the educational policy towards German women:

> Jeanne Gemmel struck me more than other Englishwomen whom we came across in our work among German women. She was able to meet German women of distinction on their own ground in their desire to work for citizenship and to restart their organization and at that stage she was the only Englishwoman whom we met who could do so. She mastered the language, and her work at a German University gave her an understanding of the German point of view. It must have been a shock to her to find work to which she gave serious thought and great care cut through lightheartedly by the AD & LG Section; for clearly this Section acted without consulting the Education Branch.[17]

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[14] Committee members represented the following aspects of Education: Adult and Technical, Teacher Training, Secondary School, Universities, Physical Training and Youth. The function of the committee was 'to secure the co-ordination of policy with regard to German women's education'. CCG Branches were asked to refer all questions relating to and discussions affecting women's education to this committee, either for their recommendation or for their information. The Committee met when specific business arose. All questions which later on became the issue of Women's Affairs Section were already dealt with by this Committee.

[15] For more details see Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

[16] Oxford, Bodleian Library, Deneke papers, Box 18, p. 9.

[17] Bodleian Library, Deneke papers, The Women of Germany, p. 62, memoirs from 1952.

Deneke advocated strongly that women's affairs were a matter of civic education, and therefore the task of Education Branch. She suggested in her memoirs that the creation of the Civic Development Section by the Administration & Civic Development Section was seen by the latter as a makeshift body. During the time of her tour in the British Zone in summer 1946 the first officers for the new established Civic Development Section had arrived in Berlin, where the headquarters of CCG had moved to from Westphalia. [18] Deneke met Joy Evans, the later Senior Women's Affairs Officer, when she was questioned by the head of Administration & Local Government Branch in Berlin about her tour and findings.[19] The A & LG Branch had undertaken to provide education in citizenship to German women that summer by inviting a number of British lecturers speaking (in English) on the details of English local government, which Deneke thought completely useless. When she learnt from Simmons about plans to put one woman in charge of the whole re-education of German women (as Senior Women's Affairs Officer), Deneke was rather sceptical. She concluded that A & LG Branch saw in the work with women an opportunity to perpetuate itself at a time when civil administration was gradually passed back to the Germans and when its task of licensing political parties and organisations had come to an end.

The idea of establishing a Women's Affairs Section was certainly one reaction to the fact that the Russians in their zone pursued a very vigorous women's policy. Women's organisations had already been in existence there since 1945 when so-called Anti-Fascist Women's committees were permitted in order to educate women in the political and cultural spheres on a democratic basis and to assist them to take part in public life. The formulated objectives for women's policy in both zones were not very different.

Deneke thought Education Branch was better equipped than Administration & Local Government Branch to stay clear of politics and work together with non-political

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[18] The Zonal Headquarters of Military Government were established in a group of small towns in Westphalia: Lübbecke, Bünde, Herford and Minden. Owing to the damage in Berlin, it was first thought that the main weight of the Commission should be in the Zone. By autumn of 1945 it had become apparent that many of the key people would have to be in Berlin. So Headquarters moved to Berlin only to move back eighteen months later, when the quadripartite machinery began to break down in Berlin and the Cold War began.

[19] Deneke was interviewed by Mr Simmons who was Assistant Director of Education Branch, the Deputy of Donald Riddy and responsible for Higher Education and Schools. It is not clear to me whether Deneke was mistaken about the names and probably meant Mr Simpson, the Head of Internal & Communication Division.

women's organisations. However, the papers show that there was a considerable amount of co-operation between both Branches. Joy Evans and Alice Cameron, both officers of the Civic Development Section at A&LG Branch, were invited to meetings of the Committee on German Women's Education, and members of this Committee contributed to a large extent to the main policy papers for the new Section. The place of the Civic Development Section was discussed in Berlin between Education Branch and A&LG Branch in October 1946. [20] In May 1946 Internal Affairs and Communications Branch was dissolved and A&LG Branch was absorbed by the newly-created Governmental Structure Branch. Donald Riddy, the Director of Education Branch agreed to have Civic Development Section transferred to Education Branch. In summer 1947 Civic Development Section became finally a Section of Education Branch and was re-named 'Women's Affairs Section'.

A policy paper *Military Instruction No 78*, drawn up by Education Branch officers and agreed by A&LG Branch, was issued with minor changes to the German administration on 10 April 1946.[21] Military Government, the instruction stated, considered it essential that German women should be encouraged to take an active interest in the life of the community and in their civic responsibilities and should receive appropriate education to that end. Experience in other countries and in Germany itself had shown that for ordinary women formal education methods are rarely the most successful and that voluntary non-political women's organisations such as Rural Women's Institutes and Townswomen's Guilds, Co-operative Guilds, Church groups and YWCA can provide the type of education required in its most palatable form. With regard to the function of women's organisations the paper pointed out that:

> In discussing common practical social and human problems with other women, in learning from experience how to conduct meetings democratically and how to give advice and active help to the wider community, in the free exchange of ideas and information of subjects of immediate interest to them, German women may learn to practice democracy in ways which cannot fail to benefit their families and the community. [22]

The German authority was advised to approve to the calling of such meetings. Non-

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[20] PRO FO1050-1210, Letter by Simmons, Assistant Director in Education Branch, 29.10.1946; In Berlin Simmons discussed the matter with Mr Nurock of Administration & Local Government Branch.
[21] PRO FO1050-22, Draft for Internal Affairs and Communications Division Military Government Instruction No 78, Administration & Local Government Branch Bünde, February 1946.

political organisations were permitted to held meetings without prior consent of higher German or Military Government authorities. But where the organisation was established, the constitution agreed, and office bearers elected, appropriate details had to be provided to Military Government. Germans, and especially German women, had to learn 'democracy' in an virtually unpolitical way. The British plan in 1945 was that political parties and associations and trade unions would be allowed to emerge in the British Zone only at a later stage, after a period of reflection which was expected to produce new political forces and leading personalities. At least it was hoped that they would emerge. Democratic and liberal forces in the Weimar Republic had been too weak to stop Hitler, so they could not be trusted. Everything had to start on a local level and gradually expand to Regional and Zonal level. However, the period of reflection was shortened by the licensing of political parties in the Russian Zone on 11 June 1945 and by the relentless pressure of German politicians whose main priority was to regain their freedom of action. Moreover, the onset of the Cold War made the development of political structures urgent.[23] However, the policy to support non-political women's organisations was not changed up to the end of occupation and remained at the core of the programme for the Civic Development and later Women's Affairs Section.

The British view on German women

When the British Liberal Violet Markham visited the British Zone of Germany in November 1947, the impression German women made on her was poor:

> Their energy and political experience are on a low level. This is understandable as the old feminine tradition of subservience to the male and his ideas had never been shaken and demolished as in England. Even in the days of the Weimar Republic, the status of German women in public life lagged far behind that established in our own country. The advent of Hitler which stripped German women of all social and political rights sent them back ruthlessly to the kitchen and nursery, followed by the war, has resulted in a blank 12 years of complete suppression. It is only since the defeat of National Socialism that they are beginning to emerge from nooks and corners but handicapped at the moment by food, fuel and housing shortages, and the bare struggle for life these impose. Allowances consequently must be made for the listless and dispirited attitude of many of the older middle-class women with whom I spoke.[24]

So far as German women were organised at all, Markham added, they drifted

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[22] PRO FO1050-568, IA&C Division Military Government Instruction No 78, April 1946.
[23] The first democratic elections were held in the British Zone in the autumn of 1946. Political parties were allowed to operate from September 1945 at *Kreis* level. The first *Land* election took place in April 1947 (nearly 10 months later than in the American Zone).
[24] PRO FO1049-1245, Report on German Tour by Miss Violet Markham. December 1947.

mainly into groups within political parties – Catholic, Protestant, Socialist. Germans seemed incapable of action without a political label. There was much bitter feeling between political parties and these rancorous differences permeated the whole field of work and were a great obstacle to collective action. Markham found that the incapacity to come together voluntarily shed light on German willingness to hand themselves over to dictatorship. Germans preferred to take orders and have their lives regulated by external authority. It was not surprising therefore that the women, weighed down by a long tradition of subservience, had little capacity for independent action or thought. The nation as a whole lacked any general sense of responsibility for their present plight.

This document encapsulates what most British visitors thought about German women.[25] The general impression was that they were economically and politically much less developed than those of Britain and their backwardness constituted a weakness and danger to Germany and her neighbours in that they made Germany vulnerable to any totalitarian tendencies. Some observers believed that the majority of German women lagged at least 30 years behind the women of England; some even claimed there were similarities to the situation in England at the beginning of the century. What was especially stressed was the waste of women's potential as industrial producers and contributors to the national well-being, while others pointed out the danger that extremist elements would find a likely convert in the undeveloped German woman.

Female British visitors were struck by the inability of German women to arrive at practical solutions to the misery around them. They found German women anxious 'to do as well as women in other countries, and be as modern in their outlook', but saw them usually breaking down in self-pity or proposing impractical ideas for reconstruction.[26] Younger women particularly seemed to be in state of mental chaos. British lecturers were disappointed by the quality of questions and discussions in many audiences and claimed that many Germans (men as well as women) seemed to have lost the capacity for asking intelligent questions. Some visitors were of the opinion that German women hardly thought at all and that they must somehow be taught to think

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[25] PRO FO1049-1846, Letter Iley (German Department, Foreign Office) to Birley, 11.1.1949. Iley gives a summary of the reports of British visitors of the previous 18 months.
[26] PRO FO1013-2226, Report by Ricenda Scott on her tour to Schleswig-Holstein, March/April 1949. Scott noticed for example that at a women's meeting at Kiel, called to get help for refugees in a camp 'a great deal of sentiment bordering on hysteria' was expressed, but there seemed a complete lack of administrative and organising capacity and little hope of finding means by which the refugees could be given opportunity to help themselves to improve their conditions.

more in everything they did, even down to the simplest household tasks.

This rather negative British image of German women was persistent without any change throughout all the years of occupation. This requires some explanation since this image was in contradiction with other developments in post-war Germany. British officers filled file after file with reports on the activities of German women's organisations but still maintained that German women were especially apathetic and uninterested in policy. A *Handbuch of German women's organisations* published in 1952 counted already one million organised women in West Germany, as many as there had been in the Weimar Republic.[27] How did British officers and visitors deal with the fact that there were more women members in the German Parliament than in the British House of Commons? For example, there were in the House of Commons in 1951 only 11 women out of 615 members, whereas in the German Bundestag out of 409 delegates 31 were women. In the Parliament of the *Länder* the situation was even better. Manpower Division of the British Military Government claimed that women in professions were in fact not as scarce as commonly thought. It was due to the pressure of active German women that the Article 3 'men and women are equal' was included in the Basic Law. But this seems not to have been recognised by Women's Affairs Officers. It also appears that the British women confronted the Germans with methods and institutions (as for example women factory social workers) which were not as entirely new to them as British women assumed.

British observers admitted that there were a considerable number of women councillors and MPs, but they maintained that it was the exception to find women who thought problems out by confronting them and then taking the necessary action. There was a very small group of 'enlightened' and capable German women, but the difference between them and the mass of women was much greater than in England. Whereas British women had a suffragette movement and had fought for their civic rights, German women got their right to vote in 1918 as a gift they had not even asked for and for which they were not prepared. The British occupiers shared with left-wingers the assumption that it were mainly women who had voted for Hitler.

Women's Affairs Officers argued that even if there were a handful of women in higher positions, this did not change the overall position of women in Germany and the hostile attitude of German men towards women at all (a change which was difficult to

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[27] Handbuch Deutscher Frauenorganisationen (Bonn, 1952).

establish anyway). An indicator of the weak position of women in post-war Germany seemed to be that they were not represented in public life and did not have a strong lobby, unlike English women. This was held to be a deep-rooted trend that could be traced very far back. [28] The Women's Affairs Officer of Political Branch compared in April 1949 the position of German women to the position of women in Britain and in the United States where according to her women formed a powerful body of opinion 'which any government neglects at its peril', and which found public expression in a variety of ways completely lacking in Germany. In Germany there was no space for women in the press or on the radio. They did not even possess public figures like Lady Astor and Eleanor Roosevelt. [29]

British observers obviously did not take active membership by German women in organisations such as those mentioned by Violet Markham – religious organisations, political parties or trade unions – as an indication of their interest in participating in public life. I will show in chapter 2 that the claim that German women were especially backward served in many instances to prove the indispensability of the work of Women's Affairs Section, which was mainly educational and not accepted in all parts of Military Government.

The British view on German women was fed by two sources; on the one hand by ideas related to the British policy of 're-education'[30], and on the other by information

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[28] PRO FO1049-1846, Background letter, 28.9.1949.
[29] Ibid.
[30] For overview of literature on British re-education up to 1989 see Michael Balfour, 'In Retrospect: Britain's Policy of 'Re-education', in Nicholas Pronay and Keith Wilson, eds. *The Political Re-education of Germany and her Allies after World War II* (London, 1985), and 'Re-education in Germany after 1945. Some further Considerations', *German History* 5 (1987); Raymond Ebsworth, *Restoring Democracy in Germany. The British Contribution.* Vol. 1960 (London and New York, 1960); Kurt Jürgensen, 'British Occupation Policy after 1945 and the Problem of Re-educating Germany', *History* 68, 223 (1983), and 'The Concept and Practice of 'Re-education' in Germany 1945-1950', in Nicholas Pronay and Keith Wilson, eds. *The Political Re-education of Germany and her Allies after World War II* (London, 1985); Kurt Koszyk, 'Umerziehung der Deutschen aus britischer Sicht. Konzepte und Wirklichkeit der 'Re-education' in der Kriegs-und Besatzungära', *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* 29, 22 (1978); Günter Paschkies, 'Re-education und die Verbreitung der britischen Bildungspolitik in Deutschland während des Zweiten Weltkrieges', in M Heinemann, ed., *Umerziehung und Wiederaufbau. Die Bildungspolitik der Besatzungsmächte in Deutschland und Österreich* (Stuttgart, 1981), and *Umerziehung in der Britischen Zone 1945-1949, Studien und Dokumentationen zur Deutschen Bildungsgeschichte Band 9* (Weinheim, Basel, 1979); Turner, ed., *Reconstruction in Post-War Germany: British Occupation Policy and the Western Zones 1945-1955*; David Welch, 'The Political Re-education of Germany after World War II: A need for a Reappraisal?', *German History* 4 (1987), and 'Priming the Pump of German Democracy. British 'Re-education' Policy in Germany after the Second World War', in Ian Turner, ed., *Reconstruction in Post-War Germany. British Occupation Policy and the Western Zones 1945-1955* (Oxford, New York,

gained from leading German women themselves. Why leading German women partly reinforced the image of the unpolitical 'Hausfrau' will be discussed later in this work. The major aim of occupation policy was the re-education of the German nation towards democracy. The term 're-education' was vague, had never been clearly defined and could be used to justify a wide range of policy initiatives. [31] There was at least no formulated or agreed-upon planning of re-education between the various Branches of Military Government. Instead compromises emerged from the intense rivalries that existed within the British administration. However, there was a certain underpinning of (mainly psychological) theories that permits a clearer understanding of the British view.

The British and Americans were convinced that National Socialism was a form of aggressive nationalism, and that this was a typical German disease, deeply rooted in German culture. This culture was determined by a combination of (mostly Prussian) militarism and political immaturity. German women were thought -as far as their civic rights and participation in public life was concerned - to be far behind the British women lagging as indeed the whole German nation behind the rest of the Western world. The historical idea of *Sonderweg*, the misguided development of the German nation towards modernisation, rooted in the second half of the nineteenth century and reinforced during the First World War, served to explain their aggressiveness and anti-Western tendencies.[32] In later years it had been extended by psychological and psychoanalytical theories according to which the German national character resulted from the misdevelopment of the German nation and was therefore shared to a certain degree by all its members. The concept of 're-education' had a medical background belonging to the field of political psychiatry, which, up to the late forties, was a special field of research in American psychiatry.[33] By the mid forties these psychiatric

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Munich, 1990); van der Wilfried Will, 'The British Policy of Re-education: Contradictions and Achievements', in Alan Bance, ed., *The Cultural Legacy of the British Occupation in Germany. The London Symposium* (Stuttgart, 1997).

[31] Welch, 'Priming the Pump of German Democracy. British 'Re-education' Policy in Germany after the Second World War'.

[32] Adolf M. Birke, 'Warum Deutschlands Demokratie versagte. Geschichtsauffassungen im britischen Außenministerium 1943/45', *Historisches Jahrbuch* 103, II (1983), p. 39.

[33] Ute Gerhard, 'The Medical Meaning of Reeducation for Germany: Contemporary Interpretation of Cultural and Institutional Change', *Paedagogica Historica* XXXII, 1 (1997). shows that the notion of re-education was taken from contemporary psychology, anthropology and psychiatry. Analysis of Nazi politics, propaganda, and 'new' society since 1933 revealed that authoritarianism, ambivalence, aggressiveness, and manipulative domination characterised German national character and recent domestic and foreign policy. After the United States became a belligerent, psychiatry participated in the assessment of military personnel as well as in efforts of peace planning for the United States and the Axis countries. Psychology and psychoanalysis engaged in the frustration-aggression debate focussing on communism and

approaches to Fascism seemed to have been common knowledge in British circles as well. The following features had been found with German prisoners of war during the Second World War in many years of Anglo-American psychological research.[34] Germans accepted complete separation between the moral standards of a citizen in his private life and the moral standards of the same citizen as a member of a nation and his duties to the state. Marked characteristics of modern Germans were excess of disciplined obedience; racial arrogance; inclination to worship power; and a tendency to idealism, romanticism and sentimentalism which sprang from a lack of self-assurance. To these features, all of which appear in various reports of female Visiting Experts to the British Zone, could be added pessimism, the tendency to self-pity, inability to compromise, stubbornness and no sense of humour. Michael Balfour, Chief of Information Services Division of the British Military Government, even assumed that the weakness of German thought was a result of the preoccupation with high-sounding theories and words which proved either meaningless or commonplace when closely examined.[35]

An 'expert' on German national character, Mrs Feeny, informed the Women's Group on Public Welfare that Germans were sentimentalists and that any educational approach therefore had to be an emotional approach.[36] Allied to this feature was their general lack of imagination. Mrs Feeny had always been puzzled by the sadistic streak in the German and used to wonder if it were the result of a very widespread homosexuality which prevailed under the cover of respectability.[37] But she came to

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fascism, and both deeply influenced research and analysis of 'national morale'. Cultural anthropology in particular contributed the idea that education is a source of societal variation and change. Gerhard's article shows how through these contributions the medical idea of re-education became a resource for reculturalisation.

[34]Wolfgang G. Friedmann, *The Allied Military Government in Germany* (London, 1947), pp. 225-226; Barbara Marshall, 'German Reaction to Military Defeat 1945-1947; the British View', in V. Berghahn and M. Kitchen, eds. *Germany in the Age of Total War* (London, 1981), p. 219. For a more critical view on the theory of 'national character' see Barbo Eberan, *Luther? Friedrich "der Große"? Wagner? Nietzsche?...?...? Wer war an Hitler schuld? Die Debatte um die Schuldfrage 1945-1949* (Stockholm, 1983).

[35] Michael Balfour and J. Mair, *Four Power Control in Germany and Austria 1945-1946* (London, 1956), pp. 53-54.

[36] London, Fawcett Library, Papers of the Women's Group on Public Welfare (WF), WF/C6, Mrs Doris Feeny, Federation of Congregational Women, to Miss Robertson, WGPW, 24.6.1946.

[37] For proof that this was common knowledge see M. Balfour, who wrote in 1956 in Balfour and Mair, *Four Power Control in Germany and Austria 1945-1946.*, p. 53: 'The society held up for admiration by many German writers had been essentially a masculine one, exalting manliness and hardness to an extent which suggested a subconscious compensating inclination to the opposite. Exhibitions of tenderness and interests associated with feminine values were deplored. German literature contains any idealization of women in their roles as sweethearts and mothers,

think that it was 'a deliberate fostering of lack of imagination which made atrocities possible in the very early days before the Gestapo got the upper hand'. It seemed to her that British educational policy should supply some focal point to replace Führer worship, and she was wondering if the welfare of the child provided the point from which to start to develop democratic citizenship: 'It has been my experience that Germans had a different standard of personal morality from ourselves, the use of a lie was as natural as the use of a handkerchief and no question of right and wrong was involved, it was a mere question of policy. I think the defence at the Nuremberg trial bears out this personal observation of mine.'

It was also commonly believed that the whole difficulty with the German race arose from the attitude of men in general to women. Erich Fromm's psychoanalysis of character structure in more simple terms helped to explain the German character to CCG officers. [38] The early years of childhood was where the damage began. The relationship between man and woman, between mother and father in the family, was singled out to be the cause for the character features of male Germans. In German families an authoritarian father caused an inferiority complex and lack of security in the son, which manifested itself later in aggressiveness and selfishness. Education Officers in the Control Commission demanded therefore that a campaign for the education of young children should be given first priority. Women had to be educated in order to educate their children. The starting point, however, was to change the submissive position of women within their families.

A third concept informing re-education was the sociology of crowd behaviour.[39] Political masses were attributed with 'female' characteristics such as being passive, responding easily to political appeals and showing emotional or irrational behaviour. The concept of masses in politics served as an explanation of the development of

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but in the family circle they have too often been regarded as inferior beings, intended for *Kinder, Küche und Kirche*. By men of this outlook, weakness was not only despised but charity and tolerance were confused with it. By contrast, however, Germans lapsed too easily into excessive sentimentality, to which the very language lends itself. In the light of modern psychological knowledge it is impossible to avoid seeing a connection between this ambivalence and the phenomena of homosexuality.'

[38] Gerhard, 'The Medical Meaning of Reeducation for Germany: Contemporary Interpretation of Cultural and Institutional Change'. Gerhard recalls that the Frankfurt Institute of Social Research in 1936 published a volume entitled 'Studies in Authority and Family'. In the social-psychological part of the book's introduction, Erich Fromm maintained that modern society facilitated an externalised rather than an internalised superego. The superego of a large number of people, he suggested, remained in a less than mature stage of externalised moral control. This enabled amoral authorities such as in fascist states to mastermind mass destructiveness and acquiescence to crime.

[39] Helmut König, 'Wiederkehr des Massethemas?', *Neue Soziale Bewegungen* 10, 3 (1997).

National Socialism, inasmuch as it was seen by Critical theory as epitomising the rule by the masses. There are numerous examples in the files of the Military Government that express fear of how the predominantly female political mass in Germany would react. It was held possible that women, denied a married life and without the compensation of a professional career, would react emotionally and vote for one political extreme or the other.

This fear is demonstrated in an article written by the journalist Pamela Hinkson in December 1947.[40] Hinkson presents ideas by Agnes von Zahn-Harnack, the pre-1933 president of the *Bund Deutscher Frauenvereine*, the umbrella organisation of non-political women's organisations in Germany. Zahn-Harnack herself drew in 1947 a parallel to the situation of German women in the 1920s when a whole generation, which had in the last world war lost hope of a normal family life and motherhood, had already been in professional life for about ten years; a life that many of them did not like. They began to dream of a sheltered home where they might live, and Hitler cleverly used these dreams. Now, Zahn-Harnack claimed, there was again a generation denied normal home life by the war; 'a disappointed and confused' generation. A generation, Hinkson added, that by education and racial characteristics was less able to face the deprivation than women of other nations. Hitler's power flourished first in the soil of economic depression and frustration. No one who knows Germany, Hinkson wrote, can believe that Hitler's characteristics died with him or doubt that there would be plenty to follow a successor, should he arise promising to lead them out of their misery. To her it was a fantastic thought that the Nazi plan – children for the fatherland – outside marriage, and all the cunningly used emotions, flattery and 'honour', with which that plan was decorated, might appeal to another tragic generation of young women if they were not helped to a saner and more constructive fulfilment. The social and psychological problem seemed likely to be increased by a blind insistence on marriage as women's only vocation to much inevitable frustration rather than a wider vision of women's special mission and opportunities as citizens, whether married or single, with accompanying fulfilment of their 'natural instincts'.

Both the British and the German side emphasised the idea that German women needed help, whereby the Germans were thinking more of material help and relief with the argument that only such measures would guarantee a democratic basis and the

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[40] PRO FO945-293, Article by Pamela Hinkson.

British official side was focussing more on the educational aspect in order to change the mental outlook of German women. The remedy offered by the British to the Germans who were used to living in 'herds' was that the individual was to be taught to think for herself - a phrase often used in Women's Affairs files - and to be responsible for her own actions. One of the first papers of British Military Government which dealt with the public role of women was a memorandum of Administration & Local Government Branch issued in November 1945. It stated that democracy on the widest possible basis required that every man and every woman should be taught and encouraged to understand that everything in their local and national life concerned them vitally and that they were responsible for their government at every level. Democracy began with the individual and the more people who were responsible for government, from the lowest level upwards, the more firmly would democracy be established.[41] For the present, the paper continued, the more nominated councils, and the more representatives there were, the more the ordinary citizen would sense a share in his own government. (It must though be noted that in 1945 nominated councils had practically no legislative power.) Accordingly, the introduction of women into local government was encouraged. This, it was believed, would have a 'civilising and generally beneficial effect on the behaviour of the German race'. [42] Despite the memorandum few women were placed in local government and administration by British commanders. The intended reform of the German municipal code concentrated on the separation of political and executive functions at the top of the local government according to the British model. In general, however, decisions made by the British resulted in the re-emergence of old political structures in the hands of (male) politicians with experience of local government before 1933. There were far fewer women in political bodies everywhere than there had been in the Weimar Republic.

German women and re-education policy

To the British the idea of re-educating an entire people was nothing fundamentally new. [43] It came with the discovery by the British ruling elite that by educating the elite of

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[41] PRO FO1050-115, Draft memorandum by J.M. Coban, Administrative & Local Government Division to Research Branch, Intelligence Group, 2.11.1945.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Nicholas Pronay, 'To Stamp out the Whole Tradition', in Nicholas Pronay and Keith Wilson, eds. *The Political Re-education of Germany and her Allies after World War II* (London, 1985),

subject peoples in the British way of life they were able to maintain rule indirectly rather than by the more costly and troublesome military-administrative methods of control. In fact, many officers of the British Military Government had gathered their experience in the Colonies before they came to Germany. The main attempt to influence Germany's political culture was made through the *Projection of Britain*, a campaign which intended to transmit to the Germans an intelligible picture of the British character, of British traditions and the British way of life.[44] What this meant to people who were responsible for re-education in the British Zone (namely the struggle between civilisation and barbarism) can be taken from a lecture given in 1947 by Robert Birley, from 1947 Educational Adviser to the Military Governor and thus responsible for Women's Affairs Section:

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p. 10, explained that the success of this cultural and educational method in India and elsewhere fostered a particular predilection towards the belief that no matter how distant or alien or deep-rooted the political tradition or culture of another society might be, it was always possible to bring about a change of attitude in depth through a combination of occupation and 'education'. The very high expectation of what education can actually achieve in terms of fundamentally moulding character and personality was particular to Britain. He continued: ' It was the idea of "education" in the British (ruling elite's terms) - with its concentration on „character formation", "values", "soundness" and "manner" instead of a mastery of scientific knowledge and intellectual skills - as a social and ideological education fitting and which qualify a person to be a member of the political ruling elite of Britain, which was sui generis (...) Liberalism rested on the twin ideals of an ideologically ('morally') "educated" elite and an "educated electorate" as distinct from a mass electorate who were to receive information and above all guidance from a "responsible" Press in the hands of the "educated" elite itself. The function of the "responsible" Press was not to articulate the "prejudice" of the people but to "educate" them to see issues in a particular ideological "moral" light. Liberalism thus extended the particular British concept of "education" to the media of communication and reinforced the belief that through education of the elite and the control of the media of communication it was possible to generate major changes in the political, indeed ideological outlook of the people.

[44] Eva A. Mayring, 'The Impact of British Occupation and Political Culture in Germany after 1945', in Alan Bance, ed., *The Cultural Legacy of the British Occupation in Germany. The London Symposium* (Stuttgart, 1997), pp. 197-199; Ian McLaine, *Ministry of Morale: Home Front Morale and the Ministry of Information in World War II* (London, 1979), pp. 153-154, describes the picture of Britain and Germany painted during wartime by the Ministry of Information. Full use was made of symbols designed to fashion an image of the Briton as tolerant, peaceable, home-loving family man - as opposed to the Germans who, because they found it difficult to credit the individual as such with dignity and worth, tried to acquire them by huddling into rigid hierarchy and disciplined formations, by reverencing rank and drill. At the same time, propaganda sought to bolster the prestige of the British political system by underlining the relationship between the people's social impulses and those institutions which enshrined them. Thus, the principles of democracy did not simply affect the political system: 'They are reflected in our family life, in our attitude to children, to marriage, to all personal relationship... in little things, in the way a tennis club is run or a village club or a Women's Institute, or free and easy discussion in the corner pub. They are to be found throughout our Friendly Societies and Trade Unions and in the principles of collective bargaining honoured by employers and workers alike. They are interwoven inextricably into the texture of our daily lives.' (Quoted by McLaine from a memorandum by Francis William, Ministry of Information, 21 May 1941, INF 1/251).

> Englishmen should realise that there are millions in Europe to-day, who feel that we will decide whether the way of our western civilisation will survive or perish. Material resources can only come, no doubt, from across the Atlantic but spiritual example must come in very large measure from us, just because we are ourselves suffering from the same crisis (...) One thing, at least, we can do ourselves. We can offer the strength of our own tradition to Germany. This is not as absurd a notion as it sounds. Germans now, very naturally, hunger for contacts with the outside world, from which they have cut themselves off for so long. We shall naturally need to show humility and tact. It is no use supposing that British institutions can be transplanted to German soil. What is needed is the stimulus of mind on mind.[45]

Birley saw re-education as a means of rebuilding the cultural links between Germany and the civilised world which the Nazis had been so concerned to destroy.[46] The *Projection of Britain* was the special task of Education Branch and of Information and Public Relations Branch within the Military Government. Birley believed that the role of Educational officers in the Military Government was to establish mutual trust and to exchange ideas.

From 1946 on British Information Centres were set up in large German cities, usually equipped with an English library and a reading room as well as space for discussion groups and lectures, window displays and exhibitions. There was an attempt to influence German political culture through the media, particularly through two magazines which were published in Germany *Blick in die Welt* and *Neue Auslese* and through short talks on the BBC or the *Nordwestdeutscher Rundfunk* in Hamburg. Anglo-German discussion groups were set up aiming to provide Britons and Germans with a better understanding of each other's outlook. The same purpose was served by so called Exchange programmes which brought thousands of Germans over to the UK. [47]

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[45] Robert Birley, "The German Problem and the Responsibility of Britain. The Burge Memorial Lecture 3.12.1947," (London, 1947). p. 26.

[46] Welch, 'Priming the Pump of German Democracy. British 'Re-education' Policy in Germany after the Second World War'. pp. 222-224.

[47] Gerhard Braunthal, 'The Anglo-Saxon Model of Democracy in the West German Political Consciousness after World War II', *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 18 (1978), pp. 254-255. The American Military Government, in comparison, up to 1952 sent more than 3000 Germans from all walks of life to America and in addition thousands of high school students and college students. The British, less wealthy than the Americans, organised exchange programmes on a more modest scale, but over 1,000 Germans visited the United Kingdom up to late 1950, and 450 British visited Germany in various capacities. George Murray, 'The British Contribution', in Arthur Hearnden, ed., *The British in Germany: Educational Reconstruction after 1945* (London, 1978), p. 88, claims that in the peak years of 1947 and 1948 CCG provided for over 2000 visitors from Germany to the United Kingdom and over 1000 in the reverse direction each year. In addition to these fully-sponsored visits there were others partially paid for by Education Branch, others completely independent especially after the travel restrictions had been raised.

The Hansard Society, an organisation for the promotion of parliamentary institutions, invited a number of prominent German politicians to Britain to study its form of parliamentary government and public institutions. In 1947 a 'Host-Guest' programme was set up to provide an opportunity for local government officials to visit their British counterparts and see how their system worked in practice. 'Key personalities' were sent to courses in civic education to Wilton Park near London.[48] A major reason for including women into Wilton Park courses was, incidentally, that the presence of women at the course would increase its value for the men, both civilians and Prisoners of War (POW) since no proper representation of conditions in Germany could be made without an account of women's opinions and of the nature of present domestic life. This was to prevent POWs being disillusioned to too great an extent when they got home for they were not prepared for the social and psychological conditions in Germany.[49]

However, the question arose whether German women needed a special re-education different from the re-education of men. Several British observers, especially those who were women representatives of political parties, stressed that they were normally against segregation of women's from men's affairs, and that they were only moved to suggest special action to stimulate women's organisations and interests by the special circumstances which existed in Germany. German women had been discriminated against for so long that it was difficult for them to transform themselves into fully responsible members of the community without some special help. To Margaret Lambert for example, they seemed to be 'rather like backward children who needed a bit of extra coaching to catch up'.[50]

Helen Jones has pointed out that the British notions in the UK in general about German women were such that from the end of the hostilities to the currency reform of 1948, German women were thought to be suffering most from the appalling low standard of living in Germany and controversy raged over the extent of British

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[48] Wilton Park was situated in Beaconsfield near London and was a camp for the education of German prisoners of war who could participate voluntarily in courses. It was led by Heinz Koeppler, a German by birth in co-operation with German and British lecturers. In January 1946 the first courses started lasting several weeks. Topics were history and political development in England and Germany and discussion about future Europe. From January 1947 German civilians could also participate in Wilton Park courses, from summer 1947 women too were included.

[49] PRO FO945-283, Participation of women in training courses in Wilton Park, 10.5.1947, Headquarters CCG Berlin to German Department Foreign Office.

[50] Margaret Lambert to Lord Henderson, 31.December 1948, quoted in PRO FO1049-1844, Iley to Birley, 11.1.1949.

government responsibility for these conditions and over the sending of food parcels to Germany. In 1939 the German working class in general, and women in particular, were seen in Labour circles as victims of the Nazi regime and during the war German women were most typically portrayed as such. [51] The occasional article in women's magazines about Britain's enemies would contrast, in a general way, foreign freedom in Allied countries with oppression in the Axis countries and exhort British women to pull their weight in the war effort. [52] When the war ended there was an initial revulsion of the stories of the concentration camps but almost immediately the dire circumstances in which the Germans were now living flooded the newspapers. The 'Save Europe Now' campaign, launched in the autumn of 1945 was spearheaded by Victor Gollancz, the Jewish publisher and he more than anyone exposed the abysmal housing, low standard of living and starvation rations in Germany. By publishing articles about conditions in Germany in the *Times*, *Manchester Guardian*, *Observer*, *News Chronicle*, *Daily Herald* and *New Statesman*, he aroused sympathy among the public as a result of his campaign.[53]

The backwardness of German women could be seen not only as a danger and a weakness but as an opportunity. German women were not held responsible for National Socialism to the same degree as men. In a purely formal sense (as applied to the denazification procedure), most women had not been active Nazis, because only a rather small number had been members of the Nazi party. The *Gleichschaltung* (bringing into line) of the women's organisations into the Nazi women's organisation, the *Frauenschaft*, was not judged to be disagreeable as party membership. Former leaders of women's organisations could even claim to be and were perceived as victims of the Nazi system. Because Hitler's regime enforced a rigorous separation of male and female spheres and because women had only a small chance of advancing into higher political and economic positions, they seemed to have been less involved. The major source of their guilt was located in their lack of political interest and their emotional approach to political issues.

Women constituted the majority of the German electorate, and the part which

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[51] Jones, "Creating Good Citizens: British Attitudes towards Women in Occupied Germany (unpublished paper),". pp. 3-4.
[52] Jane Waller and Michael Vaughan-Rees, *Women in Wartime: The Role of Women's Magazines 1939-1945* (London, 1987), p. 110.
[53] John Farquharson, 'Emotional but Influential: Victor Gollancz, Richard Stokes and the British zone of Germany, 1945-49', *Journal of Contemporary History* 22 (1987).

was perhaps the most easy to influence and, if awoken to political consciousness, likely to 'repay us hundredfold in increasing the prestige and power of our ideas in Germany'[54] The more emotional approach of women (in contrast to the rational approach of men) could facilitate compromise between various political and religious forces, something valued by the occupying forces. As one of the Senior Women's Affairs Officers summed up in 1947, women offered the best possible approach to assisting German people towards a democratic way of life.[55] They were less hampered than men by party political tradition, they yearned for some social contact in their drab lives and were intensively interested in the outside world. They needed, of course, encouragement, sympathetic approach and guidance. This, however, was considered to be a task for British women. As Violet Markham had stressed, German women had much to learn. Whereas in Britain during the last three decades women were thought to have benefited by the experience of practical democracy in Women's Institutes, Women's Voluntary Service and in church and local organisations, the Hitlerian (and to some extent the older German) conception of *Hausfrau* had denied any such opportunity to German women. British women could re-introduce German women into the work of democratic organisations. The assumption that German women as mothers and women were especially equipped for democracy seemed to have been a comfortable one for both sides. In this way those German women who were willing to co-operate with the British were hardly confronted with the role they played in the recent past.

Definition of women's role in public life

How was the role of a woman citizen in a democratic society defined by the British? Instead of going into difficult theoretical definitions of what women as citizens were expected to do, the British women observers and lecturers assumed that they themselves as individuals and representatives of women's organisations were the best examples of what could be achieved in Germany. Even if the slogan 'projection of Britain' was officially used only in later years of occupation, the policy was already practised in respect to women in 1946. It was suggested that the best German women could do was to learn from British women and to copy their organisations and methods.

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[54] PRO FO1049-1844, Iley to Birley about Dame Caroline Haslett's report, 11.1.1949.
[55] PRO FO1050-1210, Report on Women's Affairs for Political Division, Rita Ostermann (Women's Affairs Officer Political Branch), Report following up her tour of the Zone, June 1947.

British middle-class women after the war were of the opinion that men and women now stood as equals in all spheres of British society, that the struggle for emancipation was a thing of the past. [56] Just as workers now had the Welfare State and high wages, so women 'had' the vote, they 'had' equality. It now depended only on the women themselves to play their part in public life.

Historians have argued that British women did, in fact, not gain much from the Second World War in terms of more civic rights and opportunities. It is very important, however, that there was a strong and widespread belief in post-war years that these gains had been made. British women were members of a victorious nation. They had contributed their share to victory; be it in munitions factories, in food production (the battle cry of Women's Institutes had already been during the First World War 'Jam and Jerusalem'), in the armed forces or even in advisory positions at higher levels of government administration. Caroline Haslett, to give just one prominent example of a Visiting Expert, was a member of a committee that advised Bevin, Employment Secretary of the State during the war, about the more efficient use of the female labour force. It was thought that in none of the warring nations was the percentage of women employed in war production higher than in the United Kingdom. Women had fulfilled their duties as citizens, and now they felt their work rewarded by the men in the government who build the Welfare State. As Mrs Lee, one of the Women's Affairs Officers in Hamburg, expressed at a meeting in March 1948:

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[56] Penny Summerfield, 'Women and War in the Twentieth Century', in June Purvis, ed., *Women's history: Britain, 1850-1945* (London, 1995) gives an overview of the historical debate after the war. Alava Myrdal and Viola Klein who in 1956 investigated the trends considered the impact of the war on women to have been significant in three ways: 1. Sex discrimination in matters of employment almost disappeared. 2. The reorganisation of working conditions to meet the needs of women workers was revolutionary. 3. There was a sizeable reduction in the number of married women in paid work in spite of the evidence that women wished to stay in work after war. In the 1960s and 1970s Arthur Marwick popularised the view that the Second World War contributed significantly to the growth of equality between the sexes. In the 1980s Denise Riley showed that there were competing discourses concerning women's role during and after the war in areas such as child care, shopping and feeding. Conventional patriarchal expectations about women were in tension with the pressure of wartime production which demanded solutions to the problem of mobilising the female labour force. But the great bulk of wartime domestic work was thrown back to the private sphere of a woman's own resources and those of her family. In the area of social policy there was little then to undo at the end of the war. Wartime nurseries were handed over to hard-pressed local authorities which returned to the pre-war policy of providing day nurseries for special cases of poverty or hardship rather than as a service for any working woman. And employers were left to decide whether it was worthwhile continuing part-time working arrangements. There was no social revolution arising from wartime social policy of the sort Myrdal and Klein had imagined. See also Harold Smith, 'The Effect of the War on the Status of Women', in Harold Smith, ed., *War and social change: British society in the*

> At the moment there are far too many women doing nothing in Germany. In England people have been kind enough to say that the women contributed to the winning of the war in no small measure by entering into industry. The German women must win the peace by doing the same, thus turning out more exports, saving our pockets and re-establishing Germany amongst the European nations. That is one concrete way, but they must also come into public life and take themselves responsibility of creating order out of the chaos. [57]

Some demands of the pre-war women's movement for welfare reforms had been in fact realised. Conditions for British working class women were being improved after the war with the Family Allowance Act of 1945 that guaranteed families with children a 'family income'. During the war the State had opened up nurseries to enable mothers of young children to take up work in factories. The National Health Service provided health care. Professional women made also gains: the marriage bar was removed for women teachers with the 1944 Education Act and likewise in the Civil Service in 1946. Women entered into professional areas where they had not been before or which had not existed before the war, such as certain parts of the Social Service. From the standpoint of feminists who measured women's progress by the range of job opportunities and the ability to continue work after marriage and childbirth, the Second World War had widened their horizons. It is equally important that British women representatives involved in the 're-education' of German women came with an idea of German women as described above and assumed that nothing similar had happened in Germany.

During the Second World War British women's organisations found little difficulty in putting aside their differences and began to co-operate in pressing for equal treatment of women by the government. [58] The large non-feminist groups encompassing the majority of British women made a contribution towards the advances in the struggle to secure adequate social welfare benefits for women. Fears about the falling birth rate and the consequences of employing large numbers of married women gave women's organisations an ideal opportunity to promote the work performed by mothers and housewives in the home. Not only these non-feminist organisations but also the Labour Party and its women's organisation had devoted time and effort during the war to such questions as the design and construction of houses, supplies available for mothers and children and the extension of gas and electricity networks.

British women activists felt that their efforts in pressing for social welfare

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Second World War (Manchester, 1986).

[57] PRO FO1049-1246, Meeting on 16.3.1948.

[58] Kristy Parker, *Women MPs, Feminism and Domestic Policy in the Second World War*, Ph.D, University of Oxford, 1994; Martin Pugh, 'Domesticity and the Decline of Feminism 1930-

benefits for wives and mothers had paid off with the Beveridge Report and the Family Allowance Act of 1945. The Family Allowance Act of 1945 secured benefits for children paid directly to the mother (and not, as Beveridge suggested to the father). Even if British women's organisations saw the introduction of family allowances as a result of their agitation, historians have pointed out that it had more to do with controlling wage levels than with acknowledging women's work in the home. The principal reason for introducing the bill was to curb the inflation of wage levels through cash benefits to children. Likewise, the improvement in the maternity service was motivated by higher maternal mortality rates and falling population levels rather than signifying recognition of women's service as mothers. Nevertheless, the impact of family allowances, improved maternity services and free health care did make a difference to the quality of women's lives.

The Beveridge Report of 1942, which laid the foundations of the post-war Welfare State, quite explicitly set out to strengthen marriage and to encourage married women to stay at home. It suggested that children's allowances could help to restore the birth rate and benefit mothers and housewives who had according to Beveridge 'vital work to do in ensuring the adequate continuance of the British race and the British ideas in the world'. [59] The report treated the wife as dependent on her husband, qualifying for social benefits through him. If she chose to go out to work and contribute independently she would receive lower benefits than a single woman. Married women wage earners were exempted from the compulsory employment insurance covering men and single women. Beveridge also proposed that women should receive a marriage grant to mark the transition from paid employment to unpaid maternal service. In return, the married woman would relinquish all rights to unemployment and disability benefits for which she may have contributed as a wage-earner prior to marriage.[60] The scheme was still considered to be progressive.

There were some setbacks as well after the war. Women were eased out of jobs regarded as more appropriate to men. They were segregated into female work in the factory and the office and in various types of services. Employers were no longer willing to help women by organising shifts for part-time workers, and the nursery

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1950', in Harold Smith, ed., *British Feminism in the Twentieth Century* (London, 1990), p. 272.
[59] Quoted by Caitriona Beaumont, Women and Citizenship: A Study of Non-Feminist Women's Societies and the Women's Movement in England, 1928-1950, Ph.D, Warwick University, 1996, p. 232; Elizabeth Wilson, Women and the Welfare State (London, 1977), p. 151.
[60] Susan Pedersen, 'Gender, Welfare, and Citizenship in Britain during the Great War', *American Historical Review* 95 (1990).

facilities provided during the war were withdrawn. There was also a strong social pressure on women to aspire to femininity and domesticity above all, as evidenced in women's magazines.[61] The Labour Government was hampered by indebtedness, and economic stringency made it more difficult to be generous to women. Thus the Government refused in 1947 to implement the principle of equal pay for women in the public sector.

What was the part women were to play in a democratic society? When Mrs Grennan, the first Women's Affairs Officer in North Rhine-Westphalia, had to give a talk on the role British women played in public life in spring 1947, she asked for help in England. She received a letter from a Liverpool city councillor. It is worth quoting at length because it is a good illustration of the self-image and the positive thinking which fired British visitors, and which they attempted to communicate to German audiences:

> Women in Britain play so large a part in national and local government .... In Britain we are now participating in the beginning of a period of large scale reconstruction. When this reaches fruition it will mean that the ordinary man and woman will enjoy by natural right a fuller and more purposeful life. We realise that all have a part to play in the shaping of events, and in Britain men and women stand as equals in all spheres of life.
> As you know all laws are made by the Parliament, but in many instances the work of detailed administration is delegated to the Local Authorities, which consist of men and women elected by citizens for the purpose of governing the city or area in which they live. The activities of these Local Authorities are closely connected with the daily life of the ordinary men and women, and they are sensitive to changes in public sentiment. .... In this connection women are encouraged to take part in public life because in Britain we feel that they have an outstanding contribution to make particularly with our children whose education, training and care is considered to be of the first importance.
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> Women are elected to the City Council on the same terms as men.... Each activity of Local Government administration is controlled by a Committee of Councillors, and it follows, therefore, that women will be most effective. When I was elected to the City Council I served on the Housing, Education, Hospitals, Libraries and Arts Committees. I felt that they offered scope for my experience and opportunities for putting the women's point of view.
>
> What can we do when we are elected to these various Committees? The answer to this can be put in one word- plenty! What can be more important to any woman than the question of housing? There is an acute shortage of housing accommodation, not so acute as yours, but it must be remembered we also lost

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[61] April Carter, *The Politics of Women's Rights* (London, 1988); Denise Riley, 'The Free Mothers: Pronatalism and Working Mothers in Industry at the End of the last War in Britain', *History Workshop* 11 (1981), and 'Some Peculiars of Social Policy concerning Women in Wartime and Postwar Britain', in M.R. Higonnet, ed., *Behind the lines: gender and the two World Wars* (New Haven, Connecticut, 1987).

> many homes by bombing. Women Councillors ensure that the women's point of view in the home is understood. She knows too well the value of build in furniture, of cupboards in the right places... These and many other points affecting domestic life are better understood by women than men. How few men remember to leave a place for the baby's pram when they are drafting their plans?

She made similar claims 'about that all important subject of education':

> All women realise that value of a good education for their own children and the woman councillor is anxious that all children should have the best education without regard to their limited income.

These, and other duties and responsibilities meant that:

> the woman Councillor is usually a busy person. She has her home responsibilities and these are not made any lighter at present with the shortage of domestic help. All help is needed in the essential industries and we must do the best we can without help. We will have meetings to address in the evenings and as I said earlier a responsibility to our own electors. This entails usually one or two evenings a week interviewing people, usually women, who need help with their individual problems. These may concern housing or help with filling up a pension form. It may be a request that you will call and see mother-in-law who is according to the caller doing all she can to break a marriage! .... Often a letter from the Councillor to an official and some good advice to the caller will put matters right. The elector goes away feeling that she is sharing her difficulty, and this alone is half way to solving her problem.
>
> There is so much work for women in every country to do. The world is weary and the problems are many. They differ little from country to country and in them all is a rising generation which must be saved from the mistakes of the past generations. There will be difficulties and disappointments but our task as women is to find a way to overcome them and to open the door to a fuller life where individual freedom and liberty will be the birthright of all.[62]

It was this image of the 'good' woman citizen which was intended for transfer to Germany. The political vision prevalent, a quasi socialist vision, painted a post-war society where 'the ordinary man and woman will enjoy by natural right a fuller and more purposeful life'. The place of women in this society was well defined. Women were to be active in local administration, and closely connected with the daily needs of ordinary life. Their contribution to local policy can be defined as 'womanly' and 'motherly' as regards both the issues like housing and education of children as well as the social skills this demands. The woman councillor was to be like a good mother, always there for her electors, with an ear for their small sorrows. She was to help even

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[62] PRO FO1013-607, About role English women play in local government, 26.5.1947, Letter to Mrs Grennan by an unknown woman from Liverpool.

with private problems, to encourage and to conciliate. On the top of that, she was not to neglect her responsibilities at her middle-class home, which were becoming more and more a problem because the shortage of domestic help.

'Re-education' of German women was not about more equality with men. It was a special reminder that before rights there were duties; that social, political and legal rights had to be earned. By contributing to the common good as mothers or industrial workers, women could help the reconstruction of their country just as British women had done during the war. British visitors believed (and were obviously told by CCG officers in the Zone) that what was at fault with German women was that they did not take up their civic duties, as the journalist Alison Settle put in 1948:

> Realising the force of the women's vote, the men in Military Government and in the Control Commission are working ... to create in these women a desire to take part in life outside the home. Easier access for women to the higher posts in a wide range of occupations, education in citizenship, adult education for wife and mother, and for more places in industry, these, in Germany, where the women so dominate numerically, are clearly seen as essential to social progress and prosperity. This, however, is a matter in which British women should use their influence, the battle should not be left to the men in authority in Germany alone. It as an issue in which we can both give and receive, for there is a great deal for this country to learn from the position in Germany today. The German woman is already in possession of many of the political and civic rights for which British women are still fighting. She has the vote for a considerable time and to her women members of Parliament are familiar. The professions lie open to her, moreover, the rate-for-the-job has been achieved in the Civil Service while our women are still denied it. <u>It is not then the lack of feminism, as we have known it that is at fault. Women have the right to a say in their fate. It is the will to take up the duties involved in those rights that is lacking, an attitude that is not altogether absent in this country</u>. (emphasis mine) [63]

The idea expressed here by Alison Settle, that British women – in participating in occupation policy side by side with men 'in authority'- could not only teach but also learn something from German women is rather exceptional. Also untypical was the knowledge and information that women in post-war Germany were in possession of political and civic rights British women had not yet attained. Normally reports are characterised by the absence of any historical or factual knowledge and most of the 'teachers' of German women had only little knowledge of the history of German women's movement for example, the legal position of women during the Weimar Republic or during the Third Reich. Statistics were hardly available to them. It did not

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[63] PRO FO1051-597, Notes on an interview with women journalists in Lemgo, British Zone, 24.6.1948.

help that most of the Visiting Experts stayed in the British Zone for several weeks only. The British notion that the women's movement in Germany was a blank sheet on which to write entirely new ideas caused some conflicts between Germans and Britons, however. I will demonstrate that even politically active and highly motivated German women refused to take on British models and insisted on working according their own traditions and concepts.

Objectives and Methods of the Civic Development Section (Women's Affairs Section)

The policy of the new Section was designed by its first officers Alice Cameron and Joy Evans in a paper *Objectives and Methods of Civic Development Section.*[64] Members of the Committee on German Women's Education got the opportunity to comment on the draft, though their comments had no influence on the final phrasing of the paper. The introduction still points out that the task of the Section was to encourage political education and education in civic consciousness and to develop the community spirit for both men and women. Soon, however, women were singled out to be the main target of this activity. Women constituted a special problem because under the Nazi regime their interests had been narrowed within the confines of the 'three K's', *Kinder*, *Küche* and *Kirche*.

The paper distinguished two categories of women: those who already belonged to organised groups and who formed a positive section of the community because they were capable of forming a public opinion. The others, who were not organised and who presented a negative section of the population, belonged to the second category. Each of the two groups, the paper stated, represented a different problem and therefore required different handling. Nevertheless, they all were women and 'thus to some extent susceptible to certain basic principles of approach'.[65] The doctrine of the three K's had been taught so assiduously during the recent years that any attempt to eradicate it would be doomed to failure. Rather, the paper suggests, the doctrine should be transformed into the means of widening women's interests. Through her interest in children, the German woman could be led to take interest in Child Welfare and education, through her affiliation with the Church she could be led to the idea of community and public

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[64] PRO FO1050-1299, Objects and methods of approach of the Civic Development Section, 28.6.1943; Minutes of a meeting held at A&LG Branch Bünde to consider the Draft Directives to Regional Staff Officers, 1.7.1946.
[65] Ibid.

service, and through her home preoccupations to all forms of Public Welfare that were in existence at the time of the Weimar Republic.

It is interesting to note that the view of German women as being limited to *Kinder, Küche, Kirche* was not shared by the members of the Committee on German Women's Education. E. Davies underlined the point, with views in accord with much current historical research on women in the Third Reich.

> Rather a dangerous and misleading statement. It is a fact that whether in or through Party the Nazis gave women and girls opportunities of influence and self-expression far beyond anything they had had before. Unless we realise that and are prepared to do something comparable, we are going to face a dangerous 'bloc' of discontented young women. Whether we approve of what they did or not, the Nazis simply did not in fact confine women's interest to the three K's. [66]

The task of Civic Development Section was to promote the growth of political consciousness amongst women and at the same time to support occupation policy. The Section was a small one with in the beginning only four or five officers. It had to work with the help of the Political Officers in Political Division and the *Kreis* Resident Officers (who belonged to Local Government Branch), because officers of both Branches kept contact with women organised in political parties. The new Section was also to maintain continuous liaison with other Divisions and Branches of Military Government such as Health, Industrial Relations, Education and Information Service Group. Education Control Officers who had contact to members of cultural groups could make any pertinent information available to Civic Development Section. Welfare Branch maintained contact to public welfare organisations such as *Caritas*, the *Innere Mission* and the *Evangelisches Hilfswerk*. The value of these movements was that they developed the 'idea of social service through communal activities'. Women were also to be encouraged to join trade unions and be elected to works councils. The experience they could gain from working in co-operation with men in these spheres could lead to their increased interest in municipal affairs and make them more fitted for local government work. Other developments calculated to interest 'the more intelligent type of woman' were Advisory Committees on the Employment of Labour, the Labour

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[66] Birthe Kundrus, 'Frauen und Nationalsozialismus. Überlegungen zum Stand der Forschung', *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 36 (1996); Leila Rupp, 'Mothers of the Volk: The Image of Women in Nazi Ideology', *Signs* 3, 2 (1977); Jill Stephenson, 'Modernization, Emancipation, Mobilization: Nazi Society Reconsidered', in Larry Eugene Jones and James Retallack, eds. *Elections, Mass Politics and Social Change in Modern Europe. New Perspectives* (Cambridge, 1992) surveys the scholarship on this topic up to 1996, especially the question whether German women were victims or perpetrators of the Nazi regime.

Courts of Assessors and the Housing Committee recently set up by the Labour Exchange with the help of the municipal authorities. All these activities, the paper argued, provided unlimited opportunities for the woman capable of making an individual contribution to her local community and every effort should be made to encourage participation in such movements.

The mass of unpolitical German women who constituted 'the larger and less intelligent section of the female population' provided another problem. They could be stirred into activity only through ideas readily comprehensible, continuously presented and easily related to the interests they had most at heart. The approach to the mass of German women implied first and foremost the development of the three K doctrine as outlined above. Here Civic Development Section could co-operate with Education Branch and Public Welfare Branch. The re-establishment was suggested of Parents' Associations which were of great value in keeping mothers informed about new education schemes. Further, the work of the Child Welfare Clinics ought to be extended by the formation of Mothers' Clubs. The paper recommended the formation of organisations on similar lines to the British Women's Institutes and Townswomen's Guilds, starting at Parish basis. This policy would ensure the development taking place from the lowest level and at the same time leave the way open for the establishment on a Zonal basis when the time was ripe. Another valuable approach to the general mass of German housewives existed in the Public Welfare System. Women's associations, the paper explained, worked with greater enthusiasm when they were combining for a specific purpose. Women were seldom inspired by the abstract ideal of co-operating for the general good of the community. If, on the other hand, they had a concrete purpose, they took it up with enthusiasm. There were innumerable sociological problems such as that of German refugees which could immediately brought home to the community. This would necessarily entail the use of press, radio and film though in such a form as to remove any suspicion that propaganda was being exerted to coerce public opinion.[67] Finally, it was pointed out that while it was the aim of Civic Development Section to

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[67]Davies (Education Branch) pointed in her comment to a different possibility of making use of the of the Public Welfare System; (PRO FO1050-1299; Objects and Methods of approach of the Civic Development Section, 28.6.1946): 'Under the Nazis the Public Welfare system developed into an unrivalled medium for influencing the public opinion particularly among the more uninformed sections of the community, and there is no reason why the same system should not now be employed to inoculate democratic ideas. Trained social workers have the opportunity of discussing problems with the women with whom they come in contact, and suitably briefed could provide most effective liaison with women en masse.'

foster the growth of organisations calculated to promote greater civic consciousness among women, there was no intention that such organisations should be officially initiated by the Section itself. Nevertheless, the growth of public opinion among German women could not be expected to be spontaneous under the present conditions. It seemed therefore necessary to employ publicity to prepare and stimulate them into developing of their own accord on the lines indicated.

This was how objects and aims of the Section had been defined. Soon, however, the major activity of Women's Affairs Officers was to encourage only certain organisations and activities of German women. Whereas non-partisan organisations which seemingly followed a model known in Great Britain (Townswomen's Guilds, Women's Institutes) were viewed with much sympathy the encouragement of women to participate in trade unions and work councils became merely secondary.

3. Work, development and status of the Women's Affairs Section

Routine work and qualifications of Women's Affairs Officers

Civic Development Section started very small with only three Women's Affairs Officers. The first Senior Women's Affairs Officer was Mrs Wagstaff, succeeded by Joy Evans at Headquarters in Berlin in early summer 1947.[1] During the following months Women's Affairs Officers were appointed and stationed at Regional Headquarters of the CCG in Hanover, Düsseldorf and Kiel. The work of Women's Affairs Officers in the Civic Development Section had been characterised in the policy paper *Objects and methods of approach of Civic Development Section* [2] and in *Local Government Instruction No 3* from July 1946 as to encourage women to play a part in Local Government and the Public Services. Women's Affairs Section was supposed to be a sort of co-ordinating body for the 'women's side' of activities of other Branches. It never had been planned to have a great number of officers.

In February 1947, a Women's Affairs Officer had also been appointed by Political Division to the Division's Headquarters in Berlin. For some months the two Women's Affairs Officers worked alongside each other: Joy Evans at Administration & Local Government Branch and Rita Ostermann at Political Branch. In summer 1947 both Senior Officers shared one office of the then renamed Women's Affairs Section under the direct control of the Educational Adviser Robert Birley.

How was the contact between Women's Affairs Officers and German women maintained and what made up the routine work of the former? The main work of Women's Affairs Officers in the Regions was to observe and to advise German women's organisations. From 1946 and especially after the formation of the German *Länder* in 1947, officers in certain Branches of the Control Commission such as Education Branch had no power to issue instructions or directives directly to Germans. This was also the case with Civic Development Section. Women's Affairs Officers were attached to the *Land* or Regional Headquarters of CCG and had to work through a

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[1] PRO FO1049-568, Deneke report. Mrs Wagstaff was in the Zone until April 1947.
[2] See chapter 1. The tasks were specified in 'Local Government Instruction No 3' in July 1946. The draft of this instruction had been considered at a meeting in Bünde on 19.6.1946 under the chairmanship of Mr W.H.Ingrams (Controller General) by Miss Cameron from Administration & Local Government Branch, Miss E. Davies from Education Branch and one officer from

network of contacts to the British and German administration. They had to rely on Local or Regional Military Governors for support if conflicts arose. There were no Women's Affairs Officers below the Regional level, though some of the female Education Control Officers (Education Branch) working at *Regierungsbezirk* headquarters were also involved in work with German women organisations and sent reports to the *Land* office. The efficiency of the work of a Women's Affairs Officer therefore rested on her ability to maintain a network of contacts. When she started her job, she first had to get a general idea of the situation in the area. Helpful in providing the necessary information were *Kreis* Resident Officers, Education Officers and members of British Relief Teams such as the British Red Cross or Friends Relief, all of whom had contacts with German women 'on the ground'.[3] There were about 8,000 local councils in the British Zone and it was impossible to keep direct contact to all of them and to ensure that women were nominated to the councils. Here Women's Affairs had to rely mainly on the co-operation of *Kreis* Resident Officers. To encourage the formation of women's organisations Women's Affairs Officers had to be in contact with women of ability and personality who could develop and foster such organisations. Where the work of women's organisations met with opposition in German official quarters British officers had the task of intervening tactfully.

One task of Women's Affairs Officers was to maintain an extensive correspondence with leading German women 'in all walks of life and all spheres of interest, so that they may be able to help them with their individual programme, whether they be in a local council, are *Hausfrauen* or working in factory'.[4] They wrote detailed reports for the Foreign Office on the situation of women in general and on the development of certain women's organisations in particular. They also helped with the organisation of women's conferences. In some cases they even initiated the forming of women's associations.

Women's Affairs Officers were to accompany and to guide English or other

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Public Relation/Information Services Branch.

[3] Friends Relief operated from summer 1946 to December 1947 in Germany for Germans (before for Displaced Persons). Donations which arrived in Germany were distributed by international Relief-Teams in co-operation with German Relief organisations to needy people and in this way close personal contact could develop between German women and members of Relief Teams in towns where those were stationed. Besides the material help given to the Germans it was of great importance that Relief Teams ignored non-fraternisation policy and opened their houses to Germans providing them with a heated room for meetings and tea. The development of strong and active Women's Committees as for example the one in Aachen can be put down to these beginnings.

[4] PRO FO1049-1246, First meeting of the Standing Committee on Women's Affairs in

foreign visitors through their Region and to plan and organise their tours. Senior Women's Affairs Officers maintained contact to certain individuals and pressure groups in England especially when they were on leave. When Joy Evans, for example, was in London in August 1947 'to find out the current trends of policy towards voluntary organisations and to widen the contacts with women's organisations in order to help in that part of policy which deals with interchange of personal visits and material'[5] she met Margaret Lambert of the German Department of the Foreign Office, a personal friend of hers, the Vice President of the International Women's Service Group, Miss MacLellan; Lady Nurnburnholme, Vice President of the International Council of Women; Lady Hillingdon, the Deputy Director of the Women's Voluntary Service; and Mary Sutherland of the Labour Party's Headquarters. Evans discussed Women's Affairs policy with all these ladies and asked for suggestions and support.

Part of the job was 'educational' in a more formal sense. Officers lectured to various audiences on any topic that was required and that seemed suitable in furthering democratic consciousness. Some of the Women's Affairs Officers displayed an amazing variety of knowledge. The topics offered by Bertha Bracey, Women's Affairs Officer in Schleswig-Holstein, covered 'American Negro Poetry with coloured photographs and projector'; 'The English woman sees Germany for 28 years'; 'Studies of German, British and American Character'; and 'The woman in the Community'.[6]

One of the Women's Affairs Officers defined her work as mainly dealing with publicity: Women Affairs Officers were to encourage German women to take an interest in current events and public affairs by means of wireless, Information Centres (*Die Brücke*), libraries, exhibitions and films, documentary films, discussion groups, quizzes, talks from experts, pen friends, personal contact. They were to encourage German women to take an active part in civic responsibility in economic, social and political life via visits of Local Councils, joining organisations, helping voluntary associations, exchange of visits, and changing the attitude of men towards women. [7]

The routine work and the diversity of topics dealt with are illustrated by a Monthly Report of the Women's Affairs Officer in Hamburg.[8] For Political Branch

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Hamburg, 16.3.1948; Contribution by Mrs Lee, Women's Affairs Officer in Hamburg.
[5] PRO FO1013-232, Duty in the UK between 22 July and 2 August 1947, by Evans, sent to Riddy, 11.8.1947.
[6] Grundhöfer, 'Ausländerinnen reichen die Hand'-britische und amerikanische Frauenpolitik in Deutschland im Rahmen der demokratischen Re-education nach 1945, p. 397.
[7] PRO FO1049-1246, First meeting of the Standing Committee on Women's Affairs in Hamburg, 16.3.1948; Contribution by Mrs Lee.
[8] PRO FO1050-1231, Monthly Report for February, Women's Affairs Hamburg, 27.2.1950.

CCG she wrote reports on: the reformation of the *Verband Weiblicher Angestellter*; on the activities of Women and Mothers of All Nations (WOMAN); on preparations for the International Women's Day on 8th March in Hamburg and Communist activities this involved. For the Office of the Educational Adviser she prepared a 'Who's Who' of the leading Hamburg women with biographies and a report on the *Deutscher Akademikerinnenbund* which had its headquarters in Hamburg. At Hamburg Study Club in *Die Brücke* she spoke about 'Deprived Children', she gave a lecture on 'Electioneering in Britain' and spoke to *Landfrauen* in Rahlstedt on English women in the countryside. She attended discussion groups at *Die Brücke* on 'Australia' and on 'Banstone School' as well as the annual meeting of WOMAN. In addition to this there was a certain amount of correspondence and reports to Women's Affairs Headquarters in Bonn.

If there was more than one officer at Regional Headquarters, at a later stage, duties were divided, as for example Dr Broome did for her Düsseldorf Office in 1949. Broome herself as Chief Women's Affairs Officer was the adviser to the Regional Commissioner in North Rhine-Westphalia in all matters concerning women and was responsible for the work of the Branch. The second officer assisted the Chief Officer and carried out such duties as visits from one to three weeks long to other areas within the *Land*. The staff officer and private secretary of the Chief Women's Affairs Officer was in charge of the office with special responsibility for the arrangements concerning visits to and from the UK and acted for the second officer in time of leave, sickness or whenever required. The duty of the German staff was receipt, registration, filing and dispatch of all unclassified correspondence.

How qualified were Women's Affairs Officers for their work? There are no papers in the CCG files which reveal personal information about the officers, about their age, qualifications, profession etc. But it can be inferred from reports and official correspondence that all of them came from a middle-class background and that they normally had an university education, presumably in the social sciences, education or child psychology. Paschkies noted that a training centre for British occupation officers was established in Wimbledon in February 1943. [9] Courses lasted about five or six

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[9] Paschkies, *Umerziehung in der Britischen Zone 1945-1949*. In Wimbledon there were guest lecturers lecturing on 'contemporary Germany' and 'German mentality', among them the historian A.J.P. Taylor, the educationalist R.H. Tawney, but also Sir Robert Vansittart. Vansittart especially was famous for his anti-German views and his thesis of collective guilt of all Germans was widely shared.

weeks and covered military problems, history, law and economy in Europe as well as questions concerning particular *Länder*. Further, there were courses on problems like health service, welfare organisations and education. The training centre worked for two and a half years until summer 1946. Therefore it is possible that officers of Education Branch like Gemmel, Davies and Kathleen Walker and probably even Joy Evans took part in these courses before they were sent to Germany. It is otherwise unclear how Women's Affairs Officers were briefed for their jobs.

The age of the Women's Affairs Officers differed widely. Joy Evans was in her mid thirties when she arrived in Germany, Rita Ostermann was well into her fifties.[10] Some of them were married to CCG officers, which was considered to be a plus with this kind of work, because it was believed by the CCG administration that married women had a greater prestige with German women and could more easily meet them on the same footing. To be a CCG officer's wife could sometimes be helpful because it allowed for social contacts with other circles and members of the CCG which could be employed to further the efforts of the Section. Mrs Youard, for example, was married to a CCG Colonel in charge of Food and Agriculture Department in the Rhineland, and was a mother of four children between three and seventeen years of age. It was no accident that she was one of the most energetic - and, to a degree, successful working - Women's Affairs Officers in the British Zone. However, her successor Dr Broome, equally energetic, was unmarried. Deneke, who met Youard at her 'charming requisitioned home on the edge of the Rhine at Bonn' reported that Youard wanted closer co-operation with the army authorities which 'her position as a wife made possible and she was (perhaps a little unfairly) critical of C.C.G. women officers for not seeking such co-operation when it hardly was possible for them to do so, socially'.[11] Another example was Mrs Lee, who was Women's Affairs Officer in Hamburg and married to the Kreis Resident Officer in Hamburg-Harburg who supported her work.

The experience Women's Affairs Officers had in political or social work is not generally evident in the archival records. Evans had done work for the Liberal Party before she came to Germany.[12] Youard had some experience with Women's Institutes and worked with *Landfrauen* in the Weser-Ems district before she became Women's

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[10] According to Deneke and photographs of Rita Ostermann in Grundhöfer, 'Britische und amerikanische Frauenpolitik in der Nachkriegszeit - "To help German women to think for themselves".'.
[11] Bodleian Library, Deneke papers, Box 7, Tour in the Rhineland in 1947.
[12] Bodleian Library, Deneke papers, The Women of Germany, p. 58.

Affairs Officer in Düsseldorf. Lee had been a Women's Institutes President at home. It can safely be assumed that on average they considered themselves as being not party-political. Broome saw herself first of all as civil servant of His Majesty's Government. Her report, written on the visit of Lucy Middleton, Labour MP, to Düsseldorf in October 1949 reveals her political convictions:

> I have not felt obliged before in self defence to reveal my own political leanings and I do not consider that any civil servant, temporary or permanent, should be so addressed by any visitor as to feel in necessity of doing so. But I felt constrained to point out to Mrs Middleton that she was barking up the wrong trees and as far as I am concerned since I belong to a Liberal Radical family and in any event was not here to do political work, still less to further the interest of any political party, but to carry out the unbiased policy laid down by His Majesty's Government.[13]

Women's Affairs Officers were appointed from 1947 on the recommendation of Rita Ostermann, the Senior Women's Affairs Officer in Political Branch. Youard was a personal friend of Robert Birley and was obviously initially promised the position of a Senior officer. From the diversity of abilities it does not become apparent what qualified an appointee for the job. Whereas members of the Education Branch (and especially members of the Committee on German Women's Education) had a decent knowledge of education, of German language and of the German education system, at least prior to Hitler, and sometimes applied their psychological knowledge in recommendations concerning family 'education' - this cannot be said about other Women's Affairs Officers.[14] It has to be asked therefore, if it was conceivable to expect them - and here the Senior Women's Affairs Officers in particular - to formulate independently a policy for women's affairs in Germany. In the end, Women's Affairs Officers were meant to be civil servants following the instructions set for them and that is essentially what they did.

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[13] PRO FO1049-1846, Report on the visit of Lucy Middleton by WA Düsseldorf, 3.10.1949, by Broome.

[14] Kathleen Walker, who stayed as Education Control Officer in Düsseldorf, had been a student of Helena Deneke in German language at St Hugh's Oxford. Deneke claimed that she met further of her former students in the CCG but she does not mention names. Edith Davies, 'British Policy and the Schools', in Arthur Hearnden, ed., *The British in Germany: Educational Reconstruction after 1945* (London, 1978), p. 95. reported that she acquired her knowledge of German schools at first hand. She had visited Germany regularly until as late as Easter 1939 when she had taken a party of grammar school girls to Germany. Later - in Education Branch - she was responsible for examining syllabuses by German authorities and worked with leading school personalities in the *Länder*.

Approach to German women

Knowledge of the German language and culture was obviously not required for employment with Civic Development Section. Hardly anybody could manage without the help of an interpreter. Most of the correspondence with the German side, minutes of meetings and reports from German organisations had to be translated into English for the use of Women's Affairs Officers. Later in the occupation it was expected that officers take courses in German language, but few did so. Evans, for example, had only a rather limited command of German even after five years in the country. There were exceptions to this rule. Dorothy Broome and Bertha Bracey (Women's Affairs Officer in Schleswig-Holstein) spoke German fluently; as did Rita Ostermann who had one German parent.

In general British Military Government - in contrast to the American - did not employ German or Jewish emigrants. Language barriers limited Women's Affairs Officers' personal contacts mainly to educated middle-class German women who spoke English. Officers gave advice to Germans, normally at informal gatherings (sometimes during or after public conferences), and they obtained information mostly from a small circle of German women at meetings following private invitation, a fact which must not be underestimated. The sort of social circles with which the Women's Affairs Section were in contact was illustrated by the women present at a Cafe party after a meeting of the Standing Committee on Women's Affairs in Düsseldorf in July 1949.[15] Those invited included: Frau Arnold, wife of the *Ministerpräsident* of North Rhine-Westphalia; Frau Hensel, wife of the *Oberstadtdirektor* of Düsseldorf; Frau Franken, Director of *Luisenschule*; Frau Bardenhewer; *Ministerialrätin*; Frau Larmann, responsible for youth in the *Sozialministerium*; Frau Milchsack, wife of the Oberbürgermeister of Wittlaer; Frau Waldhausen, leader of the *Evangelische Frauenhilfe*; Frau Horion, chairwoman of the *Katholischer Frauenbund*; Frau Dr Kall, representative of an organisation of East Prussian Refugees.

In order to build up a network of contacts Women's Affairs Officers met leading German women from whom they obtained information about their particular organisation as well as the names and addresses of other women actively involved in other women's organisations. These rather informal contact arrangements were also made to get in touch with women who were in official or semi-official positions (e.g.

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[15] PRO FO1013-2225, Invitation for Cafe after 6th Standing Committee on Women's Affairs on

mayor or Head of Social Welfare Department) and women connected with the political parties.[16] Once a Women's Affairs Officer obtained a rough picture of conditions under which women's organisations operated, the next step was to visit some of their headquarters. This was easier in Berlin and Hamburg, than, for example in North Rhine-Westphalia or Schleswig-Holstein, since Women's Affairs Officers did not have cars at their disposal. Visits were made to meetings of women's organisations as well as to schools, teachers' training centres and religious headquarters concerned with women's work.

It was difficult, if not impossible to record all small local women's groups in existence. With Ordinance 122 the registration of clubs including women's organisations was a matter for German legislation and therefore full statistics as to numbers of branches of the various organisations in *Regierungsbezirke* were not available to Education Branch or any other Branch of CCG. The information obtained was therefore incomplete and the fact that some areas appeared to have many more flourishing women's activities than their neighbour *Kreise* may be attributable to the zeal and energy of a *Kreis* Resident Officer or an Education Control Officer in tracking down these organisations and reporting them. An Education Control Officer from Arnsberg reported:

> I would say that the old 'welfare-type' organisations, the Mothers' Union, the Church Women's Guilds, the German Red Cross – in fact all the associations which promote and perpetuate the old 'three K's' policy – are flourishing and working pretty much as they did in the old Hitler and pre-Hitler days. These 'Vereine' are not much in the news where Mil Gov and attempts at 'democratisation' are concerned, but they are widespread and branches are to be found in every town and village.
> Although the current registration machinery leaves the R/B offices with inadequate statistics, I think we can assume of those organisations for which we have got some information, that the very fact that they have been notified indicates that they are perhaps movements with a newer approach – movements sponsored, fostered, assisted, and in some cases even suggested by Mil Gov. The very fact that they have come into the news at all suggests that they are movements which at some time or another have asked for help from, or otherwise aroused the interest of KROs and ECOs. [17]

One special feature of Women's Affairs report is that they do not contain any membership figures. At the best they give numbers of branches of organisations, and the

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Oxford House, Düsseldorf 1.7.1949.
[16] PRO FO1013-606, Progress Monthly report on Women's Organisations in the British Sector of Berlin, 26.2.1947, by Jacobs.
[17] PRO FO1013-2221, Progress report re Utility of German women in Public Affairs, by Miss Mellers, RB Arnsberg, Education Branch, 30.8.1948.

addresses of leaders. Why the reports were written in this way is difficult to say. It is possible that it was difficult to get reliable figures. It is also possible that Women's Affairs wanted to prove the success of its work by suggesting that the increasing number of local organisations of the kind they supported meant an increasing degree of civic responsibility among German women.

Women' Affairs Officers found the attitude of the German women towards the English women generally friendly, in the sense that there was almost no hostility when a sympathetic approach had been made. When German women realised that a genuine attempt was being made to understand their point of view, they gained confidence and encouragement.

The assumption was prevalent on the British side that Germans would reject anything that was too obviously connected with the occupation forces. It was a general British method to give recommendations to leading German individuals in such a way that these ideas were to appear genuine German ones. 'Re-education' was aimed at key personalities. Women who did not belong to the category of middle-class, aristocratic or professional woman were beyond the reach of Women's Affairs Officers. Attempts to reach the mass of unpolitical housewives by means of newspaper articles and radio programmes did not go very far, mainly because financial means were lacking. More importantly, Women's Affairs Section had no serious concept with which to attract the 'mass of women'. It developed no ideas of how to help women who exhausted themselves queuing, shopping on the Black Market, hoarding food and possibly working at a badly-paid job. In fact, Women's Affairs could not even address the most urgent demands articulated by the German women themselves because they included a criticism of occupation policy. German demands for the improvement of food rations, the release of German prisoners of war, the cessation of dismantling of industrial plants were considered unacceptable and made discussion between British and German women difficult. Whereas Elisabeth Holt, Women's Affairs Officer at the US Military Government, went in 1947 to the Siemens Factory Berlin and spoke to women workers during their afternoon shift about everyday matters, the necessity for increased production and the relationship between production and imports, there was no such option for British Women's Affairs Officers when factories were dismantled in the British Zone.

By far the largest proportion of the German leading women who had personal contact to British officers were middle-aged or elderly. This was felt to be a limitation and it was hoped to be corrected in the future because the less accessible group

comprising women from the age of 21 to 40 was the most important one. These were the women who were having the worst time in earning a living or looking after small children and families. On the other hand, these were the women who would influence the younger generation far more than the 'very worthy older people', who were probably out of touch with conditions at the time, as the Women's Affairs Officer from Berlin stated.[18] The closest contact Women's Affairs had was with women who, after a short period of time, replaced the older women's leaders of moderate and conservative women's organisations like Anna Mosolf, Theanolte Bähnisch, Gabriele Strecker who – on the whole – did not at all want to be identified with 'suffragettes'. Their approach was to treat the problems of the housewife as political issues. They were less interested in fighting for women's rights than in the adoption of women's duties.

A number of issues important for women in post-war Germany were not addressed by Women's Affairs, issues such as the inclusion of the equal rights article into the Basic Law. The SPD member Elisabeth Selbert [19] (one of the four women in the Parliamentary Council) had proposed including an article which was a specific acknowledgement of women's equality with men in every respect. The rejection of her proposal in December 1948 prompted a wave of petitions from bourgeois and socialist women alike. In the files of Women's Affairs Section only a few remarks can be found on the topic. There are firstly two newspaper cuttings from *Westdeutsche Zeitung* from December 1948 and April 1949.[20] The first article came with a covering letter by E. Cozens, Women's Affairs Officer in Düsseldorf, to Joy Evans, informing her that Frau Dr Franken, CDU member of the Town Council and headmistress of a girls' school in Düsseldorf, had discussed the matter with Dr Adenauer, chairman of the Parliamentary Committee. Frau Franken reported that he was quite amenable, but she felt that prompting from a higher level was needed to achieve the desired result. Many prominent CDU women had threatened to sever all connection with their party if the clause was omitted. Miss Cozens had written to the Regional Commissioner and asked him whether it was possible for the Military Governor to drop a hint to Dr Adenauer, because it was felt that this was all needed to get the clause included. Evans sent the

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[18] Ibid.
[19] About Selbert see Anke Martiny, 'Von der Trümmerfrau zur Quotenfrau: Vierzig Jahre Gleichberechtigung im Lichte und im Schatten der Verfassung', *Blätter für deutsche und internationale Politik* 34, 1 (1989), pp. 69-75.
[20] PRO FO1049-1844, 'Equal rights for women in the Basic Law', *Westdeutsche Zeitung* 13.12.1948 and FO1050-1214 'A woman fights in Bonn for equal rights for women',

message to Chaput de Saintonge, British Liaison Staff in Bonn, who answered on 12 January 1949 that there was no positive step which could be taken by Military Government authority in this matter.[21] He thought it hardly likely that the CCG could be able to bring sufficient pressure to bear on the members of the Parliamentary Council in this question. However, he promised that 'when the occasion arises during my discussion with members of the Parliamentary Council I will do everything in my power to put forward the case for "equality" of Women's Rights'. A further note was written by Harman, Women's Affairs Officer in North Rhine-Westphalia. When Elisabeth Selbert spoke to women in Cologne in February 1949, Harman reported on this with an ironic undertone hardly hiding the antipathy she felt for the SPD woman.

> Frau Dr Selbers (sic!) came straight from the Parliamentary Council at Bonn where she had just been present at the 3rd reading of the Basic Law. Frau Selbers as a good SPD member rode the party line pretty strongly, suggesting that SPD had been the first party in 1919 to recognize the fight for the civic equality of women. The Bonn constitution was now taking women a step further: in it was laid down that women not only had equal civic but also equal legal rights. This means a complete revision of the B.G.B. (*Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch, code of law, D.T.)* This statement was greeted by a storm of applause, especially since Frau Selbers made it clear that it was due to her unceasing toil that the final wording was accepted. [22]

Women's Affairs Officers, with the exception of Miss Cozens, were apparently not in personal contact with advocates of the Equal Rights Article. Nothing in the Women's Affairs files records that this matter was discussed between the *Frauenring* and Women's Affairs and that any support was forthcoming from the British side. Female emancipation - in the sense of equal legal and civic rights for women - was not on the agenda of Women's Affairs Section, nor of any other Branch of British Military Government. Grundhöfer claimed that during the discussion about the inclusion of the equal rights article, Women's Affairs Officers fought on the side of prominent German women and gave them support. [23] They organised meetings in all regions to mobilise a broad public, and developed a feeling of identification with the aims of the German women. The only evidence Grundhöfer could produce for this claim was the above letter Miss Cozens wrote to Evans. However, certain newspapers in the United States

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Westdeutsche Zeitung, without date.
[21] PRO FO1049-1844, Chaput de Saintonge to Evans, 12.1. 1949.
[22] PRO FO1013-2227, Report on Frau Selber's lecture in Cologne, by Harman, 10.2.1949.
[23] Grundhöfer, 'Ausländerinnen reichen die Hand'-britische und amerikanische Frauenpolitik in Deutschland im Rahmen der demokratischen Re-education nach 1945: Rupieper, 'Bringing Democracy to the Frauleins. Frauen als Zielgruppe der amerikanischen Demokratisierungspolitik in Deutschland 1946-1951', p. 63.

claimed that the public campaigns at the turn of 1948 to 1949 was attributed to the mobilisation of German women by Women's Affairs Officers.[24] Rupieper gives the example of an American member of the League of Women Voters who spoke at a meeting of handpicked women in Bad Schwalbach (Hesse) on the topic of the '*Die Stellung der Frau nach dem bürgerlichen Gesetzbuch*'. Similar meetings obviously took place in other towns of the American Zone, but not in the British Zone. I also could find no evidence for Grundhöfer's claim that after Article 3 had been included in the Basic Law Women's Affairs supported German women in pushing equality through in the practical law. At countless meetings, she wrote, Women's Affairs introduced German women, among them lawyers, to the problem. British Women's Affairs Officers were certainly not trained in law. The only example I came across is a talk given by Evans on the legal situation of women in Great Britain at certain meetings of Anglo-German clubs.

Women's Affairs methods were in concord with the general British occupation policy.[25] The British 'indirect' method of 're-education' aimed at the 'educated' elite and not at the political masses. It used private channels (through personal contacts and private conversation) instead of mass media; it distributed well chosen information, which portrayed Britain's own cultural values. It used words like words 'information' (the propaganda division of CCG was called 'Information Services') 'publicity' and 'projection' which aimed at giving a positive picture of the British way of life and abstained as far as possible from anti-Soviet propaganda or even from criticism of the German past. This *Projection of Britain* method of British Cultural Propaganda was developed in the thirties and used in all Branches of CCG. British military officers and

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[24] Grundhöfer, 'Ausländerinnen reichen die Hand'-britische und amerikanische Frauenpolitik in Deutschland im Rahmen der demokratischen Re-education nach 1945, p. 457. Here too, she only cites one newspaper article as an example.

[25] Gabriele Clemens, ed., *Kulturpolitik im besetzten Deutschland 1945-1949* (Stuttgart, 1994). analyses the Cultural policy in Germany. She follows Lothar Kettenacker, *Krieg zur Friedenssicherung. Die Deutschlandplanung der britischen Regierung während des Zweiten Weltkrieges* (Göttingen and Zürich, 1989). in seeing a connection between the decline of Great Britain as an economic and military power, which became obvious in the thirties, and the necessity to 'project Britain' abroad. The decline led to a stronger reflection of the British about their own values and about British national character. It was a help in Britain's claim that she could still have – despite the loss of power – a say in the world's fate. The British demonstrated that they still had something to contribute to the new political order in Europe after the war, by pointing at moral values and traditions which were prevalent in politics, economy and society. The 'Projection of Britain' was the main objective after the war of British cultural policy in Germany and it was supposed to secure the British influence over Germany far beyond the time of military occupation.

civil officers met above all with German aristocracy and industrialists, taking their interests into consideration.

Difficulties and Limitations of the work of Women's Affairs Section

Women's Affairs Officers were in a subordinate position within the structure of the Military Government. Civic Development Section remained a small Section with an average of eight officers for the whole British Zone containing 26,000 CCG officials in 1947 and some 12 million German women. Women's Affairs Officers, like most of the other officers in the British Military Government, worked on a temporary basis outside the established career ladder within the Civil Service. Naturally, their status within the hierarchy was rather low. Short-term contracts and the limited appeal of the position might have contributed to the high staff turnover among officers. Some of them stayed only for one or two years. This made it more difficult to follow a consistent line of policy. However, the Senior officers Ostermann and Evans were in their posts for up to five years and more.[26]

The funding for the Section was restricted. Insufficient provision of cars, paper, clerical help etc. hampered the work. For example, Women's Affairs Officers had to use cars from the CCG pool, which had to be ordered each time needed and could not be used for longer journeys. This made travelling within the Zone quite time-consuming. To attend distant meetings they had to use the Military train. This meant that Women's Affairs Officers were not mobile but bound to the city where they were stationed. Broome described her working conditions in North Rhine-Westphalia in 1949 as follows. For three Women's Affairs Officers and one German secretary there was one office:

> The constant telephoning, coming in and out of people, individual interviews and deputation oftener than not make concentrated thought and work quite impossible. At present Miss Bliss and I are little more than office girls the

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[26] At a conference of Women Youth Officers and Women's Affairs Officers at Bad Rothenfelde in March 1949 two Women's Affairs Officers at *Regierungsbezirk* level attended: Miss Gentry, Women's Affairs Schleswig-Holstein; Miss Mordin, Women's Affairs Berlin. There were certainly more. Broome listed in May 1950 the number of Women's Affairs Officers still in the Zone. (FO1013-2234, Broome, Appendix III, Women's Affairs Organisation): In the German Department of the Foreign Office there was one executive officer (this was Mrs Reeve) plus assistant. The Women's Affairs Section had four officers (Senior Control Officers, Control Officer I and two Control Officer II) plus German clerks. One liaison officer (COIII) was at Educational Adviser's Office and in the *Länder* of Schleswig Holstein and Lower Saxony there were one officer (COI) plus German secretarial assistance. In North Rhine-Westphalia there were two officers (COI and COII) plus one German secretary. There were altogether 12 officers in the British Zone.

> greater part of the time we are in Steel House. This problem is aggravated by the problem of leave, deputising for others, interpreting for others and escorting visitors about the Region which deprives us for as long as two days at a time of any assistance other than that of Miss Beyer.[27]

Women's Affairs Officers were stationed at the Headquarters of Regional Commissioners in Düsseldorf (North Rhine-Westphalia), Hanover (Lower Saxony), Kiel (Schleswig-Holstein), Hamburg, and in the British Sector of Berlin. In the different *Länder* they were in different chains of command. In Lower Saxony and Schleswig-Holstein the Chief Education Officer was responsible for Women's Affairs, in NRW the Regional Government Officer and in Hamburg the position was not clear and the officer was only loosely attached to Education Section. At least this was the situation in 1948.[28] Within their *Land* Women's Affairs Officers were able to act quite independently and strong personalities could pursue an individual policy and even be critical towards the Senior Women's Affairs Officers in Berlin. Beginning in 1947 the work was co-ordinated with the help of regular meetings held as Conference of Women's Affairs Officers on a rotating basis in one of the *Länder* or in Berlin in Birley´s presence.

Women's Affairs Officers were mostly working in a kind of vacuum. They were not well informed about general developments in the British Zone or in Germany. Youard, for example, complained in 1948 [29] that while monthly reports and papers were sent from the regions to Women's Affairs Headquarters Berlin there was hardly anything coming back. Then she listed what she was missing. Few papers on international meetings, e.g. the Socialist Congress in Vienna or the political parties, were received in the regions. She thought it valuable to have a summary of party developments regarding women (particularly at Zonal level), female membership of Zonal Committees, biographies of Zonal figures etc. at regular intervals. Youard also considered it helpful to have information about the French and American zone policy; the *Frauenfunk* of NWDR and its policy; women on the Economic Council; and who was looking after the interests of women and in what way during the formation of the new constitution. She also wanted to be kept informed of Frau Bähnisch's major schemes, e.g. for an *Arbeitsgemeinschaft* (Working Committee of women's organisations) for the British Zone.

Furthermore, there was a lack of co-operation amongst Women's Affairs

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[27] PRO FO1013-2221, Organisation of Women's Affairs in NRW, by Broome, 28.1.1949
[28] PRO FO1050-1229, Conference of WA Officers in Bad Rothenfelde, 24.11.1948.

Officers in the Regions and between them and the Senior Women's Affairs Officers. Occasionally even rivalries occurred and caused support to be given to different competing German women's groups. From 1947 on many women's organisations in Germany were functioning on a zonal or even inter-zonal level which made co-operation between Regional officers even more necessary. One of the major clashes between Women's Affairs Officers occurred in connection with the foundation of the National Federation of Business & Professional Clubs in West-Germany in 1949/50.[30] The first club was formed in Münster in November 1946 with the help of a member of the British Red Cross, Miss Greenwood. Similar clubs were established in other towns of NRW and on 13 November 1949 the presidents of the existing five clubs in NRW and one in Berlin met in Münster to form a 'loose' national federation. This federation applied for affiliation in the International Federation of Business & Professional Women. Meanwhile a *Club berufstätiger Frauen* had been established in Hamburg, and this club was not prepared to accept the federation set up in Münster. Evans apparently advised the leader of the Berlin club, Frau Demme, to make contact with the group in Hamburg. Demme perhaps misunderstood the hint, conveying the message to Münster, that the Senior Women's Affairs Officer disagreed with the existence of the National Federation. The National Federation dissolved itself on 24 April 1950. Broome was present at this last meeting and seemed quite surprised by its outcome. She got very upset about this intervention by Evans, prompted, she rightly assumed, by Bliss, the Women's Affairs Officer in Hamburg and strong supporter of the club in Hamburg and its ambitious leaders. A very emotional correspondence followed between Broome on the one hand and Evans and Bliss on the other. Representatives of clubs in NRW, Berlin and Hamburg were invited to the Conference of the International Federation of Business & Professional Women from 31 July to 5 August 1950 in London where the local differences were discussed with the Germans. It was agreed that as soon as the development of groups became more evenly distributed the Membership Committee would consider the question of affiliation. Germans were left the task of forming at least one club in each of the 12 *Länder*. The representative (and controller) sent by the International Federation, Miss Bergliot Lee, invited delegates from all clubs in West Germany to a conference at Bonn on 19 and 20 May 1951, to discuss the founding of a new German Federation. Finally, the *Deutscher Verband berufstätiger Frauen* was founded with Maria May of Hamburg as its first president.

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[29] PRO FO1013-716, Youard to Evans, 18.8.1948.

The co-operation of Women's Affairs Officers with other Branches of CCG also turned out to be difficult. One of the handicaps in the contact with other Divisions was the low status of Women's Affairs Officers. Civilian officers of CCG had quasi-military ranks, which were equivalent of the junior officer ranks in the British Army. Women's Affairs Officers were of a medium rank (Control Officer I or II), comparable with that of *Kreis* Resident Officers. Other Branches could be contacted only through Education Branch administration and later through the Office of the Educational Adviser. In order to co-ordinate the policy of Women's Affairs with different Branches a Standing Committee on Women's Affairs had been set up in October 1947. This, however, was only possible with Birley's authorisation. This Committee was to provide a forum for representatives of different Branches to meet whenever there was a need to discuss certain problems concerning women. It ceased to exist in 1948 when the headquarters of different Divisions moved from Berlin (where the Russian blockade had begun) to different places in the British Zone which made meetings difficult to arrange. The Zonal Women's Affairs Office remained in Berlin. There were, however, Standing Committees of Women's Affairs established in the Regions and in Hamburg in early 1948 which continued their work until the end of occupation.

The formulated object of British Women's Affairs policy was, as has already been emphasised, to encourage German women's non-partisan societies and their co-operation, and to increase the number of women taking part in the work of elected councils. Here, as in other fields of activity, Women's Affairs depended on other Divisions to implement policy, especially on the co-operation with Government Structure, Religious, Health, Political and Intelligence Division. Press, radio and film were the best means of contacting women with young children. This required the co-operation of Information Services Division (PRIC). The minutes of the meetings of Standing Committees on Women's Affairs, however, reveal that nothing of much importance had ever been decided there. What was useful for Women's Affairs was certainly the possibility of getting information about particular problems, for instance concerning the employment of women. It can be seen from the files of Manpower Division that the meetings were taken seriously and that statements had been carefully prepared and agreed between several officers beforehand. But Women's Affairs Section did not get very far in opening up attractive employment facilities or vocational training for women. Public Relations Division regularly announced that the lack of paper made

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[30] PRO FO1013-2233.

it impossible to launch a Women's magazine, which was one of the urgent demands made by Women's Affairs. All in all, there was much discussion but not much action.

Shortly before she left her position, Youard identified the main difficulties of Women's Affairs as the lack of clear directives and policy, and of a woman sufficiently senior to carry weight with all departments in Headquarters.[31] At *Land* level, she wrote, all Departments were very friendly and Women's Affairs had the help of the Regional Government Officers. But owing to the lack of policy, the co-operation started at too low a level. Other Branches, such as Manpower and particularly Information Services Division had no clear instructions on policy regarding women and methods of implementation, on the role and functions of Women's Affairs Officers and the part to be played by other Branches. Women's Affairs Officers therefore had to chase round after information and help which should have come automatically. It was, for instance, impossible for Women's Affairs to initiate a publicity campaign unless Information Services Division had had instructions from their headquarters. Kathleen Walker supported Youard's critique. After pointing out which items should be included in Women's Affairs policy, especially a campaign for the 'right' education of young children in the home, a task which Women's Affairs had lost sight of, Walker concluded:

> These are a few points which should by now form a definite part of the policy for Women's Affairs if, indeed, any policy had been formulated. There has been no indication that this has been done, in fact, the reverse appears to be the case. Early in 1946, the first Women's Affairs Officers came out as part of Administration and Local Government and at that time the idea, not written down, was to persuade women to enter local government. At the beginning of 1947 Women's Affairs passed over to Education Branch since when Women's Affairs Officers have been left to work out their own policy in a complete vacuum, the only plan at Headquarters having been to bring out a large number of Women Visitors from England 'to put Women's Affairs on the map'. Considerable interest has now been aroused among all kinds of women's groups in the UK, who seem also to be working without coordinated guiding principles from over here. Recently Women's Affairs at Regional level has been transferred to the R.G.O. as a department in itself though at HQ it appears to belong to Informal Education and still we have no guiding principles. [32]

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[31] PRO FO1013-716, Paper of Women's Affairs Department, by Youard, 3.8.1948; PRO FO1013-2221, Regional Standing Committee on Women's Affairs, Comment on Memo by Youard, Flag D.

[32] PRO FO1013-716, Lack of Policy for Women's Affairs, by Kathleen Walker, 8.8.1948. Walker approached Birley as early as May 1947 with the request that a woman of some standing and experience should be appointed to HQs so that a policy could be worked out and that this should not be looked at merely from the political angle.

The lack of overall policy guidelines also prompted policy disagreements between Women's Affairs Officers. Some of them evidently had very different assumptions of what Women's Affairs should be dealing with. Although the fields of activities for Women's Affairs widened in the course of time, the policy remained as formulated in summer 1946. The enhanced responsibilities of Women's Affairs were evident from an agenda of a meeting in January 1948 in Norfolk House London between Women's Affairs Officers and members of the German Department.[33] The meeting besides questions on the general policy of Women's Affairs also discussed the employment of women in industry; the development in the Trade Union and Co-operative Movement affecting women; training of women for the Social Services; lecture schemes; the development of women's organisations; visits of German women to the UK; contact with US Military Government in the matter, the use of publicity media especially the German service of the BBC, the newspaper *Die Welt* and *Nordwestdeutscher Rundfunk*. Yet, as Youard criticised, Ostermann's memorandum on Women's Affairs from April 1948 omitted all references to problems of employment and to the legal status of women in the home. Youard demanded that a clear statement of policy, objectives and methods covering the whole field of women's affairs should be issued to all officers of the Control Commission.

A rather frustrated Dorothy Broome also vehemently criticised women's affairs policy of the British Military Government in 1949.[34] She found that Women's Affairs was labouring under three serious handicaps: first there was the lack of a sufficiently high-powered woman in the Foreign Office with responsibilities for Women's Affairs; secondly, there was no woman at Zonal Advisory level; and, thirdly, no general scheme had ever been drawn up for Women's Affairs. Had a woman in the Administration Branch of the Foreign Office (German Department) of no less than Principal rank been made responsible for German women, instead of a woman of only Executive grade (such as Mrs Reeve), Broome thought, most of the difficulties of Women's Affairs would not have arisen because practically everything else would have fallen naturally into its proper place, even such matters as office and mess accommodation and transport. A woman in the German Department of the Foreign Office would have

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[33] PRO FO1051-596, Meeting held at Norfolk House London in order to discuss Women's Affairs in Germany, 8.1.1948. In the chair Mr Crawford (German Education Department), present Ostermann, Evans, Reeve, Mr Nicholls (German General Department); Mr Churchill (German Education Department) and others.
[34] PRO FO1013-2224, Women's Affairs and Cultural Missions, by Broome, 17.4.1950.

understood the need for the appointment of a woman Adviser of as high a calibre and status as the male Advisers to the Military Governor on Education, Manpower and Politics. There would have been women as Deputy Advisers in the various Departments of CCG. She would at least have pressed for the ad hoc appointment of women as Joint Educational, Manpower, Public Health and Political Advisers and the like. Had either of these courses been taken, Broome was convinced that as a matter of course women of the right calibre, experience and status would have been appointed at Regional and District level in the British Zone and in sufficient numbers. There 'is no dearth of intelligent and experienced women, only unwillingness or a refusal to seek them out and use them', she argued. Broome found it a cardinal error not to realise that women advisers were necessary for the reorganisation of German education and for the reconstruction of German industry. 'Had there been a woman Adviser on Education as well as a man, adult education of women, the informal education of women, the revival and the extension of women's organisations would have been put into the hands of experienced women',[35] she critically remarked.

Administrative development of Women's Affairs Section 1947-1951

In January 1948, however, it seemed as if Women's Affairs Section would receive more attention and financial means because even the highest ranks of the Foreign Office realised very clearly that there was a 'women's problem' in Germany which the Russians had exploited for their own propaganda purposes. Ernest Bevin, the Foreign Secretary, impressed by the efforts the Russians made to recruit members for the *Demokratischer Frauenbund Deutschlands*, the umbrella organisation for women's organisations in the Soviet Zone, demanded from the German Department of the Foreign Office that something be done about women's organisations in the British Zone. [36]

What may have prompted this interest was the fact that the Conference of Foreign Ministers in London in December 1947 had not reached any conclusion concerning a Peace Treaty for Germany, and that the *Demokratischer Frauenbund* in the Russian Zone wanted to be licensed in the whole of Germany. At the Six-Power Conference in London from 23 February to 6 March 1948 the decision was taken to establish a West-German state. On 20 March the Russians protested with the withdrawal

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[35] Ibid.
[36] PRO FO371-70861, Internal Minutes, German Department, February 1948.

of its representative from the Allied Control Commission. At this time, in March 1948, the American Military Government also created a Women's Affairs Section staffed at first with five officers. Its first leader was Lorena Hahn, then her deputy Elisabeth Holt took over in October 1948. Finally, in February 1949, Ruth Woodsmall came to Germany and took the lead. In April 1948 Women's Affairs Officers were working at *Land* level in the American zone.[37]

The weeks following the receipt of Bevin's telegram were filled with hectic activity. Reports were written and recommendations flew to and fro between different Departments of the Foreign Office and the CCG. A special meeting was organised at Norfolk House London, where German Department was situated, to consider the development of Women's Affairs in the British Zone.[38] Action was asked for especially since Lord Pakenham was under pressure to send a programme of action not only to Bevin but also to Violet Markham and her club of ladies who all had travelled to the British Zone in different concerns and were now demanding more engagement of Military Government in women's affairs. The German Department encouraged Birley to make suggestions of how to support German women.[39] With Pakenham Birley discussed the problem of paper supply to get a woman's magazine started. Women's Affairs got £ 3,000 for organising Exchange Programmes for the financial year 1948/49 to pay for fares and accommodation for 40 visitors to England. [40]

In April 1948 Women's Affairs Section was taken from Education Branch and became an independent Department under the direct control of the Educational Adviser and his office. Women's Affairs Officers in the Regions now had to report to the Regional Commander through the Regional Government Office instead of through Education Office. Rita Ostermann from Political Branch was made Senior Women's Affairs Officer for the Section because the political aspect of the work had become more important and 'its handling needed some experience and tact'.[41] The non-political organisations remained the domain of Joy Evans. The number of Women's Affairs

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[37] In November 1949 the Women's Affairs Section at OMGUS was separated from Education and Cultural Relations Division and became an indepenent Branch with headquarters in Frankfurt. OMGUS Women's Affairs was dissolved in February 1952 together with the *Land* and *Kreiskommissariate*.
[38] PRO FO1051-596, Meeting held at Norfolk House London in order to discuss Women's Affairs in Germany, 8.1.1948.
[39] PRO FO1050-1593, Crawford to Birley re future plan about Women's Affairs, 6.5.1948.
[40] PRO FO1050-1155, Provisional Financial Estimate for Women's Affairs Section 1948-1949, 26.10.1948, Evans to Mr Raby, Education Branch.
[41] PRO COGA945-285, Minutes of a discussion between Birley and Pakenham, 15.3.1948.

Officers in the Regions was increased from eight to twelve. They were subordinated to Joy Evans and they sent their reports to her office. Up to summer 1948, in each Region one higher-ranking officer grade I was added, who was expected to deal particularly with the 'political aspect of the question'- meaning fighting Communist infiltration.

Nearly a year later, in spring 1949, it became evident that Education Branch had to undergo some changes owing to the planned foundation of a West German state. On 10 February 1949 a Policy Instruction *Policy in regard to the future organisation of Education Branch and Information Services Division* explained that because the authority for educational matters had already been transferred to the *Land* Government an Occupation Statute would not change the situation materially but would only formalise it. In future the British role in Germany would be as in France or Italy. His Majesty's Government would have no further responsibilities and the minister (Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster) would no longer be answerable to the House of Commons. It followed that Information Services had to be restricted to what could be provided from the profits on their publications in Germany and that Education Branch would have to disappear except insofar as a handful of officers remained on the staffs of the High Commission and *Land* Commissioners.[42]

Military Government Instruction No 40 from February 1949 stated that efforts both of the Educational Adviser and Chief Information Services Division would be directed towards the 'Projection of the British point of view' and the presentation of British objectives in Germany. The Educational Adviser became responsible for publishing and explaining the current British policy. At Headquarters a British Relations Board was set up for the projection of Britain in Germany, presided over by the Military Governor. Board members were the Political Adviser, the Educational Adviser, Chief of Information Services Division and the four Regional Commanders. Similar Boards were established on Regional level and around the British Information Centres even on area level. Education Officers, including Women's Affairs Officers, were transferred to the British Information Centres (*Die Brücke*) and became part of what were called 'Cultural Missions'. In this way 'education' was thought to be immune to alterations in the rest of the Commission and could, if necessary, be dissociated from it altogether and attached to a Consulate or Embassy. Generally, no-one doubted the effectiveness of 're-education' of the German people. General

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[42] PRO FO1050-1153, Iley, FO, to Birley, 9.5.1949.

Robertson wrote to the Foreign Secretary in April 1949 in respect of the proposed reduction of Education Branch stating that he believed that the creation of a peace-loving Germany was a long-term process. He thought that the work done by Education Branch was still necessary and should be continued - by what ever name it is called.[43] But after all, money had to be found to continue Education Branch.

Ostermann and Evans moved in summer 1950 from Berlin to Wahnerheide near Bonn, where they were accommodated with the Headquarters of Political Division (Chancery). In 1950 there were still three Regional Women's Affairs Officers, stationed in Hamburg, Lower Saxony and North Rhine-Westphalia on the staff of the Regional Government Officer. At the Office of the Educational Adviser there was no longer a special Women's Affairs Officer. Birley's successor, Professor Marshall, suggested that a member of his Office keep himself informed as to the events at Regional level and there were plans to hold quarterly meetings with functional officers at which general lines and policy were to be discussed and agreed.

The transfer of Women's Affairs Officers to the Information Centres meant that they were cut off from the circulation of information, especially of information issued by Political Division and Information Services Division. They came under the direction of Heads of Information Centres some of whom themselves appointed Women's Affairs Officers at random if they needed somebody to represent the women's point of view.[44] There were no Education Officers in the function of Women's Affairs Officers at *Regierungsbezirk* level as there had been previously.

In 1949 Ostermann defined the tasks for Women's Affairs Officers at the Zonal Headquarters in a memorandum to the new Educational Adviser Marshall as mainly dealing with Exchange Programmes and arranging conferences e.g. for Women's Affairs Officers in the British Zone.[45] In addition the Zonal office organised the supply of literature concerning women's affairs to the officers in the Regions for use in their work as part of the Cultural Missions. With regard to women's organisations the task was to encourage relationship between women's organisations and international bodies, to maintain contact with women members of the *Bundestag* and so to act as a liaison with various interested bodies in London pending the establishment of the authorised

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[43] PRO FO1050-1153, Robertson to Bevin, 30.4.1949.
[44] So for example the Head of *Die Brücke* in Düsseldorf appointed a British woman to the Area Board. PRO FO1050-1214, Broome, 11.7.1949.
[45] PRO FO1049-1847, R. Ostermann to Steel (Political Adviser) and Professor Marshall (Educational Adviser), Policy of Women's Affairs Section, 25.10.1949.

representative of the German Foreign Office in London. Additionally they would maintain contact between the committee of the *Bundestag* and the German women's organisations. The two officers at headquarters also were to keep Women's Affairs Officers informed of matters of primarily political and international importance, such as the work of the Commission of the Status of women in the United Nations organisation. Women's Affairs Officers at the Missions were to strengthen the groundwork for the *Frauenring* as much as possible.

The new Educational Advisor, Marshall, had no interest in women's affairs and officers could not hope for much support.[46] In October 1949, when preparation started to move certain CCG headquarters to Bonn, one of his inspectors commented on the work of the Section:

> I am of the opinion that an investigation into the work of this section should be made with a view to reducing their (in many cases) selfassumed responsibilities. The section seems to have involved itself in many activities, which are only remotely connected with Education and Culture. These activities do involve a great deal of correspondence and it will be difficult to cut them off suddenly. But as a medium term policy I suggest it would be well to frame some terms of reference for the section to be fully effective say by 1 April 1950.[47]

For Ostermann and Evans it presented a problem to explain to Marshall exactly what Women's Affairs Officers were doing. What Evan's response represented was a patchwork of small actions and activities, which illustrated very clearly the lack of coherent policy, but also the relatively poor results of work.[48] Evans explained quite correctly that Women's Affairs was in the first place a 'pressure and liaison group' to other CCG Branches. In this function it covered up deficiencies in the work of other Branches and Divisions. For example, Women's Affairs helped with Public Health Branch making a nutrition survey during the Berlin Blockade enabling study of the problem from the housewife's point of view. The Section also supported the interchange of information on the development of social science in the UK and the British Zone. It

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[46] T.H. Marshall was sociologist, Professor at London School of Economics, and leader of the German Section of the Foreign Office Research Department during the war. Before the First World War he was a lecturer at Berlin University and from 1914-1918 in Germany '*zivilinterniert*'. In 1948 he resigned from his work at FORD and returned to LSE. From 1949 until 1950 Marshall worked as Educational Adviser in the British Zone. Reusch, 'Die Londoner Institutionen der britischen Deutschlandpolitik. Eine behördengeschichtliche Untersuchung', p. 334.

[47] PRO FO1050-1230, Organisation of WA Section, handwritten report to the Educational Adviser, (Administration officer of Political Division), 24.10.1949.

[48] PRO FO1049-1845, What do Women's Affairs Officers do? Evans to Professor Marshall,

was the result of invitations issued by Women's Affairs Section that experts from Sheffield and London universities were invited to investigate the conditions in the British Zone. It was largely at the insistence of Women's Affairs that the Visiting Expert, Miss Boyes, came to the British Zone in 1948. Concrete results of her visit were the Advisory Committee on women's employment, which had been established in most Regions by the German Labour officials. Members of the German Ministry of Labour were invited to the UK to exchange views on the question of vocational guidance. All this was done in co-operation with Manpower Division.

Broome, clearly unsatisfied with the Senior officers' work, continued to insist that each Women's Affairs Officer should be given the responsibility and scope which would enable her to lay down policy and carry out her own programme. Even as late as 1950, Broome asked for a Senior Women Principal at the Foreign Office to concern herself with Women's Affairs, and for the ad hoc appointment of a Woman Joint Education Adviser or Deputy Educational Adviser. There should be a female as well as male head of each of the Cultural Missions. Women as well as men should be appointed Head of the Information Centres *Die Brücke* because:

> It is not the slightest use our preaching to the Germans about democratic citizenship, about joint rights and joint responsibilities, if in practice we ignore the existence of women or admit them only to the lowest offices, keeping the same rights at any rate, if not the responsibilities, as the exclusive preserve of men. Still less is it any use German women and Women's Affairs Officers being told by their British superior officers that the German women have in their own hands the salvation of Germany, as long as we deal with them on the side, on the cheap, and exclude them from authority in the Cultural Mission. In these Cultural Missions we have a golden opportunity to show what we meant for women to take up their public as well as their domestic responsibilities, about "the great partnership", "the true balance" and the "equal rights and duties for men and women".... If women, or women of standing, are to be cast out or excluded from participation in Cultural Missions then we render nugatory all our preaching about joint citizenship and destroy the value of the work which Women's Affairs Branch have done, in spite of their limitations.[49]

The educational optimism and power of Women's Affairs Officers and Visiting Experts diminished rapidly the more they were confronted with the limitations of their work and with the fact that women in the hierarchy of the Military Government were relatively powerless. The problem of the discrepancy between their own position within the CCG and the educational mission to teach German women 'to think for themselves' and to raise their status in society became completely obvious at the end of occupation

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27.7.1949.

when the dissolution of the Women's Affairs Section was discussed.

Most people in Britain and Germany might have learnt of the existence of Women's Affairs Section only in July 1951, when its abolition was debated in the House of Commons[50] and *The Times* published several contributions, mostly from British writers who demanded that the decision be reversed. Among the letter-writers were well-known representatives of women's organisations, Members of Parliament, women of such standing in the political life of the country as Irene Ward, Caroline Haslett and Peggy Alexander. The Section consisted at that time of eight officers whose salaries totalled £ 5,600 plus their cost of maintenance in *Deutschmarks*. Three official reasons were given by the Foreign Office to abolish Women's Affairs Section: the need for economy in the use of sterling; the necessary reduction of CCG personnel [51] with the gradual transfer of administrative responsibilities to the Federal German government; and that there was no precedence for having a special official for Women's Affairs at an Embassy, which was what the remaining nucleus of the CCG was to become. [52] The main argument however was that Women's Affairs Section had fulfilled its tasks and that there was no further need for its activity in the British Zone. Marshall wrote in November 1949:

> The task of Women's Affairs Officers was originally based on the policy of stimulating the women of Germany to take an active part in the affairs of the community and to wean them from subordinate position in society (*Kinder, Küche, Kirche*) which they had occupied for so long....Thanks in part to the natural reaction against the Nazi past, but also to the past encouragement and help of our Women's Affairs Officers, an impressive effort is now being made by many prominent German women in different fields to organise and stimulate feminine interest and activity outside the home. They have been greatly helped in this by contacts with the outside world sponsored by our Women's Affairs Section. In spite of the heavy inertia, which had, and still has to be overcome in the mass of German women, the position of women in politics and professions is assured and their interest in community effort outside the home is growing. ...In

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[49] PRO FO1050-1214, Broome, 11.7.1949.

[50] Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons, 11.6.1951 (490)-413-4, Miss Burton asked the Foreign Secretary what the cost per annum, during the past two years, of the Women's Affairs Section was and if, instead of abolishing it completely he would retain a nucleus of these women who were fulfilling a difficult task in Germany. The answer given was that the salaries of Women's Affairs Section amounted in 1949/50 to about £ 7,200 and in 1950/51 to £ 8,100 excluding the cost of typing services, rations, transport and administration. The cut could not be described as purely administrative but as a matter of policy. The size of the Control Commission in Germany was to be reduced by a very great rate. A similar request was made by Irene Ward on 18.6.1951, (489)-33.

[51] Personnel was reduced from 26,000 in 1947 to 3,500 in 1951.

[52] Fawcett Library WF/C11, Consultative Committee on Educational Relationship with Germany, Foreign Office. The future of Women's Affairs Section in Germany, Note by Secretary Mac Lean, 12.8.1951.

> view of the considerations outlined it will in future become increasingly difficult to justify the retention of the Women's Affairs Section. [53]

The opposing party in the debate consisted mainly of prominent British women interested in German matters, British women's organisations, and Women's Affairs Officers themselves. They agreed with the Foreign Office that the work of Women's Affairs Office had been tremendously successful but insisted that it was still needed and wished for by German women for a long time to come. The first letter published in *The Times* on the matter came from a German, Katharina Petersen, who questioned: 'It is true that in your country, as in mine, women are very often equals in theory only, and not in practice?'[54] Lucile Sayers wrote that her impression, shared by other sponsored visitors at varying intervals, was that Women's Affairs had been of the greatest value in building up and steadying the morale of German women, greatly shaken by the war and sorely and continuously assailed by Communist propaganda:

> Where the German woman would hesitate to approach a Ministry of Chancery, she knocks freely on the door labelled Women's Affairs and is deeply appreciative of the friendly counsel there obtained. The influence of the women may prove the decisive factor in the present war of nerves, and at this moment of international tension, to rupture a well-tried relationship would be deplorable, and German women would have cause to feel "let down" should Women's Affairs be withdrawn.' [55]

Such arguments were echoed by several other Visiting Experts. Joy Evans reported in June 1951 to London that German women's organisations, although their lack of co-operation with one another was deplorable, were beginning to unify against the abolition of Women's Affairs and she assumed:

> It may be that with our withdrawal, we accomplish more than by a year's hard work. Various men officials of the Federal Ministries, particular in the ministry of Interior and Foreign Office, have also said that they will present their views to the High Commissioner, on the value of ensuring continuity of the work. Rita and I are just sitting back, and awaiting to see what does emerge. The need for work to be continued, though in a modified way, does appear to be essential.[56]

Women's Affairs Officers tried to convince appropriate levels that their work had not gone far enough, that there still was work to do. Organisations such as the

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[53] PRO FO1050-1230, Internal memorandum, Future of Women's Affairs Section, Deputy Educational Adviser, 7.11.1949.
[54] *The Times*, 22.7.1951.
[55] *The Times*, 26.7.1951.
[56] Bodleian Library, Deneke papers, Box 23, Joy Evans to Helena Deneke, 22.6.1951.

Women's Group on Public Welfare expressed their belief that German women were not established enough to preserve the very limited position they had gained. The abolition of the Women's Affairs Section would have an extremely adverse effect on the women in Germany, and be a great setback in any endeavour to get German men to see the importance of women taking their full responsibility outside the home. Representatives of the WGPW were convinced that though women's affairs might be addressed within some other section if would be difficult to avoid women's needs becoming completely swamped. That had on the whole already happened in Britain, and in Germany it would be inevitable. Finally, there was still a need for the ordinary woman, the housewife and wife of the industrial worker, to visit England, more so than the German woman who was already playing her part in the country's affairs.[57] It is interesting to note that finally new impulses emerged, such as identifying industrial workers as a target group for re-education, as arguments for continuing the section's work. Nevertheless, the Women's Affairs Section was closed in September 1951. Most of the officers had left the country by then. Rita Ostermann seemed to have stayed in Bonn for a couple of years. Bertha Bracey, formerly Women's Affairs Officer in Schleswig-Holstein, and Veronica Williams, Women's Affairs Officer in Hanover, worked as British specialist for Women's Affairs at the High Commission in Frankfurt.

Co-operation between Women's Affairs Section and Visiting Experts

Women's Affairs policy was influenced by British women who travelled as Visiting Experts at the invitation of the Foreign Office to the British Zone. There they met representatives of German women's organisations, politicians, officers of the German administration and members of the Control Commission to form an overall impression of the situation of women in Germany and of some topics in particular. They wrote reports to the Foreign Office and gave recommendations, which were sent for comments to different parties and finally reached the Branches which were concerned with the issue. Some of the 'Visiting Experts' were women prominent in British public life, for example Labour MP Mary Sutherland; Nancy Astor, former Conservative MP, or the independent politician Violet Markham.

The first delegation of British women came at the special invitation of Jeanne Gemmel, who wanted to support the organising of women's associations. Helena

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[57] Bodleian Library, Deneke papers, Box 23, hand-written 'Notes on yesterday's interview', July 1951

Deneke and Betty Norris travelled for six weeks in the British Zone, both as representatives of the Women's Group on Public Welfare. The report of their first tour was printed in 1947 under the title *The women of Germany*.[58] At the time an elderly lady in her sixties, she succeeded in winning the confidence of German women and of Women's Affairs Officers alike. Between 1946 and 1951 Deneke travelled to Germany seven times, normally for a period of several weeks and she had an intimate knowledge of German women's organisations and the leading personalities involved. Other visitors followed partly on invitation of the Foreign Office, partly on their own initiative. Their reports and their policy recommendations caused the tasks of Women's Affairs Section to become increasingly broader and less focussed - up to the point that some Visiting Experts found that willing 'amateurs' were doing the work and suggested that specialists be employed in fields such as women's employment or welfare work.

There are no collated figures for the year 1946/47 but from the correspondence in the Women's Affairs files it can be taken that about eight British women were sponsored by Civic Development Section in this period. Numbers then increased notably. From June 1947 to December 1947, sixteen Visiting Experts were invited to lecture on Social Services,[59] and during the final year 1948/49 eighteen women came from the UK and the Netherlands.[60] From 1949 onwards travelling was much easier for foreigners and a travel permit was no longer necessary. It is likely that the number of visitors increased, but at the same time it is more difficult to get information about the numbers, because not all of the visitors were channelled through Women's Affairs. For 1949/50 the number of Visiting Experts paid for by Women's Affairs was 25 (450

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[58] For Helena Deneke see David Phillips, 'Helena Deneke and the Women of Germany: A Note on Post-War Educational Reconstruction', *German Life and Letters* 53, 1 (2000). She had been the first to register as an actual resident, once it became possible for women to do so in 1918. Deneke was a teacher in German at Lady Margaret Hall in Oxford. She had played a role with suffrage organisations until the end of the First World War, when she gave up being Treasurer of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies. Thereafter she became involved with the work of the Women's Institutes, and she was to continue to be associated with them for the rest of her life. She served at various times as Secretary, Chairman and President of the Oxfordshire Federation of Women's Institutes. Her strong involvement with these groups resulted in her being chosen to play a part in the democratic development of women's organisations in Germany after the War, as a representative of the Women's Group on Public Welfare. According to Phillips, Jeanne Gemmel was her former pupil. Following the closure of the Department for Women's Affairs, Deneke became a member of the Academic Council of Wilton Park and was thus able to continue her active involvement with Anglo-German interchange until Wilton Park was discontinued in 1957/58.

[59] PRO FO945-283, Appendix A 'Women's Affairs in Germany', December 1947.

[60] PRO FO1050-1230, Memorandum Women's Affairs 1948-1949.

altogether were paid by Education Branch).[61] About 30 reports out of about 80 written by Visiting Experts in connection to women's affairs are still preserved in the files of Women's Affairs Section and the German Department of the Foreign Office.[62]

Fares to Germany were paid for by the Foreign Office, but Visiting Experts obtained no fees for their work. [63] That means that only those women could travel to Germany who had the time and money to spend for such an undertaking (unless they came in their function as civil servants, as did for example Miss Boyes, the official of the Ministry of Labour). In order to be fair in the distribution of financial means, Women's Affairs Section tried to categorise Visiting Experts who travelled on Section's money. A balance had to be found between politicians, experts in Social Sciences, specialists in industrial welfare, members of trade unions and Co-operatives, representatives of women's organisations, and independent lecturers. Only female visitors were invited to concern themselves with women's problems in Germany. Their reports were, depending on their personal interests and the duration of their stay in the British Zone (which ranged from three days to seven weeks) of differing quality. It can be said that the time spent was hardly ever enough to get more than a glimpse of the problems, and most Visiting Experts were highly dependent on what they were told by people in the field. Hardly anyone had a deeper knowledge of the situation in Germany either then or earlier.[64] With the exception of Helena Deneke, Betty Norris, Peggy Alexander and a few others none of the Visiting Experts spoke German. Therefore, recommendations tended to conclude that everything should and could be done as in England.

During the early years of occupation, Visiting Experts were a great help for Women's Affairs Officers. They were provided with car and driver, giving Women's Affairs Officers an opportunity to visit outlying local groups of women's organisations. Visiting Experts could thus function as 'liaison' between the local women groups and

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[61] Pilgert and Waschke, Women in West Germany. With Special Reference to the Policies and Programs of the Women's Affairs Branch Office of Public Affairs Office of the U.S. High Commissioner for Germany, p. 47.
[62] A list of Visiting Experts and the purpose of their tours is given in the Appendix of this thesis.
[63] London School of Economics (LSE), Markham 5/231.
[64] Deneke wrote in her memoirs about her first tour: 'I had the vaguest idea at the time of what the Control Commission was that was inviting me and had no notion as to what I should find in starting the prospected visit, the letter that came to me was a personal one from Nancy Tennant. She represented the NFW's on the International Section of the Women's Group on Public Welfare that ... had been asked to recommend 2 women, whom they thought suitable to go. I felt it was impossible to refuse. (...) Betty Norris had lived in Germany as a child, I was known to

Women's Affairs Section and make new contacts and advise groups according their suggestions. The relationship between Visiting Experts and Women's Affairs Officers was often quite delicate because many reports also referred to the work done by the latter. Visiting Experts could state their wishes whom they were prepared to meet in Germany, but the concrete programme was worked out by Women's Affairs Officers who had to provide contacts to local German women. Therefore a critical attitude towards or ignorance of the programme could be offensive to Women's Affairs Officers.

There was not always sufficient information available about the Visiting Expert, the type of audience she wished to talk to, whether she needed an interpreter and what kind of organisation she represented. Visiting Experts too, felt that before going to Germany they and their German audience should be better briefed. Often they had no idea how big the audience would be, interpreters had problems with special terminology, the German audience was not well informed about who the Visiting Expert was and what to expect from her. Women's Affairs Officers and German audience often regretted that there was little time for informal discussion, and welcomed the suggestion that lecturers should stay several days in one place and get to know the members of the groups as individuals. Visiting Experts too, found that it was better to stay in one place for a longer period of time instead of going from one place to another, and that visits should be repeated. Only in this way could conditions under which German women were working really be appreciated. The proposal was made that lecturers should have the possibility of having two days off at the beginning of the tour to be introduced to the situation in Germany. Some lecturers wrote that they would not have wanted to give the same lecture they delivered at the beginning of their tour had they been more familiar with the situation. [65] Information about difficulties of accommodation, transport and local conditions seemed urgent since some visitors (obviously completely unaware of the conditions in Germany) had complained about the lack of towels, soap, bad food, and terrible transport. [66]

Whereas some of the visitors were recognised authorities in their field in the UK and respected by the Women's Affairs Officers the usefulness of others was doubted. After some time it was more difficult for Women's Affairs Officers to see why a visitor from England without any knowledge of the German situation should be more

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have taught German in Oxford. Reasons why we were picked out dawned on us gradually'.
[65] PRO COGA945-283, Report on Women's Affairs of 1947, Women's Affairs in Germany, Mrs Reeve, German Department, 24.12.1947.

competent a judge than the officer herself. Advice given by those visitors was often considered to be useless and looking after those visitors was a burden to the officers. Kathleen Walker expressed the opinion that the most helpful visitors were those specifically asked for by the Branches, not those simply sent by the German Department.[67] Another officer felt that many of the visitors came solely for their own benefit and it was the general opinion that on many occasions such visitors did harm, as they were ignorant of the local conditions and often interfered in the work and principles which Military Government was trying to install. Williams, Women's Affairs Officer in Hanover said, referring to the statement that the British Zone would be open now for visitors:

> The difficulty is that many of these people feel that they would like to address a meeting or group of women when they have really nothing useful to tell them and in spite of their good intentions, they only succeed in destroying any interest German women have by boring them with matters of little importance.[68]

She herself had decided to adopt a policy whereby she would only arrange meetings for those persons who were officially sponsored and who were not coming on their own.

Did Visiting Experts stimulate new policies in regard to women's affairs in Germany? The similarities of the recommendations given by Visiting Experts and the instructions already given by CCG Branches are very striking. It seems that their help was not needed so much to recommend new policy as to help to more effectively carry out policy already formulated by Branches of the British Military Government. Matters became more complicated if this was not the case, as for example with the recommendations made by Caroline Haslett on the status of women within the Control Commission. However, even here CCG found ways to stonewall implementation. Normally the German Education Office in London was much more open to new ideas and to a more 'idealistic' approach than were the members of the CCG dealing with the situation in Germany.

An interesting and prominent example of uninvited involvement in German matters is that of the International Women's League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF). The defined aim of the organisation, to which 15 British organisations were affiliated, was to work for peace amongst nations, races and classes based on justice and goodwill; to secure the full rights of citizenship to women, and to co-operate with women in other

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[66] PRO COGA945-283, Collective Comments on visitors from the UK, Reeve 24.7.1947.
[67] PRO FO1050-1214, Standing Committee on Women's Affairs, NRW 31.8.1948.

countries working for the same needs. From 1945 to 1948, the League showed a keen interest in Germany and its development. The first resolution sent to the Prime Minister demanded an end to the policy of 'non-fraternisation', which was seen as a danger to future reconstruction of peace.[69] The British League included members of the Friends Relief Teams who were active in Germany and therefore had first-hand knowledge of what was going on in the British Zone at a time when other British organisations were not allowed to travel to Germany. The WILPF approached a Member of Parliament in January 1946 to discuss the situation in the British Zone.[70] Following this meeting, a small group of the WILPF under Miss Anderson prepared a memorandum titled *The position of women in Germany* to present to the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Hynd. This paper was signed by figures of high standing, such as Vera Brittain, Mrs Mignon Castle, Lucy Middleton, and Theo Naftel (Secretary of the Co-operative Women's Guilds). The memorandum, dated May 1946, had been circulated among women's organisations and individual women in Britain who were asked to support a proposed deputation to Hynd. A letter was also sent to Magda Hoppstock-Huth who discussed the points with Hamburg members of the organisation. [71]

The memorandum echoed the most urgent claims made by German women at that time concerning the return of prisoners of war and the improvement of food supplies.[72] It further demanded the encouragement of German women in official and unofficial positions of responsibility, the support of women's organisations and their contact with kindred international bodies, and to forbid the employment of women on heavy demolition work for punitive reasons or as means of obtaining higher rations. The WILPF also urged abolishing the ban on marriage between British soldiers and German women. The fact that there was no possibility for soldiers to make provisions for children for whose birth they were responsible was labelled deplorable. To counteract prostitution the memorandum suggested the employment of women police. Finally, it was recommended that it should be possible for German women to visit other countries as soon as the worst technical obstacles of transport had been overcome.

Hynd's office answered that employment of women for punitive reasons did not exist in the British Zone and that, although the food ration was of course extremely low,

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[68] PRO FO1049-1246, Standing Committee on Women's Affairs, NRW, 7.5.1948.
[69] London School of Economics, WIlPF, 2/15,30 Annual Report, March 1945 to February 1946.
[70] In January 1946 Col Rees Williams and in February 1947 Mr Sorensen was approached in the same matter.
[71] Messenger between London and Hamburg was Fenner Brockway, who wrote about this meeting with Hoppstock-Huth in his book. Fenner Brockway, *German Diary* (London, 1946).

it was more varied and greater than the general public believed. Hynd was briefed for the meeting with the WILPF delegation, however it seems that this meeting never took place.[73] It is also not clear to what extent the memorandum might have contributed to the establishment of the Civic Development Section, because the briefing indicates that the German Department found it difficult to give appropriate answers to the questions.

WILPF remained active in the matter. In September 1946 a special sub-committee for Germany was formed with seven members. This sub-committee sent several letters to *The Times* on for example the food situation in Germany in November 1946 and on the problem of requisitioning of houses in the British Zone by British troops. In spring 1947 the WILPF protested against the policy of dismantling in a letter to the Foreign Secretary. [74] A leaflet was produced which informed willing donors of how to send books, newspapers and other materials to Germany. In 1947 three German women were invited to the Autumn School of the WILPF and two further German WILPF members from Hanover were included in a group of visitors to Wilton Park.[75] Pen contacts between British and German members were started in 1947, and in 1948 six German women were guests of the British League.[76]

Representatives of the WILPF who travelled to Germany were a real nuisance to Military Government. Regional Intelligence Hanover warned Women's Affairs in May 1947:

> It may be of interest to you that these 2 women Mrs Duncan Harris and Mrs Phillips have just visited Hamburg, where the latter in particular made a very ill-advised speech, sympathising with all German grievances, criticising the British policy, and by implication CCG personnel, and making rash references to the 'cleft between ourselves and Russia'....Our Hamburg people feel that the visit may have caused some harm here, as it has provided the Hamburg women with an axe to grind on an allegedly 'official' question which they will probably hear for months to come.[77]

The incident made clear to everybody that careful briefing of Visiting Experts was essential, especially since the Cold War had started. In order to avoid similar accidents the policy was changed. The personal qualities of the speaker became a criterion. Women who already proved to be good speakers were invited repeatedly to the British

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[72] PRO COGA938-252, The position of women in Germany, memorandum by WILL, 1.5.1946.
[73] PRO FO938-252, Brief for the Chancellor (for the meeting with representatives of the Women's International League), 1.5.1946.
[74] LSE WILPF 2/17, Annual Report WILPF 1947/1948.
[75] Ibid.
[76] Among these women were for the second time Gräfin Baudissin (Lübeck group), Frau Hoppstock-Huth (Hamburg) and Frau Oschatz (Oberhausen group).
[77] PRO FO1050-1263, Report of the Regional Intelligence Office in Hanover, Mr Platt to Miss Cameron, 20.5.1947.

Zone. As Birley put it: 'I can see no reason why our task should be made more difficult than it is by unintelligent and uninstructed visitors from the United Kingdom.'[78] Visitors were now carefully briefed with the help of a collection of papers and memoranda compiled for this purpose.[79] They were warned that Germany was a battlefield of ideologies, and that it was difficult for the visitor from the UK with pre-conceived ideas of government and politics to realise the full political significance behind what was seemingly innocent meetings.[80]

To avoid pitfalls Evans warned visitors that there was no point in comparing the food situation and the fuel crisis at home with the economic crisis in the British Zone. The two situations had so little in common that comparison often seemed ludicrous to a German audience especially one composed of German women.[81] This comment hinted that anybody who stayed in the Zone for a longer period of time could see that the economic situation was not comparable even if Britain had had to keep food rationing after the war. Evans at least was not convinced that German housewives could learn from British housewives how to manage the crisis on the basis of their individual households. Evan's advice stands in remarkable contrast though to other papers contained in the 'briefing package' such as: 'Lectures should emphasise the world-wide aspect of want and scarcity. They should go further than this, however, and in view of the widespread tendency for the Germans to be steeped in self-pity and to refuse to see anything but their own problems, and also to see their continuity with past history.'[82] Whatever the subject of the talk, according to the same instruction, lecturers had to be prepared to receive tricky questions on a wide variety of subjects, some of them 'extremely difficult to answer' such as: Why are our prisoners of war not sent back? Do the English know and care at all about the atrocities committed on Germans? Why is butter being exported when our children are starving? Why is Germany deforested? How can we believe in democracy when we see what two years of democratic

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[78] PRO FO1050-1210, Visit by speakers to the British Zone, 5.7.1947.
[79] LSE Markham papers 2 27/33, The collection contained reports recently written by other Visiting Experts, a German booklet '*Frauenüberschuß und Erwerbsarbeit*' by Irmgard Enderle, a bulletin on 'German Educational Reconstruction' from September 1947, a memorandum written by Education Branch titled 'Brief for Official Visitors to Germany' which provided information on all fields of education including Women's Affairs.
[80] LSE Markham papers, 2 27/33, Memorandum 'Brief for Official Visitors to Germany', Part one, women's organisations.
[81] PRO FO1050-1263, Comments on recent visitors from the UK to the British Zone, by Evans, 3.7.1947.
[82] LSE, Markham papers 2/27/33, Paper 'Lecturers leaving Britain', by Williams, 1.7.1947.

government have done? It was surprising, the paper stated, the number of Germans who were unaware that no food was being exported from the British Zone. A few British people had attempted to give information which was outside their scope. Although the speakers naturally gave their own opinion, German audiences tended to look on someone from England as representing the official view. Therefore visitors were warned to take care to avoid raising any hope which could not be fulfilled, or giving any information if one was not certain of it. It was better to state that one cannot answer the question.

Especially in the end of British occupation, Women's Affairs criticism was not only directed towards Visiting Experts who had nothing (or the 'wrong' things) to contribute but also towards CCG and Foreign Office who did not act upon useful recommendations. Broome commented in 1950:

> What we need is support from visitors for our claims, and action on the part of the Educational Adviser and the Foreign Office or whoever the appropriate officer and office, not lengthy reports describing what we already know. What is the use of British women coming out to a Land one after another for short periods ranging from three days to three weeks ... writing reports on their return saying what is more than clearly known to us here and moreover what was expressed four years ago by Miss Deneke and Miss Norris in their report....on which little action was taken, emphasising..., the need for staff on the ground, and urging that certain practical steps be taken to deal with the problems and then their being told by the Foreign Office, when they submit their reports, that difficulties, including the attitude of the Educational Adviser, will not permit of any change of habit? In my view it is a wicked waste of such small amount of money as we have at our disposal and a misuse of precious time and valuable energy.[83]

Influence of Pressure groups in England on Women's Affairs policy in Germany

In January 1948 British women made an attempt to agree on a policy line and to put pressure on the Foreign Office and the top levels of CCG. Visiting Experts and women interested in the German question joined forces and established a club in London. Originally there had been two clubs, one called 'Visitors Club' around Violet Markham,[84] and a club of 'German Women's Friends' around Nancy Astor.[85] The members of the

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[83] PRO FO1013-2234, Broome's comment on Alexander report, 11.7.1950, The criticised Educational Adviser is Thomas Marshall.

[84] Violet Markham (1872-1959) was a member of the Liberal Party since 1914 and was for many years chairman of the Central Committee on Women's Training and Employment which in its first twenty years trained nearly 100,000 women, principally for domestic service. In 1919 she was appointed a member of the Industrial Court and she was an early member of the Lord

former soon joined the latter to avoid overlapping of work. Markham's Club met only once but the 'German Women's Friends' club saw four meetings between January and June 1948. The list of ladies associated to Nancy Astor's Club read like the 'Who's Who' of the organised women's world in London: Mrs Patrick Ness (Treasurer, International Council of Women), Mrs Cusden (former Mayor of Reading and member of the WILPF), Mrs Mitchiner (WILPF), Mrs Bell (Chichester, wife of the bishop), Dame Dorothy Brock, Mrs Paterson (Secretary of German Section of Christian Reconstruction in Europe), Miss Grutter (Homerton College Cambridge), Mrs G. Williams (Bedford College, Regent's Park), Mrs Corbett Ashby, Miss Liddell, Miss Rees (Institute of Almoners, Tavistock House), Lady Doris Blacker, Miss K.D. Courtney, Miss Cowan (ex-President National Council of Women), Miss Homer (Women's Group on Public Welfare), Mrs Walter Elliott, Mrs James Carruthers (alias Violet Markham), Miss White (Chairman of the Guild of Catholic Professional Workers), Caroline Haslett, Miss Dawson (The Birmingham Settlement), Lady Grant MP, Miss C.S. Ganley MP, Miss Rowntree, Miss Pamela Hinkson (journalist), the prominent Labour politician Margaret Bondfield, Miss Deakin (journalist of The Times), Miss Alison Settle (journalist of The Observer). [86]

Despite the impressive list of important participants - the results of the meetings were rather minimal. They included a promise to support Exchange Programmes with German women and to write articles on outstanding British women for a proposed women's periodical in the British Zone. Ostermann and Evans exchanged their ideas with the 'German Women's Friends' while they were in England. Meetings at Lady Astor's house with prominent British ladies led to a number of very interesting and important observations and recommendations, for example that too little publicity was given to the appalling conditions in Germany and to the work of the women in the British Control Commission there. The position of women in the Control Commission did not help to show Germans how men and women could work together in equality because they were themselves in 'lower grade' posts or worked in subsidiary capacity. The Club backed Evans' suggestion that it would be a good thing if 'expert' women

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Chancellor's Advisory Committee for women justice. In 1934 she joined the new Assistance Board of which she was deputy chairman in 1937-1946. In 1945 she turned her mind to post-war organisation of private domestic employment. Markham was opposed to female suffrage, although she never ceased to declare that women should take part in local government and herself sat on the committees of many bodies.

[85] For information about Astor see Pugh, 'Domesticity and the Decline of Feminism 1930-1950', p. 244.

[86] Reading University Library MS 1416/112/254 (1948), Notes taken at Meeting Wednesday 7

holding posts of high responsibility would go to Germany for about three months and work independently of the Control Commission. (This, however, never happened.) Finally, it was demanded that the Control Commission should give more priority to the requests for premises to be obtained by the German women to hold meetings. It was agreed that these suggestions should be put forward by the German Women's Friends Club to Lord Pakenham. But in February 1948 it was thought wiser to postpone the deputation because so many different groups were approaching him at the same time. There is no indication that a meeting ever took place and of how these suggestions were treated. However, nothing similar ever became ever part of CCG policy.

Although Violet Markham's club only held one meeting this did result in a letter to Pakenham summarising the main demands concerning German women on which the ladies of the club had agreed. The idea for this meeting came from Mrs Bell, wife of the Bishop of Chichester who had just returned from a tour with a churchwomen's delegation from Germany. The meeting took place on 14 January 1948 in Dame Caroline Haslett's office and included Haslett, Lady Eldon (representative of the Catholic Church), Lady Doris Blacker, Miss Nancy Adams, Mrs Walter Elliott, Mrs Margaret Bondfield and Mrs Bell.[87] Despite the fact that various members of this group - they all had been in Germany - had individual opinions on various topics they nevertheless agreed upon a common policy. Some of the ladies had private contact to Pakenham and to Members of Parliament. In any case, the Foreign Office felt it necessary to find and give an informed answer, albeit one which was finally received nearly a year after the original letter. This answer from the Foreign Secretary's Office tried to convince the Club that all its demands had been met.

The most important demand made by the Markham Club was the appointment of a senior qualified woman in each of the three Branches of CCG, Manpower, Religious Affairs and Civic Development Section. It seemed obvious, Markham stated in her letter to Pakenham, that a separate powerless Women's Section could achieve nothing. Women's Affairs Officers should be placed where the decisions were made, that is within the Branches themselves. Furthermore, the letter suggested that some effort should be made to start experimental vocational training schemes for women, as an example which Germans could subsequently develop for themselves. With this the Club supported recommendations which had been originally made by Caroline Haslett at her

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January 1948.

[87] LSE Markham papers, MS 1416/112/254 (1948), Notes of a meeting held at 35 Grosvenor Place, Wednesday 14 th Jan 1948, to discuss problems connected with Women in Germany and

tour in summer 1947.[88] It was clear to her that in order to implement the new and important experiment with industrial training for women she had proposed, it was essential to appoint a competent officer whose training and experience would enable her to deal authoritatively with women's industrial affairs. The main task of Women's Affairs Section then would be social and civic work. Finally, the Visitors Club saw an urgent need for better co-ordination in the matter of visits of German women to England in order to avoid duplication and overlapping.

To the German Department of the Foreign Office these recommendations were worth some consideration. But they met with vehement resistance by the Manpower Adviser, Luce, and finally also by General Robertson. Needless to say, Manpower and Religious Affairs Branch never employed a high-ranking woman. In summer 1948, when Caroline Haslett was on her second tour in Germany, she suggested that there should be 'a women adviser for Women's Affairs to the Military Governor' just as there was a Manpower, a Political and an Educational Adviser. This woman should be of special qualifications and qualities and she should be appointed in a position which would give her the status and power to influence both the Control Commission and the German authorities. According to Margaret Lambert this point was even made by German women:

> What they asked for was for a leading British woman (a 'Lady Lord' as one of them put it) to come out to Germany as a sort of Women's Adviser, something parallel to the office in education filled by Mr Birley, as far as I could gather. They felt that if they could have constant access to and advice from a woman of the same sort of experience and standing as Mr Birley has in the educational world, they could get things going themselves. There seemed also to be a psychological consideration: the German women felt that such an appointment would give them all a new status vis-à-vis the German male officials, and they would than be able to talk to the Burgomaster and his like on something more like equal terms. In fact they wanted to be put on the map by this appointment.
>
> It was pointed out to me (I do not know with what justification) that there are few if any women occupying really senior posts on the Control Commission, and that bad willing Germans drew the conclusion from this that although the British might preach a greater participating by women in public affairs, they did not in fact practise it.[89]

This argument, that the British gave a bad role model in not employing at least one woman in a higher position in CCG, was used on both the German and British

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MS 5/26 Letter Mrs Bell to Markham, 13 Dec 1947.

[88] Those will be dealt with in chapter 7.

[89] PRO FO1050-1229, Notes on my visit to Germany, 23 August to 9 September 1948, by Margarte Lambert.

sides. Women worked in all Branches of CCG though not in higher positions. It was evidently commonly accepted that women were best suited for the women's side of the work in each Branch. Even the connection between Education Branch and German Department of the Foreign Office was maintained by a woman, Mrs Reeve. Haslett thought that the Women's Affairs Adviser would not even need an office of her own but could in fact co-ordinate the work of all female members of the CCG. In this way additional costs for personnel could be saved in times when money was scarce and CCG personnel were reduced. Iley, a member of the German Department, supported this idea but considered at the same time that:

> whilst the right woman would be valuable, the wrong one might do a great deal of harm and would certainly be a great nuisance. We want someone, not necessarily of outstanding reputation, but who possesses not only wide knowledge of affairs (preferable, but not, I think, including industrial affairs), who has the personality, the drive and the imagination to influence people powerfully both individually and in the mass, and at the same time to treat delicately where there must be many unavoidable toes.[90]

The German Department accepted Haslett's proposal because it seemed to entail little alternation to the present organisation. What was wanted was not a new organisation or alignment but someone who gave greater ambition, coherence, direction and vigour to the present policy and organisation. Her function would be purely advisory, and the administrative work would continue to be the responsibility of the interested Division or Branch. At the same time it would be essential for her 'to have the right approach to any level of the Commission' and in her contacts with German organisations, whilst she would advance her main object 'on the understanding that she took care to see that her action was in the line with the policy of the Commission'.[91]

This was now rejected by Birley and by the Manpower Adviser Luce on the grounds that it was not clear what this Woman Adviser would have to do. The one thing, Birley wrote to the Political Adviser Steel, in favour of that suggestion was that since the headquarters of the Divisions moved from Berlin to the Zone in 1948, it was no longer possible to have a Standing Committee on Women's Affairs for co-ordination between the Branches.[92] In these circumstances it would not be bad to have one person to do the co-ordination who could move around and visit the various Divisions concerned. Otherwise, he thought there 'was a danger that the proposed adviser would

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[90] FO1049-1249, Iley to Birley, 11.1.1949.
[91] Ibid.

confuse rather than co-ordinate and produce agreed policy', mainly because the post was of 'an indefinite nature'. To the Foreign Office Birley explained that he did not believe that the most 'high-powered' lady from England would be able to do much of use. For this she would need to have experience and understanding of the German problem and very close contact with Germans. There was, perhaps, no part of the work which depended more completely on intimate personal contact than that which deals with women's organisations and with the place of women in German society in general. Birley added that he could not believe that anyone could be found as well-suited for this as Miss Ostermann.[93]

Luce, the Manpower Adviser, rejected the proposal very openly giving quite similar reasons:

> On the general question of appointing an Adviser on Women's Affairs, I am not in favour of creating a special post for this purpose. It is difficult to see what the holder would have to do. She would have no direct responsibility, and could only act through functional officers, and I feel she would be merely an extra cog in the machine without adding to its efficiency. [94]

As an alternative Luce suggested that a high-powered woman should come out to Germany for visits from the UK to sum up the position of women's training and employment. Finally, Luce did not regard this question as being one of great urgency. With unemployment exceeding the million mark, there were no outstanding opportunities for women to enter industry. The argumentation of Religious Division was quite similar. The feeling was that it was not advisable to interfere with the structure of this branch by including a woman into its higher ranks.

Markham received in December 1948 (nearly one year after she sent her letter to the Foreign Office) a reply which informed her that CCG did not think it desirable to cut across the 'denominational layout of the work of Religious Affairs Branch by appointing a senior woman officer'.[95] As far as women in industry were concerned, arrangements were made in summer 1948 for a survey to be carried out by Miss Boyes of the Ministry of Labour on women's employment in the British Zone. The Military Government had raised the status of Women's Affairs Section, which now formed a separate section of the office of the Educational Adviser and was directly responsible to

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[92] PRO FO1049-1844, Birley to Steel, re Dame Haslett's report, 22.1.1949.
[93] PRO FO1049-1844, Birley to Iley, FO, re Dame Haslett's report, 26.1.1949.
[94] PRO FO1030-94, Comments on Dame Caroline Haslett's report, 25.3.1949.
[95] LSE, Markham papers, MS 5/23 Letter by Lord Henderson to Violet Markham, December 1948.

Birley. This re-organisation, Henderson claimed[96], had enabled Women's Affairs to give more attention to problems of social welfare:

> You will see from this letter that as a result of the interest shown by yourself and the ladies associated with you, the various problems of affecting Women's Affairs have been brought sharply to notice and, within limits imposed by present-day conditions in Germany, we have been able to do a great deal in the way you suggested.[97]

The rise of status of Women's Affairs Section, however, was due more to the Cold War and the developments in the Russian zone than in reaction to Violet Markham's letter. Pressure groups in London had been able to point out certain problems with the organisation of British Military Government, but they had no real influence as the example of the suggested appointment of a Women's Affairs Adviser illustrates and they also showed no attempt to pursue the matter any further.

It is noticeable that the common reason given for the rejection of this proposal was that it was not clear what a Women's Affairs Adviser would have to do. It seems that it was dubious to everybody in the CCG, even to the Women's Affairs Officers themselves, what kind of function she could have besides the co-ordination of women's affairs between the Branches 'in the line with the policy of the Commission'. Broome, for example, thought about Dame Haslett's proposal that 'while the presence at H.Q. Berlin of a woman with wide experience of industrial and business administration' might be useful, overmuch emphasis on industrial matters would merely result in an imbalance in another direction. What in her eyes was needed was 'a woman of the calibre Dame Caroline Haslett had in mind, who has not only industrial knowledge, but also understanding of all other subjects which are engaging the attention of Women's Affairs'.[98] On the other hand she sharply disagreed with the suggestion that Women's Affairs Officers should have their own range of activities severely curtailed by the removal of all interests in the industrial sphere and focus only on welfare work and civic education.

Finally, in April 1949, General Robertson decided - much in the same thinking of the Manpower Adviser - that he had no grounds for dissatisfaction with what was

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[96] Lord Henderson replaced Lord Pakenham on 31 May 1948. Pakenham had resigned from his ministerial position after one year. Henderson's rank was that of Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State.
[97] Reusch, 'Die Londoner Institutionen der britischen Deutschlandpolitik. Eine behördengeschichtliche Untersuchung'.
[98] PRO FO1013-2226, Comment on Dame Haslett's report, 28.1.1949.

being done: 'while we may usefully widen our horizon, we shall gain nothing from the appointment of a new official with grandiose but vague terms of reference'.[99] Women's Affairs Section remained a small, powerless Section with its headquarters connected to Education Branch and later to the Office of the Educational Adviser, mainly occupied with the education of German women towards citizenship. It was separated from other Branches and was not in a position to exert any influence on the decisions made in other Branches with concern to women. The major role of the Section was to give advice and suggestions to German women's organisations as well as to interested Branches of the Control Commission. Whether these recommendations were followed up was another matter. The method of approach which had been laid down in the policy paper *Objectives and methods of approach of the Civic Development Section* and which suggested close co-operation with Health and Welfare, Political, Manpower and Public Relations Division worked only to a certain extent. It strongly depended on how interested women officers within these Branches were in co-operating with Women's Affairs. The administrative and informative 'networking' within the Control Commission was mainly done by women officers employed in different Branches and in the German Department of the Foreign Office. Political decisions, however, were made by male officers in those Branches.

Women's Affairs Section had no influence on and no means to help change the conditions in which German women and women's organisations had to work and live. There were, however, examples of successful co-operation between Women's Affairs Officers in the Regions and *Kreis* Resident Officers (Local Government Branch). In general the work of Women's Affairs was focussed on two areas: the civic education of women by means of lectures, courses and Exchange Programmes; and the encouragement of certain women's organisations. The following chapters will explore how this work was conducted and how it was perceived by German women.

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[99] PRO FO1030-94, General Robertson to Mallet, German Department, 1.4.1949.

4. Women's Affairs Section and the fight against Communism

The attitude of Women's Affairs Section towards activities of German women

Despite all British concerns about the apathy of German women, in many of the larger German cities women's committees had been established, partly by the municipal authorities, partly by women themselves. These associations were called *Frauenring*, *Frauenklub*, *Frauenbund* or *Frauenausschuss*. Women's committees stimulated women to contribute to the 'common good' in the community. They counted world peace and international understanding among their objectives, but immediately following the war the main focus of their work was on the improvement of living conditions on a local basis. However, in many towns the activities of women's committees were a rather disturbing factor in that they generated an endless series of appeals, protests and demonstrations concerning food and housing problems. Women's Affairs raised two major problems with Women's committees: they did not qualify as democratic associations, because their statutes did not resemble the British Standing Conference of Women's Organisations (some had no statutes at all) and they were thus vulnerable to Communist infiltration.

One of the most active women's committees in the British Zone was the *Frauenausschuss* in the town of Aachen which since 1946 was supported by Quaker Relief.[1] The main committee of the *Frauenausschuss* was composed of 25 women. As in most *Frauenausschüsse*, representatives came from various sections of the community, e.g. the *Schulamt* (school authority), *Wirtschaftsamt* (economic administration), wholesalers and charitable organisations, from all political parties and the Catholic and Protestant churches. Sub-committees for special tasks had been set up which took part in the fortnightly meetings of the Executive Committee. The Sub-committees function was twofold: they represented the *Frauenausschuss* on all communal committees of the *Kreis* and *Regierungsbezirk* dealing with relevant subjects

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[1] For history of the *Frauenausschüsse* in Berlin see Renate Genth and Ingrid Schmidt-Harzbach, 'Die Frauenausschüsse: Das halb gewollte, halb verordnete Netz', *Frauenpolitik und politisches Wirken von Frauen in Berlin der Nachkriegszeit 1945-1949* (Berlin, 1996).; for *Frauenausschuss* in Bonn see Susanne Fuchs, *Frauen bewältigen den Neuaufbau. Eine lokalgeschichtliche Analyse der unmittelbaren Nachkriegszeit am Beispiel Bonn* (Pfaffenweiler, 1993). The activities of the *Frauenausschuss* Aachen until 1947 are well documented in the papers of Friends Relief Service Aachen (Quaker).

and they furnished written and verbal reports to the appropriate authorities, both German and British.

The main concern after the war was food, since many people in larger cities lived at starvation levels. The minutes of the 1946 November meeting state that thanks to the Aachen Committee and their policing of market gardens in the surroundings the vegetable supplies have become large enough for free sale in Aachen shops. The *Landwirtschaftsamt* (agricultural administration) issued *Hofkarten*, farmers' records cards, which the *Frauenausschuss* had advocated and put the distribution and collection of these products under the control of a municipal committee on which all women were represented. The Food Committee of the Aachen *Frauenausschuss* together with the municipal Medical Officer prepared a petition to Military Government about the food position in the area and called all women of Aachen together with their children to attend a public meeting in the matter and to accompany their delegates to the Military Government. This might indicate that the activities of the *Frauenausschuss* were not always to the liking of German and British administration.

The *Frauenausschuss* also addressed the problem of vagabond youths, an especially urgent issue for Aachen, where there was an average of 3,000 to 4,000 homeless boys and girls. The *Ausschuss* had secured, with the help of Quaker Relief, a large building with about 20 acres of land, which they hoped to turn into a young people's home. Other activities of the Aachen women included: the search for missing relatives of returned prisoners of war; distributing clogs to children in schools; a project for a short training in home nursing for girls. An office for a women's advice bureau had been already supplied by the city in 1947, where a volunteer member was available for information and help in all kinds of subjects. The *Frauenausschuss* also co-operated well with the town on other occasions. In July 1947 a campaign to encourage women and schoolgirls to help to clear the streets of rubble had been sponsored by the three leading representatives of the *Frauenausschuss* and appears to have met with fairly good response.[2] Volunteers did a morning's work under the Director of the *Stadtgarten* and received a free mid-day meal provided by the city. Improvements in various fields had chiefly been obtained by a deputation visiting the Military Government and German authorities and putting the facts of the cases before the officials concerned with possible suggestions. Once a month a general meeting was held at the Aachen *Pädagogische*

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[2] London, Friends House, papers of Friends Relief Aachen.

Akademie to which all townswomen were invited and usually some 200 attended. General meetings began with a report on the progress that had been made with regard to matters under investigation. There was then a talk on a topic of interest at the moment, e.g. health, use of rations, medical service etc. At all Working Committee Meetings special committees were elected to deal with the problems of the day, for instance Bread Committee, Housing, or School feeding Committees. Permanent committees had been formed to deal with Wandering Youth, D.P.Camps, Education and Culture etc. The *Frauenausschuss* office was open for inquiries every afternoon.

Women's committees had been formed in other towns of the *Regierungsbezirk* following the Aachen model. It is not known how many women's committees existed in Germany after the Second World War.[3] The number is thought to have been highest immediately after the war. In nearly every large city in all regions of Germany women's committees had been established. With the return of party politics and the creation of the German *Länder* in 1947, however, many women's committees disappeared from the local scene. In 1947 the most urgent difficulties had been overcome, voluntary social work had been again institutionalised and political structures had been re-established. The voluntary work done by *Frauenausschüsse* was taken over step-by-step by male officials and traditional administrations. Many women who had been active in *Frauenausschüsse* concentrated their activities and careers more in the political parties, trade unions and administration.

A list from April 1948 with information collected by *Kreis* Resident Officers about existing *Frauenausschüsse* in North Rhine-Westphalia named only 18 in larger cities and towns.[4] Another list, compiled to suggest German women's organisations for adoption by British women's organisations in 1948, listed one *Frauenausschuss* for Schleswig-Holstein, one for Hamburg, one for Lower Saxony and 24 for North Rhine-Westphalia.[5] This list did not include necessarily women's committees with individual membership which called themselves *Frauenringe*. In 1951 there were still seven *Frauenausschüsse* working in NRW.[6]

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[3] Barbara Böttger, *Das Recht auf Gleichheit und Differenz. Elisabeth Selbert und der Kampf der Frauen um Art 3.II Grundgesetz* (Münster, 1990), p. 107, assumed there were thousands of Women's Committees (about 7500 in the Eastern Zone alone).
[4] PRO FO1013-709, Appendix for Information on Women's Affairs by Youard, April 1948.
[5] PRO FO1013-2230, Memorandum by Mrs Reeves, Scheme for Adoption of German women's voluntary organisations by similar organisations in the UK, September 1948.
[6] PRO FO1013-2234, Report of a visit paid to *Frauenausschüsse* in NRW, by Mrs Sharp, February 1951.

Why did British Military Government not acknowledge the work done by *Frauenausschüsse* such as in Aachen? The first Visiting Expert who pointed out the British problem with German *Frauenausschüsse* in summer 1946 was Helena Deneke. She did this largely under the impression of the events in Berlin, where she had noted that *Frauenausschüsse* were created and widely supported by the Russian Military Government, that had ordered the formation of *Frauenausschüsse* in addition to the formation of committees for food, youth, and returnees. *Frauenausschüsse* existed in all towns of the Russian Zone, membership was free, accommodation and a paid secretary were provided by the local administration.[7] In Berlin *Frauenausschüsse* were subordinated to the *Magistrat* and the municipal administration. But also in the British Zone there were *Frauenausschüsse* which had been appointed at the instance of a leading woman or a group of women or formed by the mayor. In these cases, Deneke thought, they were too closely linked to the civic authority.

There was no agreed way of forming a *Frauenausschuss*. In some places, *Ausschüsse* included representatives of political parties only, in others, they had a wider basis and included religious and welfare groups. They all claimed to be non-party, but to Deneke it seemed that they intended to rearrange the proportion of party members in accordance with the result of the elections, thereby turning *Frauenausschüsse* into executors of civic policy. The idea behind the formation of a *Frauenausschuss* was in Deneke's eyes to give an advisory voice in local affairs by making it possible for representatives of women's organisations to meet for consultation and discussion on important matters, just as did the Standing Committees of Women's Organisations in Britain. But wherever the *Ausschuss* had been nominated by the mayor, where it had been provided with offices and a paid secretary by the civic authorities and wherever the number of representatives of a political party was governed by the strength of this party in the town councils (as happened in Berlin) it lost independence and democratic character and became nothing more than the long arm of the civic authority.

Deneke advised, therefore, that a draft constitution on the lines of the Standing Conference of Women's Organisations in Great Britain should be circulated for general information to those Military Government officers who may have to deal with women's committees. First of all the independence of the *Frauenausschuss* from the local administration (and from any influence by a political party) had to be secured and also a

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[7] See also PRO FO1045-283, Dissolution of the Women's Committees in Berlin, April 1947,

representation of women's organisations on equal numbers at the *Frauenausschuss* irrespective of the size of their membership or their success in local elections. Every organisation should have the right to apply for membership at the Standing Conference, where they could get together and then take the various proposals and suggestions back to their organisations. These suggestions could be sent to the mayor or proper authority bearing the signature of these organisations who wished to support them.[8] It was important, Deneke emphasised, that every organisation which participated in the *Frauenausschuss* secured its absolute independence in all decisions made, especially since women with Communist and left-wing tendencies were especially active in *Frauenausschüsse* everywhere.

This last idea turned soon out to be the key point in regard to *Frauenausschüsse*. The British were well aware of the fact that in some of the more important *Frauenausschüsse* in their Zone such as in Aachen, Hamburg (which had 2000 members organised in 28 groups in March 1947)[9] or in Essen the leading personalities were Communists. The constitution as suggested by Deneke was to prevent *Frauenausschüsse* being entirely dominated by Communist influence and that Communists could claim that the whole *Frauenausschuss* represented their ideas.

While still in Germany, Deneke had the opportunity to discuss her ideas with representatives of German women's organisations and with Education Control Officers. She attended two meetings of the Committee on German Women's Education in Bünde.[10] The Committee agreed to send a letter of recommendations for the forming of *Frauenausschüsse* on the above lines to responsible CCG officers. Herta Gotthelf [11], the

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Extract from Monthly Report Berlin.

[8] PRO FO1013-607, Evans report on her duty to the UK, 17.4.1947; Evans had discussions with Miss Robertson, Secretary of the Women's Group on Public Welfare and Mrs Graham, the Honorary Secretary of the Standing Conference in Luton. She explained that normally a general meeting of all delegates from the local organisation represented in the Standing Conference held a meeting once a year. The Executive Committee of perhaps 10 or 12 members was elected at that meeting with the power to co-opt for sub-committee work interested persons with special qualifications. The Standing Conference held meetings every two months, prominent speakers were invited and attended these meetings, lecturing to delegates who then conveyed their views to their own organisations.

[9] PRO FO1013-606, Extract from Monthly report on Women's organisations in Hamburg, by Lee, March 1947.

[10] PRO FO1050-1210, Supplementary detailed minutes of Conference of Committee on German Women's Education held at the *Konsumverein Bünde*, September 20th 1946.

[11] Christl Wickert, *Zwischen Familie und Parlament. Sozialdemokratische Frauenarbeit in Südniedersachsen 1919-1950* (Kassel, 1983).: Herta Gotthelf was in the 1920s secretary of Marie Juchaz for the SPD women's movment. In 1934 she emigrated to England. She participated in the 1. Party Conference in Hanover 1946 on invitation by Schumacher as foreign guest. She took over the Women's Bureau of the SPD Headquarters on 17th July 1946. (From

leader of the women's section of the Social Democratic Party, who was present, pointed out that it was no good education in democracy if instructions were issued for things to be done in a certain manner. She thought it important to suggest to the inaugurators only that every organisation should have a fixed number of members and that a proper outline be given to form these organisations. Any suggestions should, however, be given in such a way that it was plainly understood that they were not orders but merely recommendations. And Madga Kelber (Friends Relief) said she hoped that these recommendations were not going out in written form but only through discussions in conferences and meetings. The chairman of the meeting made it clear that everything would be done to advise indirectly. It seems, however, that *Frauenausschüsse* were not keen on framing constitutions on the proposed lines.[12] At least when the question was debated in Aachen *Frauenausschuss* in January 1948 it met with considerable opposition. The chief reason was the deep-rooted distrust on the part of several older women, mostly with CDU leanings, of anything which resembled a formal organisation.

From spring 1947 onwards, anti-Communism became more obviously the attitude of Women's Affairs Section under the influence of the dissolution of the *Frauenausschüsse* in Berlin and the creation of the *Demokratischer Frauenbund* in the Russian Zone. Women's Affairs now saw a danger in the fact that *Frauenausschüsse* restricted their activities mostly to welfare work.[13] It was argued that in doing purely welfare work they could be used for any other ideological purpose as happened with women's committees in Berlin:

> The organisation of women began in 1945, when Marshal Zhukov 'permitted' the setting up of Anti-Fascist Women's Committees within the municipal administration, for the purpose of 'organising the education of women in the political and cultural spheres on a democratic anti-fascist basis, assisting

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Jahrbuch der SPD 1946, p. 30).

[12] London, Friends House, FRS/1992/Box 71. According to the Monthly report of Friends Relief Aachen for January 1948 they inclined to prefer the 'rather vague hit and miss manner which they have worked in the past, as to an organised programme on a reliable financial basis which would lay a minority open to the risk of being overruled by any issue. This means that if a constitution is adopted a number of CDU members may secede, which would be a serious loss to the *Frauenausschuss* and make its membership lopsided from a political point of view.

[13] PRO FO1013-232, Walker to *Landkreise* in NRW, 19.3.1947. PRO FO1013-2234, Interview with members of the Women's Committee at Essen by Kathleen Walker, March 1947. Women's Affairs refused to forward an appeal by the Essen *Frauenausschuss* to the 'Women of the World' for help with the food situation in the Ruhr area on the grounds that 'it failed to place the miseries of the German women in their proper perspective with regard to those in other countries'. The Essen *Frauenausschuss* was informed by Walker that 'an appeal which was to be successful must look at Germany's difficulties against the background of the world difficulties thereby keeping the right perspective'. The criticism was purely rhetorical since similar appeals by groups of *Frauenringe*, for example, were not met with a lesson in being considerate to others.

> German women to take part in public life and Germany's democratic transformation, and assisting mothers to educate their children in a democratic spirit'. These general aims developed in such practical tasks as carrying checks on milking, helping with the harvest, running children's hostels, sewing centres, and laundries. Participation in politics was encouraged by the SMA, and a total of 12,000 candidates was appointed by the Women's Committee for the Soviet zone communal elections in the autumn of 1946.[14]

Women's Affairs carefully distinguished between women's committees with individual membership that followed a democratic constitution and called themselves *Frauenringe*; working committees that followed the constitution of Standing Conferences; and committees without a constitution which were named *Frauenausschüsse*. Women's Affairs Section made an effort to get the *Frauenausschüsse* transformed into *Frauenringe* and in this way to give them a constitution to combat Communist infiltration. In September 1947 Political Division of CCG laid down a policy line following the recommendations made by Deneke after her lecture tour to *Frauenausschüsse* in the Rhineland and Ruhr in summer 1947.[15] At each meeting Deneke went into the constitution and composition of *Frauenausschüsse* to make them aware that they were constructed to represent different confessions and parties, emphasising that it was not very important as long as purely practical work was undertaken, but it would become more important when general questions were involved. Difficulties were also likely to arise when an *Ausschuss* thought of extending itself and so became unbalanced. The ordinary member might not be very interested in questions of organisation but these would become more interesting to her when she realised what a confused organisation can lead to. The background for this tour was to win some of these groups over to join the *Frauenring der Britischen Zone* which was founded some weeks earlier and which found the support of Military Government.

The following policy towards *Frauenausschüsse* was suggested to CCG officers:[16] Firstly, they should keep to their basis of membership, i.e. by representation of organisation, confessional, political or otherwise and this should be carried through logically in their constitution. The main work of *Frauenausschüsse* was to remain practical and consultative. Proposals to make a union of *Frauenausschüsse* were to be

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[14] PRO FO1049-1246, Women's Organisations in the Soviet, British and US Zone, Report by Research Department FO, March 1948.
[15] PRO FO1050-1207, Work on Women's Organisations in Germany, 20 June to 19 July 1947, Confidential report by Helena Deneke.
[16] PRO FO1050-1211, Basis Memorandum on policy with regard to women's organisations,

examined very critically and treated with caution. When *Frauenausschüsse* wished to increase their membership the inadvisability (and unfairness) of over-riding constituent organisations was to be explained and the alternative of starting '*Frauenringe*' be suggested; i.e. individual membership and no representative membership.

Some of the *Frauenausschüsse* were supported by International or British Relief Teams such as the Red Cross and Friends Relief.[17] Members of the Relief Teams acquainted themselves with the local welfare service, which Military Government had asked them to 're-activate'. They found that welfare officers and charitable organisations were already active and functioning, but desperately handicapped by shortage of material. To support the German welfare agencies they provided supplies. According to their religious principles, Friends Relief was also concerned with reconciliation and mutual co-operation between the different agents in the welfare sector: 'When the local charitable bodies - the Catholic with the Evangelical, the Socialist with the Communist inspired "Community Aid" and the municipal Welfare Department along with the rest, could be brought into harmonious and fruitful co-operation, then the relief work did indeed leave a legacy that went further than bodily nourishment.'[18] This serves as a reminder that others as well as the CCG identified co-operation between different political and religious forces in Germany as most important in order to cope with reconstruction. Whether members of the Relief Teams concerned themselves with women's affairs was a matter of chance and personal interest.[19] They naturally supported women's organisations that were doing practical welfare work and the Women's League for Peace and Freedom. Some British women established Business & Professional Women Clubs or Townswomen's Guilds if they themselves

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Education Branch, 30.9.1947.

[17] From summer 1946 until the end of 1947 there were 160 members of Friends Relief in 12 different towns. Activities of the teams included the organisation of Week End Camps and International Camps with German and Foreign Youth; Old People's Homes, tuberculosis homes and discussion groups for young people. In Aachen Relief Teams also helped with the search of members of the British army who had become fathers of illegitimate children in Germany.

[18] Robert Wilson, Quaker Relief. An Account of the Relief Work of the Society of Friends 1940-1948 (London, 1952), p. 244.

[19] Some of the Relief Teams reports contain paragraphs on 'Women' and give an account of the development and the activities of women's organisations on local level, as for example on the Women's Committee in the town of Hagen, which had 50 to 60 members. British Red Cross in Münster reported in May 1947 on the development of a Club of Business & Professional Women, established with the help of the wife of the British Group Commander. Members of the British Red Cross helped with the preparatory work in establishing the *Frauenausschuss* in Münster and in Bochum and the Townswomen's Guild in Hamm. Friends Relief helped delegates from Oberhausen Women's Committee to the Women's Peace Conference in Berlin in March 1947 to obtain passes for the Russian Zone and in getting a permit to travel on the Military train.

had experience with those kind of organisations. German women mainly received support in form of transportation, meeting facilities and assistance with administrative paper work.

Women's Affairs recognised the value the contact of Relief Team workers with German women 'on the ground' could have for their own work. Representatives of the Relief Teams were invited to meetings of the Committee on German Women's Education in 1946 and from March 1947 meetings were organised between Women's Affairs and Relief Team workers in Vlotho (Weser), where the headquarters of the British Red Cross was situated.[20] Special liaison officers (for BRC they were two men and two women) co-ordinated contacts between Relief Teams and Women's Affairs Officers at Regional headquarters. It was agreed that unless Team members happened also to be members of the same women's organisation in England, all English contacts with German women's organisations should be made through headquarters CCG who would keep in touch with Mrs Wagstaff (then Senior Women's Affairs Officer at Administration & Local Government Branch). This indicates that Relief Team members tried individually to establish links between German and British women's groups. Mrs Wagstaff promised to send down information and from time to time circulars on special subjects to liaison officers and regional meetings. Teams were expected to promote weekend training camps, employing German leaders, and as much as possible also utilising the service of speakers on women's subjects coming out from England to lecture. In any case, Women's Affairs was not in agreement with and wanted to control the 'amateurish' activities of members of the Relief Teams and tried to incorporate them in line with policy which, from March 1947 with the formation of the *Demokratischer Frauenbund*, was - decidedly anti-Communist.

The formation of the Demokratischer Frauenbund Deutschlands, *March 1947*

From March 1947 the activities of the Civic Development Section/ Women's Affairs Section were overshadowed by one important event: the establishment of the *Demokratischer Frauenbund Deutschlands* as the umbrella organisation for all women's organisations in the Russian Zone of occupation. At the same time the

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[20] PRO FO1013-607, Meeting with Liaison Officers and Team Workers to the British Red Cross held at Vlotho on 23.4.1947, by Joy Evans. Mrs Wagstaff, Joy Evans and Rita Ostermann were present and outlined the work of Civic Development Section.

Conference of Foreign Ministers in Moscow was unsuccessful in respect to Germany, underlining and furthering differences between the former Allies. The Americans pursued from now on the policy of containment - the containment of the Russian influence in Europe. From summer 1947 Anglo-American Military Government no longer paid heed to avoiding the impression that there was a plan to create a separate German State in the Western Zones. Anne Deighton has shown that even before the war came to an end British foreign policy was dominated by a desire to contain communism and the Soviet Union.[21] Britain's traditional preoccupation with the European balance of power meant that she was more concerned with building diplomatic bridges with countries such as France and even Germany in order that the Soviet Union might be contained.

Women's Affairs was sceptical from the very beginning that the Women's Peace Congress in Berlin from 7 to 9 March 1947 could be anything other than a Communist inspired propaganda event, especially since it was known that the leading figures of this new organisation, Sendhoff, Hauser and Rentmeister, were originally connected with the *Frauenausschüsse*, and were all Communists.[22] The proposal to form a representative women's body for the whole of Germany was first put forward by a delegate conference of all women's committees in the Russian Zone in July 1946. Berlin, with 32 women, sent the largest number of representatives to the Preparatory Committee in December 1946, and in this way SED women influenced the new organisation towards their intentions. The proclamation issued by this Committee contained the following aims for the future organisation of the *Demokratischer Frauenbund Deutschlands*: 1. To work for the maintenance of peace; 2. To oppose fascism, militarism and reaction; 3. To serve the unit of Germany by participating actively in political life; 4. To co-operate in restoration and reconstruction and to soften the present distressed conditions; 5. To solve the legal, social and economic problems of

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[21] Anne Deighton, The Impossible Peace: Britain, the Division of Germany and the Origins of the Cold War (Oxford, 1990), pp. 5-7,p. 223.

[22] PRO FO1050-1212, Letter E.M. Jacobs, A&LG Branch to Miss Evans, Civic Development Section, 20.2.1947. For history of DFD in Berlin see Genth and Schmidt-Harzbach, 'Die Frauenausschüsse: Das halb gewollte, halb verordnete Netz', p. 52. In the beginning of May 1946 the *Zentrale Frauenausschuss* (Central Women's Committee) was established to co-ordinate the activities of all women's committees in the Soviet Zone and in Berlin. Elli Schmidt (KPD/SED) remained the president of the Central Committee but was replaced in summer 1946 by Magda Sendhoff and Edith Hauser (both KPD/SED). Maria Rentmeister's function at the Berlin *Magistrat* was to coordinate the work of *Frauenausschüsse* in the various districts of Berlin. All of these women were answerable to the Soviet Military Administration and their

life of women on the grounds of equal rights and equal duties; 6. To create the basis for a sound and happy family life; 7. To rouse the sense of real cultural values; 8. To restore Germany's good reputation throughout the world by peaceful collaboration with the women of all countries. [23]

The Preparatory Committee agreed in January to the fundamental documents and applied for the licence for the DFD to the Soviet Military Administration. The first president was the medical doctor Anne-Marie Durand-Wever,[24] who did not belong to a political party; her successor in April 1948 was Emmy Damerius, an SED woman. The majority of delegates to the Peace Congress were sent by *Frauenausschüsse* according to a number determined per *Land*. Invitations had been issued to women in all parts of Germany. But of the 2,000 delegates who took part in this conference only 150 came from the Western Zones; 84 from the British, 17 from the American and 5 from the French Zone.

Members of the British Red Cross who were not informed of the Communist tendencies of this meeting expected that something on the lines of the National Council of Women in England was to be created. They sponsored delegates from their own towns or areas, especially in the Rhineland, to go to Berlin.[25] The Red Cross reported that delegates had been freely elected by the various women's committees in the area, and as far as could be judged from the names already known to members of the British Red Cross Teams, they represented various shades of opinion and were able to put forward the point of view of women in Western Germany. Social Welfare Section Düsseldorf was asked to give assistance in sponsoring the journey of 140 delegates from NRW alone. It seems that many more women were interested in taking part in the Peace Conference but had no opportunity to go to Berlin.

The inaugural meeting was held at the *Staatsoper* Berlin with - as Ostermann reported - the 'usual well dressed platform, red bunting and doves; and ... excellent ballet'.[26] Amongst the foreign delegates were representatives of the International Federation of Women, established in Paris in November 1946, including the Russian

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own political party.
[23] PRO FO1050-1212, Draft for Programme of the DFD and Proclamation of the Preparatory Committee, English translation of the German paper, 20.2.1947 sent by Jacobs to Evans.
[24] She left the DFD in 1950. For more details see Rita Pawlowski, 'Der Demokratische Frauenbund Deutschlands (DFD)', *Frauenpolitik und politisches Wirken von Frauen im Berlin der Nachkriegszeit 1945-1949* (Berlin, 1996), p. 75.
[25] PRO FO1030-606, Sponsoring of delegates to Women's Conference in Berlin by British Red Cross Liaison Officer, North Rhine Region to Social Welfare Section, Düsseldorf, March 1947.
[26] PRO FO1049-1847, Development leading to Deutscher Frauenkongress in Bad Pyrmont, by Rita Ostermann, 26.10.1949.

delegate to the Paris Headquarters, Madam Popova. Mrs Beatrice King of the Anglo-Soviet Friendship Committee was refused an entry permit by the British administration on the grounds that she did not represent general British opinion and that no other invitations had been forthcoming. Rita Ostermann interpreted the formation of the *Demokratischer Frauenbund* at this Peace Congress as a Communist intervention by the International Federation of Women. By March 1947 this organisation had made several attempts to send delegates to the Western Zones of occupation. The Military Governors were not receptive to the suggestion and rejected the applications for entry permits. Following this, according to Ostermann, the obvious course was to organise a meeting to found a German group. A suitable opportunity was soon found through the women's committees which had been organised in the Russian Zone and Berlin.

Joy Evans, who also attended the congress, noted that the atmosphere during the opening session was most enthusiastic [27] and she thought it an unhappy observation that 'such enthusiasm and such sincerity on the part of many for the pure idea of peace could become a channel for so much perverted thought.' There was equally no doubt, Evans wrote, that the atmosphere finally changed to scepticism. There was some criticism from the audience regarding the way in which the voting was taking place. As a result, however, of the ballot, it was decided to form the *Demokratischer Frauenbund Deutschlands* (DFD) immediately, and the names of the *Frauenausschüsse* joining the DFD in the Russian Zone and the Russian Sector of Berlin were given. The chairman and the four deputy chairman were all Berliners and formerly connected with the *Frauenausschüsse* in Berlin.

Evans found that the propaganda measures were well to the fore. Well-filled bookstalls showing the usual portrayals of health and happiness in the Soviet Union alongside plaques and biographies of Stalin and Lenin were provided. Whereas the Russians spent money on propaganda material and entertainment (including ballet and orchestral and choral concerts), there was no literature or entertainment of any kind from American, British or French sources. However, in the face of all this entertainment an informal reception given by German Political Branch of the British Military Government to delegates from the British Zone on Saturday evening generated considerable interest. Evans noted with satisfaction that 60 to 70 women attended. Other invitations were asked for but these were refused 'as it was held that this reception was

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[27] PRO FO1013-606, Report of the First Conference of the DFD in Berlin, March 7th - 9th

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purely an act of hospitality to the delegates from the British Zone and must not in any way be considered as recognition for the *Demokratischer Frauenbund Deutschlands'*. Among the delegates from the Western Zones invited to this reception were many of the well known Communists from the Ruhr district and Hamburg. Ostermann could report that the success of German hospitality in the Eastern Sector to impress their 'sisters' from the Western Zones was marred by rather 'undemocratic procedure' on the part of the Russian authorities following the reception given by the British. The official bus taking representatives to their lodgings in the Eastern Sector was held up and the women were detained for between two and three hours at various police offices of the Soviet administration while their passes were examined. 'It was an extremely cold night and the Communists in the bus had to face a great deal of ribald criticism from their fellow travellers.'[28]

To Ostermann the utterly undemocratic method of founding the DFD was evident throughout the proceedings: opposition speakers were excluded; public discussion was made impossible; and the resolutions framed so as to make assent easy.[29] But the main aim was achieved; the DFD had been founded and the enthusiasm aroused was swiftly directed towards the formation of committees in the Western Zones prior to extending the League throughout Germany. For many women, even those from the moderate and liberal camp, the DFD seemed at first a continuation of the old women's movement in Germany that was able to overcome its chronic division between a liberal middle-class wing and a socialist wing. It was not easy for everyone the recognise that the *Demokratischer Frauenbund* would be a Communist cover organisation. The rhetorical connections of the DFD with the *Bund Deutscher Frauenvereine*, the person of the non-partisan President Durand-Wever and the fact that the poet Ricarda Huch agreed to become honorary president in November 1947, seemed to vouch for such a continuation.[30]

On Monday 10th March (following the Peace Conference) delegates from the British Zone arranged a meeting to discuss the probable formation of a similar organisation as the DFD for the British Zone. The meeting decided to set up a Liaison

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1947, by Joy Evans.

[28] PRO FO1049-1847, Development leading to the Deutscher Frauenkongress in Bad Pyrmont, by Rita Ostermann, 26.10.1949.

[29] PRO FO1050-1297, Women's Peace Congress in Berlin 7th - 9th March, by Rita Ostermann (?), 13.3.1947.

[30] Irene Stoehr and Ingrid Schmidt-Harzbach, 'Friedenspolitik und Kalter Krieg: Frauenverbände im Ost-West Konflikt', *Frauenpolitik und politisches Wirken von Frauen im Berlin der Nachkriegszeit 1945-1949* (Berlin, 1996), pp. 229-238.

Committee for one representative from each of the Regions to work with the large Committee in Berlin. This, Women's Affairs noticed, would provide an immediate channel for propaganda material into each Region. Evans predicted that there would be an immediate and vigorous attempt to establish the DFD in the British Zone.

Ostermann foresaw that two general types of delegates would return to their homes in the West. The first and larger group was determined not to negotiate with the *Demokratischer Frauenbund*, but realised in a vague and troubled way that a negative attitude was not enough. The second, rather smaller group (so Ostermann hoped) was determined to spread the doctrine of collaboration with the DFD rapidly through the Western Zones. It was that group which had to be stopped.

A telegram, sent a few days after the Berlin Peace Congress to all Branches of Military Government informed CCG officers that the 84 delegates from the British Zone were now returning home. Many of them would probably contact the women officers of Administration & Local Government Branch (Women's Affairs) in the Regions, asking for advice and guidance on the possible formation of an association similar to the DFD. [31] It was essential that these officers should be advised:

> to temporise over the question of forming any new association, stressing the number already in existence, putting forward the suggestion that a zonal committee, embracing representatives of all parties and organisations should be seriously considered as being more likely to meet democratic requirements than still another women's organisation, adding that, while the initiative must be German, such a committee would not be unwelcome.

In other words, CCG wanted a similar umbrella organisation for the British Zone that could attract women who otherwise would join the DFD.

Delegates who returned from Berlin brought the news to an enthusiastic audience, as could be seen for example in the town of Herne in North Rhine-Westphalia. Here approximately 2,000 women attended meetings in two different cinemas in order to listen to the report by Anna Melzer (leader of the women's section of the KPD in this *Land*), who had been one of the delegates to Berlin. The women expressed their disapproval of the fact that the delegation of the International Federation of Women were not allowed to visit the British Zone and a resolution to CCG was adopted accordingly.[32]

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[31] PRO FO1013-606, Telegram sent out from Bercomb Berlin, re support non-political organisations, 13.3.1947.
[32] PRO FO1013-606, Two large peace demonstrations, covering letter by Grennan, Newspaper

An attempt to establish an organisation similar to the DFD was made in the British Zone in Aachen on 16 and 17 April 1947 at a conference of *Frauenausschüsse* of the Rhineland.[33] 150 women from *Frauenausschüsse* in Bochum, Duisburg, Bonn, Düsseldorf, Dortmund and Hamm attended a conference that was conceived simply as a gathering for an exchange of ideas and discussion of mutual problems. [34] Invitations had been extended to Westphalia and there were also guests from Hamburg and Hanover. Delegates were accommodated in private homes of Aachen families. A grant made by the Food and Agriculture Branch of Military Government from confiscated foodstuff enabled Friends Relief to give the delegates a meal every day in addition to the food they had brought with them. Frau Pascher, the President of the Aachen *Frauenausschuss* and a member of the KPD, reported in a very positive way on the Berlin Peace Congress. According to the more 'neutral' Friends Relief Report (in contrast, for example, to Bähnisch's memoirs) the feeling was soon expressed that local *Frauenausschüsse* might be linked advantageously into a larger organised movement, possibly at zonal level. Many representatives, who came expecting to talk about local work in autonomous groups, were taken by surprise by this proposal. Others urged caution and patience to allow the new German women's movement to grow 'organically' without premature organisation from the top. These others were mainly represented by Theanolte Bähnisch. Women's Affairs Officer Kathleen Walker commented that it was obvious from the beginning of the proceedings that the KPD representatives intended to press for the formation of a zonal women's organisation on the lines of the Russian sponsored DFD.[35] Walker reported that 'much valuable work was done by Frau Bähnisch who both by her speech and by personal interview did much to prevent a decision being forced on the meeting'. Bähnisch recalled in later years the heroic part she played at this meeting in Aachen.[36]

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cutting from the *Westdeutsches Volksecho*, 25.3.1947.

[33] PRO FO1013-607, Meeting of the Women's Committee Aachen, 16 -18 April 1947, by Frau Hasche, 18.4.1947.

[34] London, Friends House, FRS/1992/Box 71, Monthly report from Friends Relief Aachen for April 1947.

[35] PRO FO1013-607, Report on Conference of representatives of women's organisations at Aachen 16-18 April, by Walker, 30.4.1947.

[36] Theanolte Bähnisch, 'Vom Wiederaufbau der Frauenarbeit nach dem Zusammenbruch 1945. Vortrag zum 10jährigen Bestehen des Deutschen Frauenrings', *Mädchenbildung und Frauenschaffen* 4 (1960), pp. 164-165, knew beforehand that it was intended at Aachen to form an organisation similar to the DFD. She herself spoke at the conference about her tour to England (in November 1946) and of the International Council of Women. In the evening of the first day of the conference she took part in a meeting of a small circle which discussed the preparation of the foundation of a DFD for the British Zone. At this meeting she found herself to be the only non-Communist alongside the woman who had invited Bähnisch to the

However, some months later another attempt to form a wider federation of *Frauenausschüsse* was made in Solingen in August 1947.[37] There an overwhelming majority of speakers was in favour of the plan and a committee was appointed, although not on a representative basis, to draw up proposals for a constitutional women's federation for the *Land* North Rhine-Westphalia, which could be further discussed in local groups. It seems, however, that most of the *Ausschüsse* reacted like the Aachen *Frauenausschuss* in deciding to vote against the formation of a *Land* organisation. The main objections here came from Catholic quarters, where there was an anxiety that matters of conscience would be decided in such an organisation by majority voting.

Fighting the Demokratischer Frauenbund Deutschlands *in the British Zone*

Immediately after the formation of the DFD Women's Affairs Officers became considerably more active. Lists were compiled with all existing women's organisations in the British Zone down to local level complete with names, addresses and political leanings of leading personalities. In March 1947 Group Commanders in NRW received orders to send information about women's organisations to *Regierungsbezirk* headquarters. Of special interest was whether the group exercised political influence. These information were summarised and lists of women's organisations of all the *Länder* and their development from December 1946 up to spring 1947 arrived at Women's Affairs Headquarters in Berlin.[38] The report from Schleswig-Holstein [39], for

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conference, the wife of a *Pfarrer* in Aachen. Bähnisch tried to inform other delegates of the dangerous Communist activities but according to her many women did not believe her. The next morning the Communists proposed to take the vote about unification of *Frauenausschüsse*. Bähnisch then asked that every *Frauenausschuss* should report on its work, so that everybody could learn what the *Ausschüsse* do and how they were composed. This was intended to be a tactical trick in order to win time during which via telephone and telegraph important members of the 'old women's movement' were informed and asked to come and help to prevent the unification. In the afternoon, Helene Weber appeared at the meeting and the unification was prevented. (Helene Weber was from 1919 to 1933 Member of the *Reichstag*. In 1946 she became Member of the *Zonenrat* and in 1948 Member of the *Parlamentarischer Rat*. She was on the Executive Committee (*Vorstand*) of the *Katholischer Frauenbund*, President of the *Berufsverband Katholischer Fürsorgerinnen*, became a member of the CDU and was Member of the *Bundestag* from 1949.).

[37] PRO FO1013-2227, Report on Communist *Arbeitsgemeinschaft*, Women's meeting held on 8 August 1947, Solingen meeting on 29.8.1947. The Solingen *Frauenausschuss* invited women to attend a conference at Schloß Burg on 16,17,18 September. Walker observed the meeting and wrote the report.

[38] PRO FO1013-606, Report on Women's Organisations, by Ursula Lee, 17.3.1947; List of Women's organisations in Hanover, by Alice Cameron, March 1947. For NRW lists are in files FO1013-232,606,706,714.

[39] PRO FO1013-606, Report on Women's Affairs in Schleswig-Holstein, by Vaughan Johnson, February 1947.

example, indicated that in six of the *Landkreise* KPD activists had initiated women's committees which were controlled from the Hamburg party office.

However, *Kreis* Resident Officers and even Women's Affairs Officers themselves were a bit confused by terms the German women used for their groups which made distinguishing between non-communist groups with a *Frauenring* constitution and groups with Communist sympathies difficult. Alice Cameron reported from Hanover that it needed careful investigation in order to find where the enemy was hiding, i.e. which organisations should be encouraged and which not:

> A word of warning may here be added on the ambiguity of the German terms used (1) for societies with individual membership and (2) for standing conferences. In most of Hanover Region the societies are called Club, Frauenring, Frauenbund or Frauengruppe, while the Standing Conference is called Arbeitsgemeinschaft. In Osnabrück, however, the Standing Conference is called Frauenausschuss. In Schleswig-Holstein, the Frauenausschüsse are societies. In North/Rhine Westphalia they are sometimes societies, sometimes Standing Conferences and consist partly of representatives of organisations and partly of individual members. In Hamburg the Standing Conference is called Frauenring'[40].

The second precaution taken by CCG to counteract the spread of the DFD in the British Zone was a Publicity Campaign targeted especially at CCG officials.[41] On 2 May a press briefing was given in Berlin by the Civic Development Section. Thereafter Women's Affairs Berlin was prepared to give publicity to all activities covering the Zone or beyond, e.g. Zonal Women's Conferences, International Conferences, visits of women from other countries to Germany, etc. During June women's affairs was planned to be a subject in a series of the CCG broadcasts over B.F.N. 'Inside Talks on Germany'. Public Relations Officers at Regions were asked to obtain - in relation with Women's Affairs Officers - as much background and factual information as possible for submission to Information Services Control Hamburg and to publicise local activities of women's groups through the usual media of Public Relation handouts. Press Officers with PR/ISC Regional Staff were to encourage editors to deal with the subject in feature and leading articles. From other correspondence in Women's Affairs files can be inferred, that despite this campaign, women's activities did not get great coverage in the media.

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[40] PRO FO1049-1245, Memorandum on women's organisations in the British Zone, by Ostermann, 14.11.1947.
[41] PRO FO1050-1210, Publicity Campaign Directive No 10, from HQ PR/ISC to Regional Staff PR/ISC, 28.4.1947.

Still, there were newspaper articles in German newspapers such as *Der Tagesspiegel* that enlightened women on the tactics and ideological background of the *Demokratischer Frauenbund* in order to make politically uneducated women aware of the lurking danger.[42] Speakers of the DFD, the reader learnt, dismissed party politics as destructive and drew attention to the pressing problems of the nation's existence which had to be solved on a level above party politics. In this respect, unbiased women were in a better position to effect change than dogmatic men bound by tradition. This was sweet music to women's ears, and its euphony was not diminished if mention was made, by degrees, of the advantage of 'progressive democracy', of the success of democratic land reform and industrial nationalism in the Eastern Zone. The danger was, the *Tagesspiegel* explained, that under the cloak of 'sacred feelings' only Communist principles were declaimed. As a result of such political leadership and of all the resources of unlimited propaganda, the DFD in the Eastern Zone, during its ten months of existence, enrolled a quarter of a million members.

Indeed, the DFD had developed within shortest time into a remarkable antagonist. As a result of the fusion with the *Frauenausschüsse* in the Russian Zone, which took place in November 1947 at the order of Marshall Sokolowki, the DFD had been strengthened not only numerically but materially, since through this co-ordination it had been permitted to take over wholesale the entire inventory and furniture produced by the *Frauenausschüsse* through private and communal support. The DFD was the only women's organisation permitted in the Russian Zone and women's organised activities (apart from Trade union and Co-operative women's groups) were thus entirely channelled into an organisation under Communist control.[43] What was especially disturbing for the British side was that the DFD even sat in an advisory capacity on the block committees in the *Länder* in the Russian Zone and thus gained considerable political influence. From 1949 the DFD had a seat on the East German Parliament, the People's Congress.

A further initiative to gain sympathy throughout the Eastern Zone, the *Tagesspiegel* continued to explain, was the 'close co-operation' with 80 million women 'all over the world'. CCG had been informed already in winter 1946 that the Communist influenced Women's International Democratic Federation founded after the

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[42] PRO FO1049-1844, Die Politik des Demokratischen Frauenbundes, *Der Tagesspiegel*, 1.1.1948.
[43] PRO FO1049-1246, Women's Organisations in the Soviet, British and US Zone, report by

war, would be well-disposed towards a German organisation and would probably favour a direct union with it. A delegation led by Damerius was sent, at the invitation of the International Federation of Women, to the September meeting at Stockholm, where it reported on the German women's work and on the political and economic situation in the Russian Zone. At first, however, agreement was limited to a constant exchange of experience and news between the DFD and the IFW.

Der Tagesspiegel informed its readers that in December 1947 the DFD produced an 'even greater political show' (than sitting on the 'People's Congress'). It invited women members of its organisation and also representatives of women's associations in the Western Zones to a 'Conference on German women' in Berlin, to work out together a resolution for the London Conference of foreign ministers.[44] On this occasion as well, the speakers were adherents of Eastern 'progressive democracy'. The women speakers from the Western Zones at this conference emphasised more than once that they were the mouthpiece of millions of women, though they knew too well that the Western women's organisations had declined all participation in that Conference in a Trizonal decision made at Frankfurt on 22 November 1947.

In West and South Germany, the *Tagesspiegel* stated, the DFD had only found a response in small and unimportant circles. There could be no question of an association and still less of an amalgamation with the women's associations in the Western Zones, organised from the start, and held together in 'women's circles', since these associations rejected both the centrally directed and primarily politically organisation of the DFD and also its methods, which had been exposed long and clearly enough. The article concluded that 'the tendencies of the DFD are so obvious that only an absolute nitwit could fail to recognise them'.

Despite this assumption, the DFD gained ground in the Western Zones. In February 1948 the organisation applied to the Allied Control Commission for the admission of a united democratic women's organisation for all Germany. The American and British refused to recognise this organisation on a national basis but did not publicly announce that the DFD was in fact banned in the Western Zones. Instead it was said that

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Research Department FO, March 1948.

[44] PRO FO1049-1245, Meeting of the *Demokratischer Frauenbund Deutschlands* in December 1947, by Jacobs, sent to Evans, 10.1.1948. The resolution goes: 'Die Pflicht zur Wiedergutmachung kann nur auf der Grundlage der wirtschaftlichen, politischen und sozialen Gesundung des deutschen Volkes erfüllt werden, durch einer Zerreißung Deutschlands würde ihm jede Existenzgrundlage entzogen. Deshalb sind die Beseitigung der Zonengrenzen und die Bildung einer deutschen Zentralregierung dringende und unerlässliche Voraussetzungen für die Demokratisierung Deutschlands und die Sicherung des Weltfriedens.'

apart from the fact that this organisation could not maintain its claim to represent all German women, it would be premature to sanction national organisations. Women's Affairs Officers could use this argument when approached with requests. Such requests came, for example, from the British Committee of Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF) which in summer 1948 forwarded a complaint from the DFD. The DFD claimed that its effort to establish contact with women's organisations in the British Zone had met obstacles such as the difficulty of travel between the Zones and the refusal of licenses for local groups of the DFD. [45] They further demanded that Military Government should allow facilities for establishing a union of *Frauenausschüsse* within the British Zone. Ostermann replied that the DFD had never been banned in the British Zone and that it was therefore as much at liberty as any other women's organisation to apply for permission to form a Zonal basis in the British Zone under Ordinance 122, which granted the right of free association of lawful purposes.[46] In making such an application an organisation had to produce evidence that it could command sufficient support for this purpose from the German people. This the DFD had not so far been able to do and therefore it appeared that its lack of success in attaining formal establishment was due to the absence of response on the part of the German women themselves who were unwilling to support what they know to be a Communist dominated organisation under whatever democratic disguise it may appear. Thus while it had not been the policy of His Majesty's Government to ban the Communist Party or related organisations in the British Zone, it would scarcely be appropriate for them to take active steps to encourage an organisation of this type and seek to impose it on German women who had clearly shown their lack of enthusiasm for it. [47] Ostermann assured the Women's International Democratic Federation that members of the DFD received exactly the same treatment in respect of inter-zonal travel arrangements as members of other organisations. Until communications between Western Germany and Berlin were interrupted, as a result of the Berlin blockade, women delegates, including Communists and members of the DFD, were regularly given facilities to travel by the British military train to attend conferences in Berlin.

This statement was not exactly true. For example, Magda Langhans, head of the women's section of KPD in Hamburg, member of the Hamburg *Bürgerschaft* and one

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[45] PRO FO1049-1248, Women's International Democratic Federation to Bevin, July 1948.
[46] PRO FO1049-1248, Reply to the Women's International Democratic Federation in London, sent by Bevin's Office, by Mr Dean, 23.8.1948.

of the leaders of the *Frauenausschuss* there, was not given permission to attend the Women's World Congress at Budapest from 28 November to 10 December 1948. Her invitation came from the Paris International Democratic Federation via the Berlin DFD. Entries and Exit Branch had been instructed to delay action.[48] Political Division advised CCG Hamburg: 'No facilities should be given to enable Frau Langhans to make this trip. Unless you see an objection, we consider that no reason should be stated.'[49] DFD groups in NRW as in Cologne, Düsseldorf and Unna were effectively banned. A report by Intelligence Division stated that in order to circumvent the Military Government ban, the Düsseldorf DFD aspirants changed the name to *Arbeitsgemeinschaft Deutscher Frauen* on 3 May 1947. But 'the manoeuvre accomplished nothing whatsoever and the movement was dormant until January, when a fresh application embodying a claim to a membership of 200 was submitted to Military Government. This naturally met with no more success than the previous'.[50] These were certainly not the only examples. In Schleswig-Holstein, the *Frauenvereinigung* had been banned because of Communist infiltration. Intelligence Division Düsseldorf again commented in June 1948 that the discouragement which the *Bund* (as the women's committee was called) encountered from Military Government circles had been almost as powerful a deterrent as an actual ban and progress in this *Land* had been negligible. If the DFD now chose to function in accordance with Ordinance 122, Military Government would scarcely be in a position to raise any objection, but the organisation would still require observation.[51]

The spread of the DFD in the British Zone 1950

In April 1950 the *Demokratischer Frauenbund Deutschlands* was founded in the Federal Republic of Germany. It lasted only seven years until it was banned together with the Communist Party in 1957, this time by the German government itself. With the decree on the *Politische Betätigung der Angehörigen des öffentlichen Dienstes gegen die demokratische Grundordnung* from September 1950, known as the

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[47] Ibid.
[48] PRO FO1049-1249, Telegram re Magda Langhans visit to World Congress at Budapest, 19.11.1948.
[49] A hand-written comment was added: 'I fail to see why we should do anything to help this woman at all. I cannot understand how Hamburg has never heard of the *Demokratischer Frauenbund*. If the woman really wants to go to Budapest all she's got to do is to get into the Soviet Zone and the authorities there will fix her up. I suggest that we either reject the application or tell Hamburg to stall by losing her papers ....'
[50] PRO FO1049-1246, Regional Intelligence Office, Mr Allisop, Düsseldorf, to HQ Intelligence Division, re German women's organisations in Land Nordrhein-Westfalen, 31.5.1948.
[51] PRO FO1049-1247, Letter Rhine Westphalia Intelligence Staff Düsseldorf to HQ Intelligence Division Herford, 18.6.1948.

'Adenauer-decree', all persons were removed from the Civil Service who were members of the KPD or the DFD. On 10 April 1957 the organisation was banned as being anticonstitutional and subversive. However, Women's Affairs in Germany were still to experience the spread of the organisation in the early 1950s. In March 1950 alarming news about take-overs of the DFD reached Women's Affairs Section from all parts of Germany. Groups of the *Demokratischer Frauenbund* were founded in every *Land* in the British and the US Zones while Communist attempts were made to capture or infiltrate women's groups, whether organised or not. This applied to housewives, factory hands and agricultural workers. [52]

The campaign was thought to be directed from Berlin and executed through the KPD network in Western Germany. A CCG report on Communist activities among women's groups in Western Germany stated that earlier that year the KPD *Land* Committee in NRW issued instructions for a concerted drive to establish DFD groups in the area. On 14 March this was discussed at a meeting of the KPD women's leaders in *Kreise*. Two days later the acting head of the Women's Section of the KPD *Landesvorstand*, Frau Dicke, went to Berlin for instructions. She returned with Frau Elli Schmidt and Frau Schirmer-Poscher, first and second chairman of the DFD in East Germany, who presided over the foundation of the *Land* Committee of the DFD in Essen on 1 April. Frau Schirmer-Poscher was also invited by the Hamburg *Arbeitskreis für gesamtdeutsche Fragen*, and used a press conference to publicise the DFD. The Hamburg *Frauenausschuss*, which was KPD-led but not exclusively KPD in its membership, went over to the DFD with 2,000 members. In summer 1950 Elli Schmidt was in Western Germany and addressed large meetings at Stuttgart and other towns. OMGUS reported that there appeared to be little opposition. The indirect approach of the DFD took various forms such as the distribution of pamphlets in factories and the demand for speakers to be allowed to address the workers. The more suitable approach was through cultural associations which pursued the general aims of peace and unity, such as the *Deutsche Friedensgesellschaft* and the *Frauenliga für Frieden und Freiheit*.

Rita Ostermann received in spring 1950 reports from *Kreis* Resident Officers in North Rhine-Westphalia about women's meetings which discussed the formation of so-called peace committees in preparation of for 8 March, International Women's Day. These committees were not dissolved after the celebration, but established as permanent

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[52] PRO FO1013-2227, Report on Communist activity among women's groups in Western

peace committees. The KPD programme for NRW for the March celebrations included 13 demonstrations in different larger cities at which representatives of foreign women's organisations were invited to speak.[53] The main demonstration took place on 5 March 1950 in Düsseldorf. Ostermann was informed that these March meetings would be used to try and form the DFD in NRW, and for the selection of 170 delegates for the DFD Conference in Berlin between 26 and 29 April 1950. From these delegates to Berlin it was planned to choose the Preparatory Committee for the foundation of the DFD in NRW in May 1950. A considerable amount of propaganda was printed for these demonstrations. There was every indication that the DFD was prepared to make the most of the International Women's Day, not only for the excellent opportunities which it provided for the KPD peace demonstrations, but also for the welcome opportunity of gaining a foothold in non-communist organisations and the subsequent exploitation of the theme of international peace.

In other towns the Communist advance was made through the women's organisation of the *Frauenring* or other non-political organisations, as for example in Duisburg. The British Resident (as British *Kreis* Resident Officers were called then) reported that on 14 April the DFD was formed in Duisburg at a meeting of the *Frauenunion*.[54] Two of the leading members of the Duisburg DFD were communists. The two foremost tasks of the DFD were to collect signatures for peace, and to spread the organisation over the whole town. Their further intention was to absorb the *Frauenunion*. Members of the Frauenunion became alarmed and saw the British Resident for help and advice. The following report is of interest because it reveals how much the leaders of local middle-class women's organisations relied on the support of the local Military Government Officers. The British Resident, Col. Hutchison, invited them to come to his house in the evening of 18 April. The women informed him that another meeting would be held on the 26th April at which the *Frauenunion* would be dissolved and all members would be absorbed into the DFD. Hutchison asked to see their rules of association. These required a 75% majority to effect dissolution. The German women asked him what to do, and he advised them to whip up as many members as possible to come to the meeting and sit together as a solid block, to select a spokeswoman and not let the Communists have it all their own way. They also should

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Germany, 26.5.1950.

[53] PRO FO1013-2227, Communist inspired women's organisations in NRW, R. Jahn to Ostermann, 21.2.1950.

[54] FO1013-2227, Report from Duisburg, by Col Hutchison re forming a Frauenunion, 21.4.1950.

hold on to their funds (DM 84 at the time). Further, they should think up a few good but awkward questions to ask, not to mind too much about the smart answers, but let the others present draw their own conclusions. Hutchison concluded: 'These ladies have little courage, they are already defeated, for they told me, they are convinced the majority will vote for the fusion with the DFD, because ALREADY 122 women's organisations have been absorbed by it.' However, the Frauenunion defeated the attempt to incorporate the *Frauenunion* into the DFD by a margin of three votes.

On a national scale, the Americans had also become alert and active in fighting of the DFD, and both the British and American Women's Affairs Sections could join forces. From 20 April to 4 June 1950 a group of 11 leading American women representing the largest American women's organisations visited Germany prepared to co-operate with German women's organisations. This was the first official visit of prominent American women to Germany after the Second World War. The visit ended with a conference at Königswinter where about 60 women met for a symposium on the role of women in a democratic society. This visit was greeted by OMGUS as a positive motivation at a point in time when communist propaganda was running at full power. Especially the female population of Berlin seemed to be open for Communist slogans promising peace and reunion of the city. Every East-Berlin group of the DFD had adopted a *Bezirk* in the West with the aim of doing propaganda work there.

At a Trizonal Women's Affairs Officers' conference in Wiesbaden on 2 and 3 May 1950, the attention of the British, American and French officers present was drawn to a document on the activities of the KPD. It was assumed that the plan was the same throughout Western Germany:

> K.P.D. women are well drilled and peace is a matter most likely to draw women who are not trained and experienced enough to recognise what may be behind their advances. <u>All</u> the women's organisations have among their aims the achievement of international co-operation and the securing of peace. That is one reason why K.P.D. propaganda is so insidious where women are concerned and why it had always seemed to Women's Affairs Branch here so important and urgent that women should be given as much help as possible in training themselves to form private and public opinion and stand up to mass propaganda.
>
> No <u>direct</u> counterblast to K.P.D. action is possible. We cannot say we are against peace and we cannot hope to defeat them at their own game of propaganda. Our reply must be of a different kind, namely to give encouragement to all other groups of women, e.g. Frauenring, Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Landfrauen, Hausfrauen, Federation of University Women, independent Verbände and the like - to give support to all their efforts to combine, co-ordinate and co-operate among themselves (e.g. on the lines of local Standing Conferences) and to International connections, e.g. with Council of Women, International Business and Professional Women's Association, International

> Federation of University Women etc., where strong organisations already function. Even so, the possibility of infiltration into local Standing Conferences is an actual problem.[55]

The conference in Wiesbaden agreed to accept the USA lead and offer of financial support to call an informal independent conference of women in Germany at Bad Reichenhall in autumn 1950 in co-operation with German women and prominent women from other countries. It was also agreed to establish a residential Training Centre for German women in some conveniently accessible place in Germany, where present officials of women's organisations and all other interested women could meet for discussion. This was established in Bad Schwalbach in the American zone. In October 1950 the *Büro für Frauenfragen* (Bureau for Women's Citizenship Work) had been established in Wiesbaden with substantial American financial support with four German workers and one American Women's Affairs Officer. The *Büro für Frauenfragen* published the journal *Information für die Frau* and organised courses in civic education for women.

In September 1951 a similar institution but on national level was established in Bonn financed by the Women's Affairs Section at OMGUS (which was finally dissolved in February 1952). Women's Affairs OMGUS decided to create a project for which women's organisations had to co-operate nation-wide. In October 1951 OMGUS invited to Frankfurt representatives of 14 women's organisations who were introduced to the American plan to have a central information bureau. [56] The following organisations had been invited: *Deutsche Angestellten Gewerkschaft, Deutscher Akademikerinnenbund, Arbeitsgemeinschaft Katholischer Deutscher Frauen Köln, Deutscher Landfrauenverband, Deutscher Hausfrauenbund, Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund (Hauptabteilung Frauen), Lehrerinnenverband, Deutscher Frauenring, Staatsbürgerinnenverband, Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Wählerinnen, Verband Weiblicher Angestellter, Evangelische Frauenarbeit in Deutschland, Deutscher Verband berufstätiger Frauen; Jüdischer Frauenbund.* On 8 December the new *Informationsdienst für Frauenfragen* was founded which at regular intervals published information on women's affairs.

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[55] FO1013-2232, Activity among German women in NRW, by Porter, Assistant Commissioner, 19.5.1950.
[56] Grundhöfer, 'Ausländerinnen reichen die Hand'-britische und amerikanische Frauenpolitik in Deutschland im Rahmen der demokratischen Re-education nach 1945, pp. 414-416.

The support of women's organisations in Berlin

Berlin under four-power control had its own unique conditions. Until September 1947, women's organisations in Berlin were only licensed for their particular district and could not operate throughout the whole city. On 14 February 1947, at the time of greatest hardship during the winter of 1946/47, the *Stadtverordnetenversammlung* of Berlin decided to dissolve the *Frauenausschüsse* which were thought to be influenced to a large extent by the *Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands* (SED, a party established through the forced unification of Social Democrats and Communists in the Russian Zone and Russian Sector of Berlin) [57]. Louise Schröder, the Deputy *Oberbürgermeister* of Berlin (and a member of the Social Democratic Party) put forward to the *Magistrat* a resolution which was passed with an agreed dissolution date of 31 March 1947. It was proposed that social welfare and other activities should be taken over by the appropriate department of the *Magistrat*. Considerable public protest was expressed against this resolution even from opponents to the SED, who saw no sense in dissolving the groups which were doing a considerable amount of good at a difficult time.

The DFD, formerly restricted to the Russian Zone of Berlin, was licensed for Greater Berlin on 9 December 1947. The constituent meeting for the Berlin organisation was on 6 March 1948, attended by delegates from all 20 administrative districts of Berlin.[58] The Conference elected 20 delegates to attend the East German People's Congress. It was also decided to apply for affiliation to the International Federation of Democratic women, as did the DFD in the Soviet Zone.

The only other women's organisation in the Western Sector of Berlin at this time was the *Wilmerdorfer Frauenbund* which had been authorised in February 1946. It was founded by Agnes von Zahn-Harnack, president of the *Bund Deutscher Frauenvereine* during the Weimar Republic, together with other representatives of the 'old' women's movement, such as Marie-Elisabeth Lüders and Else Ulich-Beil. Women's Affairs believed the organisation to be modelled on the 'old international Alliance for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship'. When Zahn-Harnack asked in December 1946 for her organisation's licence to be extended to the British Sector, she had assured the British

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[57] PRO FO1045-283, Dissolution of the Women's Committees in Berlin, April 1947, Extract from Monthly Report.
[58] PRO FO1049-1247, Constituent meeting of the Berlin Democratic Women's League, June 1948.

authorities that it would work on the same lines as Frau Bähnisch's already licensed *Klub Deutscher Frauen* in Hanover. The licence was delayed until January 1947 but meanwhile there were similar organisations in many areas of Berlin which later joined the *Wilmersdorfer Frauenbund* and became the *Berliner Frauenbund.*

The group in Wilmersdorf met twice monthly.[59] One gathering was a lecture followed by discussion, the other normally a visit to a social institution. The organisation had 200 members when it started. Later, when it was licensed for the whole of West-Berlin invitations were sent to approximately 900 women (ca 350 housewives, 140 academics, 110 social workers, 100 trade women). Lectures held in 1948 were on the Social Insurance System, on school reform, and the Berlin blockade; Kierkegaard and his time; crisis in marriage and lack of marriage; and nervous breakdown as a consequence of psychological trauma. There was also a mock town-council meeting with representatives of all three political parties to underline the importance of taking part in elections. The group's work was more or less restricted to these lectures in civic education for middle class-wives and professionals. In August 1947 the *Wilmersdorfer Frauenbund* opened a clothing and gift store, and an 'Academic Commission' provided for mutual assistance between young and old academic members. This basically meant that the older women gave academic literature, equipment and free meal to students and provided heated rooms in which to study. In return the students helped out in the household. The *Frauenbund* also planned to open a 'matrimonial advice bureau'. Financial support was secured from private households.

The second women's organisation in Berlin, the *Notgemeinschaft* 47 (*Deutscher Staatsbürgerinnenverband*) was formed at the end of 1947 in the Western Sector of Berlin as a follow-on organisation of the *Allgemeiner Deutscher Frauenverein* (established 1865).[60] This organisation aimed to connect welfare work with political work and it received more sympathy from the Western Allies than the *Wilmersdorfer Frauenbund.* The first chairman of the *Notgemeinschaft*, Else Ulich-Beil, had been the vice chairman of the *Deutscher Staatsbürgerinnenverband* from 1921 to 1933, which was re-founded as *Notgemeinschaft.* The *Notgemeinschaft* tried to mobilise women

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[59] PRO FO1050-1215, Tätigkeitsbericht und Arbeitsvorhaben des Wilmersdorfer Frauenbundes 1945, Agnes von Zahn-Harnack to Ostermann, 17.8.1947.

[60] The *Allgemeiner Deutscher Frauenverein* had been affiliated to the *Bund Deutscher Frauenvereine*. It established itself as in a narrower sense the 'political' organisation. In 1928 it renamed itself as '*Staatsbürgerinnenverband*'. The name '*Deutscher Staatsbürgerinnenverband*' had not been permitted by the Allies. Only in October 1949 did the

electors in the run-up to elections in the city. They organised meetings such as *Die Frau im Parlament* in co-operation with political parties in Berlin. A housewife committee had been formed to deal with questions of food and rationing during the Berlin blockade. The Committee drafted resolutions on meals for schoolchildren, evacuation of children from the city of Berlin, gas supply and supply of milk powder and fat. During the blockade the *Notgemeinschaft* was active in sending children out of Berlin to West Germany. The *Notgemeinschaft* maintained close contact to CCG officers. In May 1948, at Ostermann and Mrs Wilson's instigation, a Berlin Anglo-German Club was formed to foster better understanding between German and English women. Ten women from the *Notgemeinschaft* were invited regularly to these meetings which took place in private houses of CCG officers, as for example Mrs Birley's, the wife of the Educational Adviser.

From March 1948 to November 1948 eight regional groups were formed in different parts of the city. Every group had between 40 and 50 members, the number of members was about 400 to 500. Grundhöfer worked out four fields of activity for the *Staatsbürgerinnen*: Social work was especially important during the time of the blockade. From 1950 the social work concentrated mainly on work with refugees. Every second Thursday one of the eight groups organised a lecture about a topic in civic education. The third task was international co-operation. There were teas with foreign guests, language courses for participants of Exchange Programmes with Britain and the USA. In 1952 there were 54 evenings organised for English Conversation. From 1950 the *Staatsbürgerinnenverband* was in charge of an international Students hostel which had been established by the Intentional Alliance of Women in Berlin. The IAW financed the flat with 10 rooms which could be used by the *Staatsbürgerinnen* up to 1954 and paid for rent, heat and the furniture. Foreign guests were accommodated in this hostel. American and British administration officers liked to use it for receptions in honour of foreign guests. The fourth task was to keep the communication between West Berlin and West Germany. Members of the *Staatsbürgerinnenverband* lectured on the situation in West Berlin.

Neither the *Wilmersdorfer Frauenbund* nor the *Notgemeinschaft* 47 had an office or a permanent meeting place during their early years. Both organisations were led by women over sixty who handled much of the clerical work themselves on borrowed typewriters, as Ostermann pointed out. She stressed the unfavourable

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organisation change its name into '*Staatsbürgerinnenverband*'.

conditions and the lack of means, contrasting this with the DFD with its office and requisitioned premises, its highly-paid secretarial staff, unlimited stationary, transport provided by the Russian authority and above all, regular food parcels for all its leading members.

The *Berliner Frauenbund* for a long time tried to keep the balance between East and West. For example, it did not participate at the first '*Freiheitskundgebung*' in West Berlin in March 1948 during which an appeal was made to the 'women of the world' on the Berlin blockade. The *Notgemeinschaft/Staatsbürgerinnenverband*, on the other hand, appeared to be a more suitable counter-organisation to the DFD. Ostermann thought that the Russians were well aware that the opposition of women in the West was not futile. The first public meeting of the *Notgemeinschaft* attracted nearly 1000 men and women of all classes and ages to a lecture by Dr Freda Wuesthoff entitled *Atomenergie und Frieden*. The DFD could not hope to match such an audience within West Berlin. For the next meeting Ostermann anticipated an even greater event with Professor Barraclough speaking about his widely read book. (In the event Barraclough was unable to accept the invitation.) 'These are the features with which the Russians cannot compete in attraction', Ostermann thought, 'either with the intellectual classes or often with the masses, who formed the longest cinema queues Berlin had yet seen to view the Royal Wedding'.[61] She hoped that personality played a particularly important part, and 'although the DFD have a very competent group of well-trained party functionaries, and some excellent public speakers, they have no one whose personal reputation could be compared with that of Agnes von Zahn-Harnack, the leader of the *Berliner Frauenbund* and one of the best known figures in Berlin and throughout Germany'.

During the following years the *Berliner Staatsbürgerinnenverband* established itself being 'expert' in questions regarding the Eastern Zone.[62] As the self-proclaimed champion of a city threatened by political oppression it made contact to helpful and influential women in all Western countries, who wanted to stand by the heroic Berliners, who had not even asked for material help.[63] The *Notgemeinschaft* adapted its activities immediately and unconditionally to fight communist oppression. Even during the first year of its existence it changed from pacifism to peace linked to political

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[61] PRO, FO1030-94, Draft on women's organisations, R. Ostermann, April 1948.
[62] Stoehr and Schmidt-Harzbach, 'Friedenspolitik und Kalter Krieg: Frauenverbände im Ost-West Konflikt', pp. 248-252.

freedom. The Berliner *Frauenbund* followed, especially after 1950 when von Zahn-Harnack was replaced by Hildegard Meißner as president. The formation of the *Deutscher Frauenring* in October 1949 forced both women's organisations in Berlin to cooperage. The Berliner *Frauenbund* asked the *Notgemeinschaft* to support their request to establish in the *Frauenring* a Committee for International Relations under its leadership. The *Notgemeinschaft* promised to help if the *Frauenbund* would support the establishment of a Committee for *'ostzonale Angelegenheiten'* under its auspices. The *'Ausschuss für gesamtdeutsche Fragen'* was constituted on 6 December 1949 in Berlin. It had 16 members, five from the *Staatsbürgerinnenverband*, five from the *Frauenbund* and six women from Western Germany, Nora Melle from the *Staatsbürgerinnenverband* becoming president. The main task of this Committee was to teach women in West Germany about the living conditions under Communist rule in East Germany. In November 1950 there was the first national conference in Berlin, sponsored by the West German government. When in end of 1950 opposition began against the planned remilitarization West Germany which was articulated in 1951 and 1952 at numerous *'Frauenfriedenskonferenzen'* (see above), political education was considered to be one of the most important element for the *Bundesministerium für Gesamtdeutsche Fragen*. The *Staatsbürgerinnenverband* from now on continuously received financial support for that purpose. Nora Melle was from 1951 until her death in 1959 also the chairman of the *Bonner Informationsdienst für Frauenfragen*.

The second conference for *'Gesamtdeutsche Fragen'* in January 1952 organised by the *Staatsbürgerinnenverband* and the *Berliner Frauenbund* chose as its topic the permanently increasing Communist infiltration of women's work in the West. They tried to show how so-called Peace Conferences were misused to mislead gullible women. The Conference, in which 50 women participated, drew up a 'strictly confidential' practical political guide for members and leaders of women's organisations of how to deal with the problem. A resolution was issued which called on the *Ministerpräsidents* of the *Länder* to establish a 'Women's Office' at the Home Ministries of the *Länder* to support women's organisations in the fight against communist infiltration. It advised against co-operation with organisations such as Women and Mothers of all Nations. In this way the middle-class women's organisations in Germany actively supported West-Integration and anti-Communism.

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[63] Ibid., p. 42.

Women's Affairs Section and pacifist organisation

The entire policy of the DFD in 1947 and 1948 was dominated by campaigns for peace. In these years the DFD initiated its biggest peace campaign of the post-war period - to ban the Atom bomb. This campaign served, as Stoehr has pointed out, in the end to support the Soviet delegation's claims at the UN at a time when the USA still had a monopoly of the atom bomb. The DFD collected nearly 5,5 million signatures.[64] Since peace was one of the topics with which the DFD attracted membership an indifferent approach to world peace in the midst of the Cold War did not seem appropriate to Women's Affairs, as Ostermann explained:

> It is a frightening thought what a dynamic personality (such as Dorothy Thompson, for example) could do in a short time in Germany. Western Union, European Alliance, Atlantic Charter, World Government, Mothers of the World Unite to Preserve Peace, these are some of the ill-defined aims which capture the imagination, largely because they are non-German.[65]

After the war the idea of a typical female pacifism reached a large public, evident in the formation of international women's organisations such as the *Movement Mondial des Meres (Mütterbund)* [66] and Women and Mothers of all Nations (WOMAN). The aims of WOMAN were chiefly to strengthen the United Nations so as to establish an effective world authority, able to act by majority, to prevent aggressive war, and so to control the atomic threat and to prevent rearmament for aggression. The organisation was founded in New York by Dorothy Thompson. A German Branch was established in Hamburg on the suggestion of the New York Headquarters with Vera Vermehren as the General Secretary. According to British reports the organisation

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[64] Ibid., pp. 233-235.
[65] PRO FO1030-94, Memorandum on Women's Affairs Section 1948-1949, by Ostermann and Evans, 14.7.1949.
[66] Irene Stoehr, 'Der Mütterkongreß fand nicht statt. Frauenbewegungen, Staatsmänner und Kalter Krieg 1950', *Werkstatt Geschichte*, 17 (1997), p. 67. In 1950 three organisations planned the first '*Mütterkongress*' in Berlin. A German group of the *Mouvement Mondial des Mères* (MMM) had been established in Bonn by Klara Maria Faßbinder. The German headquarters of WOMAN worked under the leadership of Vera Vermehren from 1948 in Hamburg. As representation of WOMAN and MMM in Berlin the *Mütter-Liga* was founded in 1949. Stoehr points out that the 'mother organisations' were founded during the Cold War and that the conservative middle-class organisations distrusted them. They were not invited to Bad Pyrmont 1949, when the *Frauenring* was established. In contrast to the 'traditional' moderate women's movement which saw 'motherliness' as a metaphor for the necessity that even childless women should get involved in politics; the post-war '*Mütterbewegung*' put its emphasis more on physical motherhood without being interested in question of education. Also civic education played no role in these organisations. And the '*Mütterbewegung*' propagated absolute priority of peace for women's policy. In 1949 adminstration in Berlin was totally sceptical towards the

appealed to middle-class women between 25 and 40 and was more inclined to the right than left. It was growing rapidly and engaged in various welfare projects, especially concerning with helping prisoners of war. In January 1949, the permission for the association was renewed by Military Government for the Hamburg group. WOMAN had been established in several cities in the British Zone, the only group in the US Zone existed in Frankfurt from May 1949.

In Berlin, however, the licensing of WOMAN (as with all women's organisations) had been delayed because all four powers had to agree and the blockade did not help the chances of a pacifist organisation being recognised. Elfriede Golbig, leader of a group of WOMAN in Berlin, complained bitterly about the situation in May 1949 to Ostermann.[67] Reluctant to support WOMAN, the British administration had asked Golbig in February 1948 to join a women's organisation which already existed, but she refused because in her eyes the *Notgemeinschaft* and the *Frauenbund* were non-political and she was attempting to form a political organisation. She also accused Zahn-Harnack of having made propaganda for Hitler. In May 1948 an organisation called *Mütterliga* had been formed in Berlin under the leadership of Frau Hahn and Women's Affairs suggested that Golbig might contact her. Golbig felt intimidated and claimed that Hahn's *Mütterliga* had adopted her own programme and had tried to win over the important members of her own group. Women's Affairs made no further intervention in this matter.

Women's Affairs' objections to WOMAN were clearly expressed in a letter by Elisabeth Holt, Women's Affairs Officer with OMGUS in May 1949. The organisation was viewed as one which appealed to sentimental right wing groups:

> The appeal, unless directed towards a constructive program, is so emotional and similar to the '*Frauenbewegung*' sponsored by the National Socialists as to give cause for concern. The program puts little emphasis on civic education for women, the necessity for women to assume thoughtful political responsibility, to correct social conditions in the community or to inform them of constructive social programs to improve conditions. It is unconstructive in that it draws the attention of women away from their role as responsible citizens with specific tasks in their community.
>
> Depending on the personalities found in the locality, parts of the program are being pursued energetically along social welfare lines. As in Hamburg, middle class women are actively sponsoring a program to improve conditions in the bunker dwellings. This is social welfare of a patch work variety with no attempt to alter basic conditions. It is impossible to judge as yet whether it will develop along political lines. Among its active members are persons known to have been

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'*Mütterbewegung*'.

[67] PRO FO1049-1844, Golbig to Ostermann, 1.5.1949.

> active in National Socialistic women's organizations. It is worthy of note that its program is similar to the propaganda issued by the *Demokratischer Frauenbund*, though there is no evidence that its leaders are in communication. Its principal danger is that it can become a peace movement which through emotional appeal lead women aside from the serious task of being informed citizens.[68]

This extract is interesting in several respects. Pacifist organisations were accused by (female) members of the British and American Military Government of being irrational and emotional and therefore dangerous. They were suspected of being right wing or even Fascist and Communist at the same time (in any case prone to totalitarianism). However, the allegations that the leader of WOMAN in Hamburg, Petra Vermehren, was a strong Nazi was examined and denied by Intelligence Division.[69] Welfare work done by these groups was denounced - in the same way as had been with *Frauenausschüsse* - as being 'patch work' not altering the basic conditions. To prove the contrary, WOMAN organised a West-East mother help, which made contacts between West and East German families. [70] Practical *'Mütterpolitik'* replaced the theory of *Mütterlichkeit*. Stoehr also indicates that Zahn-Harnack had a strong influence on the way WOMAN was judged by official German levels such as the *Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen*. In general the Women's Affairs Section's judgement of WOMAN was in agreement with Zahn-Harnack's views. Stoehr[71] has concluded that this form of anti-Communism (which she calls feminist anti-Communism) in the 1950s had a special distrust of *Mütterpolitik* because it led to

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[68] PRO FO1049-1845, World Organisation of Mothers of All Nations, by Elizabeth Holt, OMGUS, 25.5.1949.

[69] PRO FO1014-1248, Letter from PR/ISC Group HQ Berlin to Major-General Bishop, 24.11.47, HQ Lübbecke. Information about Mrs Vermehren. The letter confirmed that Vera Vermehren was a member of the NSDAP 'of long standing' and had also been a regular contributor to 'Das Reich' (Goebbel's newspaper) as its Lisbon correspondent. PR/ISC had been informed by Intelligence Division that Vermehren was under suspicion of having engaged in German espionage activities in Lisbon during the war. After her son's desertion to the British authorities in 1944 Mrs V. was recalled to Berlin and interned for a short time under the *Sippenhaft* rule, despite her own defence that she had been a loyal party member. This internment appeared to have gained her the reputation of a victim of fascism, to judge by the position she was holding in 1947 on the Hamburg Red Cross. 'her previous career suggests that this is a somewhat misplaced distinction'. In 1947 the licensing for her magazine *Europäischer Kurier* was postponed. PRO FO1049-1248 WOMAN in Hamburg, 28.8.1948. Intelligence Hamburg wrote: 'This office has no known security objection to any of these persons holding the posts as outlined.....Frau Petra Vermehren, the General Secretary, has a good record, and the occasional allegation that she was a strong Nazi would appear to be completely unfounded, according to her life-history, a copy of which is appended to this letter.'

[70] Stoehr, 'Der Mütterkongreß fand nicht statt. Frauenbewegungen, Staatsmänner und Kalter Krieg 1950', p. 77.

[71] Ibid.

ignorance of the differences between the political systems. The syndrome of 'ignorance' was more and more connected with the image of the 'unpolitical' woman who is led by her emotions and whose need for harmony and peace might prove dangerous. The word 'Gefühlspolitik' was used in this context particularly to single out women who sought some form of communication with the East without being Communist.

What seems to be equally important for the judgement of pacifist groups was their criticism of occupation policy. When Dorothy Thompson visited Germany in 1949 she made a great impression on the Germans and also gave a clearer (and more positive) idea to Women's Affairs Officers of what her organisation was about.[72] However, shortly afterwards, in June 1949, a telegram from Washington informed the British Foreign Office of an article by Dorothy Thompson written on her visit to the Ruhr area which criticised the policy of dismantling (a big-business conspiracy) and the treatment of German trade unions. [73]

Other pacifist organisations, for example the *Liga für Frieden und Freiheit*, were viewed in the same way. The unease which the international organisation (WILPF) caused within the German Department has already been noted in chapter 2. The German Branch of the organisation was first re-established in Hamburg in November 1945 by Magda Hoppstock-Huth, a member of the SPD. The organisation stood to the left politically although it included members of all political parties. The basic aim of the WILPF was international co-operation between women for peace, which also included co-operation with Soviet women. Hoppstock-Huth had an influential supporter in Ellen Wilkinson, Minister of Education in the Labour Government at the time, and herself a member of the WILPF. In January 1946 Hoppstock-Huth had written to Wilkinson asking to speed up the legislation for the organisation in the British Zone. Wilkinson visited Hamburg in February 1946, and recommended the German group to Military Government. In March 1946 the organisation was legalised. Together with Zahn-Harnack and Bähnisch, Hoppstock-Huth was one of the first guests invited to the UK by the British Council of Women in winter 1946. Hoppstock-Huth was invited to the first meeting after the war of the Executive Committee of the WILPF in Geneva in July 1948. In 1949 at the Congress in Copenhagen the German section of the organisation was able to restore communion with the WILPF after an absence of 17 years.

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[72] PRO FO1051-88, Sixth Conference of Women's Affairs Officers, Impression on the visit of Dorothy Thompson, 1.7.1949.
[73] PRO FO1049-1845, Dorothy Thompson writing from Essen, published in *Washington*

In 1946 German delegates to the Luxembourg Congress of the WILPF were refused travel documents by the British authorities so they could not attend.[74] The *Frauenliga für Frieden und Freiheit* was suspected of having Communist leanings.[75] Hoppstock-Huth was a guest of honour at the inaugural conference of the Berlin DFD in March 1948. Therefore she was denied a visa to the United States in January 1949 by the British administration because 'as a result of her participation in SED inspired manoeuvres in Berlin, Hoppstock-Huth presence in the political life of Hamburg was decidedly delicate'.[76] It was felt that any major Military Government assistance to Frau Hoppstock-Huth might have had unfortunate repercussions upon British relations with Hamburg SPD.

With the onset of the Cold War women's organisations were used by the occupying forces for propaganda purposes. The Russians seemed more successful in this. The *Demokratischer Frauenbund Deutschlands* in the Russian Zone soon had a membership of half a million, international recognition with its affiliation to the Women's International Democratic Federation and the organisation even guaranteed women political representation in the People's Congress. The DFD not only attracted and motivated the masses of women with the agreeable objectives of peace and reconstruction, it occupied also other 'political' or even feminist issues such as the demands for equal rights for women and equal pay for equal work. This was certainly difficult to counter. The major difference was that in the West 'peace' was claimed to be based on personal freedom of the individual. There seemed no successful attempt to define a role for women in a democratic society which was as equally attractive as the role proclaimed by the DFD in its early years.

All British policy activities undertaken in respect to German women have to be seen against the background of 're-education', and, in particular, as a reaction to any activities in the Russian Zone. Two policies emerged out of this situation: Firstly, women in the Western part of Germany had to be more intensively educated in democratic citizenship. In fact, most of the initiatives of Women's Affairs Section as described in the following chapters such as lectures by British visitors in civic

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Evening Star on 14.6.1949; Telegram from Washington, 16.6.1949.

[74] Gertrud Bussey and Margaret Tims, Pioneers for Peace. Women's International League for Peace and Freedom 1915-1965 (London, 1965), p. 182.

[75] PRO FO1013-2230, Youard to Mrs Roach, Education Branch, 18.6.1948.

[76] PRO FO1049-1245, Intelligence Hamburg to Mrs Lee, 12.1.1949. It was reported that Hoppstock-Huth was invited to resign 'voluntarily' from the SPD but she refused. She agreed, however, to the suggestion of the SPD *Vorstand* that she contribute a suitably contrite article to the *Hamburger Echo* in the form of an apologia for her activities in Berlin.

education, Adoption Schemes and Exchange Programmes started in spring/summer 1947 when, following the foundation of the DFD, more money was made available from British funds for such purposes. Secondly, the DFD and all organisations which were prepared to co-operate with the DFD alongside pacifist organisations had to be banned or limited in their activities. Hand in hand with the ban of the DFD went the encouragement of all other non-political or professional women's groups but especially of efforts 'to combine, coordinate and cooperate among themselves'. Here Women's Affairs focussed on one umbrella organisation in particular, the *Frauenring*.

5. The British contribution to the rise of the *Deutscher Frauenring*

The attitude of Women's Affairs towards the 'old' German women's movement

One women's group in particular in the British Zone received the support and encouragement of Civic Development Section/Women's Affairs Section from the beginning: the *Klub Deutscher Frauen* in Hanover. This group became the nucleus of an umbrella organisation for non-partisan women's organisation first in the British Zone and later, with the establishment of the *Deutscher Frauenring*, on a national level. The *Frauenring* was chiefly the project of one very ambitious and energetic woman, Theanolte Bähnisch (1899-1973), a lawyer who had been appointed Regierungspräsidentin of Hanover by the British Commander of the town, Brigadier Hume. This chapter follows the development of the *Klub Deutscher Frauen* into the *Deutscher Frauenring*. It sets out to examine especially why this organisation had been supported by the British Military Government and with what success.

The *Klub Deutscher Frauen* was founded as the successor of the *Bund Deutscher Frauenvereine* (BDF) which was the umbrella organisation for women's organisations in Germany up to 1933. In the early 20th century middle-class German women had developed a radical feminist edge, focussing on issues of sexual emancipation and advocating state support for unmarried mothers. However, after World War I the revised programme of the BDF did not champion women's emancipation, emphasising instead the institution of the family and an 'appropriate' sexual division of labour. Gone was the demand for state support for unmarried mothers and their children, gone were the demands for sexual emancipation and a new sexual ethics promoted by the *Bund für Mutterschutz*.[1] Under Gertrud Bäumer's successors as president of the BDF Marianne Weber (1919-1931) and Agnes von Zahn-Harnack (1931-1933) the organisation drifted

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[1] In contrast to the British National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship which campaigned from 1925 together with other non-feminist women's organisations for child allowances for mothers the German women's movement did not. Family allowance, as an income supplement for workers, was granted in a few industries after World War I, on the French model of equalization funds, it met the opposition of a strong section of the trade union movement and did not survive inflation and depression., Irene Stoehr, 'Housework and Motherhood: Debates and Policies in the Women's Movement in Imperial Germany and the Weimar Republic', in Gisela Bock and Pat Thane, eds. *Maternity and Gender Policies: Women the the Rise of the*

to the right. Characteristically, Zahn-Harnack's 1928 historical account of the German women's movement almost totally ignored the radical wing of feminism which had long since been expelled from the BDF because of their anti-war agitation and internationalist stance during wartime.

In the 1920s the expanding member unions of the BDF were the economic pressure groups or professional groups.[2] Predominant were the *Reichsverband der deutschen Hausfrauenvereine* with ca 200,000 members in 1931 and the *Verband Landwirtschaftlicher Hausfrauenvereine* for rural housewives numbering perhaps 90,000. These economic pressure groups had the greatest influence within the BDF. It meant that the focus of attention of the BDF's constituent groups moved away from rights towards interests, even though the rights had not been granted and the interests could sometimes be in conflict with each other. The BDF's most persistent efforts were directed towards combating sexual libertinism, pornography, abortion, venereal diseases, advertisements for contraceptives and the double standard of sexual morality. The BDF continued to demand in its programme the reform of the marriage provision of the Civil Code, full equality for women in education and the professions and equal pay for equal work. But it never campaigned actively for these aims. The BDF had preserved its own existence by reducing its practical demands to a minimum and by refraining from indulging in politically-controversial campaigns for the equality of sexes. The adoption of the *Volksgemeinschaft* idea was evidence of the BDF's deeply felt need to place itself above the party-political struggle if it was to survive as an independent organisation and at the same time avoid being torn apart by the internal party-political dissension. The BDF preserved apparent unity and respectability at the price of political ineffectiveness. The programme of the BDF after the First World War was drawn up under the guidance of Gertrud Bäumer and remained in force until 1933. The special civic tasks of women were seen in the maintenance of German unity, in the promotion of internal peace, and in 'the conquest of social, confessional and political antagonism through the spirit of self-sacrifice', a sense of civic duty and a strong, unified national consciousness.

This outline of the development of the BDF after World War I mirrors the critical attitudes Post-war historians have taken towards it. [3] Evans takes the programme as an

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European Welfare States, 1880s - 1950s (London, 1991), p. 229.
[2] For this and the following see Evans, *The Feminist Movement in Germany 1894-1933*, p. 230.
[3] Ibid. In contrast see Irene Stoehr, 'Mütterfeminismus - ein alter Hut? Die Frauenbewegung und die Mütterfrage seit der Jahrhundertwende', in Pass-Weingartz and Gisela Erler, eds. *Mütter an die Macht* (Reinbeck, 1989), and "Organisierte Mütterlichkeit'. Zur Politik der deutschen

indication that the BDF had little understanding of the parliamentary system and rejected party politics as divisive and unpatriotic. The aim of the BDF was to unite women of all parties in exerting 'motherly' influence over society. Although the British Military Government was concerned that the women's movement in post-war Germany should not develop too closely along the lines of before 1933, it was never particularly explicit about it. However, the spirit of self-sacrifice, the promotion of internal peace and the sense of civic duty were certainly not among the features of the BDF that were criticised by the British.

In fact, all the critical points Evans listed for the BDF were on the wish list of the British occupation forces in respect to a German women's umbrella organisation: the preference of economic interest groups such as *Hausfrauen* and *Landfrauen* (instead of explicitly political groups), the consent of party-political and religious antagonism, and even the union of women of all parties in exerting a 'motherly' influence over society. The acceptance of the latter idea is less surprising if we remember that in all European countries a concept of 'spiritual' or 'extended' motherhood had been developed that empowered women as mothers to act throughout the society and claim a significant role in their nation.[4]

The BDF had been dissolved by the president Zahn-Harnack in 1933 shortly before it would have been forced by the Nazis to do so. Gertrud Bäumer continued to publish her magazine *Die Frau*, the official organ of the BDF from 1921 almost to the end of the Third Reich.[5] The Nazi scheme of compulsory service for women in the war effort was welcomed by Bäumer as a fulfilment of the old idea of a 'Women's Year of Service' first mooted by the women's movement before the First World War.[6] (As I will show later, this idea was repeated after the war by leading German educationalists and accepted by CCG.) The National Socialist Mother's Service and the Nazi Laws for the protection of mothers enacted in 1942 were given a similar welcome. The attitude Bäumer adopted in *Die Frau* and other publications she issued in the years 1933-1945 got her into trouble with the Allies after the war ended. Together with the DFB the International League for Peace and Freedom 1947/48 publicly denounced Bäumer's attitude during the First and Second World War. The British censors banned the

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Frauenbewegung um 1900', in Karin Hausen, ed., *Frauen suchen ihre Geschichte. Historische Studien zum 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Munich, 1983).

[4] Karin Offen, *European Feminismsm, 1700-1950: A Political History* (Stanford, 2000), p299.

[5] Evans, The Feminist Movement in Germany 1894-1933, p. 261.

[6] Also British Military Government was in favour of the introduction of the *Pflichtjahr* for girls according to this model after 1945.

publication of her books because of their militaristic nature.

British officers concerned with women's affairs did not know much about Bäumer anyway. One of the anecdotes in Deneke's memoirs is about a meeting at Göttingen on 29 August 1946, called to start a *Frauenring*, where she and Jeanne Gemmel were present. Deneke's chief recollection of this meeting was that she had to cope with 'a fiery, dark-eyed woman' next to her, a socialist, who was enraged by some remarks of Dr Bäumer's about election experiences and was always on the edge of making 'some misplaced and rather coarse attacks'. Deneke was surprised that her repeated 'This is an old lady and a guest' quelled the troublemaker. She admitted that she was not aware at the time of the great esteem in which Dr Bäumer was held for her feminist conviction and her writings, but she felt it was a good thing to have held an angry woman back.[7]

Women's Affairs Section was tolerant in the Bäumer case saying that it tried to avoid political involvement at any rate. In April 1948 Ostermann wrote to Ursula Lee, Education Branch Hamburg, who had asked for advice on how to deal with the attack made by the Hamburg Headquarters of the WLPF against Bäumer:

> I have discussed the matter with Frau Ulich-Beil and Frau v. Zahn-Harnack, who both knew her well and while they do not agree on the course she adopted under the Nazis, they both maintain that she is a very outstanding woman of great personal integrity.
>
> As far as I can gather, she continued to publish her magazine for women under the Nazis by compromising wherever possible on those things which were not of first-rate importance, in order to retain the means of expressing an opinion on things which were vital. Thus, for instance, she supported the *Arbeitsdienst* for girls and various other measures introduced by the Nazis, at the same time writing and lecturing on very controversial subjects at considerable risk to herself. As she pointed out in an exchange of letters published in the "*Tagesspiegel*" last year (I believe) Sophie Scholl, the young girl student who was executed with her brother for anti-Nazi propaganda, had also been a member of the B.D.M. and it was young people such as these to whom she had addressed her articles.

Ostermann found:

> It is the old conflict of whether the individual should compromise at all with what he or she rejects in principle, in order to maintain some measure of freedom for their own ideas, or whether they should go into absolute opposition. I gathered that Frau Ulich-Beil took one point of view and Frau von Zahn-Harnack the other and judged Gertrud Bäumer accordingly.

Ostermann was further informed that Bäumer had been denazified and was free to

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[7] Bodleian Library, Deneke papers, The women of Germany, vol 2, p. 50.

pursue any activities she chose. The fact that she was targeted by the left-wing press was sufficient reason for Ostermann to take a neutral stand in the matter:

> I am fully aware that she is the target of attacks in the Soviet-licensed press and just because of this I think we should maintain a neutral attitude in what is after all a purely German concern. I believe that women like Frau Hoppstock-Huth are genuinely distressed that we do not take sides in the matter, but they will all have to learn to make their own decisions and accept responsibility without expecting us to intervene. If Gertrud Bäumer were boycotted on all sides by all German women's associations because of her political past, we could do nothing either, and to ask us to support a campaign against her seems to me unrealistic. [8]

The letter shows that Women's Affairs was willing to accept and did not question any attempt of self-defence made by leaders of the 'old' women's movement. Debates between the Right and the Left were considered to be a political quarrel and a purely German concern of no interest for the British side. Ostermann even accepted that Bäumer herself aligned her writings with the actions of war resisters during the Nazi era. The letter also reveals that Zahn-Harnack and Ulich-Beil in Berlin served as advisers to Women's Affairs Headquarters in many questions, especially about how to judge allies and opponents of their own women's organisation.

The Klub Deutscher Frauen *in Hanover*

The women's group the British fostered from the beginning was not the *Frauenbund* Zahn-Harnack established in Berlin and which had 30 members in summer 1946 (according to Miss Cowans's report)[9] and not much chance for growth at the time, but the group around Theanolte Bähnisch in Hanover. Bähnisch, only in Hanover for a few weeks, sought contact to interested women and together they worked out a programme for a new organisation published in the local daily newspaper on 7 June 1946. She recalled in 1960, that one of her major motivations to found the *Klub Deutscher Frauen* was fear of Communism.[10] In Hanover leading women of the *Frauenliga für Frieden und Freiheit* whom Bähnisch suspected to be Communists, had started to establish a *Frauenausschuss* to which her new organisation was to offer an alternative. Interesting

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[8] PRO FO1013-2227, R. Ostermann to U. Lee, 14.4.1948 .
[9] PRO FO1050-1210, Report on visit to certain parts of the British Zone, by Miss Cowan, September 1946.
[10] Bähnisch, 'Vom Wiederaufbau der Frauenarbeit nach dem Zusammenbruch 1945. Vortrag zum 10jährigen Bestehen des Deutschen Frauenrings', p. 162; Barbara Henicz and Margrit Hirschfeld, 'Von der Frauenbewegung zur Organisation der Frauen. Die ersten Frauenzusammenschlüsse', in Annette Kuhn, ed., *Frauen in der deutschen Nachkriegszeit* (Düsseldorf, 1986), p. 127.

enough, one of the founding members of the group, Elfriede Paul, was a Communist. Bähnisch's second wish was to support women who were seeking her advice in all sort of problems and who assumed that she - in her distinguished administrative position - was the right person to help.

The arrangements for the formation of the *Klub Deutscher Frauen* had been discussed with Jeanne Gemmel of the Committee on German Women's Education at a adult education conference in Hanover, at a time when Civic Development Section was not yet fully established. [11] Thus the initiators of the *Klub* could be sure of the encouragement of British Military Government. By June 1946 non-political organisations no longer needed a licence; new foundations only had to be registered after a constitution had been agreed. The *Klub Deutscher Frauen* intended to be a non-political organisation with an interest in the civic education of women.[12] Gemmel had met at conferences representatives of another 'school' of education for women, especially strong in the Catholic Rhineland which advocated *'Spinnen und Weben'* as the proper pursuits for *'veredelte sittliche Frauen'* and who talked of *'das große Anliegen des Mannes'* compared with the humbler domestic role of women and of saving women from '*die Technik'*. Gemmel found such 'ideas' hard to bear.[13] Bähnisch seemed to her therefore a much better alternative.

One reason for choosing Theanolte Bähnisch as a partner for Women's Affairs policy was certainly her position as *Regierungspräsidentin*, which made her exceptional in the whole British Zone, and a showpiece for British propaganda to help women into positions of local government and administration,[14] as well as her having a certain amount of influence and power. She was undoubtedly one of the better-known personalities in Lower Saxony. The second advantage might have been that Hanover was not far from Bünde, the Headquarters of Education Branch in 1946. This allowed for interested British officers like Gemmel and Davies to have easy contact and control over the developments in Hanover.

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[11] PRO FO1050-1299, Invitation by Elfriede Paul, Hanover, to Miss Gemmel, Gründung einer Frauenorganisation, 7.6.1946.
[12] Dr Anne Franken, Headmistress of a girl's school in Düsseldorf, CDU member, ex-member of the Landtag who later became a prominent member of the *Frauenring Düsseldorf*.
[13] Bodleian Library, Deneke papers, Box 22, Report by Gemmel on Education Conference in Erlangen on 13 to 15 September 1946. At this conference Dr Franken spoke on the political re-education of women.
[14] *Regierungspräsident* was a level of administration between *Land* and local government in the larger *Länder*. Regierungspräsidents had supervising authority for local government. Ebsworth, *Restoring Democracy in Germany. The British Contribution*, p. 126.

Davies of the Committee on German Women's Education was present at the inaugural meeting. She was quite critical about shortcomings in the conduct of this meeting such as the unpunctual beginning and the failure to secure rooms for future group meetings. Bähnisch also promised a periodical for which there was no paper. She obviously relied on Military Government 'to do the hack work in connection with the latter two points', as Davies noted. Furthermore, there were no officers at this meeting and no questions were invited at close of speeches. Despite this not very promising start, which, however, reflected the difficulties German women in general had with the conduct of democratic meetings, some weeks later Davies supported the idea of a talk about the *Frauenklub Hanover* on the radio.[15] She suggested to Broadcasting Section of CCG that this be an entirely German talk, that Bähnisch's presentation should be concise and to the point and that practical details such as accommodation for club meetings and means of advertising meetings should be included. This seems to indicate that very early on the *Klub Deutscher Frauen* was considered by Education Branch to be a suitable model to be copied by women in other towns.

The inaugural meeting of the *Klub* stood under the motto: Where are you going, German woman? (*Wohin geht dein Weg, deutsche Frau?*). Bähnisch called on women to mobilise all their forces for reconstruction work. The *Klub Deutscher Frauen* attempted to make the maternal strength productive for reconstruction ('*brachliegende mütterliche Kräfte produktiv machen*').[16] 'Motherliness' was able to become a dominant idea after 1945 because many of the leaders of women's organisations were elderly, educated, middle-class women who came from the 1920's women's movement. To counter the myth that women had brought Hitler to power another myth was created, according to which National Socialism was the rule of the male principle in politics. The fact that the regime had opened up for women opportunities and assured for the first time that it publicly recognised the special value of motherhood was mostly ignored.

What was the programme of the *Klub Deutscher Frauen*? Peace and the special role of the wife and mother were the two main topics at the inaugural meeting on 18 June 1946, both suitable to bring women of different backgrounds together. Bähnisch

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[15] PRO FO1050-1299, Wireless talk on *Club Deutscher Frauen* Hanover, letter by E.Davies to Miss Owen, ISC Branch, Broadcasting Section, 4.7.1946.
[16] Barbara Henicz and Margrit Hirschfeld, 'Der Club deutscher Frauen in Hannover', in Annette Kuhn, ed., *Frauen in der deutschen Nachkriegszeit* (Düsseldorf, 1986), p. 128.

pointed out in her speech that women in Germany were now at the crossroads.[17] Being the majority of the German population, women would have to work and play a decisive role in the impending elections. She emphasised that no women's party was envisaged, but full co-operation of men and women. The task before the *Klub* was to lay the foundations of a true peace and 'the high priestesses of a true peace would be the role of the woman'. Had German women but united to alleviate distress, Hitler might never have come to power. The task of German women was to bring home to their children the conviction that war is an abomination. The *Klub* would be a *Frauenfriedensfront* and its aims included the recruitment of members from all walks of life - the farmer's wife, the woman from the small town, the woman from the bombed city. Bähnisch's speech was greeted with lukewarm applause, according to Davies. The speeches made at this meeting prove how close the ideas of the initiators of the *Klub* and British in respect to the role of woman as citizen and educators to their children were.[18]

This was confirmed by Dr Elfriede Paul[19], one of the three speakers at the inaugural meeting who asked 'What do German women really want?'. Hanover, she answered, did not want a political women's party, such as that recently formed in Hamburg and whose short history to date was one of chaos. What the *Klub Deutscher Frauen* wanted was to revive the former women's movement in Germany. German women owed to the pioneers of this movement the fact that they had the vote at all. They had to keep themselves free from all tendency to Fascism. Elfriede Paul also turned to the question of how the *Klub* would work. First, lively discussion was essential. The public must realise that the *Klub* existed. Working parties would be formed and these would be led by experts in the fields of housing, food, help for refugees etc. The first task was to help the needy.

British officers were less impressed by philosophical discourses which contained

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[17] PRO FO1050-1299, Report on Inaugural Meeting of German Women's Club held in Hanover at 1900 hours on 18 June 1946, by E. Davies.

[18] See chapter 1.

[19] Elfriede Paul (1900-1981) was for a short time the second president of the *Klub Deutscher Frauen*. Before the war she had been a teacher for some years and headmistress of an orphanage. Later she studied medicine and became a doctor in the welfare sector in Berlin. Since 1921 she was a member of the KPD and she was also a member of the *Rote Kapelle* resistance group. In 1942 she was imprisoned and set free by the Allies in 1945. In 1945 she worked as a doctor near Hanover and was a leading figure in the Red Cross. From August 1946 she was minister for reconstruction, work and welfare in Lower Saxony and worked in the *Landesvorstand* of the KPD. In 1947 she left Hanover and became a member of the central administration of public health (Zenralverwaltung des Gesundheitswesens) in Berlin (Henicz and Hirschfeld, 'Der Club deutscher Frauen in Hannover', p. 134.(note 8).

no practical considerations, as Anna Mosolf's speech.[20] Mosolf referred to Ricarda Huch's book '*Entpersönlichung*' which found that the machine was primarily to blame: life had been forgotten, because achievements counted for everything. One aspect, however, remained unsullied, and this was the relationship between mother and child. Maternal strength was not lacking in the structure of the world. Frau Mosolf then demanded: 'Let's take our place in politics' (terrific applause). And with a hint to the numerical strength of women she continued that two-thirds of the electorate were women and their choice lay between co-operating or becoming victims. The name of Germany must be raised from the mud and this could partially be achieved when the women of Germany united with women of other countries.

There are no indications that Women's Affairs Officers shared these ideas about the special responsibilities of women in public affairs drawn from the idea of 'motherliness'. However, to Jeanne Gemmel apparently it was a reasonable starting point in rebuilding German women's organisations. Women's Affairs was not aware that the idea of 'motherliness' which placed German women in an ideal world community of women who all fell victim to the war helped to escape responsibility and provided an easy way out of avoiding unpleasant questions.

The *Klub Deutscher Frauen* in Hanover was immediately recognised as follow-on organisation of the *Bund Deutscher Frauenvereine* in the British Zone by the British Council of Women. Bähnisch had left no doubt about her intention to start an organisation which would spread on a national scale and that Hanover would be the future headquarters. Minna Cowan, the president of the British National Council of Women, who was on a lecture tour in the British Zone in summer 1946, was invited by the Education Officer Veronica Williams to attend one of the first meetings of the *Klub*. Cowan, who also had conversations with Agnes von Zahn-Harnack in Berlin and with Gertrud Bäumer, addressed the *Klub Deutscher Frauen* at a meeting attended by 300 women including Helena Deneke and Betty Norris.[21] Women's Affairs like Miss Cowan assumed that the *Klub Deutscher Frauen* would develop on the lines of the National Council of Women (NCW) in Britain. In the NCW practical work was organised

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[20] Ibid. Anna Mosolf (1895-1974) came from the 'old' middle-class women's movement and was one of the founders of the *Klub* and edited together with Bähnisch *Die Stimme der Frau*. After the war she was member of the FDP and worked as *Schulrätin* and later as *Referentin* in the *Kultusministerium* of Lower Saxony. From 1949 to 1952 was she member of the Board of the *Frauenring*.

[21] PRO FO1050-1210, Report on visit to certain parts of the British Zone by Miss Cowan,

through sub-committees on certain fields such as education, public health, child welfare, cinemas, moral welfare etc. which advised the executive to approach government departments or local authorities. The British National Council of Women represented the view of educated middle-class women. Throughout the 1930s individual membership of the Council in England and Wales was estimated at 14,300. In addition the NCW in Britain united a wide variety of women's organisations (16 in post-war years) with an interest in social welfare. The British NCW had 68 Branches which operated much in the same way as the headquarters. The organisation played a major part in encouraging women to come forward and undertake public work in local councils and committees, while the steady educational work carried out by means of lectures, conferences and discussion groups helped to train women for their responsibilities as citizens.

The constitution of the *Klub Deutscher Frauen Hanover* included the following aims: 1. To establish permanent peace; 2. To relieve suffering of body and soul; 3. To put family life on a more healthy basis, 4. To awaken the feeling of human dignity and to cultivate national pride; 5. To get women to take greater part in public and social life and to counteract the lack of spiritual uplift and superficiality; 6. To work in comradeship and seek equal rights between men and women; 7. To exchange views and ideas with women of other countries.

Numbers of membership for the *Klub Deutscher Frauen* in Hanover are difficult to obtain. According to Heinicz and Hirschfeld between 50 and 120 women attended larger meetings.[22] Most of the members of the *Klub* were active in other organisations as well; political parties, trade unions or welfare organisations. A Central Committee of 15 women was formed, who became at the same time chairwomen of the sub-committees. Deneke was shocked by the fact that Bähnisch, while aiming at democracy, had nominated her Committee. She however soon remembered how in early days, with a clear field and no settled tradition, something of this kind had been necessary at home in starting a women's society in villages where such things had been unheard of. Bähnisch agreed that ballot-elections were right for the future.[23]

The sub-committees of the *Klub* were formed to carry out the scheme for matters of health, housing, of advice on household matters, refugees, questions of employment and education. The Central Committee met once a month to co-ordinate the work of the

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President of the National Council of Women in Great Britain, 7.9.1946.
[22] Henicz and Hirschfeld, 'Der Club deutscher Frauen in Hannover', p. 134, footnote 21.
[23] Bodleian Library, Deneke papers,The Women of Germany, vol 2, p. 31.

various sub-committees and to discuss future plans. Sub-committees were staffed by professional experts who were mostly employed in administrative posts. Their influence on administration worked basically through their informal contacts. This form of political influence excluded women from active participation who did not have such connections, so that the connection to the membership on the ground got more and more lost. Working class women were more and more pushed aside and the *Klub* finally appeared, despite the claim to include women of all walks of life, as representative of middle-class women. Bähnisch demanded that papers given at conferences be handed in for her check beforehand. Disputes were not fought in the open. The *Klub Deutscher Frauen* and later the *Frauenring* was anxious to make the organisation appear seamless and conflict-free.

What did the *Klub* do? Foremost there were regular informal meetings, lectures and consultation hours (*Sprechstunden für gesundheitliche und familienrechtliche Fragen für alle Frauen*). The *Klub* provided courses on diet, cooking, the making of toys and children's clothes etc. At irregular intervals lectures were given by *Klub* members or guests on such topics as for example Paragraph 218 (concerning the legal regulation of abortion) and employment of women. In May 1947 a course was announced and started with two lectures on the 'Importance of political thinking of women' and about the municipal code (*Gemeindeordnung*). Whether the series continued and with what topics could not be ascertained by Henicz and Hirschfeld; there were no further announcements in the local press.

Bähnisch published a magazine *Die Stimme der Frau*, beginning in June 1948. The purpose of this magazine as proposed in the first number was to 'make the voice of women heard'. The number of articles dealing with political topics diminished after the first few issues. The emphasis shifted to questions of fashion, housework, psychological help with the complicated living conditions in cramped accommodation and problems of the relationship between the sexes. All in all the organisation seemed to be concerned mostly with education, but it also got involved in local - and later national - politics by sending resolutions to appropriate bodies.

The formation of the Frauenring der Britischen Zone *in June 1947*

In June 1947 the *Frauenring der Britischen Zone* was established with support of British Military Government. Bähnisch, who had argued at the Conference of *Frauenausschüsse* in Aachen in April 1947 that an union of *Frauenausschüsse* in only

one Zone was not desirable and that the movement had to grow from its small beginnings, initiated some weeks later a union of women's committees which followed the model of the *Klub Deutscher Frauen*.

Four weeks earlier, from 20 to 23 May 1947, the first inter-zonal women's conference had been called at the instigation of British and American Military Government at Bad Boll near Stuttgart in the American Zone. The Western Allies desired an interzonal organisation to combat the influence of the *Demokratischer Frauenbund Deutschlands* in the Western territories. The reception given to the Soviet Zone delegates of the DFD, three of whom came uninvited, was very cold, and they were permitted to speak only for a few minutes.[24] The representatives of the 42 organisations present, unable to find an agreement to form an interzonal organisation, instead issued a resolution asking for help with the 're-education' of German women by the Anglo-American occupation forces.

The conference at Bad Pyrmont in June 1947 was to serve as a declaration of policy and as a moment for federating all '*Frauenringe*' in the British Zone. The *Klub Deutscher Frauen* had merged into the Lower Saxony *Frauenring* uniting all *Frauenringe* in the region. For Bad Pyrmont Bähnisch had called representatives of all women's groups in the British Zone with individual membership. Six hundred women delegates were present, among them Frau Durand-Wever, president of the DFD.[25] Resolutions were passed demanding that women should be allowed to take part in the preparation of the constitution of the *Länder*, that more consideration should be paid to women filling positions in the public service, equal pay for equal work, and acknowledgement of women's rights to work whether married or not. A temporary executive was appointed and the task of drawing up a statute of the *Frauenring* was given to a special committee.

Representatives of the US and of the British Military Government were invited and Ostermann and Miss Cameron gave speeches. International guests were Deneke, representing the Women's Groups on Public Welfare, Cowan from the National Council of Women and Lady Nurnburnholme for the International Council of Women (both

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[24] British Women's Affairs Officers in the Regions seem to have been merely badly informed of what was going on in Bad Boll. Jacobs from Berlin sent an article from *Der Tagesspiegel* of 30 May to Evans and Ostermann and asked whether Political and Education Branch had any further information about this conference (PRO FO1050-1215, Women's Meeting in Bad Boll, letter by Jacobs, 5.6.1947).

[25] Research Department report gives the number of delegates as 400. PRO FO1049-1246,

travelled at their own expense). Women's Affairs felt that the organisation would only achieve success if it appeared to be a totally German-inspired movement. Deneke remembered later that CCG officers thought it desirable to avoid speeches on the part of the English guests, because the English were much criticised in Germany and officers anticipated the possibility of an outburst 'at a time when nerves were frayed and control difficult'.[26] Despite these worries, Lady Nurnburnholme and Miss Cowan both made speeches. Of the latter Deneke wrote: 'I can still see her mounting the platform with fiery assurance and can see the amused surprise in the face of the political officer as Miss Cowan plunged into an oration of good will in a mixture of tongues.' Cowan used the opportunity to offer help from the British Council of Women and Lady Nurnburnholme informed the audience that the International Council of Women invited the *Frauenring* to take part in the upcoming conference in Philadelphia.

This was certainly a promising start for the new zonal organisation. Ostermann emphasised the outstanding advantage of the *Frauenring* having international contacts. Invitations to foreign countries mostly went out to welfare workers, teachers, churchwomen, trade unionists and professional women as individuals and to the groups they represented. They were not extended to members of political parties. This in itself justified the supra-party organisation from a wider point of view.

The major advantage of a zonal organisation was, however, its role in combating the DFD, as Ostermann underlined. The knowledge that there was another large organisation in the West professing democratic principles barred the way to the easy onrush of the DFD. Women who were anxious 'to pool their easy efforts and who felt that the difficult economic and social questions could best be influenced by concerted and co-operative action hesitated to join the *Demokratischer Frauenbund* as it no longer was the only organisation in existence'. Meanwhile other groups such as influential church organisations, the country women's associations and the professional associations were able to develop their resources and programmes without hindrance from an overpowering and politically-biased organisation. [27]

Deneke's private notes give some impressions of the atmosphere of the Conference and emphasise the British view that the outstanding figures of this organisation had been resistance fighters during the Nazi period:

Women's Organisations in the Soviet, British and US Zone, March 1948.

[26] Bodleian Library, Deneke papers, Box 18, Report on her first tour.

[27] PRO FO1049-1847, Political Development leading to Deutscher Frauenkongress in Bad Pyrmont 7 - 10 October 1949, by Rita Ostermann, 26.10.1949.

> There were strongly contrasted personalities. Frau Bähnisch, dynamic, determined with a clear grasp of issues. Striking too was Frau Petersen,[28] who had been obliged to flee from Hitler, had shared the hardship of refugees, and showed herself to be an idealist with no shame in human nature though she had seen it also at its worst. (...) Frau Dr Lüders, a brilliant speaker, appeared in the character of a spirited war horse, she had been imprisoned under Hitler and would never refrain from standing up for her ideals (...) Vikarin Daasch's phrase sticks in my mind, it is 'innere Gastlichkeit' that must be learnt by each woman, she will certainly be required to receive strangers in her overcrowded house, she may have to lay aside the habit of being chief in the family when her husband returns to his rightful place after the war. Baronin von Knigge told of her own decision to work for refugees. She was standing by the roadside with her little daughter holding her child's hand as a band of wretched men marched by, men starved to the bone... who tramped homewards from Russia, the child pulled at her mother's hand excitedly. 'Mutter, du musst helfen'...She was then chief director of Women's Work in the German Red Cross for Hanover.[29]

There were, however, also some critical points to be made. Firstly, there was no obvious common basis for all the different groups which were invited to join the *Frauenring*. Ostermann recognised this fact but viewed this to be a positive aspect. A variety of subjects were touched on by the speakers such as the problem of refugees and the problem of readjustment of Prisoners of War to their families, which remained difficulties.[30] Ostermann hoped the *Frauenring* as a Zonal organisation could be an instrument for the representation of public opinion upwards, i.e. to the Military Government, and for influencing the public opinion downwards, through various organisations represented within it, which in turn would embrace a larger proportion of the female population. [31] At present there were no means for the public expression of women's views other than an occasional article in the press, which was usually directed by party considerations. And while their views do not necessarily differ in principle from those of men, there were a number of problems which concerned women more directly and should be considered by them, Ostermann found. Such questions as equal pay and domestic workers' wage rates were already being debated by the trade unions

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[28] Katharina Petersen, a Quaker and former school teacher in Kiel, lived in exile in Holland where she had a school for the children of German emigrés. After the war she was working in the *Kultusministerium* in the position of a *Ministerialrätin* with Dr Grimme in Hanover. She was later a leading official in the Hannover Ministry of Education. After Bähnisch's retirement she became President of the *Klub Deutscher Frauen* in Hanover. Henicz and Hirschfeld, 'Der Club deutscher Frauen in Hannover', p. 134 (footnote 16).

[29] Bodleian Library, Deneke papers, Box 18.

[30] PRO FO1050-1207, Report on recent women's conferences at Bad Pyrmont and Fürth, by Rita Ostermann, July 1947.

[31] PRO FO1050-1210, Report on Women's Affairs for Political Division, by R. Ostermann,

and political parties, but there were other problems covering a wide field which demanded immediate action. These included the law on abortion, with all the relevant features - overcrowding, lack of contraceptives, inadequate hospital and maternity assistance; proper representation of women on all bodies dealing with matters of direct concern to them such as schooling, vocational training of girls; provisions of children's shoes; the insertion of a clause in the new *Länder* constitution defining the economic status of housewives; the position of wives with regard to joint property acquired during marriage etc.; and the Black Market. Other economic or political decisions Ostermann obviously considered to be men's issues.

Yet again the conference demonstrated problems with democratic procedure. The decision was made to form a union of societies in the British Zone with individual membership (*Frauenringe)* and to meet again in autumn with a view to work out details and constitution. A draft constitution was to be circulated and nominations for a central committee were asked for, to be dealt with by the autumn conference. Societies similar to the Hanover *Klub* had agreed before Bad Pyrmont to instruct their delegates to vote for taking part in the proposed union. Schleswig-Holstein, Hamburg and Lower Saxony ratified this at Bad Pyrmont. But Rhineland and Westphalia were not ready with the exception of the *Frauenring* in Düsseldorf. However, it was a problem that many of those present in Pyrmont had the impression that not everything followed exactly democratic lines, that Bähnisch was rather authoritarian and that the organisation was being imposed from above. Some of the delegates did not understand that the draft constitution was to be submitted to a further conference in autumn where the vote on federation was to be taken.[32] Disappointed members of the *Frauenausschüsse* took home attacks on the motives of Bad Pyrmont. At a small conference at Aachen the decision was taken to call a meeting to start a union of *Ausschüsse* in August 1947. Therefore, immediately after the Pyrmont conference, Ostermann agreed with Deneke that it would be best if Deneke could visit *Frauenringe* and *Frauenausschüsse* in the Rhineland to explain the constitution of the *Frauenring* to them.

Deneke's subsequent recommendations were taken as the basis for the formulation of policy in respect to *Frauenausschüsse* in the Political Branch of CCG.[33]

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following up her recent tour for the zone, June 1947.

[32] Deneke reported similar problems of a rather authoritarian conduct of *Frauenring* meetings from Cologne where Christine Teusch, Frl Francken and Dr Bardenheuer were the leading figures. Deneke assumed that all of them were liberal minded but would not let opposition speak its mind at meetings. (Bodleian Library, Deneke papers, Box 22).

[33] See chapter 3, p 89.

Frauenringe had individual membership whereas *Frauenausschüsse* were a sort of Standing committee between representatives of different women's organisations, parties and welfare organisations. Deneke suggested that they should have at least a constitution which regulated the kind and size of membership. At meetings Deneke conducted, Communist members often took the lead and spoke of Bad Pyrmont giving the impression that Frau Bähnisch assumed a dictatorship and that the *Frauenring* Committee at Hanover was setting the constitution without reference to the delegates. Deneke found that her visit seemed useful in counteracting these false reports and in preparing the ground for Frau Bähnisch, who went to the Rhineland herself in autumn 1947.

The first clear sign of the upcoming division of Germany's women's movement between East and West and the first anti-Communism action of the newly established *Frauenring* was during the deadlocked Conference of the Foreign Ministers in London in December 1947. In the same month the DFD had sent invitations to West-German women's organisations for an all-German conference in order to set up a common resolution of German women. Their demand was that a women's delegation should be received by the Foreign Ministers of the four Allies at the conference, where the question of unification and the preparation of a peace treaty for Germany was to be discussed. The *Frauenring der Britischen Zone* refused to participate in this action and the conference as such, and instead directed a similar appeal to the women of Great Britain.[34] The DFD did not take this very well, as Bähnisch put it, and published an appropriate answer to the *Frauenring* in the East German Press before it was sent to Hanover.

How did women's organisations in the Western zones define their objectives in contrast to those of the *Demokratischer Frauenbund*? One major difference was

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[34] London Record Office, Papers of the National Council of Women of Great Britain, German Women and Peace Treaty. The appeal Bähnisch sent to the British Council of Women for support contained the plea that men and women alike be allowed to take part in the peace negotiations of the Conference of the Foreign Ministers. Immediately after the letter had been received, Miss Wakefield, President of the NCW, consulted Corbet Ashby and some other prominent representatives. They drafted a letter to the Foreign Secretary, which was sent on 1 December 1947 to Bevin and Pakenham. This letter was signed by representatives of the following organisations: Women's Freedom League (Mrs Corbett Ashby), Church of England Moral Welfare Council, National Women's Citizens Association, Women's International League, St Joan's.The British Government answered that they advocated that a hearing should be given to German representatives at an appropriate stage in the Peace Treaty discussion. The collapse of the London Conference followed so quickly that the Executive Committee of the NCW did not feel any further useful action could be taken.

certainly the commitment to democratic principles and that 'personal freedom and respect for human dignity were an incontestable precondition to peace'. At a Women's Congress from 22 to 24 May 1948 in Frankfurt am Main women's organisations of the Western Zones agreed on a number common aims. Helene Weber of the *Katholischer Frauenbund*, Gabriele Strecker, Marie-Elisabeth Lüders of the *Berliner Frauenbund* and Anna Mosolf of the *Frauenring* were among the prominent speakers. The highlight of the conference was a demonstration at the *Paulskirche*. The meeting passed resolutions on the following topics, some of which such as the demand for national unity and 'equal pay for equal work' were the same the DFD advocated: 1. Re-establishing German unity as a precondition for regaining the health of the nation; 2. Commitment to democratic principles. The congress rejected all despotism and each *'Totalitätsanspruch'* (claim for totality) from whichever side and under whatever pretext. 3. Non-party and non-confessional women's organisations were to take part in the work of reorganising the future social insurance and setting of regulation of labour conditions. The axiom: 'Equal pay for equal labour' had to be fully realised. 4. Rations in the various zones were unequal and did not come up to the minimum food ration of 2400 calories a day laid down by the League of Nation for labouring men. German women claimed and expected from the German authorities that they be fully conscious of their responsibilities and use their authority to secure and execute the necessary legal measures. German eating habits should be borne in mind in regard to the import of food.

This last point had been made explicit by two delegates of women's organisations from the British and American Zone, to the two Military Governors at their meeting, an example how privileged German women used their contacts to the higher British levels to get recognition by members of their organisations. On 15 March 1948, Theanolte Bähnisch and a leading woman of the American zone, Frau Hamann (*Hausfrauenverband Stuttgart*) got the opportunity to meet the Military Governors, Generals Robertson and Clay.[35] The meeting took place in Frankfurt and lasted one hour. Bähnisch put the daily food ration of an average German on a tray under 'the General's noses' as she proudly reported later in her magazine *Die Stimme der Frau*, because she assumed that they were thinking in calories but did not realise how small rations were in reality. Bähnisch explained to the Generals that there was a serious

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[35] PRO FO1013-94, Bähnisch to General Robertson; Information about Frau Bähnisch, briefing for meeting with her, 12.3.1948; Memo of meeting between Bähnisch, Hamann, General Clay and General Robertson in Frankfurt, 15.3.1948.

danger that women's vote would be drawn to the side of the Communists if something could not be immediately done to remedy the food situation the difficulties of which fell directly to the women. In their fight against Communism the non-political women's organisations were constantly hampered by their inability to hold out any firm hope of improvement to their members. The two delegates desired the promise of early relief from the Military Governors which could be published and used for propaganda purposes. Bähnisch made a strong plea for increased imports of food and for the intensification of the campaign for indigenous collections. She criticised the system of measuring rations in calories. The provision of a fixed number of calories, even if it were regularly achieved, did not solve the problem. What was required was a greater diversification of diet and the provision of substantial quantities of fat and protein. Other problems discussed were the requisition of houses by Military Government and the refugee problem.

Robertson replied that he knew that the battle for food was fought by women. He also knew about the Communist infiltration but he did not believe that all rumours were created in the East. He wished particularly to contradict the suggestion current in the Western Zones that food was being exported from Germany and that the Military Governors could if they only wished import all food that was required. He emphasised that the food shortages resulted from the world food situation which was caused by the war. Clay added that the Germans must realise that the Military Governor had to fight hard for food for Germany in a world market from which other countries, some of them even with lower standards, had to obtain their supplies. Since the war two million of tons of imported food had been brought to Germany and this had been done at the expense of restricting allies to a low standard and by denying these supplies to other hungry people. If women believed that they were not being listened to sufficiently their remedy was to organise themselves more closely and to unseat existing *Landtage* who were denying them their rights. This pattern of argument was repeated by both sides on many occasions.

British support for the Frauenring

To Women's Affairs Section the special value of the *Frauenring* was in three important fields: its international contacts; its efforts in civic education of women; and in its attempts to unify a large segment of the female population with the aim of representing women's interests. The aspect of international contacts gained considerable importance

at a time when it became clear the occupation would not last for decades, as had earlier been expected, but would be a short process. The argument was made that international contacts were the best means to keep German women on the right track when direct British control was no longer possible.

The British Council of Women had invited Theanolte Bähnisch, Agnes von Zahn-Harnack and Magda Hoppstock-Huth for a short visit to the UK in November/December 1946. Bähnisch later maintained that even during this tour the question of international affiliation of the Hanover *Klub Deutscher Frauen* had been discussed,[36] but it was too early because the political unity of the country was a prior necessity. Bähnisch was a guest at the house of Lady Nurnburnholme, the President of the International Sub-Committee of the British Council of Women, who was impressed with the extraordinary vitality and drive of her German guest. In May 1947 Mrs Reeve of German Department London informed Cowan about the developments in Germany, especially in respect to the formation of the *Demokratischer Frauenbund*.[37] At the same time Lady Nurnburnholme returned from the Brussels meeting of the International Council of Women in May 1947 with authority to invite a German delegate to attend the conference in Philadelphia in September 1947.[38] That was to – if possible – form a nucleus by September of the NCW in Germany, even though such a nucleus was confined for the present to the British Zone. As we have seen, the *Frauenring der Britischen Zone* was established within the next four weeks and Nurnburnholme announced at the Bad Pyrmont Conference in June 1947 that a German delegate had been invited to Philadelphia. In September Frau Katharina Petersen of the Kultusministerium Hanover, and a member of the *Klub Deutscher Frauen*, participated as an observer at the ICW Conference. Warned by von Zahn-Harnack of the 'vacuum that exists which had not yet been filled by any strong women's society in the British, American and French Zones'[39], leaving the field free for infiltration of the Russian influence through the DFD, Nurnburnholme showed herself convinced of the immediate necessity of forming a strong national women's organisation in Germany.

It was also clear to the International Council of Women (ICW) that in order to

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[36] Bähnisch, 'Vom Wiederaufbau der Frauenarbeit nach dem Zusammenbruch 1945. Vortrag zum 10jährigen Bestehen des Deutschen Frauenrings', p. 164.
[37] PRO COGA945-283, Letter Reeve to Miss Cowan, 6.5.1947.
[38] PRO COGA945-283, International contacts of women's organisations, Nurnburnholme to Reeve, 13.5.1947
[39] Ibid.

prevent the International Democratic Federation (to which the DFD was affiliated) from getting a foothold in Germany, it was necessary to speed up the process of affiliation of suitable women's organisations to the ICW. The ICW had councils in 27 countries, but had lost power, because in countries under Russian domination the National Councils no longer existed. All women's organisations of those countries were affiliated to the Women's International Democratic Federation, the second largest organisation of women in the world.

Bähnisch was invited to the Conference of the ICW Central Committee (*Internationaler Vorstand*) in Lugano in June 1949. After the encouragement she received there, she thought that the unification of non-party women's organisations on interzonal level seemed even more urgent both with regard to the international affiliation and the West German state which had now been established. She was made the organiser for the 'umbrella' organisation in the Western Zones of Germany. At the same time an organiser was appointed for Italy. After preparatory talks had taken place in Stuttgart, the *Deutscher Frauenring* was established in October 1949. The formal affiliation of the *Frauenring* to the International Council of Women took place in April 1951 in Athens.[40]

On the international stage non-governmental agencies had an influence upon the United Nations through such commissions as that of the Status of Women. In June 1946 the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (UNESCO) had set up a full commission on the rights of women.[41] Members were nominated by governments of the countries elected to work in this commission. The Secretariat of the UNESCO was introduced to assist the Commission on the Status of Women by making a complete and detailed study of legislation concerning the status of women and its practical application. This included points such as educational opportunities and the legal status of women. At that time member states alone were concerned with the resulting surveys. Later the specialist agencies and bodies gathering the information wished to include data from ex-enemy countries such as Germany and Italy.

In April 1949 at the third session of the UNO Commission on the Status of

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[40] Bähnisch, 'Vom Wiederaufbau der Frauenarbeit nach dem Zusammenbruch 1945. Vortrag zum 10jährigen Bestehen des Deutschen Frauenrings', p. 169, pp. 175-176. Bähnisch reported that in Lugano the International Council of Women offered the affiliation of the the *Frauenring* but she refused because she wanted to affiliate the organisation of the whole of West Germany. In April 1952 the *Frauenring* decided to join the International Alliance of Women.

[41] PRO FO1049-1947, Development leading to Deutscher Frauenkongress in Bad Pyrmont, by

Women in Beirut, delegates from the Soviet Union put forward a draft resolution to raise the consultation status of the International Democratic Federation of Women from category B to category A, which meant that observers could sit at the committee table. It seemed possible to Women's Affairs Section that in spring 1950 a member of the East German Parliament would attend the next meeting of the Commission on the Status of Women which would allow her to speak on behalf of the women in the Western Zones and no doubt in the name of national unity. However, the draft resolution was rejected.

The ICW on its part invited the president of the *Deutscher Frauenring* to become an observer at the Committee on the Status of Women. Thus they had an official representative of the *Deutscher Frauenring* up their sleeves if necessary. When the information was collected on the status of women in 1950 by the secretariat of the UNESCO it came not only from the Eastern Zone but also from the Western Zones. Ostermann found that 'one may question its use of voluntary organisations as a pawn in the game of international politics, but it is a tendency today which cannot be ignored, and twenty-five million German women in the Western Zones are now involved'.

Support for the *Frauenring* also came from CCG. In spring 1948 the climate in the British administration was especially favourable for the *Frauenring* and its supporters. The Foreign Secretary himself had demanded that activities encouraging women's organisations had to be enhanced. General Robertson proposed in a letter to the Foreign Office to back the *Frauenring*, since the organisation had spread throughout all four *Länder*, and there were now *Länder* organisations supervising the activities of about 60 local associations in the British Zone.[42]

It is not clear from the files of Women's Affairs whether there was substantial financial support for the *Frauenring*. Ostermann urged again and again that the organisation needed an office with a typewriter, a permanent clerk and stationery. This could only be obtained with British assistance. *Die Stimme der Frau* was published partly with Bähnisch's own money. Since May 1948 it appeared with a fortnightly circulation of 50,000, twice that of the three other women's periodicals in the British Zone. Bähnisch had been privileged in respect of paper distribution. Materially *Frauenringe* were supported by Exchange Programmes, especially those offered by the British NCW and Adoption Schemes which linked *Frauenringe* with Townswomen's Guilds.

Ostermann, 26.10.1949.

[42] PRO FO1030-94, Back up Frau Bähnisch, discussion in the Foreign Office, Minutes by Crawford, 8.5.1948.

Direct financial support of the *Frauenring* was rejected however, even by Women's Affairs Section. In March 1948 Bähnisch suggested to Public Relation Division that the *Land* government should set up and control a political fund out of which to pay non-political organisations, such as the *Frauenring*.[43] The amount of money was to be decided by the *Landtag* but details were not to be discussed publicly. The administration was to be in the hands of the political department. Something similar existed in the Weimar Republic. If Military Government decided that this idea should be encouraged, 'a stimulus' was necessary from the Regional Commissioner to the *Ministerpräsidents*. This was not supported. Women's Affairs also rejected Bähnisch's proposals for state grants to needy *Frauenringe* that would form a bulwark against Communism, after currency reform in summer 1948 (when most organisations lost their funds). Youard thought that while the state might well make a grant, the finances must be independent and rest on member subscription. No one grant-making body should be in a position to call the tune.[44]

In many respect the development of the *Frauenring* was disappointing to Branches of CCG other than Women's Affairs. Intelligence Division characterised the *Frauenring* in May 1948:

> The Frauenring or Frauenbund, although claiming to be non-political, represent the more conservative or right wing element in women's affairs, but are democratically constituted societies. Their main aims are to work for lasting peace, to contact and exchange ideas with women in other countries, to improve conditions in Germany and strengthen family life, to influence all women in political life etc. The weakness of these societies lies in the rather abstract nature of their aims, and although their individual members might represent thousands of women in other organisations, they do not offer so much scope for the average woman to play an active part in communal affairs. [45]

This was a sore point. Most of the committee work and lobbying was done by a few middle-class professionals. Besides, the *Frauenring* seemed to have attracted mostly elderly women. The generation between 25 and 35 seemed to be entirely missing, the majority was over 50. Lastly, the *Frauenring der Britischen Zone* was not as active as had been hoped. Research Department noticed in March 1948 that after the foundation of the *Frauenring* nothing further had been heard of the organisation. The

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[43] PRO FO1049-1246, Talk Bähnisch with Duncan Wilson of PR/ISC Division, 30.3.1948.
[44] PRO FO1050-1214, Interview with Frau Bähnisch by Mrs Youard, 29.7.1948. In 1960 Bähnisch explained that the currency reform in summer 1948 was also a reason that the formation of the *Deutscher Frauenring* had to be postponed to October 1949.
[45] PRO FO1049-1246, Intelligence Division Report No 70, re Women's organisation, 6.5.1948.

report concluded: 'As a counter organisation to the Soviet Zone DFD, the purpose of which it was intended by its founder, it cannot be said to have succeeded.'[46]

Rita Ostermann, however, pointed out in 1949 that it had been difficult for the leading personalities of the *Frauenring* to meet for discussion and the lack of funds prevented the appointment of an organiser 'who might have ensured that the working constitution of the *Frauenring* in the various regions followed the same pattern'. Women's organisations found great difficulty in co-operation and provided another example of the isolation between like groups inside Germany. 'Jealousies between dominant personalities, especially in the American and British Zone, arose and local differences in organisation appeared'.[47]

In this respect a suggestion by Majorie Maxse, a prominent member of the Conservative Party, is interesting.[48] Maxse found that women's organisations in Germany seemed to correspond well with their prototypes in England. However, she also observed a 'strong vein of feminism in some and an inclination to discuss imponderables with German thoroughness rather than to afford practical help in the solution of their countrywomen's difficulties'. She became more and more convinced that

> A great part of the aloofness, woolly-mindedness and non-co-operation of middle-class German women could be eradicated by the introduction of a German WVS (Women's Voluntary Service, D.T.) It would have the advantage of being run under official aegis and would, for instance, do much to alleviate the lot of the refugees, help the homeless and create a sense of responsibility and stability now noticeably absent.

The Women's Voluntary Service, set up in 1938 with governmental financial assistance, played a valuable role during the Second World War. Miss Maxse urged discussing the plan with Lady Reading, the leader of the WVS in Great Britain. Groups of women could either come to England and be trained, or the WVS could send over German-speaking organisers from their training section. The creation of a German WVS would in no way run counter to any existing organisation but, as had been proved in the UK, would produce a flexible and efficient organisation capable of dealing with abnormal situations (which in her opinion the *Frauenring* could not accomplish). It

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[46] PRO FO1049-1246, Report by Reseach Department, Women's organisations in the Soviet, British and US Zone, March 1948.
[47] PRO FO1049-1847, Development leading to the Deutsche Frauenkongreß in Bad Pyrmont, R. Ostermann, 26.10.1949.
[48] PRO FO1013-2226, Evans about Maxse report, 12.8.1949.

would not be an British diktat but a German attempt to deal with their own problems under official guidance.

Women's Affairs Officers were not convinced by this idea. Evans remarked that it must be remembered that the success of the WVS in the UK had been due, in part, to the fact that the association received financial grant from the Treasury and financial support from local and municipal rural councils. It was extremely doubtful whether the same financial help would be forthcoming from any German local authority for an above-party organisation in its district.

Also Broome was of the opinion that the WVS was the last and not the first resort for German women - as it was for British women.[49] That the *Frauenring* was very immature, that it needed help and encouragement and some good missionary work on the part of the present members was clear, but she did not see the solution of the German women's problems in their introduction of a German WVS run under official aegis and directed from London. Broome continued ironically:

> Moreover, with all due respect I would submit that Lady Reading is not the right woman to help the women of Germany at this point. Apart from the fact that she is too forceful and virtually the dictator of the W.V.S., to make her, even as far as London - and I do not think she could be kept there - the dictator of the German women would not only retard the development of the German women, but would do irreparable harm to the minority so savagely treated by National Socialists. [50]

The issue of funding was taken up again by Deneke in 1949, when she visited *Frauenringe* at Bähnisch's request in order to stimulate newer and weaker branches.[51] She observed that it was hard to persuade German women to pay a regular membership subscription. Not all 'members' subscribed. That an annual subscription also registered a member's pledge to do something for her society was an unpopular thought. Secondly, it was often difficult to find suitable meeting places. The '*Brücke*' centres were used when and where available, but normally meetings took place in an inn. Transport facilities were also lacking and in spite of efforts to cope with all this the *Frauenring* did not develop into a comprehensive citizens' society as had been hoped. Deneke believed that the recollection of Hitler's *Frauenschaft* with its compulsory membership and duties amounted to a serious inhibition which had to be overcome. She thought that

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[49] PRO FO1013-2226, Comment on Miss Maxse report by Broome, 20.8.1949.
[50] Ibid.
[51] PRO FO1050-1230, Report by Deneke about visits paid to Frauenringe 29 June to 13 July 1949, 18.7.1949.

in view of the present circumstances it was unwise to wait for inhibitions to fade away. It was important to hasten the process because the impending elections and the draft constitution at Bonn were a spur and an appeal to women to think for themselves about public questions that concerned them. The immediate crux was money. A temporary grant paid to the *Frauenringe* Headquarters, Deneke thought, could tide the *Frauenringe* over present difficulties and would be money well spent. The only income of *Frauenringe* was the profit from *Die Stimme der Frau*, which had 95,000 subscribers in summer 1949.

However, Women's Affairs did not support a grant or the appointment of a paid organiser to the *Frauenring* financed from external sources. The chief reason was that, even if CCG would have found this money, it would have laid itself wide open to a spate of criticism from other political and non-political women's organisations. Only if and when, first for the *Länder* and then for the Zone an organisation would grew covering all recognised women's organisations, i.e. a Zonal Council of Women, would little objection be raised, so as long as the financing was confined to 'priming the pump'. Broome thought that there were even stronger objections to receiving money from CCG funds than from German governmental sources.[52]

SPD and discussion of British support for 'non-political' women's organisations

Women's Affairs did not have to wait long for criticism of its policy from the German side. In particular the women in the SPD Headquarters became a nuisance. Herta Gotthelf, returning from English exile in July 1946 to take over the Women's Bureau at the Social Democratic Party's Headquarters in Hanover, found on her arrival that in many districts well-organised women's groups were already at work.[53] The SPD organisation was divided into 24 districts (in the three Western Zones and Berlin) with

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[52] PRO FO1013-2226, Broome comment on Deneke's report on her visit to Germany, June 29th to July 13th 1949, 24.8.1949.

[53] For work of SPD women's groups see Jutta Beyer and Everhard Holtmann, 'Frauen und Frauenbild in der Kommunalpolitik der frühen Nachkriegszeit 1945-1950', *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 25 (1985), p. 411; Böttger, *Das Recht auf Gleichheit und Differenz. Elisabeth Selbert und der Kampf der Frauen um Art 3.II Grundgesetz*, pp. 114-120. The SPD too tried to approach women via their everyday interests. See also Wickert, *Zwischen Familie und Parlament. Sozialdemokratische Frauenarbeit in Südniedersachsen 1919-1950*, p. 81, about female membership of the SPD. In 1949 18% of the SPD women were women. Female SPD members were mostly between 31 and 40 years old; 50% of them were housewives, 25%

sub-districts and local women's councils existed which prepared and carried out the work of organising and educating SPD women. In all towns SPD women met regularly at special women's meetings. Many SPD women were concerned with welfare work, especially the newly-organised *Arbeiterwohlfahrt*, which was established as a separate organisation from the SPD but often shared the same leadership as the SPD women's groups.

During the following years Herta Gotthelf, who was in close contact with Ellen Wilkinson (the then minister of education in Great Britain, who died in 1947) and therefore enjoyed some privileges with Military Government, wrote countless letters to comrades in the Labour party and to personal friends revealing her lack of sympathy and growing bitterness with regard to CCG policy. She hoped to influence important officials and to make use of her personal connections with Labour party members. She reported in minute detail about the living conditions in Lower Saxony and it seems she could hardly believe that any Labour party member in Britain knew what was going on in the British Zone, otherwise he or she would have objected. Gotthelf also sent the circular letter of the SPD women's section to Hynd, with the assumption that 'he might be interested to hear the voice of the people'. Gotthelf was convinced that Hynd would not knowingly support a policy of encouraging non-political women's organisations because he had told her personally in London that he thought feminist organisations were quite out of date, especially for socialist women. Therefore Gotthelf informed him:

> We of the social democratic party would be very glad if this sponsoring of these 'unpolitical' women's organisations could be stopped very soon, as they naturally will become the centres of reaction or of all the 'fellow travellers'. We are of the opinion that after 12 years in which Nazis tried to make the women 'unpolitical' it is very high time that women are educated to take an active part in the political life of our country and are not being sidestepped in all sorts of 'unpolitical' and purely feminist clubs. If you could help us in this respect, we would be very glad indeed.[54]

Gotthelf asked especially for 'moral support' for the SPD by sending out a woman comrade of the Labour Party to the British Zone to speak to some women's meetings. To Dennis Healey, International Secretary of the Labour Party in 1946, she suggested starting an international women's committee, in order to get more international attention and contacts. To Barbara Gould, Labour MP and personal friend, Gotthelf wrote that British women were handed around to speak at meetings of

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industrial workers and 15% Civil Servants.

[54] Manchester, Labour History Archive and Study Centre (MLA), DH, Gotthelf to Hynd, 18.8.1946.

unpolitical organisations, but so far no single Labour or trade union woman had been in the British Zone, so that the impression was being left in the minds of many women, that the only women bothering to come to Germany and take an interest in affairs, were British bourgeois women. About Women's Affairs Officers Gotthelf thought that

> though they too are very nice and absolutely willing to be helpful, have not the slightest idea of working class organisations. They are just this type of quite intelligent feminists - not very political and absolutely unable to understand conditions different from those in their own country. They sang to me the praise of rural women's institutions and towns women's guilds, which just might give you an idea'. [55]

And her letter concluded with the plea: 'Could you not try to get a Labour or T.U. woman appointed to such an important job?????' But the Labour Party remained uninterested and reluctant to help. When Gotthelf wrote, hoping that at least on the occasion of the SPD women's conference they would be able to demonstrate to German women 'that not only Churches, Feminists, the Communists and reactionaries of all countries know the value of aiding their counterparts in Germany whom they want to succeed in the struggle of their ideals', Dennis Healey, the International Secretary of the Labour Party in 1946, simply answered that it was untrue that the Labour Government was supporting reactionary elements. On the contrary, the British Government had encouraged the German Social Democrats, but not exclusively so, for the simple reason that they believed in democracy and the right of every people to choose its own system of government for itself.[56] There was no concrete answer to Gotthelf's request whereupon she assumed (in a letter to Middletons) 'that Healey is not as friendly to the Germans as we thought'. The Labour Party's lack of support and interest for the SPD is difficult to explain.[57]

In October 1947 the CCG policy of supporting non-political women's organisations was discussed in the German Department in Norfolk House, because Gotthelf had asked to see somebody at the Foreign Office. She was informed that the encouragement of non-political women's organisations was thought to be inevitable since CCG had been working through German educational authorities, who would hardly be concerned with encouraging organisations supported by a particular party. Churchill, of the German Department, remarked that Gotthelf's view that the only way

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[55] MLA, DH, Letter Gotthelf to Barbara Gould, 31.8.1946.
[56] MLA, DH, Letter Healey to Gotthelf, 21.10.1946.
[57] For the British attitude towards SPD see Anthony Glees, *Exile Politics during the Second World War. The German Social Democrats in Britain* (Oxford, 1982).

to 're-educate' German women was through clubs with a specifically political approach to women's questions entirely overlooked the most important factor:

> the status of German women raises an issue of fundamental moral and spiritual values. The philosophy of the 'three K's' and the idea that it was a duty to bear children for the Army of the Fatherland were ingrained into German women long before the Nazis. The Nazis, however, lost no opportunity to violate still further the spiritual values of the home and all that is implied thereby. What is needed in the reeducation of German women, is to show that not merely were their political theories out-of-date but that their code of personal values was pernicious. The remedy for this should be sought not through doctrines of any particular party, but through all those women's organisations which stand for the moral and spiritual rights of women and the family no less than the political rights of women.[58]

There is hardly an official comment which expresses more clearly that British and German administration and policy-makers, and as I will show later – educationalists - alike shared the same set of values and ideas of what is called here 'the moral and spiritual rights of women and the family' and what meant the reinforcement of the traditional role of women within the family. The morale of women was thought to have been destroyed by National Socialism and its '*Lebensborn*' idea. Women's organisations could help to restore the traditional gender role of women, whereas the SPD or any other party-political organisation was not considered suitable for this task. Indeed, traditionally, the SPD demands for women had aimed at equality with and at women's economic independence through employment (which included equal pay for both sexes).

However, it seems that Gotthelf was told during a meeting with Pakenham that there would be more support forthcoming for political women's groups.[59] Pakenham had been briefed for the meeting by a paper produced by Mrs Reeve (German Department) which explained that policy of CCG was to keep the balance between above-party associations and political organisations (which was indeed the policy laid down in the paper *Objectives and Methods of Civic Development Section*). But Gotthelf had to wait until November 1947 before the first Labour women came over to Germany. Those were Dorothy Elliott and Margaret Bondfield who visited trade union and SPD women's groups.[60] The spring election in Berlin in 1948 provided a further opportunity to invite Labour women as speakers for the SPD rally in the 'frontier city' of the Cold

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[58] PRO COGA945-283, Notes on Herta Gotthelf's interview with Lord Pakenham, 30.12.1947.
[59] PRO COGA945-293, Pressure from Berlin to back up Herta Gotthelf, 19.2.1948; Notes between Reeve and Crawford, German Department, FO.
[60] MLA, DH, Gotthelf to Healey, 25.11.1947.

War and this time her request was strongly supported by Rita Ostermann.[61] Influential Labour women such as Barbara Ayrton- Gould[62] and Mary Sutherland who travelled to Germany in 1948, however, supported the policy of CCG.[63] Both of them discussed the matter of non-political organisations with leading SPD women. Gould reported that she used every argument possible to try to persuade them to approach the ordinary woman on a non-political basis through their interest in their personal needs, as Labour women had successfully done in Britain after the First World War, but she felt, she had no success.[64]

Women's Affairs Section worked more energetically from 1947 to support the establishment a women's organisation on zonal level which was similar to the British Standing Conference of Women's Organisations. That it was the political parties which turned out to be the big stumbling block preventing the desired organisation of all women and especially the traditional hostility of the SPD women's leaders towards middle-class women's organisations was completely alien to British thinking. In June 1947 the question of participation in non-political women's organisations had been debated by the SPD Vorstand, where Schumacher declared that although the party deplored above-party activities by its members who should be working for the SPD, he was nevertheless willing to accept that many women believed their best work lay with above-party women's groups and he would not hinder them from doing it.[65] The SPD

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[61] PRO FO1049-1246, Ostermann to German Educational Branch, Norfolk House, 25.3.1948.
[62] Ayrton. Gould (1886-1950), had been a suffragette. She was a Labour activist, briefly Chief Woman Organiser and editor of *Labour Woman*, and involved in the Joint Committee of Industrial Women's Organisations. She campaigned for family allowances. Between 1945 and 1950 she sat in Parliament. Helen Jones, *Women in British Public Life, 1914-1950*, p. 84.
[63] Barbara Ayrton Gould was on a lecture tour in the British Zone in April 1948 to speak on postwar reconstruction in England and about the Marshall Plan. Mary Sutherland was in Germany for three weeks in November 1948. PRO FO371-70711, Visit to the British Zone by Mrs Ayrton Gould M.P., 4-20 November 1948; FO1049-1249 Travel arrangements for Mary Sutherland, 30.10.1948.
[64] Pat Thane, 'The Women of the British Labour Party and Feminism, 1906-1945', in Harold Smith, ed., *British Feminism in the Twentieth Century* (London, 1990). Since the First World War Labour women had emphasised the need to enhance society's valuation of women's maternal and domestic role. In 1944 Mary Sutherland, chief woman officer, launched a 'Charter for Housewives and Mothers' based on the right to good conditions of work and their right to adequate leisure. It was to include 'good labour saving homes, good health services, social security for the wife and mother as for other members of the community, family allowances, home-help service, nursery school holiday and leisure facilities at moderate costs and expansion of communal services – e.g. restaurants and laundries. The Labour movement, however, was divided internally by such issues as the employment of married women, equal pay and birth control.
[65] This was partly the result of a conversation Allan Flanders (then head of German Political Branch) and Ostermann had with Schumacher on the subject; he himself attached very little

women's section with Herta Gotthelf, however, had forbidden all members from having anything to do with above-party organisations.[66] Some women pursued an independent line but many obeyed party orders, with the direct result, according to Ostermann, 'that the gaps they leave within the groups they often patiently built up themselves were filled by a Communist'. The SPD attitude was not entirely unreasonable, Ostermann admitted in agreement with Gotthelf. In a country where the main support of the Nazi Party was the 'non-political' apathetic mass it was hard to be tolerant towards opponents and even harder to be fair to those who unconsciously allowed events to shape their convictions. Ostermann had noted that half the members who attended the SPD Women's Congress in June 1947 at Fürth had been in prison or concentration camp under Hitler and this made an impression on her.[67]

Still, the SPD women's problem was not entirely alien to Labour women. On the Labour Party side the inter-war years had seen an intermittent struggle between the orthodox party loyalists like Marion Phillips, Margaret Bondfield and Susan Lawrence, who put party and class before sex, and the proponents of feminism such as Dora Russell. The official view as expressed by the party's chief woman officer, Marion Phillips, was that Labour women should not dissipate their energies by involving themselves in any non-party women's organisation, including even the women's institutes. Also Barbara Gould thought that the desirable changes for women could be attained only by political means and hence by activity within a political party. She told the 1943 conference that the more women they could get into parliament the sooner they could eliminate women's questions as women's questions and they would become universal questions.

Mary Sutherland had observed another problem when she was in Germany. The hostility of the SPD women to the *Frauenring* was most marked in Hanover and Düsseldorf. Elsewhere the SPD seemed less antagonistic, but members of political parties worried about the question of 'dual membership'. They hesitated to join their own organisation with the *Frauenring* if this meant asking all their members to join individually. Sutherland thought it unfortunate if the *Frauenring* was to be regarded as a rival to the party women's organisations. She therefore emphasised at the meetings she addressed that political democracy could only function on the basis of political parties, that women had to study political issues, reach political decisions and support the party

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importance to it either way.
[66] PRO FO1013-94, Draft on Women's organisations, by Rita Ostermann, April 1948.
[67] PRO FO1050-1207, Report on recent women's conferences at Bad Pyrmonth and Fürth, by

of their choice. The *Frauenring* should be encouraged to prepare regular programmes of meetings, providing for practical activities as well as lectures.[68]

Only one Labour woman supported Gotthelf's view. In June 1948 Lucy Middleton met with Lord Henderson, who had replaced Lord Pakenham. At the meeting she told Henderson that she felt disturbed at the policy of supporting the above-party organisation known as the *Frauenring*.[69] This type of organisation had not existed in the past in Germany and would not have acquired its present strength without the support of British authorities. It would crumble when CCG no longer exercised strong influence as at present, but meanwhile was doing harm by drawing away many of the active women in public life who otherwise play a leading part in the party women's organisations. As a result the latter was weakened, and it was also creating hostility between members of the same party some of whom supported the *Frauenring* while some were bitterly opposed. The result was that the present strength of the parties, particularly the SPD, was weakened. If there had to be an above-party organisation, then it should be of the type of the National Council of Women, namely, it should consist of members of other organisations, both party and non-party.

Henderson asked Middleton whether she thought that the parties could get beyond their own members to deal with the great bulk of German women who had never played a part in politics at all. Furthermore, Henderson mentioned the DFD and asked whether there should not also be something similar on the democratic side to attract women who would not join any party. Mrs Middleton was doubtful about this because she thought the *Frauenring* was so tied up with the CCG that the DFD would be able to attract women by claiming to be a 'German' organisation as distinct from the 'British *Frauenring*'. Henderson emphasised that the best educator of German women was the appalling social conditions in much of Germany of the day and that these conditions were a good reason for the development of organisations which would interest themselves in social work.

In October 1949 Lucy Middleton came to Germany under an official FO scheme.[70] As the woman in charge of the Women's Section of Parliamentary Labour

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Rita Ostermann, July 1947.

[68] PRO FO1051-87, Report made by Miss Mary Sutherland on her visit to the British Zone, November 4 –20 1948, November 1948.

[69] PRO FO371-70711, Meeting between Lord Henderson and Mrs Middleton M.P. on Wednesday, 21 July 1948.

[70] PRO FO1049-1846, Report on the visit of Mrs Lucy Middleton, M.P. Labour member for the Sutton Division of Plymouth, Broome to Educational Adviser, Berlin, 3.10.1949, Middleton saw Kurt Schumacher in Bonn. She met Ministry of Labour advisers and discussed problems of

Party she promised to further contacts between the Women's Section of the Labour Party and the women's group of the SPD.

Henderson was advocating an argument which was also prevalent within the British Zone. The Military Governor thought for example that party and religious organisations could go their own way without special support from CCG, since it was not likely that they would be penetrated by Communists.[71] The best way of preventing such infiltration was to give special support to the leaders of women's organisations whom Military Government approved of, such as Frau Bähnisch. As this policy was open to misinterpretation by the parties and the churches everything possible had to be done to show them the reason for this policy and to get their support. There was, however, the obvious danger that the giving of special support to one type of organisation would encourage German women to prefer one which was not associated with the occupying power. Therefore, the policy would have to be carried out with great care. About the argument that CCG support of the above-party organisations would split the SPD, he wrote:

> This feeling is bound up with the narrow and rigid view which the SPD tend to hold regarding party loyalty, and in this connection it should be emphasised that some of the most capable and intelligent women in Germany to-day belong to the Social Democratic Party, but many feel that while their loyalty to their party is beyond questions they are entitled to a greater degree of personal freedom of judgement than the party leadership is willing to concede.

At the same time, Robertson found, there was a misunderstanding both of the functions of above-party organisations and CCG's attitude towards them. The aim of above-party organisations was to awaken in German women a sense of citizenship which is the preliminary basis for further political education. The political parties could indeed turn the interest thereby aroused in local and current affairs to their own advantage and establish contact with a number of women they would otherwise not reach through party-political channels.[72]

One major argument Women's Affairs held against political parties was that parties did little for women. For example, out of 30 members of the SPD *Vorstand*, only

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employment and housing, but ignored a meeting with the *Frauenring* Düsseldorf which Broome had organised for her. According to Broome's report, the SPD women criticised CCG officials and claimed that they were not getting enough support. Middleton promised to approach the Labour Party with a request from the SPD to use its influence in government in the matter of dismantling.

[71] PRO FO1030-94, Back up Frau Bähnisch, Discussion in the FO, Minutes by Crawford; refers to Robertson's reply to Bevin's telegram from January 1948 that more should be done in respect to German women's organisations.

[72] PRO FO371-70711, Robertson to Sir William Strang, FO, 23.8.1948.

5 were women.[73] These women, together with a number of other members of the SPD, were thought among the most capable in Germany, but with the exception of Louise Schröder they had no real influence on party decisions; most were in effect little more than party hacks. They were too few in number to make their weight felt. Also neither the CDU or the FDP had any programme directed towards improving the political education of its women members, or providing them with parliamentary training. Only the KPD had a definite policy placing women on the party lists and in administration posts. Courses were given to train young women in governmental procedures. The KPD encouraged members to participate in independent organisations, where, because their knowledge of committee work they were able to exercise considerable leadership. It seemed obvious to Women's Affairs Section that the political parties failed to make any headway with the women voters, who represented the majority of the electorate. The numbers of seats held by women in the *Bundestag* and *Landtage* indicated the relative minor position occupied by women in German public life. There were 42 women in the *Bundestag* (6.4 per cent of all deputies), the percentage of women in the *Landtage* was 13.8 percent in NRW, 7.1 per cent in Schleswig-Holstein, 6.7 percent in Lower Saxony, 13.6 percent in Hamburg – 11 per cent on average in the *Landtage* in the British Zone.[74]

CCG policy supporting non-political organisations was never accepted by the SPD Headquarters. In November 1949, Fritz Heine, member of the SPD Vorstand, claimed that fares had been paid for delegates to the Bad Pyrmont Conference for the foundation of the *Deutscher Frauenring* which he considered to be a private organisation which at most represented 10,000 women in the three Western zones.[75] He found it difficult to comprehend that 'German taxes should find their way via the occupation costs for financing private organisations'. Some of the delegates had indeed been transported by military train. Ostermann, who was permanently confronted with this kind of complaint, especially from Herta Gotthelf, replied sharply:

> With regard to Heine's letter, I regard his enquiry a little short of impertinence, considering that the SPD more than anybody in Germany have partaken so lavishly of both British and German taxpayers' money in one form or another - not mention the personal factor that the SPD women have for years made use of

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[73] Louise Schröder (Berlin); Elisabeth Selbert (Bonn), Lisa Albrecht (Bavaria), Ann Krahnstöver (S/H) and Herta Gotthelf. Louise Schröder was from December 1946 *Bürgermeister* und from May 1947 *Oberbürgermeister* of Berlin and finally member of the first *Bundestag*.

[74] PRO FO1046-1846, Background letter, article: 'Women's Affairs', published by Publication Branch, Information Services Zonal Office, printed in Hamburg (2500 copies), September 1949.

[75] PRO FO1049-1846, Fritz Heine to Duncan Wilson, Lancaster House, Berlin 2.11.1949.

> me as forwarding agent for their parcels from London. By now literally thousands of Germans, private individuals and private groups, have had their fares paid by Military Government out of occupation costs and German taxes, without a murmur from the SPD, whose only complaint is their representation is never large enough. Six members of the SPD were invited to Wilton Park for the V.I.P. conference last month, at considerable cost of the British taxpayer, which the party takes as a matter of course, contributing nothing.[76]

The second great force in Germany which seemed to be a hindrance to active participation of women in public life and to the unification of German women in one large non-political organisation was the church, especially the Catholic church. It was known to Women's Affairs that the churches had compromised with fascism in the 1930s and that this did not pass unnoticed in Germany. Church policy towards women was hardly progressive, and did not seem in keeping with times. The structural organisation of groups of the *Evangelischer Frauenbund* was maintained throughout the Nazi period. They were primarily concerned with religious study, religious introduction and welfare work within the members of their churches. The leadership of a group of elderly Catholic women for example, who consulted the Cardinal for permission before holding any committee meeting, was hardly calculated to increase the allegiance of the younger generation, many of whom were lost to active women's work altogether.[77] Rita Ostermann summarised the situation:

> It is only at the first sight paradoxical to say that these staunch anti-Communists Cardinal Frings and Herta Gotthelf, are the Communists' 'best friends' in the British Zone. Our aims are diametrically opposed to theirs, for we want women to think for themselves and they want them to think only as Catholics and Social Democrats.[78]

The attitude of Women's Affairs Section towards the Deutscher Frauenring

The *Deutscher Frauenring* was a disappointment in that it did not affiliate with any other national organisations with the aim of civic education besides its own *Frauenring* membership. The founding congress in Bad Pyrmont in October 1949 had to fulfil two distinct aims: to announce the federation of *Frauenringe* in the three Zones after the constitution had been agreed upon; and to announce the formation of a Standing

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[76] PRO FO1049-1847, Ostermann to Peter Sally-Flood, International Affairs Branch, Chancery, Office of the High Commissioner.
[77] PRO FO1030-94, Draft on Women's organisations, by Rita Ostermann, April 1948.
[78] Ibid.

Conference (*Arbeitsgemeinschaft*) of West Zonal women's organisations. The *Arbeitsgemeinschaft* was agreed upon, as the other organisations had refused to join the *Frauenring* as an umbrella organisation. They pointed out that most of them were older than the *Frauenring*, that they were well organised and had a much larger membership. They therefore saw no reason why they should enter the *Frauenring* as a '*kooperativ angeschlossener Verband*' although they were willing to work with the *Frauenring* on equal footing. This decision was accepted by Women's Affairs both on the grounds of fairness and also because constitutionally it was not practicable to have one organisation to promote co-operation between the various separate organisations, while also keeping its own organisation with local groups and individual members.

Three organisations actually joined the *Frauenring*: GEDOK (an artists' organisation); *Reichsbund der Kriegs-und Zivilbeschädigten, Sozialrentner und Hinterbliebenen*; and the *Deutscher Frauenbund für alkoholfreie Kultur*. Altogether the *Deutscher Frauenring* had in 1951 about 50,000 members. Organisations which declared to co-operate with the *Frauenring* in a form of a Standing Committee (*Arbeitsgemeinschaft*) were: *Evangelische Frauenhilfe, Landfrauenverband, Deutsches Rotes Kreuz, Deutsche Schwesterngemeinschaft* (nursing organisation), *Frauenkultur, Verein Weiblicher Angestellter, Abeitsgemeinschaft deutscher Lehrerinnen, Christlicher Akademikerinnenbund, Verband der Frauen in Sozialen Berufen*. The leaders who were elected to the Central Committee were: Theanolte Bähnisch (President), Agnes von Zahn-Harnack, Frau Mahler (French Zone), Freda Wuesthoff [79], Frau Wacker (US Zone), Frau Faupel (Rendsburg), Frau Mosolf (Hanover), Frau Ulich-Beil (Berlin), Frau Meyer-Katz (French Zone), Frau von Velsen (US Zone).

There were again mistakes in the conduct of the meeting. For example, the delegates to the conference were not elected by their local groups. This, however, seemed in part to be the fault of the local officers who in some cases autocratically appointed representatives. There was no time limit for speeches and Women's Affairs Officers found some of them were far too long and tiresome. The congress had also not been very practical. The leaders of the sub-committees confined themselves to talking

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[79] Freda Wuesthoff initiated the *Stuttgarter Friedenskreis* in 1946; a working committee of women for the '*Förderung des dauernden Friedens*' which was working until 1948. All at this time important *Frauenring* leaders were members, for example Gertrud Bäumer, Theanolte Bähnisch, Dorothee von Velsen, Agnes von Zahn-Harnack, Marie Elisabeth Lüders. Freda Wuesthoff presented to this circle a working plan which tried to establish '*Friedensarbeit*' in policy, research, and school.

about general aspects of their subject rather than the actual problem of what should be done and most importantly, how local groups could be advised and aided in their work. Women's Affairs criticised that the two aims of the conference - to announce a federation of *Frauenringe*, and to announce the formation of a Standing Conference of women's organisations - were not kept separate and that this caused suspicion. The absolutely equal standing of all member organisations of the projected *'Arbeitsgemeinschaft'* was not stressed. Bracey, Women's Affairs Officer in Kiel found:

> Irritation will no doubt be felt by such statements as that made by Frau Mosolf (Vice President of the Frauenring Hanover and for the Zonal Federation, D.T.) that certain organisations could not be '*kooperativ angeschlossen*' because some of them have also men members, hence they would only join the Arbeitsgemeinschaft. Logically, if this reason is advanced it would also prevent their joining a Standing Conference of Women's Organisations, but of course their refusal to be '*kooperativ angeschlossen*' as stated above has nothing to do with their mixed membership. Such statements, however, seem to show that certain *Frauenring* members feel that they must not lose face by admitting the real reasons. [80]

Bracey further criticised that Frau Mosolf said that she thought it a very good thing that the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft* was loosely put together and had no constitution. It should have been realised that it was only by working on an agreed constitution that friction could be avoided. Bracey concluded:

> It is very unfortunate as organisations which are at present disposed to work cooperatively with the *Frauenring*, but are absolutely firm as to what they are prepared to do and what they do not intend to do, and hence it is more unwise of the Frauenring to have allowed grounds for suspicion to exist. The principles agreed to should be fully accepted and every effort made to allay present uneasy feelings.[81]

Women's Affairs especially regretted the absence of the *Hausfrauenverein* and of the Catholic women's organisation. The British side felt that their absence was due to the attitude described above, and it was only by a very clear and open offer to work with them in a Standing Conference in which every organisation would be absolutely equal standing that their co-operation could be secured.

The problems caused by a strong intention of Frau Bähnisch to dominate all other organisations with her organisation became clear to Deneke at a very early stage. She reminded Bähnisch as early as 1947 that one had to be careful to convince the

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[80] PRO FO1050-1230, Deutscher Frauenkongreß in Bad Pyrmont, comments of Women's Affairs Officers, 12.11.1949
[81] Ibid.

societies that their independence was in no way jeopardised by membership in the *Frauenring* and therefore suggested that an independent secretariat was essential and that any executive action had to be distinctly authorised by each independent society. Deneke found in 1947, that the *Klub Deutscher Frauen* was dominating the work of the *Arbeitsausschuss* of women's organisations which existed in Hanover. It seemed extraordinary to her that 'a trained legal mind' like Frau Bähnisch's (who was a lawyer) should not be sensitive to this constitutional issue. At later conferences local *Frauenring* members frequently claimed to co-ordinate activities of all women's societies and this always roused opposition be it in the Red Cross, in *Landfrauenverband*, in religious societies or others and from the very beginning one could foresee it would make the *Frauenring* suspect. Deneke knew that Bähnisch's *Klub* from the first appealed to intellectuals and professional women.

> She thought of satisfying the *Hausfrau* by representing her needs to authorities at higher levels, and was, I believe, not interested in the actual *Hausfrau* herself. Others, who preferred to lead, rather than to be led by Frau Bähnisch, addressed themselves especially to the *Hausfrau*. A *Hausfrauenverein* arose in Kiel and declared its independence of the Hanover organisation. Others followed and they made an organisation of their own. In this way the '*Klub*' was largely cut off from the kind of membership on which it might mainly have flourished.[82]

Deneke also pointed out that CCG were disappointed by the failure to solidify the society and form a well -organised body. *Frauenringe* were badly organised and could not manage to throw up the leaders to rectify this. Frau Bähnisch, alert and active at higher levels, could not herself undertake detailed work. Those to whom she entrusted this were not capable.

After Bad Pyrmont the work of the Frauenring began on a national scale. A paid secretary could not be afforded and Bähnisch's deputy in Hanover, Maria Prejawa, declared herself prepared to head the national office in addition to her position as *Sozialdezernentin*. It was decided to form sub-committees for special fields of work. Every *Landesverband* was to focus its work on one special sub-committee and send corresponding delegates to other committees. There was a sub-committee for civic education; one for law (which observed the progress made in respect of equal rights between men and women); one for economy (*Volks-and Heimwirtschaft*, which concerned itself with consumer questions, especially with questions of food and pricing); one for housing and social questions; one for cultural questions and one for

'*gesamtdeutsche Fragen*' (whose task it was to enlighten West Germans on the activities of the DFD).

The work of the sub-committees shifted more and more from local to national level. Important issues were no longer discussed in the local groups, but were delegated to the sub-committees on national level. The sub-committees mainly worked through resolutions and appeals to the *Land*– or national parliament. The move towards above-national corporation was connected with the tendency towards more bureaucratisation. This guaranteed a greater opportunity to influence decisions, but meant at the same time a decreased mobilisation on a broader basis. Deneke thought:

> Frau Bähnisch could indeed fire a meeting.... And she could rouse individuals to action. But she had not got the time, nor possibly the gift to plot on. Her circular letters on '*Gleichberechtigung*' reached each *Frauenring*, but precise local activities at local branches needed to be inspired on the spot according to local circumstances and members could only have been roused to take an active part in their society locally if their needs for relaxation, for education, for amusement had been met as their interest in circular letters and reports.[83]

The recipe Deneke had in mind was to employ a paid organiser for *Frauenringe* who would then train leaders in the local groups. There was however no money for those and, as I have pointed out earlier, Women's Affairs was not prepared to fund them. In reality, the gulf between advanced leaders and the rank-and-file members seemed not to have been bridged.

The *Deutscher Frauenring* had 50,000 members in 1951. [84] It affiliated to the *Informationsdienst für Frauenfragen*, from December 1951 the umbrella organisation with 60,000 members of 14 united organisations. In 1952 the *Frauendienst* counted already one million affiliated members. Theanolte Bähnisch resigned from the *Frauenring* presidency in 1952.

For the women's movement in post-war Germany the described development meant that the British had supported and strengthened an organisation to which lobbying and international contacts were the most important activities. Of these activities the broad public knew practically nothing. [85] The third aim was the civic education of women's leaders on the one hand and of the rank and file on the other. This aim, which focussed on the shortcomings of women, was, as Ute Gerhard has pointed out, so to speak the essence which women's policy had been cut down to, in

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[82] Bodleian Library, Deneke papers, The Women of Germany, p. 3.
[83] Ibid.
[84] Möding, 'Die Stunde der Frauen? Frauen und Frauenorganisationen des bürgerlichen Lagers', pp. 624-662.
[85] Gerhard, 'Fern von jedem Suffragettentum. Frauenpolitik in Deutschland nach 1945, eine

competition to political parties with the consolidation of political structures in the Federal Republic. What had been won was that experts in women's questions, lawyers and officials in the organisations put the question of equal rights (Article 3 and its practical conversion in the civil code) on the agenda. The background for its success was a personal network of women who supported each other and who competed with each other.

Bewegung der Frauen?', p. 190.

6. Practical examples of the British re-education of German women

Approaching German housewives through the media

This chapter demonstrates different methods of 're-education' applied to German women by CCG in the British Zone. Firstly, I explore the early activities of the Committee on German Women's Education to encourage women to vote intelligently in the first local elections in the British Zone in October 1946. Secondly, the chapter assesses a scheme set up by Youard, Women's Affairs Officer in North Rhine-Westphalia, in February 1948 to get more women to stand for elections. Backed by the Regional Commander, General Bishop, she instructed Kreis Resident Officers to initiate courses in civic education at *Volkshochschulen* especially for women and to encourage the formation of non-political women's organisations at local level, which could provide for civic education. Similar activities presumably took place in other *Länder* of the British Zone, but the relevant files have not survived. Thirdly, German women already active in local administration were included in special courses at Local Government Schools. Finally, there were a number of Anglo-German Clubs in existence in the British Zone, where German and British women could meet and exchange ideas.

The approach towards German women, in accordance with the policy paper *Objectives and methods of the Civic Development Section*, was non-political. The British side hoped to mobilise German women through the appeal to the good mother and to widen their interests within *Kinder, Küche, Kirche*. The Committee on German Women's Education (Education Branch Bünde) had already singled out housewives as the part of population most in need of encouragement and education.[1] Busy with her many domestic problems, the housewife had little time for and less understanding of politics. On 12 July 1946 the Committee discussed the matter together with representatives of the British Red Cross, the YWCA and other CCG Branches, such as Public Safety and the newly established Civic Development Section.

One way to reach the *Hausfrau* was to put suitable articles in newspapers. The meeting sent a letter to PR/ISC requesting that, in view of the dearth of women's magazines, articles of particular interest to women be included amongst mandatory

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[1] PRO FO1050-1290, Meeting Committee on German Women's Education, Bünde, 12.7.1946. Cameron and Evan from Civic Development Section were present at this meeting.

articles to be published in the German daily press during the following months. British women present at this meeting offered to write articles 'of special interest to women' about topics such as the function and problems of women police; the problems and treatment of juvenile delinquency in England and Germany; the explanation of the practical side of women's organisations and what these could achieve; social service; women's welfare organisations; and women in academic life. Jeanne Gemmel, the chairman of the Committee, also wrote to Women's Institutes and Townswomen's Guilds for articles on the work of these organisations, especially emphasising how individual members could express their views and play their part.[2]

Articles came in, but the Committee on German Women's Education did not have the means to get them published. Information Services Control Branch Bünde wrote that it had no authority to issue articles on the described subjects to the licensed press as mandatory material because this was restricted to official announcements, proclamations and ordinances.[3] In all other respects the newspapers were free to make their own choice and to accept and disregard any recommendations which PR/ISC might attach to certain material. There were practical hindrances as well. The paper shortage prevented newspapers being printed in large numbers.[4] Newspapers appeared twice weekly, consequently material was limited to the absolute minimum. Information Control was willing to arrange for any suitable material that Education Branch wished to be transmitted to the newspapers on non-mandatory basis but could give no guarantee that editors would use it.

The Committee on German Women's Education confronted a similar problem in raising German women's awareness via radio programmes. The German Broadcasting Service of the British Zone, known as the *Nordwestdeutscher Rundfunk* (NWDR) was originally controlled by the Broadcasting Control Unit at Hamburg and Cologne, which eventually amalgamated into a single unit. These units came directly under Information Services Control Branch. The aim was to avoid too many official items and to create a service where 'Germans would speak to Germans' and take their full share in the re-

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[2] PRO FO1050-1299, Gemmel to Miss Freeman, National Federation of Women's Institutes, 15.7.1946; Gemmel to Miss Horton, Townswomen's Organisation, 15.7.1946.
[3] PRO FO1050-1299, Information Services Control Branch Berlin to Education Branch Bünde, 25.7.1946.
[4] Welch, 'Priming the Pump of German Democracy. British 'Re-education' Policy in Germany after the Second World War', p. 231. The biggest limitation on the dissemination of 'information' was the lack of paper and the shortage of wireless set. Taking *Die Welt* as an example, there was litte more than one newspaper for every 4.5 people in the British Zone by

education of their own people.[5] The NWDR devoted a quarter of an hour three times a week to women's interests, such as cookery and make-do-and-mend. Gradually literature and poetry were introduced in summer 1946 but it seemed useful to broaden this range of topics. The meeting of the Committee on German Women's Education in August 1946 discussed the theme 'Broadcast and Citizenship', with a number of important German women.[6] One problem was the lack of radios available to women. Bähnisch suggested that loudspeakers be installed in factories, but this was rejected as too closely resembling Nazi propaganda methods. A suitable time for a women's broadcast had to be found, which was agreed to be 4 p.m. School authorities could be asked to set aside one room in a school building for group listening at this time and the civil authorities a room once a week in the town hall or village hall. For individual listening 8 p.m. was thought a good time. Helga Prollius, responsible for the women's programme at NWDR, reported at the next Committee meeting, that it had been impossible to secure the 8 p.m. slot as it was reserved for general entertainment, but she was able to secure a fixed time, 3.40 to 4.00 p.m. three times a week. The second meeting included Herta Gotthelf (SPD), Liesl Kipp-Kaule representing the trade unions, and Christine Teusch, later *Kultusminister* in North Rhine-Westphalia. Deneke was present as was Magda Kelber of Quaker Relief. They discussed the content of the radio broadcast and the importance of the contacts between programme-makers and listeners. The Committee advocated the appointment of a Committee of Listeners at Hamburg and Cologne radio to advise on content and to suggest and seek out broadcasters and script-writers.[7] Relief work; reconstruction in other countries; talks by women of other countries on subjects of common interests to all women; treatment of difficult children; juvenile delinquency; industrial law - relating particularly to women; trade unions in other countries; social security; fashion as an expression of social conditions; tales for children; emergency housing schemes in Germany and in other countries; and recipes on small rations - were identified as suitable subjects.

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the end of 1947.

[5] Ibid, pp. 228-230; The NWDR was to provide for the British Zone a 'Home Service' on the lines of the BBC Home Service. It was agreed that in order to retain its audience and to build an effective a new tradition in German broadcasting, NWDR should not be too obviously concerned with 're-education' or even with any manifest attempt to raise German cultural standards.

[6] These women were Frau Dr Flittner and Frau Flügge from Hamburg, *Sanitätsrätin* Käthe Petersen from Hamburg, Frau Prollius from NWDR in Hamburg, Fräulein Bodelschwingh from Bethelstift near Bünde, Frau Fuchs, Director of Education Braunschweig, Frau Hebermann from Münster and Frau Theanolte Bähnisch from Hanover. Helena Deneke was also present.

[7] PRO FO1050-1299, Committee on German Women's Education, Draft resolution of

A committee already existed in Cologne where, according to Teusch, ten women had been selected from all walks of life to listen regularly and forward the results of their discussions and comments to Hamburg and Cologne. The ten women in Cologne had been recommended to Military Government by a non-party committee. To make the Committee of Listeners representative, Kipp-Kaule suggested that head of the unions be asked to nominate representatives and Gotthelf reminded the meeting that it was also necessary to include representatives of political parties. One of the British officers present at the meeting warned that there was a certain danger that if too much stress was placed on political representation on the Committee of Listeners, it might waste time on political arguments instead of considering real problems. Frau Prollius assured the meeting that *Frauenfunk* programmes would leave out political questions as there was little interest in the subject and nothing could be achieved through political broadcasts.

It was finally decided that the Committee of Listeners should be inaugurated for a trial period of six months. The Committee, while being composed of nominees from representative zonal bodies, should attempt to represent certain social and geographical interests (i.e. include country, towns, church and professional women and manual workers).[8] Two committees were finally established, in Cologne and in Hamburg, but there is no further information about their work in the CCG files.

Noteworthy in this discussion were two points: Firstly, from the beginning CCG preferred a non-political approach to the German housewife. Secondly, even this approach was hampered to a large extent by lack of financial means and interest from other Branches on which Educational Officers had to rely. This problem occurred again and again in the history of Women's Affairs Section, as for example with printed material for the conduct of meetings.

When Women's Affairs Officers and Education Officers attended German meetings they normally found them a real nuisance. As I have demonstrated, even the *Frauenring* had considerable difficulties in this respect. Germans had no idea of the proper conduct of meetings. Gemmel for instance wrote about the

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committee of listeners for *radiosender*, 2.9.1946.

[8] Similar committees existed in 1948 in Hamburg and in Frankfurt. (PRO FO1050-1229, Conference of Women's Affairs Officers, Bad Rothenfelde, 25.3.1949). The work of these Committees was disturbed by the currency reform. Women's Affairs Section suggested in November 1948 that women broadcast programme organisers should contact the President of the *Frauenfunk* on the American network, who worked under more favourable conditions and to obtain an inside view into her organisation. Women's Affairs invited the organisers of the Hamburg and Cologne *Frauenfunk* to Berlin in order to meet the President of the *Frauenfunk* of the American Zone. The Section was also prepared to help the British *Frauenfunk* to get better facilities and more clerical staff by approaching Herr Grimme, who was in charge of NWDR.

Volkshochschultagung (Conference of People's High Schools) which took place in Bonn from 3 to 6 September 1946:

> No provision for open house discussion had been made, and the conference was in fact at the complete mercy of some half dozen speakers. Without the very rude and crude intervention of Military Government on the afternoon of the second and third day, there would have been almost no opportunity for us to hear the voices and ideas of the lesser lights attending the conference, and not at all of the few younger people present. In spite of a bell for controlling speeches, it was quite clear that the big wigs present had no intention of controlling themselves.... (they were not able to make speeches under an hour). The real difficulty was undoubtedly the lack of chairmanship. In theory there was a chairman every day. The chairman apparently looked on it as his job to introduce the speaker and then to disappear, not to guide the meeting (...). But it seemed to me only too clear that such conference will never be conducted in a democratic manner until certain forms of conducting a meeting are laid down which oblige the Germans to set limits to their admiration of the professional spoken word, or what some of them called their 'democratic tolerance'.... No attempt could be made to summarise the content of talks and discussions (where any). In fact anyone who attempts to summarise the four speeches on Weltanschauung (Catholic, Protestant, Marxist, Christian Socialist), which gave us mental indigestion on the 2nd day, would be a hero - or a lunatic.[9]

Not only were speeches normally far too long and no room was left for discussion, chairman and chairwoman often presided like little dictators over the meetings; minor participants hardly got a chance to express their opinion. This was the case, as I have shown, even with meetings of the *Frauenring*. There were also problems with setting a proper agenda and with taking the vote at elections. What Germans in general, but women in particular, obviously needed was a lesson in democratic procedure.

But even here no money could be found simply to print rules for the conduct of meetings and for a 'model' constitution of a non-political women's organisation for distribution. German women's magazines as Bähnisch's *Stimme der Frau* refused to print such material with the claim that the magazine was not an organisational publication. Magda Kelber, the leader of Quaker Relief in Germany, wrote in 1948 a little pamphlet *Spielregeln der Versammlungskunst* which was the outcome of various courses she had conducted with German women at which committee procedure was discussed. [10] It was hoped that her pamphlet could be printed at the expenses of CCG,

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[9] Bodleian Library, Deneke papers, Box 20, Report on Volkshochschultagung 3 to 6 September 1946, by Jeanne Gemmel.

[10] Magda Kelber took on to plan and organise courses in civic education at Haus Schwalbach (near Wiesbaden). She was also a member of German Education Reconstruction Committee.

but it turned out to be impossible. Instead negotiations were going on to use a pamphlet originating from the League of Voters in the US; which had been translated for American Military Government for the same purpose and which was distributed free in the American Zone. The Women's Affairs Officer of Schleswig-Holstein, Bertha Bracey, included such rules in the little typewritten bulletin to German women she edited and contributed. Visiting Experts and Women's Affairs Officers circulated constitutions of British women's organisations such as Women's Institutes among leading German women they met.

Civic education of German women – the scheme in North Rhine-Westphalia

Spring 1948 saw a more concerted and co-ordinated attempt to reach the German *Hausfrau.* In view of the forthcoming local elections, Women's Affairs North Rhine-Westphalia started a scheme in February 1948 to interest women in municipal work. Youard prepared an instruction for *Kreis* Resident Officers (KRO) who were expected to participate and the scheme was backed up by the Regional Commander, General Bishop.[11] At *Regierungsbezirk* level Government Structure Officers were made responsible for co-ordinating this scheme in conjunction with Education Branch. Youard followed here very much the proposals which had been made in the policy paper *Objectives and methods of Civic Development Section.* One major point of her scheme was that KROs were to help with the formation of non-political organisations at local level which included representatives of all parties and religions, thus learning the principles of democracy. The creation of such women's organisations was, however, no easy task for *Kreis* Resident Officers and their wives, to whom the task of contacting leading German women often fell.

Youard provided practical tips about how to interest the housewife in local government, which confirm that the approach to German women was non-political in practice as well. The best place for women to learn 'democracy' was in welfare organisations doing practical welfare work and thereby learning to co-operate regardless of party and religion. The *Kreis* Resident Officer of Kreis Büren, whose wife wanted to launch a women's club, was advised that the best way to begin was through women's own interests.

'*Spielregeln der Versammlungskunst'* was printed 1950 in Wiesbaden (US Zone).
[11] PRO FO1013-714, German Women's Organisations, General Bishop, Draft 9.1.1946.

The best approach to politics, I think, is through the appeal to the good mother. - You look after your children's health at home, why aren't you on the Public Health Committee too? - Your husband always asks you about your own home, why do men think they can run the Housing Committee without women? - Frau Bähnisch of Hannover does this too. - The other gambit is that women suffer from wars and disasters, why don't they exert themselves to prevent them and how can they unless they have knowledge and experience?

The practical problems to which they respond are: - "How to prevent queuing"- "Is the rationing system fair" - "The refugee problem" - and "How to help the returned prisoners of war". The problem of the girls who cannot get married and what sort of work they should do arouses strong feelings. Once interest is aroused, they soon realise they must have an effective voice in politics.

> We try to take the line that women are interested in these problems as women and could cooperate to discuss them regardless of party and that Germany badly needs bridges building between parties and confessions, and women can build these more easily than men. The charitable organisations do cooperation on practical matters regardless of confessions and this practice could be extended. Hence the value of the Standing Conference of Women's Organisations. [12]

Youard explained to the KROs that in early days after the war representative committees of women were called together in many towns by individual women to advise on women's problems. In many cases Communist women immediately took the lead and as a result discredited the whole *Frauenausschuss* movement. During 1947 the other organisations appear to have fought back and those women's committees were proving a valuable meeting place for different parties and confessions doing valuable work. Few have constitutions though this would safeguard them from undue doctrination from any side. They were to be helped in forming such a committee in every Kreis. [13] So the whole activity aimed at Communist domination of existing *Frauenausschüsse* in NRW. In practical terms Youard expected as the result from the work of KROs either a women's committee co-opted to the *Kreistag*; a *Frauenausschuss* or a Standing Conference.

From March 1948 KRO reported how they tried to inspire women to establish committees. In Kreis Arnsberg, for example, eight women representing the various welfare organisations and including two councillors, one teacher and the wife of an official, accepted tea at the Office of the KRO and 'went away fired with enthusiasm

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[12] PRO FO 1013-714, Youard to Mr Rich, Kreis Bueren, March 1948.
[13] PRO FO1050-1214, Information on Women's Affairs for Kreis Resident Officers, by Mrs Youard, 19.6.1948.

and injected with the bug of public spirit'.[14] They proposed to form a Joint Committee which would investigate ways and means of promoting public-mindedness among women and persuading women to stand for election to councils. They also planned to arrange a programme of lectures, discussions etc to which they wanted to encourage the attendance of the women with whom they were in contact.

A more detailed report of such a meeting came from *Landkreis* Kleve (RB Düsseldorf).[15] In March 1948 the KRO had a discussion with five ladies at his house on the part women could play in local government. These were the wives of a prominent surgeon, and the mayor of Goch, a teacher of the vocational school in Goch, the Headmistress of the Lyceum in Kleve and the Secretary of the KRO in Kleve, Mrs Dahm. Mrs Dahm was described by the KRO as having 'a complete grasp of all aspects of local government' and was 'a firm believer in the British system'. The KRO could therefore leave most of the discussion to her along with the answering of questions. He had prepared a brief for Mrs Dahm, which she had translated into German and used as a basis of discussion. The opposition to the idea of forming a women's committee took the following lines: 1.Women in general were at present too much concerned with getting food and consumer goods. 2. The historic place of German women is her home, this is her life interest and she wishes for peace in her home. 3. If women go in public life they may lose their femininity. 4. Women do not know anything about local politics. The latter two points, KRO Hutchison reported, were not difficult to counter, and after Mrs Dahm had expounded the system of local government from the *Gemeinden*, the women began to show real interest. It was then said that though there were certain aspects of administration in which women could help, much of the administration was outside their sphere. The KRO was able to clarify this point by explaining the difference between framing policy and executing policy. Much of the local politics, he pointed out, was in fact nothing but common sense and the opinion of the woman may be as good as that of a man on whether, for example spending priority should be given to a war cemetery or to the repair of the gas works. Once the decision was made, the execution would then be left to the *Oberstadtdirektor* and his staff. Mrs Dahm then read extracts from the play *Die Ratsherrensitzung des Amtes Modell* in which two ladies took a prominent part. Interest then grew and the KRO was asked if they ought to join a party.

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[14] PRO FO1013-2221, HQ Arnsberg from Kreis Meschede re Activity of women, to Youard, 2.4.1948.
[15] PRO FO1013-709, Colin Hutchison, LK Kleve to Governmental Structure Düsseldorf,

He replied 'no', they should remain independent or form a women's political association with no party ticket, act and vote as they think best in the interest of the locality and preserve their freedom and independence. Then they asked how a lady could be elected to Council, and Mrs Dahm explained the system. The KRO added that everything started from small beginnings. A small amount of money would be necessary to provide handbills and to hire a hall for meetings, but at first, the work would start in one's own house with small discussion groups. The report claimed that the German ladies went away interested, determined to attend council meetings to see what was going on and to become co-opted members of committees. The Headmistress of the Lyceum even wanted to ask their senior girls to a meeting of the *Kreistag*.

Not everywhere were the meetings successful. In Herford, for example, the KRO was met with reservation by SPD women. Twelve women had accepted the invitation to Colonel Donner's house, six nominated by the *Oberbürgermeister* and belonging to the SPD; the remaining six from churches, local schools, and the CDU.[16] Miss Williams (Women's Affairs) gave an introductory speech and Mrs Taylor, Education Control Officer, was in the chair. Miss Williams gave an account of the active part English women take in public life and stressed the need for the development of similar interest among German women. She then suggested that a non-political women's association should be formed having as its object an exchange of ideas concerning the current problems of women, so that conditions might be improved by making suggestions and complaints to the city administration (*Stadtverwaltung*) or to the *Land* government. The proposed association should, of course, do charitable work amongst the needy. The first reaction came from the SPD block, all of whom sat together. They were quite unanimous that they were much too busy with the SPD women's work to serve even one afternoon per month in a non-party association. Most of the remaining women, however, were in favour of forming an association. Efforts were made by the English representatives to get co-operation from the SPD women and a definite plan for forming the proposed association. But during the discussion it became clear that it was impossible, at least for the time being. It was finally agreed that a similar meeting should be held at Colonel Donner's house six weeks later.

Mrs Taylor felt and pointed out in her report that it would be difficult to bridge the gap between the SPD women and most of the others. She found that this antipathy was due partly to the Germans' basic lack of tolerance, especially where politics were

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19.3.1948.

concerned, and the so called '*Bildungskluft*', a prominent feature of German public life, which rendered co-operation between people of different educational backgrounds very difficult. Further unsuccessful attempts to form non-political women's organisations were reported from other *Kreise* such as Aachen, Erkelenz, Jülich, Scheiden and Düren. There is no final report which would allow exact conclusions about how many local women's associations had been created at the initiative of Women's Affairs, in general, however, expectations were not met.

Kreis Resident Officers became increasingly pessimistic as to the practicability of the policy, or their own capacity for carrying it out. But as Youard emphasised, the scheme was likely to fail without their energetic co-operation.[17] Youard visited 39 out of 77 Kreise to encourage things. The response of German women to the initiative had chiefly depended on the interest in women taken by the KRO, the *Oberbürgermeister* or the *Oberstadtdirektor*. [18] In discussions with KROs in different *Kreise* Youard emphasised again the danger of a political approach to women which only aroused fear and opposition. The appeal had to be to that of a greater interest in public affairs and must be shown to be an extension of the family community. To build on family tradition, one must appeal to the good mother to follow her children's interests in public life. KROs should encourage members of charitable and confessional societies to take a wider view and to use the circumstances of occupation to engender a realistic approach.

Youard suggested the following methods to KROs: 1. Conversation with *Oberbürgermeister* and *Oberstadtdirektor* persuading them that women have valuable contribution to make. 2. Interested individuals should be put into touch with the *Frauenring*. 3. In country districts village branches of the *Landfrauenvereine* should be formed. 4. Political parties should be stimulated to encourage women. 5. Suggestions for broadcasts should be sent to the *Frauenfunk*, Radio Cologne. 6. Young women of promise must be recommended for co-option into *Kreis* Committees and for visits abroad.

Thus armed with fresh instructions and new enthusiasm, KROs discussed the problem again during summer 1948 with leading politicians, officials and prominent women at *Kreis* level. The results of these discussions were summed up by one of the KROs: 'Although not functioning in every *Kreis*, the existing women's organisations in

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[16] PRO FO1013-714, Meeting at Colonel Donner's House, Taylor to Youard, 21.6.1948.
[17] PRO FO1013-714, Summary of Policy Information to KROs by Youard, 19.6.1948.
[18] PRO FO1050-1214, Meeting held in Oxford House,NRW, Standing Committee on Women's Affairs, September 1948.

the British Zone would appear to be sufficient'. [19] As Beyer and Holtmann have pointed out for Kreis Unna, RB Arnsberg, there were numerous party-political and non-political organisations already in existence and the committee created by KRO to encourage women's participation in local elections was just one more. This is one explanation why Germans were reluctant to join new non-political committees. The attempt to reorganise existing women's activities 'from above' in order to win more women for local affairs was not very promising. In Unna, for example, a supra-party *Frauenring* already existed and women interested in this kind of work had already joined it, or were working in political parties or religious organisations.

A good example of the German attitude towards Women's Affairs attempts to create women's associations is the response by Frau Dr Hoestermann of the *Frauenausschuss* Bonn.[20] She reminded everyone that the German housewife had to work for 12, 14 or even 16 hours and longer. Her work was 'directly (sic) excellent community work for her people and country'. The restoration of the destroyed homes and its inhabitants was essential and constructive work, Hoestermann argued. 'Without this restoration all public life would be chaos. For undernourished ragged individuals are a public danger and the German women banish them by their housewife activity.' It was clear then, that under this burden and lacking time and physical strength women often stayed away from the usual community work. Besides, the awful experience of the Hitler period had engendered a dislike of political activity. The present German women's movement, Hoestermann wrote, realised the despairing situation of the German woman 'who in consequence of overwork and bodily and mental exertion threatens to sink down into the unspiritual and to materialise, and stems itself against it (sic)' The women's associations, the women's groups and organisations woke their members, trained the women, tried again to interest them in public life and lead them to co-operate. When of 300 women invited 30 turned up at meetings, that was hardly a success worth mentioning. In these circumstances, Hoestermann found it inopportune to organise new women's organisations in Germany after a British pattern. 'We German women have more than enough organizations and associations of all directions and purposes', she wrote. The leaders recognised the necessity of awakening of women for

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[19] PRO FO1013-714, German Women's Affairs, Report LK Kleve by Hutchison. 30.6. 1946. See also the article by Beyer and Holtmann, 'Frauen und Frauenbild in der Kommunalpolitik der frühen Nachkriegszeit 1945-1950', p. 401, for *Kreis* Unna.
[20] PRO FO1013-714, Dr Hoestermann, Head of super-partial women's committee in Bonn, 30.5.1948.

public and political life and for community work, but they were also aware of the desperate situation of the German women of all classes. [21] Hoestermann added that the questions which were discussed in the German women's world of the day were such that reasonable woman's circles were ever more of the opinion that 'super-party' and 'super-denominational' meetings do not help. The ideologies were too different. The German women's movement had up till then never ceased calling women to community work and interest them in political problems of the day. It was fully aware of the political strength of women and of the immense danger threatening the German people and country from the East. In other words, Hoestermann argued, British involvement in this matter was unwelcome and unnecessary.

Before women could stand for elections their confidence had to be reinforced and they had to gain knowledge about committee procedures. Formal courses in civic education were to provide an insight in the work and function of local committees and administration. Youard's instruction to *Kreis* Resident Officers in North Rhine-Westphalia from February 1948 suggested work on the following lines: 1. Women of various parties already in the *Kreistag* should be asked to hold meetings and discuss the value of women in public life, if possible at 'all-party' meetings with the *Bürgermeister* in the chair. 2. Short courses should be provided for possible candidates in the work of local administration, the organisation of the *Kreistag* and procedure of Council and Committee meetings. 3. The Volkshochschule should be asked to provide these courses, if there was no *Volkshochschule*, the women's organisations themselves should arrange their own courses calling the staff of the *Kreis* administration and members of the *Kreistag* to speak. 4. At least some of the courses should be held in the afternoon to attract younger women with children. They could be held in different parts of the town.

Attached to this paper was a memorandum by Youard *Women Candidates for Local Spring Elections* which asked KROs to make as widely known as possible that legislation was impending, and local elections were to be held.[22] Women's organisations such as *Frauenausschüsse* and *Frauenringe* should be contacted. It had been found, Youard wrote, that shyness due to lack of experience was often the reason that women councillors were less helpful than hoped.[23] The only known way to overcome this

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[21] Ibid.
[22] PRO FO1013-714, Women Candidates for Local Government Spring Elections, January 1948.
[23] Lists of women's candidates at *Kreis* Committees in NRW show that on average there were at each *Kreis* between 30 and 50 councillors of whom one or at most four were women. In RB

quickly, Youard explained, was the provision of definite courses of instruction. Suitable subjects for talks were the work of the *Kreistag* and its committees, the function of different Local Government Administration officers, procedure of council and committee meetings and hints on public speaking. It should be possible to find members of the *Kreistag* and officials of the various administrative offices to speak about their work. *Volkshochschulen* would help, as well as co-operative societies and trade unions.

There is no complete list of how many such courses at *Volkshochschulen* took place in NRW. There are only single reports about the efforts made by KROs to establish them. It is therefore difficult to assess their success. Generally, it can be said that this initiative did not meet with an enthusiastic response on the German side. KROs followed Youard's instruction and usually invited members of the local women's organisations to take matters in their hands, but often without considerable success. Where courses were organised, only a few women attended them.

The Volkshochschule in Cologne, for example, was prepared to arrange courses of six evenings on *Women in public life* to take place in May 1948.[24] The Head of the *Volkshochschule* claimed that women were just not interested and that women who had been asked to lecture had not even replied. But he had agreed to arrange the course if the Educational Officer supplied the lecturer. Miss Clark, Education Control Officer, saw Fräulein Hartmann, CDU *Stadtverordnete*, who was willing to co-operate. She herself offered to speak on the CDU, and she asked other women to speak on the SPD and KPD. The Head of the *Wohlfahrtsamt*, also a woman, agreed to speak on education for citizenship. Fräulein Hartmann undertook to be the leading spirit. The idea was to have a short introductory talk at each meeting (no longer than 20 minutes) followed by a discussion. The course started on 3 May 1948 under the title *Die Frau der Gegenwart* and covered topics such as women and politics, women in administration, women in employment, history of the women's movement. But the numbers of participants were very small.[25]

The Head of the *Volkshochschule* Bonn was similarly sceptical. The men leading public life in the city had always refused to co-operate in courses offering

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Arnsberg for example there were in March 1947 (list of 18.3.1947) 954 councillors, of whom were 52 women, in RB Düsseldorf 714 councillors and 55 women.

[24] PRO FO1013-714, Discussion at ECO's conference, RB Cologne, reported by Miss Clark, 26.2.1948.

[25] PRO FO1013-714, Courses for political education of women, Youard reported to Evans, May 1948; Women's Affairs considered the course to be a failure.

women municipal-political information and discussion.[26] He was willing to try again in June and asked that Military Government grant support. These examples show that difficulties with Youard's proposals arose from two sides: the mainly male town councillors were not willing to participate in the scheme of political education for women and on the women's side there seemed scant demand for such education. Given the economic conditions, younger women who had to care for families simply had no time or energy for taking part in formal courses on civic education. After the foundation of the German Federal Republic, however, civic education in *Volkshochschulen* and conferences on adult education found even less ideological and financial support from the German side than during the British occupation. [27]

Learning how to co-operate

British visitors were often surprised by the lack of non-political organisations in Germany, devoted to those general interests 'which all women have in common'.[28] They found existing welfare organisations were too rigidly organised on party or sectarian lines, leaving potentially valuable individuals feeling unable to take part in the work because of religious or political scruples. German women - and this also applied to men - did not realise the amount of pressure which they could bring to bear on bureaucrats and politicians, through non-political bodies such as Women's Institutes and Townswomen's Guilds, to accomplish reforms and local improvements for the general benefit of the community. There seemed to be a wide scope for the introduction of women's organisations with broad general aims, such as existed in Britain. Only then would there be a well-balanced volume of neutral opinion 'which could act as a healthy binding force and tone down the existing dogmatic tendencies in German women's organisations.' This would also provide 'a useful body of informed opinion able to provide neutral chairmanship for broad planning relative to the place of women in the life of Germany today'.

In the first place women had to learn how to co-operate in an organisation like a Standing Conference of Women's Organisations. The problem had been identified quite

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[26] PRO FO1013-714, Courses for political education of women, by Schroers, Director of People's High School, Bonn, 12.5.1948.
[27] Ziegler, Lernziel Demokratie. Politische Frauenbildung in der britischen und amerikanischen Besatzungszone 1945-1949, p. 10.
[28] PRO FO1051-600, Background letter No 24 'The Place of women in Germany today',

early in the process of 're-education'. But only after the formation of the *Deutscher Frauenring* had revealed that there was no especially great interest on the part of other women's association to join it, Women's Affairs decided to take care of this problem.

In summer 1950 Deneke discussed with Broome the possibility of running a school for officers of women's organisations (not only those of the *Frauenring*) in civic education and especially co-operation with each other. It was planned that Mrs Cornell (a British lecturer who travelled in summer 1949 with Deneke to the British Zone), Miss Deneke and Miss Williams (Education Control Officer) should run these courses at different centres throughout North Rhine-Westphalia.[29] These courses, which took place in spring 1951, were crash courses with students having to make their own accommodation arrangements. Two-day conferences were held in Düsseldorf, Cologne, Detmold, and Dortmund; one-day meetings in Aachen, Recklinghausen, Münster and Bielefeld, and afternoon meetings at Borken and Bursteinfurth. Each course was to cater for about 30 students from various organisations and dealt with subjects such as committee procedure, the work of sub-committees, organisation of a group, a round table conference to choose a programme for the next year, a short amusing sketch depicting tiresome characters at a bad meeting, ways of getting co-operation of ordinary members such as choosing a subject out of a hat, group discussion, brain trusts, together with a few more general talks on such topics as the growth of public opinion. The German participants had also the opportunity to speak.

On the whole the German response to the invitation was good.[30] At each meeting those present were asked to introduce themselves in turn while one member of each organisation also made a brief statement of the aims of her society. Deneke found it best to let the conference shape itself according to the preoccupations of those who came, and therefore much depended on local circumstances. She adapted the programme to suit each occasion and explained each time that she hoped for a contribution on the part of those present and suggested that they should arrange with one another what subjects they wished to bring forward. Deneke and Cornell always gave a preliminary address on the purpose of these meetings and on the general principles involved in working together, and those principles were then illustrated by concrete examples. To initiate further discussion, an address was given on how women's societies influence public opinion in England. Principles governing the consultation and working of Joint

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10.3.1949, (2100 copies printed in March 1949).

[29] Bodleian Library, Deneke papers, Box 20, Letter to Broome, 25.8.1949.

[30] PRO FO1013-2234, Report on the journey in Rhineland and Westphalia, March 27 to April

Standing Conferences of women's organisations were considered in detail at each conference and the Women's Group on Public Welfare, the umbrella organisation for all British women's organisations, was taken as a model.

Cornell and Deneke also demonstrated various methods of how to encourage inexperienced or shy members to take part in discussions at meetings. The underlying idea, Deneke explained, remained the importance of rousing and developing in the individual a sense of responsibility for the community, and in the community a sense of regard and respect for the individual. Generally they found that the instinct of loyalty to one's religious, political, or cultural association was strong while respect of another's way of thought came to German women as something of a new idea.

The following examples illustrate how these meetings were conducted and also that German women themselves were prepared to discuss topics which can be labelled as 'political'. At Cologne 45 women were present from the Red Cross, *Akademikerinnenbund*, *Konsumgenossenschaft*, SPD, *Frauenring*, *Verband der Fürsorgerinnen*, and the *Verband der Angestellten*. Deneke wrote that it took rather long to establish ease and full confidence here, but discussions worked well when the participants had relaxed. Matters suggested for discussion were: a women's party in the *Bundestag* (which met with virtually no support to Deneke's relief); the need for education in artistic matters in schools (urged by the *Gemeinschaft der Künstler und Künstlerfreunde*, GESOK); disparate high food prices (housewives advocated refusing to pay the high prices demanded by some shops); and the need for separate organisations for women wage earners. This led to a discussion on joint conferences of women's organisations and to a decision to form such an *Arbeitsgemeinschaft* with guaranteed autonomy and independence for each society. The course had been a great success.

The Münster meeting, on the other hand, was not very well attended. The religious and welfare societies and the Red Cross were absent, and there were no *Hausfrauen* at the meeting. Other societies were represented by very few women 'while the *Landfrauen* turned up in full strength and made an impression on the others by being "*aufgeschlossen*", that is free from prejudice and ready to co-operate', as Deneke reported not without pride, since her special interest was in *Landfrauen* organisation. The *Deutsche Angestellten Gewerkschaft* and the *Arbeitsamt* each sent an excellent representative who took a very active part, and the representative of the *Frauenring*

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24 1951, by Helena Deneke and Mrs Cornell, 24.4.1951.

was, according to Deneke, outstanding as regards intelligence and judgement. Here the topic of discussion was the co-operation between town and country. The other topic was 'Should married women continue in paid work?'. This brought a very good all round discussion. Youth unemployment was considered and the Arbeitsamt begged for assistance from the voluntary societies in establishing references for girls and households, with a view to domestic work. Taken as a whole, this was a good and interesting meeting, Deneke concluded.

The meeting in Dortmund, which was perhaps the most representative with members of 14 different organisations (28 women altogether), dealt with finance, the value of procedure, the importance of training for service on public bodies, the pros and cons of working according to party principles in local government, as well as the need for women to enter Parliament. There was also a discussion on the *Gleichheitsartikel*, Article 3 of the Basic Law.

Deneke concluded her report by writing that after four weeks in which she was in close touch with German women's organisations she could say that these had developed considerably and, on the whole, in the direction of democracy the British wished to see. The more prominent members were alert to present day issues and they discussed these freely and informally. Their weight and influence was undoubted; they had great vitality and were working to educate their rank-and-file members in taking responsibility and being aware of their part as citizens. Deneke's impression was that help given to them in time 'might just tip the scale' in the direction in which the British were working. She also felt that these courses did put German women's organisations in touch with one another in a way that would not have been accomplished without her. For, unless some compelling motive brought them together, as was the case with relief work in 1946, there was no occasion to meet and no society was in a position to summon the rest without seeming to want to lord it over them. The English were a neutral third party, and an invitation issued by them raised none of these difficulties. However, in stressing mutual interchange of ideas between German and English women Deneke was aware that any suggestion of instruction would have been resented. In Information Centres (where the meetings took place) where no experienced local organiser had prepared the way, Deneke found that the suspicion of being instructed had to be countered.

Women councillors at Local Government Schools

Far more successful than courses for women at *Volkshochschulen* were courses offered for women who were already councillors or members of local government committees in Local Government Schools. British officers established five schools early in 1946 in Lower Saxony to give short residential courses on experimental lines.[31] Their primary aim was to help officials and councillors of the newly formed *Kreis* and *Gemeindetage* to carry out their work.[32] Features of the syllabus were: 1. Lectures in democracy in general and its expression in local government; 2. Lectures on the German government law; 3. Lectures on how to draw up Standing Orders and their practical purpose in council and committee procedure; 4. Lectures by specialists on problems which came before local councils, such as housing refugees. Discussions followed these lectures and there were also practical exercises in the form of mock councils and committees. The committees were formed and given a set of problems to discuss after which recommendations were drawn up. These were later reported to the mock council. The course was a success. German councillors and officials were delighted especially with the practical exercises and the opportunity to discuss their difficulties with a competent partner at the course. According to British reports, the real improvement that had taken place in local government in Lower Saxony was thought to be largely due to the work of these schools.

From 1947 the management of these schools was put in German hands with an English Officer of Government Structure available in an advisory capacity. The home ministry of the *Land* Government took a sympathetic interest in the work but did not seek to control it in any way. After the currency reform in 1948 most of these schools had to be closed. In October 1948, only the two larger ones, Iburg and Hahnenklee, were still working, but later the others received financial support and were able to re-open.

It was the rule that the costs of tuition and residence were met in the case of officials and councillors by the funds of their local council. The expenses of other groups were met either by individual students or by their organisations.[33] The teaching was undertaken by a headmaster and one or two resident lecturers and by a number of

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[31] Local Government Schools existed in Iburg near Osnabrück (for 30 students per course); Hahnenklee in the Harz mountains (for 40 to 50 students); Restrup near Oldenburg (for 30 students); Aurich (25 students); and Bevensen near Lüneburg (25 students).
[32] PRO FO1013-714, Local Government Schools in Land Niedersachsen, 16.10.1948.

visiting specialists. They all were Germans, but sometimes a lecture was included by an English officer on the practice of local government in England and English officers held a kind of open forum during the course at which students could bring up any points they wished. Over time the scope of course was widened to include not only councillors and officials but all kinds of groups interested in good citizenship including women's organisations. The usual programme then adapted itself to particular interests and problems.

Women's Affairs showed a great interest in including as many women as possible in these kinds of courses.[34] Students for courses were normally recruited through the *Regierungspräsident* in larger towns who then contacted the headmaster of the school. If an individual was interested he or she could also apply directly to the schools. Women's Affairs tried to persuade political parties to send suitable candidates and to give greater publicity to these courses.

In summer 1948 Women's Affairs Section compiled a long list of women candidates from the entire British Zone and passed it to Governmental Structure Department and through them to the Ministry of Interior which finally sent the invitations to the candidates.[35] The result of this action was that in 1948 the summer courses at Hahnenklee were attended by a number of women, the first course by four, the second by one, the third by six and the fourth course by four women out of 30 students at each course.[36] Education Control officer Miss Cameron reported that the women all played an active part in debates and were very much appreciated by men both German and English for their practical and sensible speeches. Frau Hubert for example, 'found herself not only the only councillor in a Syndicate on *Magistratsverfassung* but the only person to hold a minority view. In this situation, demanding great morale and independent thought, she acquitted herself with distinction'. Cameron summarised: 'It was generally allowed by the English lecturers and officers present that the women students were in nearly all cases equal in intelligence and power of self expression to the best men present. They were, of course,

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[33] The cost of Iburg course per student was DM 16, that of Hahnenklee slightly more.
[34] PRO FO1049-1246, Discussion at the meeting of the Standing Committee on Women's Affairs, Niedersachsen, 7.5.1948, See also Ebsworth, *Restoring Democracy in Germany. The British Contribution.*
[35] Harman, Women's Affairs Office NRW, wrote in June 1948 to 15 German women councillors and officials and asked them whether they were interested in the course. Of these 15 women 8 replied that they could not attend because of other obligations or for private reasons.
[36] PRO FO1049-1248, Report on women in Local Government Course at Hahnenklee, Cameron, August 1948.

a select group, but so were the men.'[37]

Reports from the German side were equally positive.[38] Youard reported that she had interviewed the candidates for NRW; two officials of the *Sozialministerium* and Frau Hasche, the chairman of the *Frauenring* in Düsseldorf on the Hahnenklee course. The general opinion was that the course was an unusually valuable one and that from the point of view of human understanding its effect would probably be far-reaching. Slight criticism was made that the candidates were confronted on their arrival with a completely worked out programme instead of asking participants which essential points they wished to discuss. The purely technical side of administration (that is to say the 'how' of administration) was discussed at too great a length, underlining the irrevocable difference between the German and the English system. One of the German officials believed that much closer understanding between English and Germans could be achieved if they were to discuss the difficulties they met in carrying out their jobs.

The Section's interest was mostly in the school at Hahnenklee which was close to Hanover and partly influenced by the *Regierungspräsidentin*, Bähnisch. Presumably, women councillors were also included in courses of other Local Government Schools, however, there are no reports about those. Women's Affairs Section tried to help Local Government Schools with the serious difficulties that came with the currency reform. It asked the Railway Company to reduce rail fares for participants and brought the financial problems to the attention of the Rockefeller Foundation, but nothing definite was achieved. The Conference of Women's Affairs Officers at their meeting in November 1948 decided that Education officers in the *Land* Lower Saxony would send letters to *Frauenringe* in other Länder asking for their financial assistance and ask Regional Government Officers to approach the *Innenministerium*.[39] The meeting also decided that an appeal would be broadcast by the Head of the Local Government School at Hahnenklee. Miss Williams as Women's Affairs Officer was to circulate to interested persons an account of the work being performed by these schools and to state the importance that the courses continue. In February 1949 the Finance Minister of Lower Saxony was willing to give grants for Local Government Schools. It was promised that courses for women would be run in sufficient number if women applied to attend.

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[37] Ibid.
[38] PRO FO1013-714, Local Government School in Hahnenklee, Youard to Povey, Government Structure Branch, 31.8.1948.
[39] PRO FO1050-1229, Meeting Standing Committee on Women's Affairs, Sterling House, 8.2.1949.

Women's Affairs felt that these courses were not sufficiently well-known and suggested issuing a definite programme showing the type of course and when it was to be held. This would be sent through the German network and to other CCG Branches. No further details can be learnt from Women's Affairs files on whether special courses for women were offered after 1948. It is also difficult to assess whether courses at Local Government Schools at Hahnenklee continued to include women councillors and whether they offered special courses for women only.

Bähnisch's proposal for a school of citizenship at Hahnenklee

Of special interest, however, is a proposal made by Theanolte Bähnisch in summer 1948 for a School of Citizenship especially for women (and under her personal control), which she had certainly developed under the influence of the summer courses that took place at the same time in Hahnenklee.[40] That Women's Affairs very strongly supported Bähnisch's idea is a further indication their educational concepts were quite close. Women, Bähnisch argued, must be introduced to politics in an entirely different way to men. This required a 'gradual introduction to public life and education of women to find a meaning in life within themselves'. This echoes the idea that women who could not lead a life as wife and mother because of the war needed to be educated and prepared to find an outlet for their natural abilities and lead useful lives.

The idea of separating civic education for women from civic education for men was advocated by a number of German and British educationalists at the time. At the first conference on adult education in the British Zone (*Erste Volkshochschultagung für die britische Zone*) which took place from 2 to 4 April 1946, Elfriede Paul and Franziska Lambert demanded a separate women's department of the Volkshochschule with its own courses taught by women to women.[41] Lectures would be offered by doctors, nurses, art teachers, lawyers, and economists. No mention was made of members of parliament and political parties, trade unions and professional clubs. Paul, like Bähnisch, was a leading member of the Hanover *Klub Deutscher Frauen.* It can be

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[40] PRO FO371-70717, Proposal for a school of education of women in citizenship, by Th. Bähnisch, August 1948; The proposal was sent by Women's Affairs Section to the German Department, FO.

[41] At this conference the establishment of the *Klub Deutscher Frauen* had been discussed between officers of Education Branch and Elfriede Paul.

assumed that Bähnisch had developed her proposals in co-operation with Paul. [42] Courses for women were organised in *Heimvolkshochschulen* (residential schools) such as Göhrde in Lower Saxony in summer 1947.[43] These courses followed a model from the Weimar Republic. The curriculum included theoretical subjects as social science, history, psychology and pedagogy. From 1948 there were two or three courses for women per year at Göhrde attended by twenty women per course. It seems that this kind of course offered at Göhrde by Fritz Boronski did not attract the interest of Women's Affairs, presumably because it was far too theoretical and not practical enough. Ziegler indicates that after 1948 the number of civic development courses for women was reasonably high, decreasing only after 1950.[44]

The final aim of education Bähnisch saw, was 'a complete woman, and a complete human being'. Thus it was only possible to influence the whole personality of women if the intensive course of education was coupled with residence in a hostel. It was obligatory for every local women's organisation affiliated to the *Frauenring* to have a working committee for education in citizenship. This working committee dealt with theoretical enlightenment and stimulation through lectures and with practical introduction to public services, e.g. mock council meetings and practice debates on easy subjects. The *Frauenring* had seen, however, Bähnisch stated, that this work did not suffice to achieve the aim of 'complete woman, complete human being, who helps in shaping up public life.'[45] The *Frauenring* had been asking for over a year for a residential school to train women as full personalities. Bähnisch had spoken to the three Minister Presidents of the *Länder* in the British Zone about this. All three agreed with

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[42] For the German concept of '*mitbürgerliche Erziehung*' which was strongly influenced by German emigrants like Fritz Boronski who had returned from British exile, see Ziegler, *Lernziel Demokratie. Politische Frauenbildung in der britischen und amerikanischen Besatzungszone 1945-1949*, p. 68. This concept combined Swedish, British and German traditions of adult education. Ziegler claims that this concept offered especially good conditions for the development of political education specifically for women.

[43] Ibid., p. 108. The first course for women only was carried out by the *Liga für Frieden und Freiheit* from 14 to 18 September 1947. The *Volkshochschule* in Hanover offered a summer course at Göhrde on the subject of *'Gespräche über Frauenfragen'* from 21 July to 2 August 1947. This summer course was led by Elfriede Paul and Franziska Lambert. *Ministerialrätin* Dr Bardenhewer organised a course at Fredebourg Volkshochschule *'Frauenfragen. Die Frau in der Gegenwart'* with 39 participants. Bardenhewer was Head of the Department of Higher Education (Höhere Schulen) in the *Kultusministerium* in NRW. After the establishment of the *Deutscher Frauenring* in 1949 she was chairman of the 'Education Committee' until 1954.

[44] Ibid. Ziegler gives some examples of civic courses for women, but no overview of their number and kind.

[45] PRO FO371-70717, Proposal for a school for Education of Women in Citizenship, Th. Bähnisch, August 1948.

her in principle but saw no possibility of assisting financially.

Therefore the *Frauenring* arranged special courses in civic education at the Local Government School at Hahnenklee where a majority of women was invited. As the *Regierungsbezirk* Hanover was concerned with this school, together with two other *Regierungsbezirke*, Bähnisch as *Regierungspräsident* of Hanover opened the meeting. She took part in the courses for the first three or four days and let the participants discuss problems which were of special interest to them. The head of the school found that these women's courses were always much more lively than those in which men were the majority. It was also interesting to see, Bähnisch continued, how the men, who were at first sceptical towards political work done by women, became quite enthusiastic in the course of discussion. These courses were important and interesting, but for most of the women the drive and stimulus was lost when they returned to their dull surroundings. What was required was longer and more intensified training and influence. This was only possible in well-organised residential courses, which should in the first instance be attended by those women who had already been won over in principle to the idea of public service through the courses at Hahnenklee or similar courses.

Bähnisch's school had to be a residential school headed by a woman who was both 'motherly and politically trained' for it was important that women should feel at home and could take the questions and problems they had on their minds to the Head, and that they had so much confidence in her that they would talk to her frankly about all problems which occurred to them during their stay. There had to be also domestic assistance, somebody to look after the domestic arrangements for the residents. The Head was to be in charge of the educational side. She was to give at least two lessons per week. In each of the three scheduled courses she had to choose subjects of fundamental importance that brought her into contact with the women e.g. 'Why should women take part in public life?' or 'What is the ideal life of the women in the future?'. Her teaching had to have a strong emotional background and appeal not only to the women's intellect but also to their feelings. Only thus she could gain the confidence and generate enthusiasm 'for our idea', Bähnisch found. In addition to the Head, two full-time teachers were required to do the main teaching at the three courses. Furthermore, the Head had to call upon suitable men and women to give individual lessons, or occasionally run a whole day or weekend, either in a honorary capacity or for payment.

The duration of one course would be one week as most women would be unable

to spare longer. There would also be two-week introductory courses for women whose interest in public life was to be aroused, and courses of 4-6 weeks or even longer for women who intended to do responsible political work in either local government or political parties. Bähnisch suggested the following subjects: 1. General political fundamentals: What are politics? General political development in the various countries of the world, with particular reference to the last century. 2. What should I know about local government? Political training, mock council meetings, debating practice, special courses for housewives. Refresher courses had to be arranged for women who had attended previous courses.[46]

Bähnisch further suggested to combine the School with the headquarters of the *Frauenring* and the possibility of holding general women's meetings there. The headquarters of the *Frauenring* would be of practical use inasmuch as the Secretary (this is Bähnisch herself) could listen to the various courses whenever her time allows and see how the women react, at the same time she could advise them regarding help in women's work. Bähnisch thought such co-operation of the utmost importance. In other words, Bähnisch wanted financial help for establishing a school for members of her own organisation that would be under her personal control. She therefore wished this school to be established in Hanover. This would make it possible for women in Hanover who were interested in political work to teach at the school in their spare time, which would be crucial in the initial stages of the school.

Women's Affairs viewed this project very favourably and was more than willing to give support. Evans tried to find money for the school in other Branches, such as Religious Branch. Ostermann spoke to Lord Lindsay in Hamburg and hoped that he might rouse some interest amongst 'moneyed' groups in the U.K. Evans also hoped that money could come from such groups as Carnegie and Rockefeller. It was estimated that a sum of £ 5,000 per month was needed for this kind of school for 50 students per month. Despite all efforts, the money could not be raised. No further reports on this project followed and it is likely that it never materialised.

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[46] Even if the subjects for courses in Bähnisch's proposal suggest application of the method of 'learning by doing', as she possibly had seen in Local Government School Hahnenklee and as it was practised in British women's organisations, Ziegler pointed out that courses in civic education offered by the *Frauenring* were directed above all towards gaining theoretical knowledge. The *Frauenring* did not adopt the principle of learning democratic behaviour by practical involvement in public affairs as propagated by British women's organisations.

Anglo-German Clubs

One way to demonstrate to German women democratic procedure and the responsibility of the individual was through British women. The initiative came from the wives of British officers themselves. Wives of certain RB Commanders in North Rhine-Westphalia had asked in January 1949 if they could accompany their husbands in one of the monthly meetings with a view to having an informal discussion on the subject. Instead they were invited to lunch and the discussion turned out to be not very informative - as the CCG report put it - 'perhaps because the British ladies who had suggested it found it difficult to put their views in front of a number of people'.[47] It was therefore agreed that Women's Affairs Officers should prepare a short paper on the subject which would then be circulated to all those interested in the matter. A paper *What British wives can do for Women's Affairs in this Land* was written by Dorothy Broome and Barbara Bliss and was discussed at the RB Commanders Conference on 1 February 1949.[48]

The paper emphasised that the efforts made to establish friendly relations with individual German women by British women were of the greatest value. If each British wife did what she felt she best could do, the result would be considerable. Of course there were extreme difficulties in the way of breaking down the religious and political barriers which divided German women themselves; 'but perhaps the most valuable gift the British women have to offer to German women is what they are and what they stand for'. British women were to encourage German women in public life by contacting women elected to local government bodies in the autumn elections of 1948 at *Kreis* level and wives of leading officials. They were to form discussion groups or study circles on public affairs and local government. In those districts where British women already had made contacts with the *Frauenring* and the *Landfrauenvereine*, further stimulation of interest in the German women's discussion on public affairs would be useful. Meetings of small groups for discussion within larger organisations were considered of special value. If British women could help in fostering these small groups of discussion 'the most inarticulate German woman might have a chance of development'.

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[47] PRO FO1013-2224, What British wives can do; Major Bishop, Commander in NRW, to Philip Balfour, PC/ISC; 19.2.1949.
[48] PRO FO1013-2224, What British wives can do for Women's Affairs in this Land, Memorandum by Bliss and Broome, February 1949.

Not all KROs were happy with such unsolicited help. The KRO in Bielefeld, for example, wrote to Broome that he would suggest that British women be clearly briefed because not all of them were politically well educated - nor were they conversant with these matters.[49] Broome replied:

> We agree that to have well-meaning people run counter to valuable work already being done by K.R.Os would be a tragedy and British wives were advised always to get into touch with R.B. Officers and K.R.Os. But what wives do is done of 'grace' and not by order and to 'brief' them might well not only discourage those unable to offer a great deal but even limit effort of others and in fact prevent that spontaneity which was so precious in relationship between British and German women. This kind of work cannot be reduced to a cut and dried formula but we have said at the end of our memo that we will give the help we can if approached.[50]

The amount of voluntary, unpaid work British wives were prepared to offer varied widely. Some Visiting Experts described examples where British wives were indeed involved in practical welfare work such as caring for German refugees. In general, however, the initiative did not seem to have found a broad response among British wives. A report from February 1949 stated for NRW that in general the activity of Wives' Committees tended to be confined to their own private interests and those of their families.[51] This was not very suitable as role-model for German women.

British and German women, however, met in Anglo-German Women's Clubs which had been established earlier in many towns in the British Zone. Reports about the activity of such clubs exist only for North Rhine-Westphalia from towns such as Aachen, Düsseldorf, Witten, Wuppertal, Minden, Paderborn and Bünde. It is therefore difficult to estimate how many such clubs existed in the British Zone. Anglo-German Women's Clubs were started either by members of welfare organisations or by the wife of the *Kreis* Resident Officer. In Düsseldorf Women's Affairs Officers participated in activities of the club and in Aachen, the wife of the KRO, Mrs Mather, started a club closely advised by Women's Affairs Officer Youard. German members were hand-picked, and normally wives of important local personalities or women of professional distinction. Some reports from the *Kreise* indicate that there was a strong interest on the side of German ladies in having an Anglo-German Club but that British wives did not

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[49] PRO FO1013-2232, Report about Women's organisations in Bielefeld, February 1949.
[50] PRO FO1013-2232, Assistance of British Wives in the work of Women's Affairs Section, Broome to Mrs Blair-Cunynghame, RB Detmold, February 1949.
[51] PRO FO1068-50, Wives Committees in Schleswig-Holstein, Niedersachsen and NRW, 26.1.1949. Welfare Branch commented that practically no contribution is made to CCG Welfare by Wives Associations.

come forward.[52]

One typical such an Anglo-German Club was that in Kreis Brake/Lippe, RB Detmold. The small club had been started by Mrs Davie-Smith, who ran the Lemgo YWCA in 1947.[53] Membership was limited to fifteen German and fifteen English women. The Club met for discussion once a week in a room on the top floor of the YWCA. The Club room was furnished and had a supply of newspapers and magazines (of the YWCA). The KRO attended the meetings periodically and he thought that its success was due to a very large extent to the personality of Mrs Davie-Smith herself. She was very careful in the selection of the members, both German and British. The KRO was convinced that a small circle particularly in a small place did as much good as many large ones. 'Its atmosphere of friendliness, where all the members know each other, leads to a free exchange of ideas and genuine friendships'.

Another example is the Anglo-German Club in Münster. It was formed in March 1949 with some 50 people under the presidency of Mrs Magrane, wife of the Assistant Commissioner. Each British member brought or sponsored one German guest and 'a most friendly and promising afternoon was spent'. [54] The club met once a month in the Social Centre Cafeteria. According to the club report it was felt that emphasis should be on personal contact and the necessity of having an equal number of English and German ladies at each gathering. The programme for the meeting included: Tea party, Brains Trust in English (a game); talk on the work of the Red Cross in Germany; an afternoon in the cinema; a talk by *Baronin* Twickle on her recent visit to England.

One topic popular with many Anglo-German Clubs was the raising of children. Back in 1948, as part of her campaign to stimulate German women to greater public activity, Youard issued some 'background information' to KROs.[55] The paper suggested that British wives could contribute to the 're-education' of German women in the difficult area of family upbringing. Some German parents still frightened their children into being good. This part of family life led to the unscrupulousness of the German character in later life. Germans grew up under heavy discipline and took it out on somebody else as soon as they could. Youard urged KROs to get their wives to invite

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[52] PRO FO1013-2229, Reports from Halle, Detmold and Bielefeld.
[53] PRO FO1013-2232, German Amentities, Anglo-German Club in Lemgo; Report by Mr Hickson, KRO Brake/Lippe, 11.2.1949.
[54] PRO FO1013-2229, Report re Anglo-German Women's Club, Münster, 31.3.1949.
[55] FO1049-1247, Policy information for KRO in Land NRW, by Youard, 13.7.1948.

German women to their homes and to take an interest in this problem.[56]

The Club in Düsseldorf, for example, discussed the bringing up of children in February 1949. A German mother and an English father spoke and a lively discussion followed.[57] The minutes on that meeting remarked critically that the Englishman spoke only of a family of the educated class, whereas the German woman gave a picture of all classes in Germany. The English tended therefore to give the impression that, although there were families living in overcrowded conditions, in England all classes brought their children up perfectly, i.e. with freedom and self-discipline. The chairman of the Club agreed here with Women's Affairs 'that complete honesty was above all necessary in such meetings and it is dangerous to try to appear better than we are'.

'Bringing up children in the British way' and 'Bringing up children in the German way' was also the topic of a meeting of the Anglo-German Club in Wuppertal, given by Mrs Cowgill, Düsseldorf, by Miss Hohagen, Headmistress of Mothers' School, Wuppertal respectively. From this report we learn more details, for example that Mrs Hohagen illustrated with two pictures by Dürer and Holbein the inner contact of the German mother with her children. The main difference in upbringing between British and German children was that British children were taught more independence in schools, whereas the education of German children was based more on family life. The report remarked that attendance of this meeting was extraordinarily good, the largest number since the foundation of the club a year previously, namely 19 British and 36 German women.[58]

The most extensive report on activities of an Anglo-German Women's Club is the Annual report from the Club in Wuppertal, which also met at the YWCA, normally with about 10 to 15 English and 20 to 30 German participants. On the Committee of the Club were 3 German and 3 English ladies. The Club met from 5 to 7 p.m. every second Tuesday of the month. Subscription was 50 Pfennig or an equivalent in English currency. It can be assumed that this club was quite exceptional as far as the standard of discussion and the availability of 'expert' speakers was concerned. The club was attended by Youard and later by Broome, Miss Williams, and Magda Kelber, gave talks. Speakers at the meetings were normally 'qualified' German professionals. The Annual Report shows that the focus was not so much on what Germans could learn from the

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[56] PRO FO1013-1846 Minutes of the 5. Meeting held in the Conference Room HQ RB Düsseldorf, 9.3.1948, statement by Youard.
[57] PRO FO1013-2229, Anglo-German Club, Düsseldorf 3.2.1949.

British side but that German women got the opportunity to present their experience and problems and that there was a real exchange of ideas. [59]. The Wuppertal Club seemed to be in close contact to the *Frauenring*. In March 1950 20 members took part in a meeting of the *Deutscher Frauenring*.

German women's reactions towards re-education

The examples presented in this chapter show that the reaction of German women towards British involvement differed depending on factors such as class background or the kind of measure implemented. Initiatives to revive formal civic education at *Volkshochschulen* and thereby to educate the normal housewife met with nearly no response. Similarly, British interference in the activities of women's organisations sometimes met with open opposition. As early as summer 1947, Ostermann observed German resistance to the implementation of British ideas. Reports showed an increasing tendency in discussions between officers and German women for the Germans to say: 'Yes, this system is all right in England, but we prefer our own methods'. This applied first to discussions in which criticism was made of points such as the election of committees, the action of chairwomen and so on. [60]

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[58] PRO FO1013-2229, Annual Report, Anglo-German Women's Club Wuppertal for 1949.
[59] PRO FO1013-2229, Annual Report, Anglo-German Women's Club Wuppertal, by Miss Heinrich to Broome: the complete programme of the Wuppertal Anglo-German Women's Club from February 1948 to May 1950 was as follows: 1. Appointment of the Committee discussion of proposed subjects; 2. 'Impressions of my trip to England in October 1947' by Miss Heuser, teacher at local academy; 3. 'Experience at Wilton Park' by Miss Wellersdorf, Social Nurse in Youth Board, Wuppertal; 4. Talk by Miss Schlingensiepen, teacher at Industrial and Housekeeping Vocational School for Girls, Wuppertal; 5. 'The legal position of German women' by Miss Dr jur Bernards and Mrs Youard, Women's Affairs Düsseldorf; 6. 'Goethe and Shakespeare' by Dr Meinck, Wuppertal and Mr Hartley, Düsseldorf; 7. 'Juvenile Delinquency' by Miss Wellersdorf; Social Nurse in Youth Board, Wuppertal; Miss Phillips, Düsseldorf; 8. 'Which tasks in Public Life has the responsible German woman today?', Miss Speer of the Frauenring Wuppertal and Mrs Klein, USA; 9. Christmas Party in the new home of the 'Brücke'; 10. 'International Relations on personal basis', Miss Schurath, Wuppertal and Miss Kelber, Düsseldorf; 11.'Lake and Mountain Districts in England', Lanternslides shown by Miss Williams; 12. 'Discussion - Rules of the Game' by Miss Kelber; 13. Election of the new Committee; 14. 'Bringing up children in the British way' by Mrs Cowgill, Düsseldorf, and 'Bringing up children in the German way', by Miss Hohagen, Head Mistress of Mother's School, Wuppertal; 15. Miss Bock, teacher of the Housekeeping School at Elberfeld and Mr Bogan as Foodstuff Chemist, gave details on various methods of preserving and fresh-keeping of fruits, vegetables etc in Germany; 16. Outing to the Altenberger Dom; 17. 'The task of a nurse' by Schwester Käthe, Head Nurse of the Municipal Hospital Barmen; 18. Rhine-trip to Andernach; 19. 'Fromme Helene' by Wilhelm Busch with lanternslides; 20. Talk on Goethe of a very high standard; 21 Christmas party; 22. Gymnastics, by Frau Hasenclever and one of her scholars; 23. Fare-well party for all the British ladies of the local regiment leaving Wuppertal; 24. 'Women's organisations, their plans and value' by Dr Broome.25. 'Adult Education' by Nora Hasenclever from her experience during her recent nine weeks trip to England.
[60] PRO FO1050-1210, Background Policy in respect to Women's Organisations. R. Ostermann,

By contrast, the opportunity given to a handful of middle-class women to meet British wives on a private basis was very welcome. Courses at Local Government Schools were also considered to be useful; here Women's Affairs saw to it that women were included as councillors and later as officers of women's organisations. It was, however, impossible to install a Civic School entirely for women, as Theanolte Bähnisch had suggested. In the end, measures applied by Women's Affairs Section promoted middle-class women, and their women's organisations. *Kreis* Resident Officers tried to establish associations of middle-class professionals and housewives and the same social group profited from personal contacts with British officers of different Branches especially in the form of invitations to the UK.

Opposition to or at least avoidance of British re-education was always supported by the same set of arguments. The main point was that German women were overburdened. After 12 or 14 hours of work in the living conditions then present they did not have the energy to do community work. There was also a certain fear that women who participated in politics or entered professions might lose their femininity - an argument which certainly reinforced all prejudices regarding the reactionary outlook of German women. Pamela Hinkson, however, thought this an important factor because women desired to be attractive in light of the shortage of men.[61] That this idea was taken seriously can be seen by a British suggestion to send young and attractive politicians such as Barbara Ward to Germany in order to prove the contrary and to reach a younger audience.[62] Furthermore, after the experience of the Hitler regime, women disliked any activity which could be labelled 'political' and which could bring them into trouble again if political circumstances changed. German women refused to become members of an all-embracing voluntary society that might have reminded them of the NS *Frauenschaft*, and they were sceptical of any 'orders from above'. Only 'loose' organisations, such as working committees, seemed possible; but these often had no agreed-upon constitution and therefore were regarded by the British as being problematic. Although German women in the West were reluctant to respond to British initiatives, it did not escape Ostermann that women throughout Germany were successfully mobilised into non-political groups by women members of the Communist party. A deeper exploration of the remarks and comments made by German women in

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June 1947.
[61] PRO FO945-293, newspaper article by Pamela Hinkson.
[62] PRO COGA945-283, Women's Affairs in Germany, paper produced in preparation for the meeting at Norfolk House on 8 January 1948 between Women's Affairs Section and FO, 24.12.1947

response to British policies would be useful in order to distinguish between what was said in order to dodge activities not of their own choosing and what they really thought.

7. German women and British women's organisations

British women's organisations chosen for Exchange Programmes

British women's organisations played a major part in the 're-education' of German women especially with the Exchange Programmes and the 'adoption' of German women's groups. Jeanne Gemmel of the Committee on German Women's Education approached the Women's Group on Public Welfare (WGPW) for the first time in February 1946 and asked for help with German women's organisations.[1] The WGPW was the major umbrella organisation in Britain with 44 organisations affiliated.[2] It had been formed in September 1939 under the guidance of the National Council of Social Services (NCSS) as 'Women's Group on Problems arising from Evacuation'. In 1940 the Group's name was changed and its scope of activity was widened. According to its constitution, its main object was 'to bring the experience of its constituent organisations to bear on questions of public welfare, more especially those affecting women and children'. Representatives for the WGPW were drawn from national organisations with a large women's membership. The Group had no individual membership. Detailed work of the group was largely done by sub-committees or working parties. The NCSS, a government body established in 1919 to assist the work of voluntary organisations and to provide a link between them and the relevant statutory authorities, also provided the secretariat and accommodation for the WGPW.

On 29 May 1946 the WGPW received an official letter from the Foreign Office which forwarded three requests made by the Control Commission.[3] They asked firstly for names of German women connected with German women's organisations, who might still be found in the British Zone, secondly, to send two delegates to the British Zone in July or August to review the situation there, and thirdly, to send papers and pamphlets to the British Zone which would explain their methods of democratic organisations and the type of educational work done.

An attached memorandum was prepared by Jeanne Gemmel and explained the necessity for help by the WGPW. Experience in England and in other countries seemed

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[1] Fawcett Library, London, WF/C7, Letter Gemmel to Miss Herford, 5.2.1946.
[2] Beaumont, *Women and Citizenship: A Study of Non-Feminist Women's Societies and the Women's Movement in England, 1928-1950*, p. 262. The description is taken from the Index list of the WGPW papers in the Fawcett Library London.
[3] Fawcett Library, WF/C7, Letter Foreign Office to WGPW, 29.5.1946.

to indicate that the best method of activating women would be through the spontaneous efforts of voluntary organisations. Such organisations existed in Germany before 1933 and showed signs of developing along lines parallel to those of British organisations. All had been suppressed within the first years of the Nazi Regime, but now there were signs that some of the older women known to have maintained their integrity throughout the Nazi regime, were anxious to revive such voluntary organisations on a local basis. They wished to create a common meeting ground where women of all political creeds might discuss the many problems common to the community, and learn in a congenial atmosphere how to take their place in civic life. The lack of women with experience of voluntary democratically-run organisations was apparent, however. Many of the older women had lost courage or, in Gemmel's opinion, clinged too fixedly for present conditions to the ideas of the pre-1933 period. The younger women had little experience at all except of National Socialist organisations, which had ruthlessly exploited their natural interest in social welfare. Gemmel hoped that the WGPW could, by advising in certain matters in the near future, assist the healthy development of German women's organisations as might shortly be set up under Military Government Control.

The first British women's organisation which offered help as early as February 1946 was the National Federation of Women's Institutes (affiliated to the WGPW). Gemmel had informed this organisation unofficially about future plans of CCG in the matter. Therefore, the NFWI had an advantage and held a possible delegate in readiness who could be sent as WGPW representative to the British Zone. This Visiting Expert was Helena Deneke who travelled together with Betty Norris of the Townswomen's Guilds in summer 1946 to the British Zone and advised CCG on policy towards German women's organisations.[4]

Deneke was the first to suggest inviting German women over to England so that they could see how British women's organisations worked. The National Federation of Women's Institutes and the Townswomen's Guilds offered hospitality to German women, but no organisation of the WGPW offered money. After some discussion the Control Commission was prepared to give financial assistance from public funds to an Exchange Programme for women proposed by the WGPW. It was agreed between CCG and the WGPW that the scheme should start with 32 German women who would come over to the UK for about three weeks at the cost of £ 25 per person. Mrs Wagstaff from

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[4] The report is described in more detail in chapter 5 of this thesis.

Civic Development Section negotiated the programme in March 1947 with leading representatives of the WGPW during a visit in London. A similar programme was agreed with the other large umbrella organisation, the British Council of Women. Wagstaff also suggested that British organisations could 'adopt' German organisations and send periodicals to them. She was asked by the WGPW to supply a list of suitable organisations.

In her letter to the WGPW, Gemmel had listed some of the British organisations which seemed especially useful to her for the work in Germany namely the Women's Institutes, Townswomen's Guilds and Women's Co-operative Guilds.[5] These organisations had no direct German counterparts, and they had some important features in common. They had a large membership, were non-feminist, claimed to be non-political and - perhaps most importantly - educational. The Women's Institutes had in 1943 about 288,000 and in 1951 half a million members.[6] Though the membership of Townswomen's Guilds and of the Women's Co-operative Guilds was considerably smaller, both organisations belonged to the more important mass organisations in Britain. Equal rights organisations such as the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship (NUSEC) had suffered a sharp decline since the Equal Franchise Act 1928 signified the end of the suffrage campaign. They were tiny groups in comparison with these large non-feminist organisations.[7] The fundamental problem of British feminism lay in mobilising the younger generation of women.[8]

Women's Institutes and Townswomen's Guilds laid great emphasis on personal development within a collective setting. The activities of these organisations were an extension of women's work as wives and mothers. Their members believed that women, as housewives and mothers, performed a service to the community and in return were entitled to certain state benefits. Their local activity was overwhelmingly concentrated upon handicrafts, home-making and gardening. Questions relating to the status of women scarcely figured. All these organisations operated differently on national and local level. Leaders were mostly educated middle-class women who worked in the

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[5] Fawcett Library, WF/C7, Gemmel to Robertson, 18.3.1948.
[6] Beaumont, Women and Citizenship: A Study of Non-Feminist Women's Societies and the Women's Movement in England, 1928-1950, p. 50.
[7] Ibid. The biggest women's organisations in GB at the time were the Mother's Union (half a million members), the Catholic Women's League (about 18,000 members) and the Young Women's Christian Association. Feminist organisations, on the other hand, were tiny groups in comparison with these large non-feminist organisations.
[8] Pugh, 'Domesticity and the Decline of Feminism 1930-1950'.

national committees and who had been involved in the 1930s und 1940s in campaigns to improve the health and welfare of women and children and even equal pay for equal work. At the grass roots the chief activities were handicrafts.

Women's Institutes had been established during the First World War. They met the wartime need for promoting the economical use of food and preservation of surpluses and for extending the rural labour force. Local Institutions functioned by open vote of the members, and elected representatives of the County Federation in turn joined the National Federation. Though the organisation attracted rural housewives, the leadership remained in the hand of educated middle-class women. The motive behind Women's Institutes was to improve the quality of domestic work and of agricultural-horticultural work. Jam and fruit bottling, breadmaking, the production of cheese, chickens and vegetables were the activities which provided material for exhibitions and market stalls.[9] The third type of activity involved music, drama and dancing. Local Institutions provided centres for education and exchange, giving hundreds of thousands of women living in relatively isolated communities the opportunity to meet with other women and spend some time away from their homes and families.[10] During the 1920s Women's Institutes began to organise classes for their members which allowed them to follow up particular interests in arts and crafts. This gave recognition to the work performed by women in the home and demonstrated that their work was of value to the community. Institute classes complete with graded examinations, exhibitions and competitions acknowledged women's work as worthwhile occupation and did much to raise the status of housework. The National Federation received state grants, for example £ 11,700 in 1951.[11] During the 1940s the Women's Institute Movement focussed on a number of 'women's questions' such as cheap electricity, village water-supply, bus services, rural telephones and the supply of milk to children. They advocated the use of women police, cinema censorship, the election of women to parish rural districts and county councils. The National Federation of Women's Institutes passed resolutions on all these issues from time to time.

Townswomen's Guilds had been established in 1932 - following the successful example of Women's Institutes - when at its Annual Meeting the National Union of

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[9] Pugh, 'Domesticity and the Decline of Feminism 1930-1950', p. 22.
[10] Beaumont, Women and Citizenship: A Study of Non-Feminist Women's Societies and the Women's Movement in England, 1928-1950, p. 5.
[11] Inez Jenkins, Women's Institute Movement of England and Wales. The history of the Women's Institute Movement of England and Wales (Oxford, 1953), p. 82.

Societies for Equal Citizenship was renamed the National Guild for Citizenship (Townswomen's Guilds). Membership of the guilds reached 54,000 in 1939 and approximately a quarter of a million after 1945. By the 1940s it had become the policy of guilds to reject any form of association with feminist organisations such as the National Council of Women. The proper issues with which they concerned themselves tended to be village water supplies, cheap electricity and rural education, the provision of midwives and infant welfare clinics. They did also campaign for family allowances and improved maternity services throughout the 1930s and 1940s. Issues propagated by the Townswomen's Guilds such as litter, shopping facilities and consumer protection normally arose directly from housekeeping.

Although the Guilds were non-party, individual members were always encouraged to join political organisations as well as local pressure groups and urged to stand as candidates for local elections. The vast majority of members were middle-class housewives. The growth of the movement owed much to the financial support from the Carnegie Trust and the National Council of Social Services. The fact that these funds were only available for non-political organisations was no doubt a further incentive for the Townswomen's policy to remain a non-feminist and non-political organisation.[12] There were no council meetings during the war, and in the immediate post-war years the Townswomen's Guilds were mainly involved in sorting out their own structure, organisation and finances.

The third organisation of importance for Exchange Programmes was the National Union of Women's Co-operative Guilds (WCG). Founded back in 1883, the WCG were largely urban-based organisations and drew their membership from the working classes, though they had always enjoyed a number of middle-class leaders. The WCG too stressed the women's maternal, domestic role, deriving it from a series of values seen as lacking in male-dominated public life. The WCG placed great emphasis upon its role as mouthpiece for married women and for the consumer. It aspired 'to waken the housewife to what was styled the "basket power" she wielded by virtue of her role as spender of the nation's wages'.[13] In 1930 a number of influential Co-operative women cast aside their loyalty to the Labour party to put absolute pacifism

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[12] For history of the Townswomen's Guilds see Mary Stott, *Organisation Woman: The Story of the National Union of Townswomen's Guilds* (London, 1978).
[13] Pugh, 'Domesticity and the Decline of Feminism 1930-1950' p. 23.

ahead of all other considerations, refusing any official involvement in war work.[14] While women's organisations generally mushroomed in the Second World War, the WGC lost about 40% of its members between 1939 and 1941, and never recovered its former size. This was the consequence of the uncompromising pacifist stand. In 1949 the WCG had about 49,000 members. After the war an ageing membership became the central problem and membership remained stagnant for several years before it started to decline gradually. WCG was doing for working-class women what the Townswomen's Guilds tried to do for middle-class women in education towards citizenship.

What was interesting about these organisations from the point of view of 're-education' was their concept of civic education for women. The Acting Secretary of the Women's Group on Public Welfare informed Gemmel on 18 April that the variety of organisations in Britain was valuable and provided means whereby women of different tastes, outlook, or background could find a congenial group to join.[15] While some of the branches were small this provided all the more opportunity for women to gain experience by acting as honorary officers of the local branch or guild, by serving on the committee and thus learning to take responsibility for committee decisions. These organisations, therefore, served as a form of education in self-government and citizenship even if only some of these have that as their object. This potential of women's organisations is what Gemmel had in mind when she thought to transfer Women's Institutes and Townswomen's Guilds to Germany.

During the inter-war period the importance of active citizenship, especially for women, became increasingly significant in Britain. Firstly, after the Equal Franchise Act in 1928 every woman had the vote and some form of education in citizenship seemed essential if women were to play a more active part in democratic society. Secondly, the rise of fascism in Italy and Germany and of Stalin's regime in Russia focussed attention on the need for participatory citizenship if democracy was to survive.[16] In response to the developments in Europe, Sir Ernest Simon and Eva Hubback (who was responsible for the foundation of the Townswomen's Guilds) set up the Association for Education in Citizenship (AEC) 'to advance the study and training in citizenship by which is meant the training in the moral qualities necessary for the

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[14] Gillian Scott, Feminism and the Politics of Working Women: the Women's Co-operative Guild, 1880s to the Second World War (London, 1998), p. 221.
[15] Fawcett Library, WF/C7, Miss Robertson to Jeanne Gemmel, 18.4.1948.
[16] Beaumont, Women and Citizenship: A Study of Non-Feminist Women's Societies and the Women's Movement in England, 1928-1950, p. 83.

citizens in democracy'.[17] The concept promoted by the AEC involved 'high minded public service, tolerance and difference, and the beneficial exercise of rights'. Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, the group published a series of pamphlets outlining the theory of citizenship and ways in which citizenship education could be incorporated into the national curriculum. History, politics and economy were singled out as the most important subjects for citizenship education. However, it was difficult to stimulate interest in public affairs. To overcome this problem, local study groups, the use of films, drama and discussion were recommended in order to interest the public in citizenship. These methods were incorporated by the larger women's organisations. Following the outbreak of the war in 1939, the AEC continued to highlight the danger of fascism for the future of democratic societies and to stress the value of voluntary philanthropic work for an education of public opinion. The participation of adult organisations, including women's societies, was an important aspect of training of citizens which would facilitate the smooth running of democratic government and protect against the threat of totalitarian regimes. Both elements - the training in citizenship in adult organisations and the work in the Social Service, later became the key points in the programme for the 're-education' of German women.

German women could learn from a leaflet produced by the Townswomen's Guilds (TG) how this civic education worked and what methods were applied. The aim of Townswomen's Guilds was 'to encourage the education of women to enable them as citizens to make their best contribution towards the common good and to serve as a common meeting ground for women, irrespective of creed and party, for their wider education, including social intercourse'.[18] Members of TGs met together monthly and in smaller groups at more frequent intervals. A TG serves, the leaflet explained, as a centre for arousing interest in any subject affecting the life and well-being of the individual and the family in the home and of the community. It encourages members to equip themselves, as individuals for service to the community, local, national and international, by the study of any subject, and so to develop their powers of discrimination and their ability to make decisions on questions affecting the common good. Members were encouraged to develop their creative faculties and a critical appreciation on the arts. In drama, for example, a new dynamic approach was proving successful: 'A situation is built up on the experience of the actors, and from this a

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[17] Ibid.

group-technique may develop which dramatises material of communal and local interest in a way that it is hoped may be of service to the whole community.' [19] In art (the art of making things) methods served two needs: the first is 'the member's inborn desire to make something of herself', the second is 'the community's urgent need for the housewife's better judgement of industrial and mass-produced houses and goods'. Courses were offered in handicraft, cookery demonstrations, household decorating and 'jobbery', upholstery and electrical repairs, choirs and 'social intercourse'.

TGs were run by the Guild's executive committee and its sub-committees. The leaflet emphasised that the democratic principles ran through all Guilds work, were taught for example in methods of programme planning, as ideas for programmes were contributed by members themselves and were assembled in 'round table conference'. Nearly the same could be said about the running of Women's Institutes.

In particular the housing campaign gave British voluntary women's organisations the opportunity to demonstrate to the rank-and-file membership the importance of active citizenship. By the early 1940s it was already obvious that there would be a major housing shortage after the war. German bombing raids left over 450,000 homes destroyed. Women's societies emphasised the need for every family to be accommodated in high-quality housing if family life was to rebuilt and sustained after the war. As part of the Government's reconstruction programme, the Ministry of Health had set up a Design of Dwelling sub-committee in May 1942 on which seven representatives of women's organisations served. A Housing Questionnaire was drawn up by the WGPW which was sent out to constituent members. The WGPW analysed 40,000 replies. It gave thousands of women the opportunity to describe the kind of 'labour saving' home they hoped to live in after the war. Many of their recommendations were included in the publication of the Design and Dwelling sub-committee report. [20]

Courses in citizenship and social welfare

What exactly did British women think they could teach German women? The chairman of the International Advisory Committee (a sub-committee of the Women's Group on

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[18] PRO FO1050-1299, Leaflet about Townswomen's Guilds.
[19] PRO FO1050-1299, Mrs Horton to Gemmel, proposed article for women's paper, 15.7.1946
[20] Pugh, 'Domesticity and the Decline of Feminism 1930-1950', p. 290. Pugh stated that in the 1948-1951 period 200,000 houses were built annually and under the Conservative Government, later even more.

Public Welfare responsible for international affairs) answered this question to the first delegation of German women at a meeting in June 1947.[21] It was explained that the British - in contrast to the Germans - started everything in a small way from below, and not through mass movements from above. This was something to be shown to the Germans as was the other characteristic of British citizenship, the spirit of dedication and vocation that inspired much of the work achieved, and the emphasis laid on the individual. German visitors to the UK had to observe and study the following fields:

1. Government work: visits of the House of Parliament, practical observation and study of social services as carried out by the local government, particularly in the provinces etc.;
2. Social Service: Statutory such as Infant Welfare, Maternity Service, School meals and milk; Nursery Schools; treatment of juvenile delinquency; Joint enterprises: in the country boroughs where any of these or similar services are carried out by the co-operation between voluntary organisations and statutory authorities;
3. Types of democratic associations: Community Centres; settlements, village halls and clubs of all kinds, youth organisations, urban organisations (e.g. Townswomen's Guilds, Women Co-operative Guilds; Women Social Service Clubs), and rural organisations (e.g. Women's Institutes and Rural Community Councils).

The emphasis of the Exchange Programmes for German women with the WGPW was on welfare work, especially since the British assumed that the Welfare System had been controlled by Nazis and therefore had to be rebuilt. This, at least, is what Margaret Lambert, Foreign Office, found when she was in Germany:

> There is ... no tradition of voluntary social service, such as we know it in our own country and what little there is, is either associated with a particularly austere religious discipline or else with the 'compulsory volunteer' methods of the Nazis, with all their techniques for interference with one's neighbours, spying and denunciation. That is not to say that the habit of voluntary social service as part of the responsibility of the individual to the community, could not take root in Germany. I am convinced it could, as there seems at present to be a considerable fund of goodwill, and on the whole a greater sense of individual responsibility than ever I remember to have found in Germany before. But this goodwill needs to be canalised into practical channels.[22]

Most British women's organisations were involved in some kind of war work,

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[21] Fawcett Library, WF/C5, Meeting of the International Advisory Committee, 3.6.1947.
[22] PRO FO1050-1229, Notes on my visit to Germany, 23 August to 9 September 1948, by

mostly in the field of welfare work. War-time activities of women's organisations included the preservation of fruit, looking after evacuees from the larger cities[23], knitting for the troops and encouraging members to participate in 'make and mend' classes. At the outset of the war the National Council of Social Services, a government body, established a Standing Conference of Voluntary Organisations in the Time of War, a consultative body to work with the government on the planning of the voluntary sector's role during the hostilities. Voluntary organisations which undertook war work received financial support by the government. This Standing Conference served Deneke and others as a model for co-operation between German women's organisations.

The second attractive model for co-operation was the Women's Voluntary Service. [24] In 1938 the Women's Voluntary Service was set up with governmental assistance.[25] This organisation worked with the civic defence services assisting with food, shelter and evacuation of people from bombed cities. Canteen services and local authority restaurants provided practical help for working mothers, but the main issue was the setting up of nurseries for children below school age, which enabled their mothers to work.[26] By early 1940 the Women's Voluntary Service had some 600,000 volunteers at its disposal, busily engaged in boosting food production by gardening, poultry-keeping, organising collections of scrap metal and other scarce materials, and coping with evacuees.[27] Citizens Advice Bureaus (which were established just prior to the war) were, by the end of 1942 dealing with 2.5 million enquiries a year.

After the war, with the establishment of the Welfare State, a reasonable collaboration between statutory and voluntary agencies became important. In hospital and health service, voluntary service was no longer of major significance owing to the establishment of the National Health Service. The National Council of Social Service remained the body for co-ordinating voluntary effort in welfare work. Voluntary organisations now focussed on doing casework (which needed special skills) in fields of welfare work such as child care, family welfare, youth work, adult education, and advice and information. The organisation and execution of such kind of casework was what was shown to the German guests.

Margaret Lambert.

[23] Pugh, 'Domesticity and the Decline of Feminism 1930-1950', p. 265. Some 3,75 million people, largely children, were evacuated during the first three months of the war.

[24] See suggestion by Miss Maxse, p 143.

[25] Carter, *The Politics of Women's Rights*, pp. 12-13.

[26] 1,450 full-time nurseries for small children under five were in existence by September 1944 compared with just over 200 nurseries of different sorts in 1939.

[27] Pugh, 'Domesticity and the Decline of Feminism 1930-1950', p. 26.

Helga Prollius, broadcaster from *Nordwestdeutscher Rundfunk* and member of the first delegation was impressed by this co-operation between voluntary organisations and statutory authorities. The following, including grammatical mistakes, is taken from the manuscript of a speech she gave in front of the WGPW:

> Some people who really want an idea to be achieved start by themselves driven only by faith. And once started, help is coming nearly always. But they are not passively waiting for help, no, very actively they write and ask for subscribers. (...) Most of the institutions want to be independent. They want to retain the voluntary principle. even when a country council or a government is prepared to give grants, the voluntary committees want to continue carrying the work and often do so. It is the co-operation between the official bodies and the voluntary organisations that is remarkable. [28]

German women were to meet individuals working in agencies, probation officers, local authority clerks, almoners, district nurses etc. Although women's organisations were the main organisational force behind this scheme, they were not given priority in the programme. It was emphasised that visitors were to see not only women's work but men and women working together. However, meetings of the WGPW and of the Standing Conference of Women's Organisations centrally and locally, were thought to be especially instructive in demonstrating methods of voluntary democratic co-operation among women of varying political and religious beliefs. Being themselves still in a formative stage, this organisation was able to demonstrate how English women in their localities were learning to come together for a common purpose to discuss civic needs and wider questions of social and public welfare.

As far as the practical arrangements of the Exchange Programme with the WGPW were concerned, it was hoped to function not only in conjunction with the member organisations and the local branches of the WGPW but also with the regional officers and central department of the National Council of Social Service. The visitors were spread over different towns and areas in order to avoid local overburdening and collectively to give wide and varying impressions. German women stayed in 'ordinary'

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[28] Fawcett Library, WF/C6, Speech by Frau Prollius, made at the meeting of the Advisory Committee of the WGPW, 25.6.1947. Extracts were published for example in Christian Science Monitor (newspaper cutting without date); under the headline 'German women impressed by British industriousness' by Melita Spraggs. The arrival of the first group of German visitors to the UK was a media event. The WGPW held a press conference at the end of their tour. Approximately 40 members of the Press were present but the Committee felt afterwards that the reporting had been disappointing. The Press was purely interested from the 'Women's Page' angle and therefore it was decided that if further visits were arranged it was better to circulate to the Press a definite report than to undertake a Press conference again.

English homes in which women attended domestic affairs as well as outside duties. How the English housewife dealt with the present current lack of fuel, consumer goods and clothing appeared to have special educational value from the German point of view.

The Germans showed themselves much impressed by the standing of the British woman in the home. The British Press could report about the first group of visitors: 'They return full of admiration of the British housewives, men and women. They are impressed with the cheerful good humour with which British men turn up their sleeves and help in the home'. And Helga Prollius expressed her amazement on

> how the housewife, especially the one who in peace time had two or more servants, to run the house, faces the problem. And more amazing, the fact how the husband helps his wife in her daily life troubles. How he does the washing up, the shopping, sometimes even the laundry and mending. And he does it as a matter of course, with a good sense of humour. Whether he is a professor, an estate owner or an M.P.[29]

The first party of six German guests to the WGPW arrived in June, the second in November 1947. In October 1947 ten German women were guests of the National Council of Women, which offered a similar programme approved by the Civic Development Section. The WGPW programme started with three days of sightseeing in London after which the women went to other places where more detailed programmes were carried out.[30] For example, two women of the first group were guests of the Educational Centres Association in South Wales, while two visited the National Union of Townswomen's Guilds in Liverpool. There working conditions in a factory and welfare work for women employees were demonstrated by Miss Black, tutor of Social Science at Liverpool University, who later travelled to Germany as an expert on the training of social workers. Another of the German visitors spent a week in Bristol with the secretary of the Mid Western Section of the Co-operative Guilds. The Soroptimists in Leicester provided hospitality for two women and showed the club work with young people, schools, hospitals, an Engineering factory and an old people's home. Back in London, the women were shown the House of Commons, the camp for re-education of German prisoners of war at Wilton Park, Cambridge House Settlement, Holborn Borough Council meeting, Conservative & Unionist Association, Women's Co-operative Guild Head Office, National Adult Schools Union Conference and they had

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[29] Fawcett Library, WF/C7 Speech by Frau Prollius, made at the meeting of the Advisory Committee of the WGPW, July 1947.
[30] Fawcett Library, WF/C6, Report on visit of German women, by Mrs Mess, from International

lunch with a journalist from *The Times* at the Women's Journalist Club.

The Exchange Programmes with the NCW were similar. They were carried out mainly by single Branches of the organisation. After the successful visit by Zahn-Harnack and Bähnisch the Bristol Branch agreed to arrange a month-long course in local government, education and social welfare for 10 women. Here too, guests were given the opportunity to follow up their own interests such as visiting schools and youth clubs, or learning about the Health Service. Other invitations to German women followed in June and October 1948. The second group of German women visited the Branches in Norwich and Cambridge and the third group was guest of the North Regional Branch (Yorkshire). The London and Sevenoak Branches of the NCW invited a group of four German women for October/November 1948.

Women were sent proportionally from all areas of the British Zone (NRW with the largest population had four delegates per group, Schleswig-Holstein and Lower Saxony two each and Hamburg and Berlin one). Like the guests of the WGPW, the delegates to the NCW were accommodated with English families to give them a glimpse of domestic life in England.

Exchange Programmes, like many other activities of Women's Affairs Section encountered a number of problems. Although German visitors had their return fares paid and received some pocket money from Foreign Office, they otherwise came to England without a penny. The amount of £ 48 given by the Foreign Office to each visitor of the first group of guests to the WGPW turned out to be insufficient. For the second group the German Department agreed to pay £ 100 per head.[31] Nevertheless, hosts had to provide for fares within the country, accommodation and food. With food rationing and fuel shortages it became ever harder to find British families prepared to provide hospitality for Germans. It was also difficult to organise interpreters and to find German speaking hosts. Moreover, there were administrative problems. The office of the WGPW was reduced in 1947 to one full-time officer and one part-time assistant. The first group of visitors alone absorbed the entire services of one part-time administrative officer and one full-time clerk for six weeks, leaving hardly any time for their 'normal' work. In these staff circumstances the WGPW suggested to the Foreign Office that more money be given for the employment of a WGPW officer who could concern herself entirely with Exchange Programmes.

Department NCSS, December 1947, member list also in FO1049-1246, 30.1.1948.

[31] Fawcett Library, WF/C5, Meeting of the International Advisory Group of the WGPW, 2.9.1947.

Since the tours offered to German women tended to become more educational tours in Social Service than just simply visits to women's organisations, the Secretary of the WGPW, Miss Homer, felt that the National Council of Social Service would seem to have more responsibility in the matter. A working party was established in January 1948 between the NCSS and the WGPW to consider the problems of staffing and administration.[32] This suggested to the German Department in April 1948 [33] that women who wanted to study specialised or technical branches of Social Service could be cared for by the professional organisations concerned and not necessarily within a programme for women's affairs. Only where it was a question of showing types of democratic education in organisations such as the Women's Institutes and the Townswomen's Guilds would the WGPW provide visits for a week. It is not clear to what extent the Foreign Office raised the funding of Exchange Programmes, but it can be inferred from the policy of strengthening Women's Affairs Section in 1948 that more money was made available. The number of visitors increased during 1948. On the other hand, thanks to currency reform in summer 1948, Germans could pay their fares to the UK in Deutschmarks. From that time on the Foreign Office paid fares only to visitors unable to pay for themselves.

Exchange Programmes fulfilled an important function for occupation policy. The welfare work done by voluntary women's organisations was urgently needed in the British Zone and as I demonstrated in chapter 1, showing how British women were coping with the situation of shortages was thought to be a means of strengthening morale amongst the German population.

German women invited for Exchange Programmes

Whereas the number of British Visiting Experts who travelled at the expense of Women's Affairs Section to Germany between 1945 and 1952 was about 80 in total, the number of German women who travelled in the opposite direction was approximately 80 per year. [34] In addition, women were included in 'mixed' groups sponsored by other

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[32] Fawcett Library, WF/C6, Homer to Mr Haynes, 27.1.1948.
[33] Fawcett Library, WF/C6, Notes on meeting with representatives of the NCSS, 5.4.1948. All high-ranking officers of the German Department were present, Crawford and Mrs Reeve from German Education Department, Marsden-Smedley and Nicholls from German General Department.
[34] Ziegler found that between 1948 and summer 1949 there were 151 German women delegates in the UK.

Branches and Divisions of the British Military Government. The Ministry of Labour invited leading members of the German Labour administration and the Trade Union Congress invited representatives of the *Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund*. Theanolte Bähnisch and Freda Wuesthoff were the first female German guests to the Hansard Society in 1949.

It is difficult to estimate the percentage of women from the total number of visitors, but it was certainly rather small. In the peak years of 1947 and 1948 the Foreign Office provided for over 2000 visitors per year (men and women) from Germany to the UK.[35] The number of women might have been about 160. Between summer 1948 and summer 1949 the number of women delegates in Women's Affairs increased from 80 to 151[36] and from 1949 to 1950 an additional 80 German women came over to the UK.[37] For 1950 a list from North Rhine-Westphalia indicates that 121 women participated in Exchange Programmes. Of the 80 German women who came to the UK in 1947, 30 were guests of the National Council of Women; 10 visited Women's Institutes; and 10 Co-operative Women's Guilds. The WGPW invited 12 women (two parties of six); the International League for Peace and Freedom had three guests.[38] Most German women, however, travelled with Church organisations. Religious Affairs alone sent 80 women delegates to the UK in 1948.[39]

Who was invited to take part in Exchange Programmes? This question was

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[35] Murray, 'The British Contribution', p. 88.

[36] Pia Grundhöfer listed for the year 1947 for German Education Department 42 women visitors. The WGPW invited 12 women and 37 women went to Wilton Park (which already makes 49). For the period of April 1948 to April 1949 the Memorandum by Ostermann lists 146 visits of German women (PRO FO1013-94, Memo on Women's Affairs Section 1948-1949). In 1950 Education Branch organised Exchange Programmes for 80 women. Rupieper estimates that between 1947/48 and 1955 about 11,738 Germans travelled to the USA and 1,857 American Visiting Experts came to Germany. About 3,400 of the German guests were women, but only a small percentage came with women specific programmes. Hermann-Josef Rupieper, *Die Wurzeln der westdeutschen Nachkriegsdemokratie. Der amerikanische Beitrag 1945-1952* (Opladen, 1993).

[37] Of 2000 visitors in 1950, 961 came with 'educational programmes' sponsored by Education Branch. 360 of them went to Wilton Park; 58 came to England with Youth Groups, 143 with university programmes; 117 with school programmes; 64 attended teacher's training programmes; 69 vocational training; and 50 participated in other kind of programme. 121 of the 2000 visitors were women. (London, Imperial War Museum, Papers of General Bishop 98/18/1; 29.11.1950; list written by Barbara Bliss, Women's Affairs NRW).

[38] A breakdown of the visitors is contained in Women's Affairs files from April 1948; PRO FO1013-94.

[39] PRO FO1013-94, Memorandum on Women's Affairs Section 1948-1949, by Rita Ostermann. As a result of the visit of eight Church women (among them Mrs Bell of the Club of German Women's Friends) in 1947 to Germany, 80 German churchwomen were invited to a course held in September 1948 at the Royal Holloway College, University in London.

discussed within the WGPW. Should elderly women who had proved their reliability during Weimar be invited? Or should younger women be targeted who did not know anything other than the Hitlerian system? Was it more important to concentrate on women who were already well-known and influential and who could spread the news more easily among other women? Or should women be included who were not of outstanding importance? Was the programme to motivate already convinced anti-Nazis or was it to win over women who were sceptical towards democracy? In other words, did 're-education' mean to confront democratic women with the British way of life or did it mean to win women with Nazi attitudes over to democracy by showing them positive examples of how it could work?

The decision finally had to be made according to purely practical considerations. To begin with, it would have been difficult to find British women who were prepared to give hospitality to former Nazi women. Therefore, the WGPW invited women who had already shown their democratic attitude mainly by their active participation in reconstruction work and who had a field of activity wide enough to reach many women. Women over the age of 35 were thought to be more acceptable and easier to approach than younger age groups.[40]

Most of the delegates were middle-class professionals, wives of politicians, and members of the landed gentry - all with good knowledge of the English language. The British NCW prided itself on having contacts to women who resisted the Nazi regime. The first women to be invited to the UK as early as December 1946 were two big names in the German women's movement from the days of the Weimar Republic: Agnes von Zahn-Harnack, the former president of the *Bund Deutscher Frauenvereine*, and Magda Hoppstock-Huth, from the German Branch of the International League for Peace and Freedom. The third was a newcomer, Theanolte Bähnisch. The Cambridge Branch of the NCW reported after the visit that they on their part got equal enjoyment from the visit as 'we were given the opportunity of making friend with Germans of high distinction who had come through the ordeal of standing against tyranny, imposed on them by their own people, with true dignity and determination to work for a better Germany'. [41]

In general however, delegates who participated in Exchange Programmes

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[40] Fawcett Library, WF/C6, Report on meeting with National Council of Social Service, 12.3.1948.

[41] PRO FO1049-1248, Visit of 10 German Women to UK under arrangement by Cambridge

normally had no career in the women's movement before 1933. As was the case with denazification policy in general, the British fell back on 'experts' and career women in distinguished positions, who were able to attract the attention of officers and commanders of the Military Government. Guests of the NCW included for example Frau Bardenheuer, *Ministerialrätin* in the *Kultusministerium* in North Rhine-Westphalia; CDU member and wife of a leading official in the Ministry of Reconstruction; and Frau Franken, headmistress of *Luisenschule* (a girls' school) in Düsseldorf, ex-member of the *Landtag* and CDU member. Both women were members of the Düsseldorf *Frauenring*, in close touch with Bähnisch and were to play a prominent role in the Deutscher *Frauenring*. A third guest was Liselotte Milchsack, the wife of the *Oberbürgermeister* of Wittlaer, a member of the committee for the reform of education, who ran a large refugee camp.

One of the WGPW files in the Fawcett library [42] contains data about candidates for visits to the UK, such as Frau Ada Sieveking, about whom we learn that she was about 40 years, married with three children and that she had no maid. She was conscientious in going home for her children's and husband's meals but managed to do public work as well. Her husband's position entailed entertaining at home and she did all the cooking. She was the German Honorary Secretary of the Hamburg *Frauenclub* and a member of the Business & Professional Women's Club as a housewife. Before marrying she trained as secretary in three languages and became private secretary of the Director of a big Hamburg firm. In the UK she wanted to examine social institutions and voluntary organisations and to see something of home life and the way English women tackled the problems of the day. What was of value to her was the organisation of households combined with public work or a profession, labour saving devices and the reaction of architects to the needs of the day. The value for Women's Affairs in sending her to the UK was: 'Frau Sieverking is in touch with a large circle in Hamburg both socially and in her public life, and her views on domestic tasks and what is really important in "home making" would be helpful to Women's Affairs.'

Another example is that of Irmgard Münchberger, born 1901, married to a publisher with two daughters. Being the heiress of a family publishing business she took the management of the business in hand from the beginning of the Second World War until her husband returned in 1947. From 1938 she presided over a local association of 'Gedok', i.e. Community of Female Artists and Lovers of Art, an

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Branch of National Council of Women, 10.8.1948.

organisation occupying itself with all questions of art. Since 1946 she acted as a Vice President of the General Management of this organisation.

Three of the delegates of the first group invited by the WGPW were heads of municipal welfare service in their towns. One was an owner of a chemical factory with an interest in welfare work and another was a member of the administrative staff of the Handicraft Union at Hildesheim. The sixth woman was the wife of a headmaster from Kiel and the deputy chairman of the *Frauenring* there.

With the second and later groups the emphasis of the programme shifted slightly away from a focus on welfare. In 1950 the WGPW invited Louise Schröder (this very much on the suggestion of H. Gotthelf) , Deputy *Bürgermeister* of Berlin and SPD member, in recognition of her courage during the Berlin blockade. Other guests from Berlin in the same group was a journalist, SPD member and member of the Berlin *Magistrat*, who was invited by the Women's Press Club and Nottingham Branch of Business & Professional Women's Clubs. A psychiatric welfare worker and secretary of the Hospital Welfare Workers Association went to the Institute of Psychiatric workers. A young barrister had been invited by the Leicester Soroptimists for about three weeks. Eastbourne and Lewes Business & Professional Women's Club invited Frau Demme, chairwoman of the Berlin Business & Professional Women's Club for March 1950. All these visits were channelled through WGPW.

German guests were chosen by Visiting Experts when in the British Zone or by CCG officers of the different Branches. Helena Deneke and Betty Norris, for example, made the selection for the WGPW scheme on their tours in 1946 and 1947. Visiting Experts, however, did not meet German women accidentally, but normally by arrangement of Women's Affairs Section. This meant that the final choice very much depended on the network of contacts maintained by the Regional Women's Affairs Officer. Women's Affairs Officers prepared lists of likely candidates. The tendency was later for English women's organisations to ask for women from special groups such as welfare workers, local government officials or councillors. Women's Affairs Section asked other Branches to supply names of women candidates and officers then interviewed the women suggested. Branches were informed that women were to be selected for their likely influence after their return and should, therefore, be active, well-known and have wide contacts.[43]

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[42] Fawcett Library, WF/C11.
[43] PRO FO1013-606, Information about the National Council of Women in GB, for information sent to Women's Affairs Officers, March 1947; PRO FO1050-1229, Conference of Women's

In practice, nobody was interested in the details of the recent past of German guests. There are several cases of German women who had had careers during the Nazi period. One prominent example is Maria May, who became president of the German Federation of Business & Professional Women in 1951. May was invited together with six other German ladies by the Business & Professional women of Great Britain in March 1949 to London and then visited Nottingham and Manchester where she stayed with 'outstanding members of the textile world'.[44] Maria May originated the May Textiles, hand-printed designs that had been exhibited at international exhibitions. This invitation very much upset a German émigré who trained at the Bauhaus but later left for England after a dispute with the director of the school over enforcing Aryan law. According to her Maria May had been a blatant supporter of Hitler and had founded a special fashion institute in Berlin under his direct support and encouragement. Margaret Lambert, who informed Rita Ostermann thought about the incident:

> Of course from the point of view of technical knowledge it does not matter two straws about political records, and we are very glad to learn all we can from Frau May. Where it is awkward is that a number of our leading designers are German refugees, and it might be a bit painful if they were confronted by an associate of their late persecutors at a social gathering. Also it seems that Frau May is keen on promoting an exchange of textile students with this country, which perhaps ought not to be encouraged.[45]

Ostermann replied:

> I hope the Frau May situation has not been too tiresome, I am awaiting to hear from Hamburg what the selection details were, but the Women's Affairs Officer has just been replaced last week and it will take a little time. Hamburg have usually been very reliable in the nominations hitherto and may simply not have known of Frau May's Nazi associations. She will of course have been denazified in order to work and also cleared by Intelligence before going to England. I do sympathise with the former German refugees; it cannot be easy to reconcile themselves to the consequences of denazification policy, but it is a situation we and they will have to face. (...) I am very grateful to you for having written frankly and wish I could be more helpful. This problem is continually cropping up in various forms - Messerschmidt offering to build prefabs, Gustav Gründgens being sponsored by us to play Hamlet at the Edinburgh Festival, and so on.[46]

Affairs Officers, Bad Rothenfelde, 24.11.1948.

[44] PRO FO1050-1229, Evans to Regions re programme of the Business & Professional Women's Club, 12.2.1948; PRO FO1049-1847, Report by guests of the Hansard Society, March 1949, report by Maria May.

[45] PRO FO1049-1844, Margaret Lambert (FO) to Rita Ostermann, 25.2.1949. The name of this German woman is not mentioned.

[46] PRO FO1049-1844, Ostermann and Margaret Lambert, 8.3.1949.

Another woman who had a career throughout the Nazi period was Frau Lisbeth Kuessner-Gerhard who came with a group of *Landfrauen* to Great Britain in 1950. Kuessner-Gerhard, chosen by Deneke as representative of the *Hausfrauenverband* Berlin, was from 1934 to April 1945 in charge of problems of foreign country women in the Reichsnährstand.[47] In this position she continued to represent German country women in all international organisations, especially in the *Welt-Landfrauenbund* (Countrywomen of the World). From November 1946 until April 1947 she worked as a free-lance special writer for the American Military Government reporting on agriculture. She was in correspondence with the *Deutscher Landfrauenverband* and intended to organise for Berlin, together with Toni Walter, an Association of Countrywomen for female members of the *Gartenbauverband.* During her stay in England she met British representatives of Countrywomen of the World who accused her of having written an anti-English article in 1940 in the magazine *Die Landfrau.* Kuessner-Gerhard had obviously used statements by one of the prominent British members of this organisation, Lady Howard, about the bad situation of English workers (lack of social security, bad housing conditions etc.) and compared those with social conditions in other European countries, namely with Germany. She pointed out how much better the *Deutsche Arbeitsfront* cared for German workers. Kuessner-Gerhard, however, denied to Deneke the accusation that she had written that Lady Howard had been imprisoned and was forbidden to hold public speeches.[48]

This example shows that English ladies did not find it deplorable or even questionable that women played a prominent role or had an administrative function in the Nazi regime. What was unacceptable was the fact that Kuessner-Gerhard had brought Lady Howard into disrepute and great inconvenience. There were other figures amongst the first partners for Women's Affairs who could be considered dubious according to standards applied nowadays such as Käthe Petersen who had a prominent role in welfare administration during and after the Third Reich in Hamburg.[49] More important than any political record was the professional competence of the German guest and her assumed wide circle of social contacts.

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[47] Bodleian Library, Deneke papers, Box 22, 9 June 1950.
[48] Ibid.
[49] For details about Käthe Petersen, who was invited to meetings of the Committee on German Women's Education, see Christine Rothmaler, 'Die Sozialpolitikerin Käthe Petersen zwischen Auslese und Ausmerze', in Angelika Ebbinghaus, ed., *Opfer und Täterinnen. Frauenbiographien des Nationalsozialismus* (Nördlingen, 1987).

German organisations included in Adoption schemes with Britain

Adoption schemes were intended links between German and English women's groups. This had been suggested in March 1947 by the Control Commission primarily with a view to the passing of periodicals and magazines to German women. In contrast to the more 'official' Exchange Programmes which aimed at the social and political elite and which were media events, these schemes were thought to be for the 'ordinary' members of women's groups. A first list of German groups willing to participate was finalised in summer 1947. Information had been collected and sent by Kreis Resident Officers to Women's Affairs and then to the German Department in London. From this list British organisations affiliated to the WGPW could chose their 'adoptee'. Sometimes contacts were made by Visiting Experts who on their return to England tried to persuade their own organisations to link with a German group they met.[50] Sometimes, where there was no suitable German group for adoption one was created, as for example in Düsseldorf, where a group of the Women's League for Peace and Freedom was formed in Oberhausen at Youard's initiative in reaction to a letter by Mrs Cusden from the Branch in Reading, which was willing to take the new group 'under their wing'.[51] The German Department in London also had a list of British women's organisations with some interest in the adoption of German women. The Club of Visiting Experts in London around Nancy Astor took a strong interest in improving the co-ordination of this scheme.

Which German organisations were thought adoptable? The list of 1947 contained the following organisations (the figure in brackets gives the number of local groups): First there were non-political women's groups such as *Landfrauenvereine* (11); *Frauenausschüsse* (12); *Klub Deutscher Frauen Hanover*; *Frauenringe* (2); *Internationale Frauenliga für Frieden und Freiheit* (4); *Deutsche Friedensgesellschaft Hamburg*; and *Wilmersdorfer Frauenbund.*. The second group contained religious women's organisations especially in Berlin, Hanover, Hamburg, Düsseldorf and Aachen; welfare organisations (8 different groups) such as *Rheinische Frauenhilfe* (Düsseldorf), *Hausfrauenvereine* (Berlin), *Deutsches Rotes Kreuz*. Finally there were social organisations like *Verein Hamburger Hausfrauen*, *Frauenbund für alkoholfreie Kultur*; *Ärztinnenverband*; professional organisations (17 different groups) such as

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[50] PRO FO1013-2230, Conversation Mrs Reeve and Mr Windt, April 1948.
[51] PRO FO1013-2230, Mrs Cusden to Miss Walker, Women's Affairs Düsseldorf, 12.5.1948; Reply Yourd to Mrs Cusden, 19.6.1948.

Verband der Frauen in sozialen Berufen, *Deutscher Akademikerinnen Verband*, *Bund Deutscher Ärztinnen*, and cultural groups such as the *Frauenchor* Sasel (women's choir); *Frauenchor des Schlachterhandwerks Groß Hamburg* and the *Frauen Ruderverein Hamburg*. These social, cultural and sports organisations all had representatives in the *Frauenring*.

The list of local German organisations was updated by *Kreis* Resident Officers in February 1948 and sent to the German Education Department in London.[52] Professional organisations were added such as the *Berufsorganisation der Gymnastiklehrerinnen*, *Hausschneiderinnen*, Women Youth leaders and even entire *Volkshochschulen*. English organisations meanwhile could choose from a list of nearly 170 local women's organisations. Only cultural, welfare, professional and above-party organisations could profit from the scheme for the reason that Women's Affairs claimed political parties did not do anything to the advantage of women and neither did the trade unions.

Interest seems to have been very strong on the German side. In North Rhine-Westphalia Women's Affairs tried to reduce the number of candidates to about three in every Kreis.[53] Two criteria seemed important to the German Department for adoption: the local groups in Germany and England should live in similar surroundings (e.g. large industrial city or an agricultural area) in order to encourage real exchange of experience and the German group had to be engaged in a useful welfare project which was worthy of support.[54] This opened up possibilities for religious groups being included.

How the Adoption Scheme was supposed to work was not even clear to Women's Affairs Officers themselves. There was a danger that the Germans would look on these chances of contact primarily as a means of obtaining charity. Women's Affairs hoped, however, that the scheme would develop into a real exchange of views between English and German groups and that 'pen friendships' might be established.[55] Youard suggested that German clubs would value letters from members of the British organisation describing their lives and activities in the club. It might be wise for the British group to delay sending parcels until this 'comes naturally out of your friendly

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[52] PRO FO1013-2230, Scheme for Adoption of German women's voluntary organisations by similar organisations in the UK, German Department FO, September 1948.
[53] PRO FO1013-2230, Adoption of German Women's organisations, Düsseldorf 8.9.1948.
[54] Ibid.
[55] PRO FO1013-2230, Walker to Irving, 27.10.1947.

contacts'.[56] In a letter to Townswomen's Guilds Mrs Harman, Women's Affairs NRW, emphasised: 'We feel it would be so much better if both the "adopter" and the "adoptee" could contribute something to the exchange, or for instance combine to undertake a survey of training facilities for women in their respective towns with a view to possible improvement.'[57]

The most successful part of the adoption scheme was not with British women's organisations but with the English Church in Canada. Mrs Carrington, wife of the Archbishop of Quebec and president of the women's organisation inspired by the English Church in Canada adopted 11 groups of *Evangelische Frauenhilfe* in Rhineland and Westphalia and in addition to these religious relief groups, 10 non-confessional and non-party political organisations.[58] This even included the *Frauenausschuss* in Aachen (with its Communist leadership) which had a strong bias towards social work.[59] The majority of the non-confessional groups, however, were *Frauenringe* which in this way gained considerable material support even if none of the listed seven *Frauenringe* (Wuppertal, Jülich, Cologne, Münster, Neuss, Bergheim, Burgsteinfurth) seemed to have been involved in welfare projects.[60] Cologne, for example, was suggested to be linked with Quebec because the population was catholic and the city had a cardinal as did Quebec. In summer 1949 Women's Affairs reported that Mrs Carrington's appeal to the Canadian Church women's groups was the most successful effort that had been made in linking German women with the outside world.[61] Many Canadian groups had already written charming letters to the German women and in some cases parcels had been received containing soap, milk powder and clothing which could be distributed to persons in need. In all cases the German women were very keen to write back to Canada and tell their kind donors of the work done in Germany by women. Women's Affairs hoped that not only material relief but also an exchange of ideas would develop along these lines.

In general however, there were only a handful of women's organisations that got

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[56] PRO FO1013-2230, Youard to Standing Conference of Ilkley & Ben Rhydding (Yorkshire), 14.1.1948.
[57] FO1013-2230, Harman to Mrs Turnbull, Stockport re adoption with Solingen Frauenausschuss, 10.11.1948.
[58] PRO FO1013-2230, Harman to Vikarin Haake (Frauenhilfe in Westfalen) and Frau Waldhausen (Frauenhilfe in Rheinland), 5.8.1948.
[59] See chapter 5.
[60] For *Frauenringe* see chapter 6. PRO FO1013-2230, List of German Women's Organisations in Land NRW suitable for adoption by Canadian organisations, 10.9.1948.
[61] PRO FO1013-2230, Report on Canadian Scheme by WA Branch, 17.1.1949.

involved in the adoption scheme. There is no final report containing figures, but if we add to the number of a dozen links in North Rhine-Westphalia up to spring 1948 [62] the seven links reported from Schleswig- Holstein for 1949 [63] and if we assume a similar number for Lower Saxony, Berlin and Hamburg, then there were no more than 30 or 40 groups in the British Zone which participated in the Adoption Scheme.

Soon frustration developed on both sides. Firstly, there was a problem with language. Letters remained unanswered because nobody knew English or German. Sometimes the 'adoption' ended with a more or less personal exchange of letters between the two secretaries of the respective groups. Often it was not clear what to write about. When British groups sent parcels with mending material or second-hand clothes they expected a certain amount of gratitude from the German side, which was sometimes not given. Germany became tired after some time of being always at the receiving end. The scheme of the Canadian Church was much more successful, as this organisation was able and willing to send goods such as cocoa powder, which were distributed to orphanages or destitute families. The recipients of such articles often wrote more lively letters than other correspondents.

In September 1948 the Women's Affairs Officer Mrs Harman wrote to a British organisation interested in the scheme that it was, of course, very difficult 'to prevent

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[62] The following groups of women's organisations have been matched between July 1947 and spring 1948 in NRW, the list is drawn from the correspondence in the files of Women's Affairs and might therefore not be complete:
Standing Conference of Women's Organisations of Warwick with Cologne *Frauenring* in July 1947
Standing Conference of Croydon & District with Wuppertal *Frauenring* in October 1947 (initiated by a British relief worker who had worked in Wuppertal before she returned to her hometown Croydon)
Standing Conference Ilkley & Ben Rhydding with Essen *Frauenausschuss* or *Frauenklub* Hamm in January 1948
Croydon High School for Girls with Clara Schumann Schule in Bonn, December 1947
Women's Citizen Movement in York with Women's Citizen Group in Minden in December 1947
Natonal Adult Union, Branch 'Women's Fellowship Friend's House', Barton-on-Trent (Quaker) with Dortmund *Frauenausschuss*, January 1948
Soroptimists of Harrogate with *Klub berufstätiger Frauen*, Düsseldorf, January 1948
Chapel-in-le-Frith Townswomen's Guild with *Frauenausschuss* Oberhausen
Healton Moor Townswomen's Guild with *Frauenausschuss* Solingen
Cockfosters Townswomen's Guild with *Frauenausschuss* Mühlheim/Ruhr
East Croydon Townswomen's Guild with *Frauenausschuss* Aachen
Urmston Central Townswomen's Guild with *Frauenausschuss* Duisburg
Windsor Business & Professional Women's Club with Düsseldorf Business & Professional Women's Club

[63] PRO FO1013-2226, Miss Homer's report of the and Mrs Mess' visit to the British Zone of

these adoptions from becoming an entirely one-sided parcel sending affair' and that Women's Affairs was always at great pains 'to point out to the German group that the underlying intention is the exchange of ideas'.[64] Women's Affairs had found that the more effective way of galvanising any group was to invite one of its leading members to England. This, however, involved considerable expenses for the host, because the ticket had to be paid for and there were a lot of incidental expenses attached. Harman thought that it would cost a group about £ 20 to invite one person for four weeks. Other British organisations gained the experience that German associations were more interested when they felt that they had something to offer was well and were treated on a basis of parity.[65]

The most successful links seemed in 1950 to be between the National Union of Townswomen's Guilds and the *Frauenring* in different towns.[66] Miss Mess of the National Council of Social Service wrote in January 1950 about the future development that in her view only in a very few cases the scheme would really develop.: 'In both countries women lead busy lives and the first enthusiasm of the correspondence soon recedes when overwhelmed by the problems of everyday living.' She thought that it would only work between individuals concerned with the same interests such as medical women, social workers, university women, and others, and even then to no very great extent. Reports on Adoption Schemes end with January 1950. Soon after the foundation of the Federal Republic the strong interest in international contacts ceased on the German side.

Exchange between Women's Institutes and Landfrauenvereine

It is difficult to assess what German municipal welfare workers gained from their experience in England as participants of Exchange Programmes and whether it was possible for them to transfer their newly-gained knowledge to the German system. As for the second aim of the scheme - to teach German women how democratic organisations work and how they educated their rank and file members in citizenship - we have some well-documented examples. The four women's organisations which were

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Germany, 31.1.1950.

[64] PRO FO1013-2230, Minden women's group and adoption, letter to Mrs Oliver by Harman, 13.9.1948.

[65] PRO FO1013-2230, Letter by a Business and Professional Women's Club to Evans, 3.11.1948.

[66] PRO FO1013-2226, Miss Homer's report of her and Mrs Mess's visit to the British Zone of Germany, 31.1.1950.

most active in the exchange with German women were the Women's Institutes, the Townswomen's Guilds, the Women's Co-operative Guilds and the National Council of Women. All these British organisations attempted to establish or support groups in Germany. Whereas there had been with the *Bund Deutscher Frauenvereine* a National Council of Women in Germany as an umbrella organisation for women's associations prior to 1933 which could be revived other organisations like Women's Co-operative Guilds and Townswomen's Guilds had no tradition in Germany. Townswomen's Guild found something similar in the *Frauenringe* or *Frauenausschüsse* in the British Zone, at any rate they preferred *Frauenringe* as partners in the adoption scheme.

Women's Co-operative Guilds were established in Germany following the British model. In 1947 Co-operative women in the three Western Zones of Germany made an effort to create women's groups within the revived Co-operative Guilds. This was initiated by the Secretary of the International Women's Co-operative Women's Guild, Theo Naftel, who had visited Germany in December 1946.[67] During the war the British Guild was in contact with women in the Free German Movement and in 1944, before such activities received official Foreign Office blessing, the WCG ran a course of lectures for Co-operative women refugees living in the UK. In 1945 the Guild successfully lobbied the government to allow the women to return home quickly; it was assumed that the WCG would stay in contact with the German and Austrian women, and provide them with support. Some British Guild families 'adopted' a German family to whom they sent parcels.[68]

In May 1947 the president and the General secretary of the British WCG and the president of the Scottish Guild visited Germany to contact guildswomen. British Guilds helped for example in sending the magazine of the international organisation *Internationale Genossenschafterin* which was published twice a month in England to Germany (and France) for distribution. In 1948 six representatives of the British Guild accepted invitations by Frau Riedl, the secretary of the German WCG to Germany. German Co-operative women came to the UK under the scheme of the NCW or the WGPW but were mostly entertained by British Co-operative women.[69] The German National WCG was formed in September 1948 in Hamburg with Frau Riedl as secretary

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[67] PRO FO1049-568, Report Theo Naftel.
[68] Jones, "Creating Good Citzens: British Attitudes towards Women in Occupied Germany (unpublished paper),".
[69] PRO FO1049-1249, Visit by 6 women to UK by arrangement of the Women's Co-operative Guilds, Stoke-on-Trent, 21.10.1948.

and in June 1949 it was accepted as a member of the International Guild. WCGs in Germany were no independent organisations, their activities were limited to those within the Co-operation. In 1950 they counted about 8000 members.

The *Landfrauenvereine* were the major concern of Helena Deneke and therefore the source material is rich. Deneke, herself chairman of the Oxfordshire Federation of Women's Institutes, had worked closely for many years with and for Women's Institutes and she tried to reform *Landfrauenvereine* according to this English model. The British Zone included large rural areas in Schleswig-Holstein, Lower Saxony and Westphalia. Therefore the education of countrywomen seemed a matter of importance. Jeanne Gemmel had recognised this from the beginning. She attended the inaugural meeting of *Landfrauenvereine* in Schleswig-Holstein in Eutin in 1946 and specifically asked for a British lecturer who could help to revive this kind of organisation in Germany. This representative was Helena Deneke.

But only in summer 1948 did Deneke, with Kathleen Talbot made a tour to the British Zone entirely devoted to *Landfrauen*. The purpose of her tour was to gain an insight into the character, the set up, and the activities of *Landfrauenvereine* and into the lives of *Landfrauen* themselves. The two Visiting Experts went to several towns, addressed meetings of country women and inspected farms. Deneke admitted that farmers' wives did not have much time to spend for meetings. They were generally overworked because it was the custom to give extra tasks to women. She thought that some improvement could be made by re-educating men that, as a matter of good sense and to save time, more might be done by large labour-saving machinery, or, in villages, by communal laundries. Because of this it was farmer's wives in better circumstances who had a *Gehilfin* (help) who took the lead in the *Landfrauenvereine.* Occasionally, it was by refugees, who were now dispossessed and had experience of *Landfrauenvereine* in East Prussia or Silesia.

Deneke had a quite favourable view of the history of the *Landfrauenvereine* in Germany, a view completely unspoilt by the experience of the recent past. *Landfrauenvereine*, she wrote, originated before 1900 in East Prussia where

> Feudal circumstances did not preclude ties of friendship and co-operation between wives, daughters and sisters of the great landowners and farmer's womenfolk or the womenfolk of tenants. Markets for products had been established and flourished and happy personal relations had developed in circumstances where the land and its seasons and countrymen's wages were a first interest to all and where social traditions were deep-rooted. The part played

> by the leading aristocracy and gentry in these Vereine was liberal and enlightened and the Vereine spread among 'Landfrauen' in other districts of Germany where feudal traditions had subsided.[70]

In 1934 the *Landfrauenvereine* were dissolved and *Landfrauen* were incorporated in the *Reichsnährstand.* Under the stress of food shortage, Deneke explained, it served the country in wartime (just as had the Women's Institutes in England). After the fall of Hitler the original leaders of the *Landfrauenvereine* reappeared, with a wish to rebuild their own society. Deneke's sympathetic view was not entirely shared by all of the leading figures in the British National Federation of Women's Institutes. Mrs Russell, for example, stated at one of the meetings with the International Advisory Committee of the WGPW in spring 1946 that, as far as rural women were concerned, there had been a group before the war on lines comparable to the Women's Institutes which was in contact with the Associated Countrywomen of the World. But at a national meeting in Germany in 1938 which Mrs Russell attended she found that Elizabeth Boehm, the president of the *Reichsverband Landwirtschaftlicher Frauenvereine*, had become a complete Nazi. She thought, however, that rural women were in a difficult position to maintain any stand against the Nazis as they were scattered, and their organisation had been completely absorbed into the Nazi machine.[71] Mrs Russell felt unable to suggest names to the Control Commission of rural women in Germany who could help with the formation of women's associations.

Deneke's somewhat romantic view of the history of *Landfrauenvereine* expressed itself in her appreciation of the German gentry, and it was especially this

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[70] For history of Landfrauenvereine see Christina Schwarz, Die Landfrauenbewegung in Deutschland. Zur Geschichte der Frauenorganisation unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Jahre 1898 bis 1933 (Mainz, 1990).The first Landwirtschaftlicher Frauenverein was founded in 1898 in Rastenburg in East Prussia by Elisabeth Boehm. In 1916 all the Vereine established since met together in the Reichsverband landwirtschaftlicher Frauenvereine under the presidency of Elisabeth Boehm. The influential element in these organisations were women of the protestant gentry. At the turn of the century agriculture had to fight serious problems such as falling corn prices and indebtedness of farms. The model of the middle-class women's movement was also a motivation in the unification of rural women. The major activities of Landfrauenvereine were enhancing the knowledge of rural housewives in all rural housework matters; creating suitable opportunities for vocational training for daughters and home helps; increasing the production in gardening and poultry farming; and bridging the contrast between town and country. The creation of a regular market system for the products of rural housekeeping helped farmers wives to become more financially independent from their husbands. See alsoRenate Bridenthal, 'Someting Old, Something New: Women between the two World Wars', Central European History 6, 2 (1977), p. 428.

[71] Fawcett Library, WF/C5, Meeting of the International Advisory Sub-Committee of the WGPW, 12.6.1946.

group of 'leaders' whose co-operation she sought. When she first encountered *Freifrau* von Knigge, who directed refugee work of the German Red Cross she found:

> It is so natural to feel at home with Frau Knigge, and in my mind she stands for all that is most delightful in her nation's ideal of domestic piety and family affection. Herself a von Hardenberg she belongs to the same family as did the poet Novalis. The von Knigges owned property outside Hannover and at the end of the war they had settled there in a homestead. In Pomerania they had been perhaps the largest among the large German landowners.
> In Schleswig-Holstein Deneke met Gräfin Bülow, formerly president of the *Landfrauenvereine* in Schleswig-Holstein, in her little chateau at Küren:
>
> Frau von Bülow came in, tall, erect, dignified, very plainly dressed and every inch a gentlewoman. In appearance and bearing she might have been a member of our own Country families, Mrs Lee and I agreed. We felt at home with her, though clearly she, for her part, had first to overcome reluctance to talk to uniformed Englishwomen about her work among her folk in Schleswig-Holstein. However, she understood that help was offered.[72]
> In just the same way Deneke claimed to feel at home with Gräfin Leutrum, the President of the German *Landfrauenverband*, whom she visited at her castle in Unterriexingen in Württemberg in the American Zone. Leutrum had made an attempt in 1946 to co-operate with officers of the American Military Government Stuttgart to re-establish the *Landfrauenverband*.[73]

There were some fundamental differences between the British Women's Institutes and German *Landfrauenvereine* which Deneke tried to diminish in order to make *Landfrauenvereine* more suitable for the education in citizenship of their members. The first problem with *Landfrauenvereine* was the way in which they were organised. *Landfrauenvereine* were professional societies which had their panels of experts on milk production, food conservation, poultry keeping etc and they expected lectures to bear the fruits of agricultural and horticultural research experiment and experience. Women's Institutes included all women living in the countryside, and were not limited to farmers' wives as was the case with *Landfrauenvereine*. The former drew members from one village or town while the latter from different villages or homesteads. The number of women attending a Landfrauenverein meeting was therefore much larger than a normal village meeting of the Women's Institute. The

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[72] Bodleian Library, Deneke papers, Box 7, typescript p. 4.
[73] Schwarz, Die Landfrauenbewegung in Deutschland. Zur Geschichte der Frauenorganisation unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Jahre 1898 bis 1933, p. 277. Marie-Luise Gräfin Leutrum was half Jewish. Her mother Ruth Steiner, née Gräfin von Kalkreuth, was the president of the Landesverband Württemberg from 1927 to 1933. Leutrum studied agriculture and held a degree.

professional lectures given to a large audience prevented the rank and file from becoming actively involved, since especially shy members did not take part in discussion. There were no panels for discussion on social and political problems. Women's Institutes, on the other hand, brought countrywomen from one village together to learn things which were of help in their homes, to improve conditions of the village, to consider needs of the country people throughout the land and to develop a spirit of friendliness and co-operation. At least this was the principle described in a leaflet to German women titled 'What a Women's Institute is and what it does'.[74]

In practice Women's Institutes held monthly meetings, which consisted of four main parts: Business, which trained members in business methods and ensured that they managed the Institute themselves; secondly a lecture; thirdly Tea, which was to bring members together informally; and fourthly a social half hour, which consisted of singing, drama, games and other forms of recreation. In addition to the monthly meetings, Institutes often held courses in cookery, dressmaking, upholstery, home nursing, keeping fit and other subjects.Deneke noticed that *Landfrauen* meetings were usually held in a dining room of an inn where members were seated in a horse-shoe or at small tables, some of them with their backs to the speaker. As a rule the members' part consisted of listening, the chairman or the secretary thanked the speaker, and any entertainment provided (such as singing or poetry recital) came from a group of young girls or children, not from the countrywomen themselves. Often there was what was called the social half hour, but never one that involved the participation of members.

Any educational attempts from the British side to change the agenda of *Landfrauen* meetings met with vehement resistance on the part of German women. They showed themselves to be impressed by the Social Half Hour some of them experienced at Women's Institutes meetings but they were of the opinion that women in Germany were overburdened with work and could not spare the time for the participation in meetings let alone for entertainment.[75] Frau Dr Hoestermann of the *Frauenausschuss* Bonn wrote in March 1948 in reaction to the British leaflet on the Women's Institutes that the schedule of meetings which contain at the same afternoon business management, lecturing, coffee break and half an hour of entertainment was too rich a programme. This did not answer 'our thoroughness' she argued, and also not the

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[74] PRO FO1050-1298, What a Women's Institute is and what it does, March 1946.
[75] Bodleian Library, Deneke papers, Box 22, Visit arranged by National Federation of Women's Institutes, Land NRW, report by Frl Bergkamp and Frau Prott, July 1948.

present mood of the women which, on the account of the dreadful emergency, was very depressed.[76] Frau Rhodovi, the Vice Chairman of the *Landfrauenverband* pointed out that *Landfrauen* meetings were made up mostly of peasant women and therefore discussions were simpler and on fewer topics than in England.[77]

Deneke was at hand when the constitution of the *Landfrauenverband* was discussed in autumn 1948 in Bad Godesberg. Whether she really exercised any influence on this process is hard to say. No papers of the *Landfrauenverband* suggest that her recommendations were of major importance.[78] Deneke recalled later about the inaugural meeting: 'As decisions were made step by step, they asked "Miss Deneke, is that really democratic?" and I can still hear that voice and could assure them their ballot election of *Gräfin* Leutrum was really so.'[79] On 20 October 1948 the conference ratified the constitution of the *Landfrauenverband* which was established as a registered society for the British and American Zone with about 23,000 members. Gräfin Leutrum became president and Regina Frankenfeld secretary of the organisations. Both were at the same time president and secretary of the *Landfrauenverein* Württemberg. The office of the *Landfrauenverband* was at Leutrum's castle in Unterriexingen until it was transferred in 1950 to Stuttgart.

Since it was Deneke's intention to see *Landfrauenvereine* develop on the lines of British Women's Institutes, there were three main points of the constitution she considered positive signs. Firstly, the fact that in 1948 the *Landfrauenvereine*'s traditional object of furthering *Hauswirtschaft* was widened, explicit by the new name of the organisation now called *Landfrauenverband* instead of *Landwirtschaftlicher Hausfrauenverband* as previously. This meant to Deneke that the work would now include public questions concerning the countrywomen and would also allow for membership of women beyond farmers' wives alone. Secondly, for Deneke it was important that the *Verband* would become - at least in principle - financially independent of the *Landesbauernschaft*, which sponsored the *Landfrauenvereine* and paid their office and their *Referenten*.. In reality, the *Landfrauenverband* had no money

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[76] PRO FO1013-714, Dr Hoestermann, Head of supra-partial Women's Committee in Bonn, 30.5.1948.
[77] Bodleian Library, Deneke papers, Box 22, Report on the meeting of the NFWI with German guests, May 8 1950: Frau Rhodovi, the Vice Chairman of the *Landfrauenverein*, spoke first on behalf of all Germans.
[78] Schwarz, Die Landfrauenbewegung in Deutschland. Zur Geschichte der Frauenorganisation unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Jahre 1898 bis 1933, does not even mention Deneke's presence.

following the currency reform. A joint consultative body between *Bauernverband* and *Landfrauenverband* was established shortly after the latter had been formed and an immediate programme for co-operation in practical matters was agreed. It was also agreed that the *Landfrauenverband* should have a representative of the executive of the *Bauernverband* at all levels. The *Landfrauenverband* also accepted the establishment of village groups (*Ortsvereine*) instead of *Kreis*- and *Bezirksvereine*. This policy however, was only carried out in some parts and not in others such as Westphalia where there were scattered farms and no villages.

To Deneke the main means of changing the outlook of *Landfrauenvereine* was to change the intentions of their leaders. *Gräfin* Leutrum was invited to England in March 1949 where she not only studied work of Women's Institutes but also had opportunity to meet German women guests from the British Zone.[80] She spent three days in the Women's Institute's own Denman College, two weeks in the country and a weekend near London. At Denman College she met Lady Albermarle, the chairman of the National Federation of Women's Institutes. Other German guests to the Women's Institutes suggested by Helena Deneke were mostly well-educated women in their thirties who owned farms of more than 50 hectares and who were leading figures in the *Landfrauenvereine*. Normally they had worked as *Referentinnen* at agricultural schools for girls or as trainers of household apprentices. The scheme of apprenticeship in farmhouses was something which did not exist in England and of which German visitors were very proud. Some the leaders of *Landfrauenvereine* belonged to the landed aristocracy (six of twenty-one applicants for Exchange Programmes with Women's Institutes).[81] Restricted knowledge of the English language posed a serious problem to the Exchange Programmes especially with countrywomen.

What did German *Landfrauen* learn from the visits of Women's Institutes?

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[79] Bodleian Library, Deneke papers, The women of Germany, vol 2. .

[80] Bodleian Library, Deneke papers, Box 22, Report on Visit to England of eleven German women to study Women's Institute work, 1 to 22 March 1949.

[81] Bodleian Library, Deneke papers, Box 22, Correspondence with women who applied for Exchange Programme; as for example Frau Rixa von Reden-Lütken, born 1915; who ran her mother-in-law estate and was in charge of the District Red Cross; Frau Hildegard von Kessler, Broich, Kreis Jülich, born 1911, was appointed from 1934 to 1939 Librarian to the Periodicals Section of the *Wehrmacht*, in 1939 she married and built up with her husband their farm, in 1941 she was entrusted with the training of *ländliche Hauswirtschaftslehrlinge* (household apprentices) by the *Landwirtschaftskammer* Bonn, she was elected the first chairman of the *Rheinische Landfrauenvereinigung* of *Kreis* Jülich in NRW. Frau Marie Rickert from Hamburg was in 1949 the editor of *Land und Frau*, a weekly publication of the *Landfrauenverein*, was in 1943 invited by the Chamber of Agriculture in Berlin to go to Templin as an adviser on apprentices to farmer's wives at the School of Agriculture.

Usually both sides reported that the programme had been successful. German visitors expressed their gratitude and made compliments such as the following about the English husband 'who took his wife early morning tea, laid the table, washed up and generally helped in domestic duties.[82] Germans found everything quite admirable in England, but thought 'that it will be readily understood that not everything we have seen in England can be directly applied to our rural women's institutions'. Ilse Wittenberg wrote one of the more detailed and revealing reports:

> The work carried out voluntarily by members of the W.I. is great, greater than in Germany, but at the cost of the family and of domestic life. Nearly all the emphasis lies of outside of the home and one cannot but feel, on the one hand, that business is done at any price; on the other hand, one must also marvel at how almost all of these women rush around in their cars at 100 km per hour on good, but often foggy roads day and night. The Englishwoman runs her political association and life at a speed that is quite strenuous for Germans. Whether being always busy leads to real success in every case remains for me an open question. My second insoluble question is where the women find all their time, especially since no one has domestic help (...) Frequently the lady of an estate is the chairwoman. Often there is talk of the 'idea of the big houses'. Just as the large estate owner is a public figure in the church, so too is his wife in W.I. This means above all, however, that she possibly does not have a favoured position because of her money, education, and other considerations, but that because of her property she is obliged to help and that she must be the mother of the village.

Concerning the Social Half Hour, Wittenberg wrote:

> One must in this case consider how many small villages there are in England and how far apart they lie from each other in spite of the best bus connections. One must also see how lonely the life is for the women on the isolated farms, how they have no light, no running water, and no help in the house or the stable. They enjoy these amusements with a childish pleasure. How far one can transfer such things to another country, much less compare them, naturally remains an open question. [83]

Deneke herself was convinced that the good points in the development of *Landfrauenvereine* were a sign of success of the Exchange Programmes. In summer 1949 she provided *Gräfin* Leutrum the chance of getting in personal touch with her constituents in the remoter parts of the British Zone, especially in Schleswig-Holstein. Leutrum and Frankenfeld travelled with Deneke by car to different places. On this tour Deneke noticed the positive outcome of Leutrum's participation in the Women's Institutes Exchange programme. *Gräfin* Leutrum had become convinced of the English

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[82] Bodleian Library, Deneke papers, Box 22, Report on Visit of eleven German women to study Women Institute Work, April 18th - May 9th, 1950.
[83] Bodleian Library, Deneke papers, Box 22, Eindrücke von einer Studienreise zu den

method of fostering the participation of individual members at meetings. She also supported practical schemes of relieving the overburdened farmer's wife by the purposeful use of electric power (which was - unlike in England - available in all parts of the countryside). She believed in co-operation with other women's organisations (especially with the *Frauenring*) and with men (especially with the *Bauernverband*) while jealously guarding the independence of the *Landfrauenverband*. In all such matters, Deneke found, Leutrum was touching points that were of great importance for the future of the German countrywomen.[84]

To Deneke the journey in 1949 offered an opportunity to further 'democracy as we understand it at home' among *Landfrauen*. According to her it was impossible for many reasons to work in ways other than through accepted leaders. Therefore, they visited as many leading *Landfrauen* as possible to discuss methods with them to activate the ordinary members. Deneke and Mrs Cornell, who accompanied her, also spoke at *Landfrauen* meetings about Women's Institutes. Their main suggestion to the *Vereine* was to establish sub-committees in order to delegate responsibility and arouse more interest among the ordinary members. Cornell felt that as a result of professionalism all the meetings were far too earnest and utilitarian, and that there was little feeling of real recreation and enjoyment to them. Her recommendation was that German *Landfrauen* should certainly have more fun. Both English visitors were pleased to see that those *Landfrauen* who had been to England made use of what they had practised at Denman College and proved to be excellent chairwomen. They were convinced that these visits from leaders were an immense help in their decision to follow the model of Women's Institutes in their work. Where *Landfrauen* presidents did not have this opportunity, they were sceptical of any success in rousing responsibility in rank-and-file members and there was a falling standard in the conduct of meetings.

The success of Exchange Programmes and Adoption Schemes

English hosts found their German guests 'still suffering deeply from a feeling of general insecurity, and to some extent, of suspicion, and from general physical and mental weariness', but were willing to learn.[85] Mrs Mess, of the staff of the National Council of

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englischen Landfrauen, Ilse Wittenberg, July 1948. Translation mine.

[84] Bodleian Library, Deneke papers, The Women of Germany, part 4, Deneke's tour with Mrs Cornell to the British Zone in summer 1949.

[85] PRO FO1049-1246, Second course held by Women's Groups on Public Welfare, report on the German Education Department, FO, 30.1.1948.

Social Service, who escorted the second group of German guests to the WGPW in 1947 reported:

> There is no doubt that they were impressed with the way in which democracy is taught and practised in so many of our societies, clubs, institutions and settlements. Even more they were impressed by the spirit of kindliness and courtesy which they found everywhere and with the absence of hysteria and nervous excitement....They were gratified to find many people who were sincerely interested in Germany and her problems, but they bitterly resented the idea that they should be taught how to work and rebuild their country although they were only too willing to exchange experiences, especially in the sphere of professional work.[86]

This view seems to be confirmed by German reports such as that from Margarete Ainsberg:

> Everywhere you met with independent, individual personalities. It seemed to me that there in a true sense we found in reality what our best teachers in the past have always advocated, but what had been forgotten through Nazi methods when the individual was swallowed up in the herd: the training for individual responsibility, to personal independence and to respect the individuality of your fellow man. It is only now that I can understand the quality which I noticed again and again: the ability to be a member of a community. I was most surprised at the numerous minute women's groups in Merthyr, where simple miners' wives managed to keep on with their clubwork for some 12 years and I was impressed at the way in which they seemed to converse with parliamentary usage. In their way they were as impressive a sight as the most interesting session of the Commons or the town councillors' meeting.[87]

Such reports allow the conclusion that at least one of the formulated objectives of Exchange Programmes had been reached: to demonstrate the emphasis laid on the individual in a democratic society as supposed to the mass totalitarian society in the Third Reich. The 'British way of life' made a great impression on most of the German women, especially the English politeness ('their quiet disciplined attitude in the greatest rush of traffic, the decent, human way of speaking in all offices and ministries'[88]) . They noticed that compulsion was used as little as possible. Instead the authorities appealed to judgement and understanding.[89] Maria May found, for example,

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[86] Fawcett Library, WF/C6, Report on the visit of German women by Mrs Mess from the International Department of NCSS, December 1947.
[87] Fawcett Library, WF/C6, Report by Margarete Ainsberg from Dortmund about her England trip, 11.7.1948.
[88] PRO FO1050-1229, Report on four weeks stay in England (October 1st – 29th 1948), by Mararete Koch, 24.1.1949.
[89] Ibid. See also published reports by Hilde Goldner, 'Wie lebt man heute in England?', *Neues Europa*, 17 (1947); Anna Haag, "Englisches Mosaik," *Der Standpunkt* 1947; Katharina Petersen, 'Eindrücke aus England', *Die Schule* 2, 6/7 (1947);Helga Prollius, 'Eine deutsche Frau

> most impressive the discipline of queues, the non-existence of a 'Black Market', and qualities peculiar to the British race which we do not have at all or only to a small extent and which is difficult to translate into German, such as 'team spirit', common sense, sense of humour and the special kind of courtesy when they speak to each other, but also the predilection which women still have for uniforms, and women smoking in the streets.[90]

Reports emphasised the similarities of the living conditions in both countries and appealed to the staying power of German women who should take the English housewife as an example who handled the situation with good humour and industriousness. Maria May, for example, summed up her experience in the UK:

> It must not be forgotten how hard especially the professional women of the middle class have to work. In London I saw more undernourished and worn out women than over here. It is impossible to get household help and to pay them. Money is shorter than it is in Germany. One does not have the feeling to be (sic) in a country which has won the war.[91]
> It has to be taken into consideration however, that reports such as those quoted

above were telling the British largely what they wanted to hear. German visitors also appreciated the opportunity to stay in private homes and to establish personal contacts with their hosts. They admitted that even where political problems were discussed this was done without bitterness. One of the German women wrote that she felt 'deep relief when I was permitted to give my personal views and opinion to all matters, in spite of my personal attitude which was sometimes somewhat different'.[92] Helga Prollius expressed the hope that 'both sides learnt the different points of view, that both of them will think about it and find it truth (sic), no to-day, perhaps, but later or when the wounds will be healed'(sic) [93]

Conflicts between the women of former enemy countries were unavoidable. Here and there English women felt hurt by remarks made by German women and by their self-pity which did not seem to take into consideration that British women too had suffered and that the distress in Germany was the result of German policy. Generally English hosts were pleased with their German guests, but there were some complaints too such as the following from the Country Federation of Women's Institutes on the ignorance of German women who claimed:

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sieht England 1947', in Charles Schüddekopf, ed., *Vor den Toren der Wirklichkeit. Deutschland 1946-47 im Spiegel der Nordwestdeutschen Hefte* (Berlin and Bonn, 1980).

[90] PRO FO1049-1847, Impressions on my visit to England by Maria May, 26.4.1949.

[91] Ibid.

[92] PRO FO1036-49, Frau Luehmann-Klinke, leading trade woman trade unionist and Housing Welfare Officer, report to Education Branch Berlin, 21.8.1947.

[93] Fawcett Library, WF/C6, Special Meeting of the International Advisory Committee, 25 June

> That they had experienced two wars, that their country had been bombed. Several of them were indeed tactless about this and they seemed unable to see that present Russian police methods were similar if not identical with those of the Nazi regime. However, the majority and incidentally the younger ones, seemed to be more realistic and at the same time more sympathetic. They were all good guests and showed gratitude for everything that was done for them.[94]

That German women were not openly confronted with the question of war guilt was a decision the British women took deliberately. It is clear however, that German women were not given a warm welcome everywhere. Programmes were planned in a way that German women never spoke to large audiences but only met a small circle of representatives of women's organisations.

The report of one guest of the WGPW, Adelheid von Bodelschwingh, a 70 year old lady and social worker from Bethelstift near Bünde, particularly annoyed members of the WGPW. She claimed to express what the majority of German women were feeling at the time. She rejected the notion of 'collective guilt', her quixotic English being little obstacle to conveying the strength of her feeling:

> Only supranational power might punish and judge. We feel in Germany like punished by all the allied governments. And if we are to be re-educated, this is not be done by men and women representing this point of view, that gives German people the only guilt for the war and makes them feel like punished. (....) The German point of view, concerning the same matters is as follows: What sort of rebuilding or re-education is to be expected from those, who have destroyed the culture of more than thousand years in Germany, from those who have made fields of ruins out of the beautiful towns; who are going to destroy our landscape and climate by cutting down our woods, from those, who didn't help to get rid of Hitler's tyranny before the war time, which made rotten our civilisation and moral, but paid his utopian programmes because they thought him to be a wall against Bolshevism. This is not said in a political sense. It will make you imagine what are the real thoughts about re-education in Germany like. In Germany we have the chaos in fact, and there is nothing to be rebuilt or re-educated in the old manner, that may be so well proved in England or some other country. As us also have been organisations and traditions and cultural life in high and manifold manner - but that all has gone away for ever, and at us is the chaos, the nought.[95]

Her final thought was that the only possibility lay in giving some good and useful ideas to the British officers responsible for economic questions in the British Zone in order to improve the food condition. Otherwise, she argued, Western Europe would fall in the

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1947.

[94] PRO FO1042-1247, Report by National Federation of Women's Institutes, March 1948, underlining original.

[95] Fawcett Library, WF/C6, Thoughts about my journey to England, Adelheid von Bodelschwingh, July 1947; Besides this report she sent a little brochure with neatly-coloured drawings illustrating the tour, done by herself as a token of her gratitude to the English hosts.

hands of Bolshevism. Germans had to find a new 'spiritual activity' and the task of the English people would be to nurse this process and to give help to the Germans in form of freedom and acknowledgement for their work and ideas. In the view of Frau Bodelschwingh the entire world was still engaged in a struggle of civilisation against barbarism, of good against evil. And there was no question where this evil was originating, namely in the East. There is no hint in her report of an acceptance of political responsibility by German women. Not surprisingly, some of the WGPW members who read the report criticised it heavily. One member wrote she felt the report was 'full of a good deal of confused thought' and showed how little Germans realised their own responsibility for the Hitler regime. 'For my part I would rather have my own town turned into ruins than have my fields turned into concentration camps and crematoria.'[96]

This, in principle, was the attitude of a number of German women held in high esteem by British Military Government. Lemke [97] quoted the reaction of Dr Dorothee von Velsen of (*Deutscher Frauenring*) in a letter to Dr Ulich-Beil (*Staatsbürgerinnenverband*) towards the delegation of American women in April 1950. The visitors had asked her why so many Germans were full of prejudice towards the Americans despite the Marshall Plan and plenty of other support. Velsen answered: 'But you did not come with the Marshall Plan, but with denazification, dismantling, the Nüremberg Trial and the terrible moral defamation.' Velsen was supported by one of the Americans and after that some of the guests admitted that they had not known anything about it and only now fully understood the situation.

It is probably fair to say that Exchange Programmes and to some extent Adoption Schemes did not bring the success expected in the field of civic education for women. Methods of educating the rank and file as applied in certain British organisations could not be transferred to Germany. Living conditions in post-war Germany were quite different to England and leading German personalities resented British influence concerning constitution, procedures and methods of work in their organisations. The fact that a limited number of German women, given opportunity to go abroad spoke about their tours and experiences to women's circles, did not change this general attitude. The civic education of women in Germany remained restricted to

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[96] Fawcett Library, WF/C6, Letter by unknown writer from Kirby Hall, Kent, to Miss Homer, WGPW, 18.8.1947.
[97] Johanna Lemke, Dokumentation der Nachkriegsgeschichte des Deutschen Staatsbürgerinnen-

more 'formal' courses on local government, history, philosophy (such the *Frauenring* provided)[98] instead of the 'learning by doing' approach of the British organisations.

On the other hand, the importance of international contacts and the stimulating effect of Exchange Programmes is beyond doubt, as most of the reports written by German women prove. The great enthusiasm which British women showed for voluntary work in their organisations was stimulating for German guests who came back home inspired with new ideas and energy for their own work. German morale and courage was boosted at the sight of a 'normally-functioning' democratic country and at the optimism of British women and their hospitality, compared to German starvation, distress and isolation. German visitors were much preoccupied with the different standard of living in Germany and Britain. Reports by German women were filled with exact descriptions of the food they were offered and the consumer goods available in England, some of which German women had not seen for ten years. In one of the memoranda of Women's Affairs there is mention of the pocket money given to the German guests in order to enable the visitors to have some idea of the purchasing power of the pound sterling.[99] The sight in 1947 of a filled shop window was certainly as great a motivation for women to strive for democracy as were the lessons learnt during their stay with women's organisations. One of the visitors, Frieda Ross, of the Hamburg *Frauenring* who was invited to Bristol in October 1947 at the invitation of the NCW wrote:

> What an event was it to us to be guests in a dining car, where real meals consisting of three courses were served... What experience to travel in a train that had electric light as the night drew on!... Of course, you cannot imagine what the look of any English shop window means to us Germans. Even though most of the goods were rationed and therefore not obtainable for us we enjoyed the colourful displays in the windows....[100]

The visit was a real break from the struggle of life in Hamburg. Frau Ross was glad to be away on what felt like a holiday. Helen Jones even concluded that the success of the

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Verbandes 1947-1980 (Berlin, 1990), p. 23.

[98] Ziegler, Lernziel Demokratie. Politische Frauenbildung in der britischen und amerikanischen Besatzungszone 1945-1949.

[99] PRO FO1030-94, Memorandum on Women's Affairs Section 1948-1949, by R. Ostermann.

visits lay less in what the German learnt from the British, than in the brief escape from the living conditions in Germany which the scheme afforded a small number of women.[101]

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[100] PRO FO1049-1245, Visit to Bristol by F. Ross, Hamburg, October 1947.
[101] Jones, "Creating Good Citzens" (unpublished paper).

8. Reeducation of women through paid employment

Caroline Haslett's suggestion

When Caroline Haslett[1] visited the British Zone in summer 1947 and autumn 1948, she suggested educating the German woman to more responsible citizenship 'by first of all seeing that she was able to secure training for work and to take responsibility on her own job'.[2] In this chapter I will follow up this approach towards German women. It remained unsuccessful because measures supported by CCG for employment of women especially after 1948 were in direct contrast to the proposals made by Caroline Haslett. Instead of opening up highly-qualified professions, women were directed into 'female' unqualified, badly-paid jobs mainly as domestic helps and in this way the sexual division of Labour was re-established and reconfirmed.

Caroline Haslett was certainly the right choice to be sent to Germany as an expert on the employment of women. A leading member of – and since 1941 the president of – the Women's Engineering Society and Vice President of the International Federation of Business & Professional Women, she had a wide circle of contacts at the highest levels both in government and industry. She was promoted to the rank of Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire in 1947 as an award for her services to the Ministry of Labour and the Board of Trade.

Haslett was a member of the Women's Power Committee, formed in June 1940 which included several MPs (for example Nancy Astor) and representatives of women's organisations and trade unions. The Committee pressed for the utilisation of the skills and experiences of professional women in the war effort and demanded that there should be an official advisory committee of women working closely in contact with the Ministry of Labour. The WPC enjoyed close relations with government, and the cordial nature of the meetings with government ministers was frequently

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[1] Caroline Haslett (1895-1957), had long promoted women's interests. She was a suffragette and qualified engineer. In 1919 she became secretary of the newly-formed Women's Engineering Society and later editor of its journal. Her work aimed to improve women's education and to open up careers in engineering. She also tried to make women more aware of the possibilities of using electricity in the home. Helen Jones, *Women in British Public Life, 1914-1950*, p. 190.

[2] PRO FO1030-94, Report to the Foreign Office on a visit to Germany, October 29th to November 8th by Dame Caroline Haslett, December 1948.

commented on, but they rarely produced results for the women. [3] In March 1941 the Ministry of Labour under Ernest Bevin set up the Women's Consultative Committee to advise them on questions affecting the recruitment and registration of women and the best methods of utilising their services in the war effort. Haslett was appointed adviser on women's training. Her main job was to give speeches and radio broadcasts and to write newspaper articles encouraging women to offer their services for the war effort and to publicise government schemes for the provision of training for skilled workers. When in 1941 the government introduced the registration of women between the age of 18 and 40 with a view of their direction into industry, Haslett was given the task of explaining this new government policy to women on the radio programme *Calling at women*. In 1942 she wrote a small handbook *Munitions girls* which contained advice on training, uniforms and welfare for girls employed in the war industries.[4]

In the field of employment, as in other fields, German women were considered - not only by Caroline Haslett during her one week's stay in the country, but by many British Visiting Experts - to be especially backwards as compared with British women. A background briefing informed CCG officers that women in Britain 'although not yet fully on equal salary basis, have won a prominent place for themselves in the life of the nation'. [5] Propaganda material on the employment situation of British women sent to the German Labour Administration was backed up with impressive statistics.[6] It declared that the position achieved by women in the professions was of increasing distinction. In medicine, dentistry and in the auxiliary medicine services they had long had a secure place. Social work was a recognised career for women and in this sphere many new opportunities had opened up in recent years. The Ministry of Education had encouraged a number of universities to provide one-year training courses for this profession and training was also arranged by voluntary societies. Housing and personnel management were other careers which women had entered in increasing numbers and in which they had been very successful. Personnel managers were employed by most industries and were responsible for the engagement and dismissal of

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[3] Jones, Women in British Public Life, 1914-1950, p. 195.
[4] Rosalind Messenger, The Doors of Opportunity: A Biography of Dame Caroline Haslett DBE, Companion IEE (Femina Books, 1967).
[5] PRO FO1051-600, Background letter No 24, The Place of Women in Germany today, March 1949.
[6] A report by the Foreign Office claimed that in December 1948 there were 67,000 more women in employment than in mid 1939. FO1051-87, Draft on Women's Employment in

workers and their allocation of suitable jobs, industrial relations, the control of absenteeism, worker's welfare and compliance with the safety requirements of the Factories Act. Within the British Civil Service, the report claimed further, women both could and did rise to the highest positions involving the control of large mixed staffs. The positive impression of the new development in England was summed up:

> It would be an exaggeration to say that women have achieved complete equality with men. There is still some prejudice against them particularly in the higher ranges of industry where it is difficult for women to achieve managerial status except as personnel managers. Nevertheless, the picture is one of steady progress and in many occupations women work with men on a basis of equality. It is generally accepted that girls have the right to the same opportunities of education and training as boys without regard to the fact that they may later marry. Remuneration is less satisfactory. Equal pay operates in certain industries - it was introduced in the engineering industry during the war when women were doing men's work with equal productivity received the men's rate of the pay - and it is usual in many professions. [7]

Haslett herself as many of her contemporaries, believed that this situation was a result of the war. It was assumed that the position was quite different in Germany, where during the war foreign slave workers could be used to boost industrial production. It is difficult, however, to compare the percentage of women employed in both countries because numbers given in the historical literature differ widely. Smith gives for 1943 - the peak of mobilisation of womanpower- the number of adult women employed full-time in industry and the armed forces as 46% (7.250,000). [8] Summerfield claims that 51% of adult women were employed in 1943 [9], Crofts speaks of 30% employed women in 1945. For comparison, in Germany about 35,2 % of adult women were employed in 1939.[10] In any case, Britain far exceeded the other belligerents in its use of womanpower.[11] Virtually all (90%) able-bodied single women between 18 and 40 were involved in the war effort, as well as 80% of those in this age group who were married but had no children. The number of female part-time employees increased from about 380,000 in June 1942 to 900,000 in 1944. While the

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Great Britain, sent to Cullingford.
[7] PRO FO1051-600, Background letter No 24, The Place of Women in Germany today, March 1949.
[8] Smith, 'The Effect of the War on the Status of Women'.
[9] Summerfield, 'Women and War in the Twentieth Century'.
[10] Schubert, 'Frauenarbeit 1945-1949', pp. 71-76.
[11] Gisela Bock, *Frauen in der europäischen Geschichte* (Munich, 2000), pp. 297-298, states to the contrary that in 1943 the number of women employed (including women employed by the army but excluding those in agriculture) was higher in Germany (45%) than in Great Britain (42%) or in the US (37%).

number of women in engineering expanded considerably from 97,000 to 602,000 [12] and many women were required to work in the chemical or shipbuilding industries, only a very small proportion were allowed to do men's jobs. The trade unions blocked women's claims to apprenticeships and the sexual division of labour was invariably maintained by splitting a men's job or by modifying it through introduction of new machinery. Women were expected to work only 'temporarily', and it was assumed that in peacetime they would be replaced by returning men. Smith concluded: 'The notion that sex segregation was substantially eliminated might best be regarded as a myth, encouraged by government publicity designed to recruit women into industry, and accepted uncritically by some feminists eager to believe that the war was bringing substantial progress towards sex equality.' [13]

Although so many women were in employment in Britain, working conditions did not improve. There was dissatisfaction with low wages, insufficient nurseries, long working hours and with shopping facilities, bad canteens and inadequate transport. [14] After the war the proportion of all adult women in paid employment dropped to 40 % in 1947 and 35% in 1951 similar to the 1931 proportion of 34%. [15] In 1944 an Equal Pay Committee was formed to which many women's organisations affiliated, including the National Council of Women, the Women's Institutes, the Women's Section of the Labour Party, and the Women's Co-operative Guilds. The campaign focussed on the common grades of the Civil Service where men and women performed the same work but received different rates. The Labour Government announced in June 1947 that it would not introduce equal pay in the public service on the grounds that it would be wholly inflationary in its results. Under the Conservative Government equal pay was gradually introduced in the Civil Service and the teaching professions in a series of stages from 1954 on.

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[12] Summerfield, 'Women and War in the Twentieth Century'.
[13] Harold Smith, ed., *War and Social Change: British Society in the Second World War* (Manchester, 1986), p. 21.
[14] Pugh, 'Domesticity and the Decline of Feminism 1930-1950', p. 27.
[15] Beaumont, *Women and Citizenship: A Study of Non-Feminist Women's Societies and the Women's Movement in England, 1928-1950*. Penny Summerfield, 'The Girl that Makes the Thing that Drills the Hole that Holds the Spring..: Discourses of Women and Work in the Second World War', in C. Gledhill and G. Swanson, eds. *Nationalising feminity* (Manchester, 1996).Completely different figures are given in William Crofts, 'The Attlee Government's Pursuit of Women', *History Today* 36 (1986). who claims that the proportion of women in employment increased from 27 % in 1939 to 30 % in 1945 and was also 30% in November 1947.

The question of equal pay was a remarkable issue because post-war Britain depended on a vast increase of production, which in turn, was dependent on a greatly enlarged workforce. [16] The loss during the war of over half the nation's wealth and two-thirds of the export trade meant that the country now lacked the means to pay for more than one third of its essential imports. In February 1947 the British Government issued a White Paper on the national crisis, calling for women who left work at the end of the war to return to industry. [17] At the same time there was a shortage of labour in the traditional women's professions, especially teaching and nursing, and the expansion of social work also drew largely on the female labour force. This in turn led to the removal of the civil service marriage bar in 1946 and the recruitment of married teachers in 1948. In order to get women into industry, especially into unattractive jobs in the textile industry, the government opted for a national propaganda campaign, the principal target group being women aged 35 to 50.[18] Film trailers, cinema slides, shop window displays and special recruitment centres were introduced in designated districts of female labour shortage. By January 1948 the working population of women was some 70,000 greater than at the beginning of the campaign. The rising cost of living provided a stimulus for married women to get out to work. Despite the urgency with which women were needed to overcome the crisis, their earnings did not exceed what they had been paid in the past: little more than half of the amount offered to men. State facilities, like nurseries as they existed during the war, were not re-introduced. The Labour Government mainly relied on the effect of propaganda as did British Military Government in the British Zone when trying to mobilise women into the workforce.

As in wartime, Caroline Haslett served the government after the war in the campaign to draw more women in employment. The Government wanted in the immediate future to develop industries upon which the country relied, in order to recapture export markets such as textiles. In October 1945 Caroline Haslett was invited by the President of the Board of Trade to become chairman of the Hosiery Working Party. Such Working Parties were set up for each of the industries supported,

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[16] Ibid.
[17] Summerfield, 'The Girl that Makes the Thing that Drills the Hole that Holds the Spring...: Discourses of Women and Work in the Second World War', pp. 223-225; Elizabeth Wilson, *Only Halfway to Paradise: Women in Postwar Britain 1945-1968* (London and New York, 1980), p. 18.

representatives were appointed in equal numbers from the employers, trade unions and independent members under an independent chairman. Haslett was one of the first to advocate the use of women on a part-time shift basis, so that they could cope with the demands of a home and yet at the same time do a useful job. Her special interest was in management problems and techniques.

In contrast to the more recent historical research Haslett was convinced that in Britain the war had brought a change of attitude towards the female worker, especially in engineering industries, and that women in formerly 'male' vocations were more easily accepted. She also assumed that though German women had access to the liberal professions and to the political field, the climate of opinion was against women taking part in non-traditional occupations, or working in industry on technical or managerial levels. German women lacked confidence in their own judgement which such experience could give them. Because in the past women had been regarded mainly as stopgaps in industry, there had been little inclination on the part of the employers to regard them as part of the permanent labour force, except at the lowest levels, and to provide training and possibilities for advancement for them. For Haslett the question of equal access to training was fundamental if women were to acquire sufficient skill and confidence to reach the status of skilled worker or of a supervisory managerial post.

Haslett was equally convinced that the war in which so many men had been lost (thus closing the career of marriage to many women who otherwise would have chosen it) would open many managerial posts to women. This, she felt, would be made easier if the management of the electrical and light engineering industries, which were accustomed to employ large numbers of women, were to set up training schemes which would enable them to make the best use of the female skill already available in those industries. Such a departure should prove of interest to other industries and the successful operation of an initial scheme would help to break down the traditional reserve - not to say scepticism - of the male population.

Haslett's recommendations were greeted enthusiastically by those Education officers who had no faith in the approach to German women via non-political women's organisations alone. Kathleen Walker, for example, wrote in November 1948 that she had always felt that the policy in undertaking propaganda to urge German women to take more part in public life was premature. 'First merely to emphasize the necessity of this without showing them how to do so is insufficient and second until they have

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[18] Crofts, 'The Attlee Government's Pursuit of Women'.

gained experience of public life and self-confidence through their professional work they will not have the necessary background on which to build or base any constructive criticism.'[19] And to Evans Walker she explained her ideas:

> The problem of the part which German women should play in reconstruction of Germany has such deep rooted elements which cannot be touched by the kind of education which women's societies can given. When one considers that the whole of their education is planned to produce 'das Mutterherz' one realises that the vital change must come there. In this Land four women in seven can never hope to be married and this 'Mutterherz' education is therefore just the worst thing for them as it directs all their thoughts and energies into that channel alone. This is obvious in all discussions at women's meetings and with officials both men and women. Their one idea of women's work is that it is a work of 'love' - training or a scientific approach are not considered necessary.[20]

Especially in the Rhine area the traditional docility of the German women had been heavily reinforced by the strong Catholic policy, which continued to stress the paramount importance of women's place in the home. The whole idea of women's economic independence was quite contrary to the teaching of the Church. The Communists on the other hand advocated economic independence for women. The difficulties before those who would support Dame Caroline's theories, were therefore enormous, Walker found.

Kathleen Walker had some very specific ideas of how Haslett's ideas could be put into practice. She suggested working out a scheme of lectures given by women who represented in their own careers the points Women's Affairs was trying to emphasise and who, in discussions, could give factual answers from their own experience. Further, Walker thought, Caroline Haslett should broadcast in a discussion from Cologne with some trade union women or some vocational guidance people or some officials responsible for the training of technical teachers. Dame Caroline could be asked to outline her ideas about women's training and these could be given to women's organisations officers for use as a brief in any discussion with CCG Branches such as Manpower. Walker also wished a directive of some kind from Berlin so that joint conferences of the Head of the Branches and the women's organisations officers could be arranged. Finally, if and when such a scheme was envisaged it would be

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[19] PRO FO1013-2226, Comment by Walker on Haslett report, February 1949.
[20] The Institution of Electrical Engineers, London, Papers of Dame C Haslett,Minutes of the SECOs Conference 9/10 July 1947, Miss K. Walker to Miss J. Evans, Education Branch

essential to have a good supply of films, posters and pamphlets before embarking on the work so as to have concrete evidence of the kind of training and work which were now open to women. Walker considered it valuable if women of other nationalities could be included in the teams and that visits of German women to Switzerland, Holland, Denmark and France might be good.

Employment facilities for women in the Social Welfare Sector

Haslett saw in the field of Personnel Management especially wide scope for German women because it would be a logical and useful sequel to their former physical welfare work. A training course for Personnel Management was indeed introduced as a pilot project in spring 1949 in North Rhine-Westphalia. The scheme had been agreed between the Ministry of Labour in Düsseldorf and Caroline Haslett when she was on tour in the British Zone in 1948. Education Branch arranged a full time course for 12 selected girls in Personnel Management and the German Labour Administration was made responsible for arranging the practical training in factories and for placing the trainees in employment. [21] The course was similar to a course offered by the Ministry of Labour in the UK during the war, and therefore shorter than normal courses in England. The candidates were university graduates aged 25 or over with experience of social and industrial work. The papers do not reveal the outcome of this project, nor if the course took place or not and whether the women could be finally placed in industry.

This project was in fact nearly the only practical outcome of all the discussions Haslett had triggered with her suggestions. Her idea was in principle that as Personnel Managers were concerned with problems of recruiting and training of women they would supply a nucleus of trained women who could help to create opportunities of training for technical and managerial posts for other women. [22] She advised the Foreign Office to seek the help of the British Institute of Management, but also to start Exchange Programmes for British and German Factory Inspectors.

The Committee on German Women's Education had already identified social welfare as the field where many women could be employed and suggested in autumn

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Berlin.
[21] PRO FO1051-600, Training women for Personnel Management, by Moore, Manpower Düsseldorf to Manpower Frankfurt, 18.6.1949.
[22] PRO FO1030-94, Report on the Foreign Office on a visit to Germany, October 29th to November 8th, by Dame Caroline Haslett, December 1948.

1945 to reform *Soziale Frauenschulen*.[23] With regard to the vocational training for girls the Committee argued that the worsening of the situation after the war could have unfavourable repercussions for the occupation policy as a whole. During the period between 1933 and 1945 there was beneficial development of the vocational school system for girls. To some extent this was the logical result of the conscious application of Nazi philosophy and an attempt to create suitable outlets for women leaving higher positions for men vacant. There was, for instance, a swift development of a well-coordinated system of training for various branches of social welfare, made necessary by the expansion of social service, a training which offered women opportunities for useful and important work to an unprecedented degree:

> German women were not, it must be remembered, conscious of the 'oppression' under the Nazi regime, but rather of the opportunities offered to them. To decrease these opportunities is to offer them a ready-made argument - hardly required - in favour of the N.S. Philosophy regime. This fact alone perhaps makes it imperative that we should attempt to look ahead sufficiently to prevent girls being trained for blind-ally-jobs and to ensure that they will receive vocational training which will give them some standard in the commercial and industrial world, thus increasing their sense of responsibility for the fate and future of the community.[24]

As early as 1947 five women Visiting Experts in Social Science had travelled to the British Zone.[25] Their impression was that the English welfare system was far

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[23] The Committee wanted to see the entrance to the *Soziale Frauenschulen* controlled so as the right type of person would be trained. The age for entry should be raised to 25 years so that trainees would posses a mature understanding of the human needs of the people in their care and were 'less likely to be thoroughly indoctrinated with National Socialist ideology than was the case with candidates of the younger age group'. The training should be changed according to democratic principles. Davies draw up a detailed description of the training of *Volkspflegerinnen*, especially of the *Soziale Frauenschule* in Berlin 'under the chair of Alice Salomon' before 1933.The question considered was whether it was advisable to further employ *Volkspflegerinnen* and who should train them. There was a shortage of social workers in the British Zone and it was suggested that there should be an effort to attract back to Germany those who emigrated during the Nazi regime and who were qualified for the field. PRO FO1050-1298, Recommendations to Zonal Welfare Committee (organised by Health Branch), re Schools for Social Workers, 1.12.1945; PRO FO1050-1210, Meeting of Committee on German Women's Education, 27.11.1945.

[24] PRO FO1050-1298, Discussion at the meeting of Committee on German Women's Education, 4th January 1946. For women's careers in public health, family law, administration etc during the Nazi period see Claudia Koonz, *Mothers in the Fatherland. Women, the Family and Nazi Politics* (London, 1987), pp. 217-219.

[25] PRO FO1036-49, Women lectures from the UK to the British Zone, by Evans, 21.8.1947 listed: 1. Mrs G. Williams, Bedford College, Regents Park, from 10 to 22 September 1947; she was a Reader in Social Economics, London University; during the war she was in charge of recruitment for Women's Services in the Ministry of Labour; she read to *Landfrauen* and trade

more advanced than the German one. As I have demonstrated with the Exchange Programmes of British women's organisations welfare work was the most important field of activity of voluntary British women's organisations and the field German women had to learn about. The major field to which welfare work had been expanded in England during the war years was Factory welfare (since the exodus of women into factories during the war drew attention to the working conditions there) and the care of children. The 1948 Children's Act required the reorganisation of services and this in turn required an expansion of social work and increased the number of trained social workers.[26] Their preoccupation with the importance of traditional family life was evident as was the influence of psychoanalytic techniques on the growing profession (of which most Germans knew nothing at the time).

One of the British observers was Mrs Lewis, a lecturer and tutor in Social Science at Birmingham University (Faculty of Commerce and Science) who visited Germany for two weeks in June 1947.[27] She saw on her tour 10 out of 13 schools in different towns in the British Zone,[28] had discussions with *Fürsorgerinnen* and Heads of the *Jugendamt* as well as with officers of Education Branch and Social Welfare Branch. Lewis observed that in Germany social welfare work was considered to be women's work and was accorded to low status and remuneration. It was carried out largely by those who had a religious devotion and concern for the work. The welfare worker was a family case worker with a general training, concerned on the whole with treatment rather than prevention or diagnosis. There were three main streams in their social training - Health Welfare, Youth Welfare and Industrial Welfare - , but none of this amounted to the sort of specialisation into the clearly defined branches of social work techniques as known in England, such as Hospital Almoning, Psychiatric and

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union groups and any groups interested in social and economic problems. 2. Miss Vera Grenfell, Vice Chairman of National Association Girls Clubs and Mixed Clubs, Settlement work. She spoke to Youth and Social Workers duirng their visit from 20 to 30 September 1947. 3. Miss N. Dawson from Birmingham, stayed for two weeks in October, she replaced the Warden of Birmingham Settlement and spoke to Social Workers and in Youth Clubs about Settlement work. 4. Mrs Eva M. Hubback, was to stay for two weeks in November 1947 (but it is not clear whether she actually travelled to Germany); she was the Honorary Secretary of the Association for Training in Citizenship, published *'Population, Trends and Policy'*, *'Education and Citizenship'*, was to speak to groups of students and teachers.

[26] Wilson, *Women and the Welfare State*, pp. 155-157.

[27] PRO COGA945-283, Visit to Sociale Frauenschulen (sic) in the British Zone, by Mrs. B.E. Lewis, June 1947.

[28] In 1947 there were 13 schools for social welfare in the British Zone of which four were Catholic, four Protestant, five Provincial or State owned. The number of pupils - all women - was about 950.

Social Work. The course at *Soziale Frauenschulen* normally lasted two years and a third year was spent in practical training.

Recommendations Mrs Lewis made for change of *Soziale Frauenschulen* aimed to increase the status of *Soziale Fürsorgerinnen.* She suggested improving the training in schools and encouraging the growth of bodies of professional social workers, e.g. the Institute of Hospital Almoners or the Institute of Professional Management, which undertook the final specialised training of the student. For long term development the standard of the existing schools had to be raised by demanding higher entry qualifications, a more highly-qualified teaching staff, and linking them with universities more closely. This would aim at selecting and turning out a social worker with higher professional status able to take more responsibility and more remunerative posts in social administration than at present held by the general body of training social workers. Mrs Lewis' report was made known to the German side.

The German Department of the Foreign Office showed itself very positive and interested in Lewis's proposals, as it also showed interest in Caroline Haslett's proposals made at roughly the same time.[29] Their feeling that the German Department had some responsibility for social work in Germany was explained in a letter to the Health Adviser in January 1948, which stated that the 'nature of the German arrangements for the needy, the neglected and the mal-adjusted is of concern to us in the same way as the educational or police system'. It was very much in the British interest to encourage developments, 'which will make the Germans more impervious to communism, which thrives on mental and physical distress'. It seemed therefore useful to see that the German social service developed along 'healthy' lines and that, for example, they did not use authoritarian methods which were not appropriate to a free democratic society. [30]

After Mrs Lewis's tour the Joint University Council of Social Studies, the co-ordinating body for training in social work in the UK[31], approached Pakenham in

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[29] PRO FO371-70860, Comments on Mrs Lewis' report re visit Soziale Frauenschulen, by Marsden-Smedley, June 1947.
[30] FO371-70860, Marsden-Smedley, German General Department London, to Public Health Adviser Martin Strelley, 26.1.1948.
[31] During the First World War the demand for trained social workers increased. In an effort to attract women into social work, the Welfare Department of the Ministry of Munitions helped the universities to mount short intensive courses, and the Ministry provided student grants. In an attempt to standardise the quality of courses the Joint University Council for Social Studies was established to coordinate and develop the work of social studies departments. Jones,

March 1948 with an offer to help to consider the German system of training social workers in the British Zone. The Exchange Programmes with German women had aroused considerable interest of various women's groups in the matter who then had prompted the Joint University Council of Social Studies (JUCS) to ask the Foreign Office for permission to send out a representative to investigate the training of social workers in Germany. Mrs Black from Liverpool University travelled as official representative of the JUCS from 20 August to 6 September 1948 to the British Zone. She was able to discuss her findings, which do not differ greatly from Mrs Lewis's, at the end of her tour with officers at Norfolk House. She noted that since Mrs Lewis's visit a year earlier some attempts had been made on the German side to develop Social Studies at university level and to raise the quality level of education.

In practical terms Black recommended that four or five teachers from schools for Social Work be invited to courses in the corresponding university department in Britain for three to six months. In view of the special problem relating to the training of male social workers, a visit to Germany of the male head of a British School should be arranged. Black further suggested that 'a person with a wide experience of social work and social training should be attached to the Headquarters Staff of the CCG as travelling adviser and consultant'. As I pointed out in chapter 2, a special 'welfare officer' for women's concerns had never been appointed in CCG and it can be assumed that her other recommendations were also largely ignored. In contrast to the Foreign Office, CCG considered welfare to be more a German problem. It is not likely that a reform of *Soziale Frauenschulen* took place because of British intervention.

However, Mrs Black organised student programmes for German women. Two students in Personnel Management came to the London School of Economics (one man, one woman), two students to Birmingham University (Lewis's home department) to study child guidance, and one student each went to Liverpool, Leeds, Hull and Edinburgh.

Discussion of vocational training of women

Immediately after the war Manpower policy seemed to indicate that women's labour was indeed urgently needed and this situation backed the argumentation used by Haslett. With so many men killed or missing, the aim for Manpower Division was to integrate as many women into the labour market as possible. But as in England the

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Women in British Public Life, 1914-1950, p. 31.

need was for unskilled female labour. The Occupation forces began, in the Russian Zone earlier than in the Western Zones, to register people fit for work in order to draw them into compulsory work if necessary. Under Control Council Order No 3 men between 14 and 65 and women between 16 and 45 years of age had to register at the Labour Office. The Order laid down that any person of employable age who did not possess either a work pass or an unemployment card (*Meldekarte*) or an exemption certificate would lose the right to receive food cards.[32] This was certainly a strong motivation. Exemption from the Order required medical examination and documentary proof of physical or mental incapability for work. Women over 50, women with children under 14 years of age living with them, and women with relatives or others in need of care living in the same household were eligible for exemption. The transfer from one job to another required prior approval of the Labour administration. Further measures were the stopping of wage increases and the suspension of regulations for industrial safety. Thus it was possible to employ women in heavy building and reconstruction work. Basically, with the exception of the last point, this was a continuation of the employment policy as it was during the Nazi regime and during the war.

In order to draw larger numbers of women into the labour market the payment of family allowances and pension schemes was stopped by the Military Government. Housewives, despite their difficult work under these specific circumstances, received the lowest food rations. It also became quadripartite policy that in placing of labour in employment no able-bodied man should be referred to vacancy which could be filled either by a disabled person or by a woman. Labour officers were instructed likewise and 300 Labour Supply Inspectors inspected factories and vetted labour demands in the British Zone. It was essential that female labour be utilised wherever possible to release fit men for the mines or other priority work.

However, this policy met with more resistance than any Nazi attempts to increase the women's rates of labour force participation during the war. Reports of the *Landesarbeitsämter* on their efforts to get women in employment indicate that their

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[32] The results of registration are unknown as are the number of workers ordered by Military Government. Klaus-Jörg Ruhl, *Verordnete Unterordnung: Berufstätige Frauen zwischen Wirtschaftswachstum und konservativer Ideologie in der Nachkriegszeit (1945-1963)* (Munich, 1994), p. 27. assumes that the numbers were very small, for March 1947 in NRW 0.3% of employed persons in NRW.

enthusiasm to follow up this task was not very great. [33] Reports stated that many women had an aversion to taking up employment, the main reason being low wages, lack of suitable clothing and a low state of physical fitness. As Helen Jones has pointed out[34] : The extra cash which wages brought was so low, and consumer good so hard to come by, that the extra income was virtually worthless. Once the basic ration had been bought there was almost nothing else to buy, except in exchange for other goods or at an exorbitant price on the black market. The poor diet of many women meant that their health was poor, and it was therefore easy, allegedly, for them to obtain doctors certificates if they did not wish to undertake paid work. The enormous difficulties of day-to-day living meant that many women were reluctant to add to their domestic responsibilities by taking on paid work. Shopping, queuing, and going into the country to forage for food left little time or energy for anything else. The lack of accommodation and transport made it difficult to move from one area to another. The wartime bombing and the vast hordes of refugees from Eastern Europe created a housing crisis. Many refugees were billeted in the country where there had been least destruction, but there was little paid work available. They could not be moved into the cities because there were no homes for them.

The percentage of women employed in the British Zone was considered to be much lower than in other Western countries. According to Manpower Division statistics in September 1947 there were nearly 7 million workers in the British Zone of whom 1.9 million were women (plus 767,000 self employed), but 3 million had been granted exemption certificates. The number of women in employment reached its peak with 36.6 % in 1946 and then dropped continuously from 35.7 % in 1947 to 34.1 % in 1948. It had been 35 % in 1939. [35] The number of Exemption Certificates was rising each year.

Manpower officers learnt with amazement about the extensive protection laws

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[33] PRO FO1013-1846, Employment of women in NRW, Employment & Labour Sipply Branch, 5.11.1947; FO1051-596; Bericht über die Bemühungen des Landesarbeitsamtes Niedersachsen zur Verstärkung des Fraueneinsatzes im Jahre 1947; Probleme des Fraueneinsatzes in Schleswig-Holstein, 25.11.1948.

[34] Jones, "Creating Good Citzens: British Attitudes towards Women in Occupied Germany (unpublished paper),".

[35] PRO FO1051-596, Statistics re women's employment in the British Zone, 16.12.1947; Schubert, 'Frauenarbeit 1945-1949', p. 71-76. gives the following figures: the employment figure decreased from 1939 to 1947 from 35.2 percent to 28.3 percent, but the number of women in employment increased about nearly half a million form 5,612,000 to 6,159,000.

for women at work and about the reluctance of Germans - men and women - to send women to heavy construction work. Women had been protected from performing heavy physical labour by industrial safety clauses from the time of the Weimar Republic and were not prepared to have them revised (even if thousands of women in fact worked in rubble clearing and building because higher ration cards could be obtained).[36] Public opinion was very opposed to the placing of women in heavy industry. The 270 representatives of the Women's Trade Unions Congress in Bielefeld in October 1947, for example, stated that 'building is not really suitable for women because it is too public and could easily have a brutalising influence.'[37] Manpower officers pointed out that the German attitude towards this was somewhat puzzling as in farm work this questions was never considered and women seemed to be regarded by farmers merely as valuable animals.

Most women were still employed in domestic service (369,400), in agriculture, commerce, clothing manufacture and textile industries. The number of women employed in the manufacturing industries was 21 % of the total in those industries. In the same industries in Britain the percentage of women employed was 32.9 %. On the other hand a much greater proportion of women was employed in agriculture in Germany than in the UK. This was partly accounted for by the lack of agricultural machinery and the fact that a large number of women refugees were living in the country districts where there was little alternative for employment.[38] In the first two years of occupation Manpower Division attempted to get more women into industrial employment and the situation in Great Britain was put forward as an example.

All files of Manpower Division concerning the employment of German women indicate that one of the main interests was to get as many women into the work force as possible, but, and this was the difference to Haslett's demands, as temporary, cheap, unskilled workers until the economic situation was normalised. There was little use in qualifying women for professions in which they would be sooner or later replaced by

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[36] PRO FO1051-599, Correspondence re women in building trades, Morgan, Director of Employment and Labour Supply to Le Cren, Manpower Division, February 1946: In February 1946 for example, there were 30,000 women working in Berlin on buildings, and in order to legalise their position, *Ministerialrat* Kremer drew up a '*Verordnung über den Arbeitsschutz von Frauen bei Bauarbeiten*' which was published by the *Magistrat* of Berlin and later extended to other areas of the British Zone.

[37] PRO FO1013-1846, Trade Union Congress in Bielefeld, 30.10.1947.

[38] PRO FO1051-597, CCG College Staff Course No 8, Discussion on Women's employment in Germany, Background information for students, 20.9.1948.

men. This policy must have appeared to be in some contradiction to the claim made by Manpower Division in spring 1948 that 250,000 'surplus' women in the British Zone were ready for emigration.

The vocational training of girls and women was already a chief concern of the Committee of German Women's Education in 1946, as I have outlined above. The major problem in taking action was that precise economic figures were not known. Since the question of vocational training was bound up with the economic situation as a whole, it was vital, if there was to be any satisfactory solution of the many educational problems, to gain some knowledge about prospective development of industries. In January 1946 the Committee on German Women's Education received a reply from Economic Department that no specific information could be given, chiefly because the terms of reparations to be imposed on Germany were not known. The expectation was, however, that due to the destruction and removal of large parts of Germany's industrial plants, the annexation of a quarter of the farmland and the suspension of war production and the influx of refugees, unemployment could not be avoided. It was expected that an excess 1.6 million women would be unemployed, 12 % of the total.[39] The Committee on German Women's Education did not take any further action in this matter.

Two years later, in December 1947, Women's Affairs Section organised a special meeting with Manpower Division, Economic Advisory Branch and the Educational Adviser to discuss the proposals made by Caroline Haslett.[40] Manpower Division stated that with the present unstable conditions of German industry no useful guidance could be given as to the field in which women should receive training. It was impossible to offer advice without knowing where the gaps which could be filled by women were likely to occur. The largest demand was likely in any case to be for people willing to work hard at unskilled jobs. With regard to more training schemes the number of prisoners of war due to return to the Zone should be taken into account and also possible shortages of raw material for such industries as leather and metal. Therefore, Manpower Division thought it not the right moment to begin to define

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[39] PRO FO1050-1298, Level of German Industry, Main Economic Division Minden to Committee on German Women's Education, 30.1.1946.

[40] PRO FO1050-1179, Notes of a meeting between Educational Adviser and Manpower, Evans to Schumacher, Economic Sub-Division, 18.12.1947. The three parties expressed basically the same views at an important Conference in London on German women's affairs which took

training schemes for different industries in which to place women. Schumacher of Economic Sub-Division, however, admitted that there was a social aspect to providing jobs for the increasing number of women seeking them out of economic necessity (some of whom with families to support). He suggested that a start should be made by specialising in training schemes for occupations which traditionally employed women and where a lapse in training had occurred owing to war conditions, such as textiles.

The whole discussion of vocational training for women was reinforced by the considerable pressure which Violet Markham and her London based 'Club of German Women's Friends' exercised on Lord Pakenham and the German Department. Besides vocational training for women these ladies especially advocated Haslett's proposal to appoint a competent woman officer to CCG whose training and experience would enable her to deal authoritatively with women's industrial affairs in Germany. Haslett, who was a member of Markham's Club discussed her suggestions in January 1948 with different members of the Foreign Office, with Pakenham personally, who supported her views, and with Ministry of Labour officials.[41] She was thinking of starting some experimental training schemes as a demonstration the Germans could subsequently develop for themselves, and to this end she tried to enlist the sympathy of the Ministry of Labour for facilitating visits of German vocational guidance officers to the UK.

The Educational Adviser, Birley, argued with CCG on the lines of Caroline Haslett that what was needed was a pilot scheme. The concept did not encourage the training of women for entry into industry in large number. A few women could accept responsibility at managerial levels, whose influence would be able to permeate the whole of industry and change some of the generally-accepted ideas that women were only fit for unskilled work. He explained that he was thinking of training schemes involving tens and not thousands of women.

In a letter to the Manpower Adviser Luce, Birley explained his intentions in more detail.[42] To make his demands more urgent he used the argument, as had the Committee on German Women's Education some years earlier, that a frustrated majority of women in Germany would pose a threat to occupation policy as a whole. In Germany family relationships had been largely based on the ideal of female

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place on 8 January 1948 in Norfolk House.
[41] PRO FO 371-70860, Notes on Dame Caroline Haslett's meeting with Lord Pakenham, by Mrs Reeve, 21.1.1948.
[42] PRO FO1049-1245, Birley to Luce, 13.1.1948.

subservience, linking women to the care of children, the church and the kitchen. This did much to foster the aggressive and domineering spirit of the German nation. The question of employment of women in industry, therefore, assumed a wider aspect. He thought the extension of such employment the most obvious - and perhaps the only really satisfactory - way to alter the traditional attitude of the German man towards the German woman, and the German woman towards herself. 'A change in this traditional attitude is held by many to be essential in the German nation to learn to adopt peaceful habits.'[43]

Birley argued that employment of women would help to prevent emotional upheavals, which often had psychological as well as economic causes. [44] The present disproportion between the numbers of men and women was likely to produce some very strange psychological results. What they would be was largely unpredictable, 'but they will not have a stabilising effect'. It might be held that this should have been dealt with by political education of women, but in fact such political education, if unaccompanied by any move to enhance the economic independence of women, was likely to be futile, Birley argued. He understood that it was not possible to promote the training of women on a large scale. The trade unions were opposed to such a programme. The great majority of German women would probably not respond to propaganda of this kind, and finally it was impossible for CCG as it was staffed to take any broader action. Experience showed anyway, that while the employment of women

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[43] Ibid.

[44] Other Women's Affairs Officers as Broome did not share the belief in the emancipatory effect of of the economic independence of women on the grounds of employment: 'In all these matters it seems to me that we should try to work within the family and within the community. We do not want the men to grow even more dependent upon the women, still less the men to be dominated by the women and a matriarchy to result. Nor do we want to send the Germans (or any one else) with an efficiently trained war potential by the admission of German women to industry in some large scale development. We cannot withold knowledge but we can at least be aware of it's dangers and we shall not achieve our object if we merely train the German women to be as great a nuisance to civilisation as the German men have shown themselves to be.' Broome advocated that there should in fact be no barrier in law or practice and equal access for training for men and women. But she was not persuaded that it was good for the nation, the family, or the individual that women in large numbers were normally engaged in work outside the home while children were small and that the children should be brought up 'in herds from birth'. Childhood, Broome explained, was important for the child to develop its individuality. A child needs a good deal of attention in the earliest years and a good deal of time in which to absorb the world in its own way to establish itself as a person, not merely as one of the crowed. One of the aims of Women's Affairs should be to help German women to establish their influence in the home on a sounder basis and not to destroy this home (PRO FO1013-2226, Broome, Comment on report by Caroline Haslett, 28.1.1949).

in industry was actually a new phenomenon in those countries, where the status of women was high the initial steps which led to the improvement of status did not come as a result of any drive to get women into industry, but were due to the efforts of a comparatively small number of highly-qualified women, who forced their way into posts previously reserved for men. Therefore, Birley concluded, one line of action was to promote some women for higher positions. The other line was to support in agreement with Economic Sub-Commission , the promotion of training schemes for women in industries where the employment of women in larger numbers was certain (such as the textile industry). In this way it might be possible that they would reach more responsible posts in these industries.

Birley's point of view was shared to a certain degree by the officials of the German Economic Department of the FO who added the information that the Level of Industry Plan would break down if women would not take up employment. It was predicted that for 20 years to come, Germany would have 30 % more women than men in employable age groups. Therefore it was a matter of considerable concern that women were not contributing to industry to anything like the extent of women in other Western countries. German Economic Department was for this reason particularly interested in the practical training of German women.

In January 1948 the Manpower Adviser, Luce, replied to Birley's letter and issued a memorandum on the manpower situation in the British Zone.[45] Now, with currency reform in sight, the argumentation was completely different and more open than that which had been used with the German Labour Administration. First, the ratio of employed women to men was at the time lower than 1938 (27.5 % as against 28.4 %), actual numbers of women in employment were, however, greater (1,917,000 as against 1,778,000). Since the early days of occupation Manpower had been well aware of the problem of surplus female population and had energetically pursued a policy of increasing the number of women in work. The German Labour Administration, Luce stated, was fully alive to the problem and was neither noticeably backward nor conservative in the handling of it. Moreover, officials were most co-operative and ready to take British advice and agree to requests.

However, in the question of vocational training, Manpower thought it unsound to train women for industry unless there was some probability that they would be

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[45] PRO FO1030-94, Memorandum on Manpower situation by Luce, 17.2.1948.

placed within a reasonable period of time, and found that great caution was necessary in the formulation of such a scheme. There was already unemployment and also underemployment in industries appropriate to women. Industrial productivity was only some 45 % of pre-war levels. If productivity was raised it seemed certain that an increase in unemployment would result. A further re-activation was dependent on extensive capital expenditure and additional supplies of raw materials and the creation of further vacancies would have to await these. Employers generally preferred to engage and train apprentices themselves than be dependent on centrally-organised training schemes.

Furthermore, Luce stated, in contrast to Caroline Haslett's assumption, women were already employed to some extent in positions of responsibility and also in those requiring technical qualifications.[46] The difficulty in increasing their number lay in the fact that many unemployed men (about one quarter of the total) fell into these categories and could not be placed owing to lack of vacancies. It would be futile to train women for such posts. President Scheuble (of Lower Saxony *Landesarbeitsamt*) was of the opinion that while scientific or technical posts should be open to women, there should be no preferential treatment over men except in cases where posts were clearly more appropriate to women. Central registers for this type of appointment had been instituted at zonal and regional level. The population had since then increased by some 5.5 million (including 475,000 men) so that if individual productivity was raised, unemployment must be expected to the extent of 1 to 3 million. At the same time there were some 2 million more women than men in the British Zone. This would partly be balanced by the return of some 600,000 Prisoners of War. The question of emigration to the United Kingdom was investigated and two schemes - for domestic and textile workers - involving, it was hoped at the time, 500,000 women, were under active consideration.[47]

As far as the last demand made by Caroline Haslett was concerned, the Manpower Adviser thought the time not yet ripe to put in post an experienced woman officer to Manpower Division to supervise the training and placing of professional

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[46] Ibid.

[47] Representatives of the British and US Zones at the ERP Conference on Manpower in Rome stated that the surplus of German women in the two Zones available for recruitment by foreign countries was at the time estimated to be 500,000. (PRO FO1030-94, Memorandum on Manpower Situation by Luce, 17.2.1948).

women.[48] He suggested however that the service of such an officer be obtained to survey the situation and that future action would depend on her report. This role was filled by Miss Boyes, a Principal of the Ministry of Labour & National Service, who came to the British Zone in June 1948. At the time there was no woman on the staff of Manpower Division above the rank of Control Officer II. Luce explained that this was the result of a policy deliberately adopted in 1945 when it was felt that in the chaotic conditions prevailing immediately after the collapse there would be very few senior jobs which could suitably done by women. Now Manpower did not possess a cadre of women at the Senior Control Officer level available for promotion on higher grades. However, Luce admitted that a woman could be particularly useful in Labour Supply Branch. But with the rundown in the Commission and the resulting redundancies, there were few remaining opportunities for promotion, 'and our male SCOs who served us faithfully for three years and more, particularly those recruited from industry or taken up from the Services, would clearly resent a strange woman coming over their heads'.

The discussion between Manpower and the other parties was summarised by Headquarters Inspectorate of Manpower Division:

> The impression left after perusal of the correspondence, minutes and notes is that a number of those expressing views, including Education Branch CCG, have no clear picture of the realities of the female employment situation in the Zone. It appears to be a common belief that suitable vacancies can be conjured up and suitable people to fill them can be produced in prodigious number at short notice and without difficulty. This is far from the truth. (...) There is no doubt that among German employers prejudices against the employment of women generally was greater than found in other Western countries. Nevertheless, as has been shown, gifted women can force their way into higher appointments in competition with men. As this prejudice is overcome it is safe to predict that the flow of women into such appointments will increase without organisation of the special scheme demanded. [49]

Manpower Division, at least, felt no need and no responsibility to support a scheme for the vocational training of women. The opinion that Germans were not as backwards as Education Branch had suggested in the question of employment of women was also confirmed by a survey conducted in January 1949 at the request of the Office of the Manpower Adviser.[50] The survey also showed that there was a

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[48] PRO FO1030-94, Comments on Dame Haslett's report, 25.3.1949.
[49] PRO FO1051-702, Summary of the Correspondence 'Women in industry', by Headquarters Inspectorate Manpower Division, 16.12.1947.
[50] PRO FO1049-1845, Public Research Office Social Report No 287, Surplus of women,

considerable feeling for equal pay for equal work in the German population. Most respondents were in favour of women entering professional work or the higher civil service. Three quarters of both men and women felt that the higher professions should be open to women including those of lawyer, architect, accountant, dentist, journalist and higher office in the civil service.

The German Department at the Foreign Office thought Luce's view too negative. It criticised that the figures about unemployment rates and population were inadequate without analysis of the age groups and possible fitness for work in the total population figures.[51] It was not enough that the German trade unions and Labour Administration was alive to the women's problem. What one would really like to see was that they understood the long-term problem which presented the surplus of women and the necessity of altering the traditional attitude of employers and of German society as a whole. Further, it was no doubt possible that unemployment was going to rise following the currency reform. But if the reform was successful and the Marshall Plan was forthcoming, this would lead to a much healthier situation in the economy as a whole. Then economic recovery should advance rapidly and produce an increasing demand for labour. An investigation produced by Statistics Section of the General Department of the Foreign Office in March 1948 [52] confirmed that the real problem was to set a target of achievement, which would not provide skilled labour greatly in excess of the jobs to be filled nor cause labour unrest through competition from women ready to accept lower pay rates than men. The indications were, however, that at least a fair proportion of the surplus women would be required and could usefully be absorbed within the future and normal German economy.

10.5.1949, by Political Branch Bielefeld. 3500 persons living in the British Zone and 400 in Western Sectors of Berlin had been questioned. The overwhelming majority of men and women were in favour of women doing clerical work. Very few men and women thought women could to work in the building industry. 70% of men and 80% of women thought women should be allowed to do part-time work in industry. The last question was 'Should German women emigrate and marry abroad, or should they marry foreigners in Germany, and if so, which foreigners were the most worthy of the honour?' The majority was against German women emigrating, women being proportionally more opposed to it than men. 38% of men said yes and 43% said no; 35% of women said yes and 40% said no. 40% of the men were prepared for their womenfolk to marry foreigners, whereas only 30% of all women were prepared to answer 'yes', preferable to Nordic races, no coloured races and no Eastern races (Slavs, Russians, Poles). The British were most frequently mentioned as possible husbands, followed closesly by the Americans.

[51] PRO FO371-70861, Crawford to Marsden-Smedley, Initial minutes, 19.3.1948.

[52] PRO FO371-70711, Note by Statistics Section, German General Department, examining certain aspects of the Manpower situation in the British Zone, with particular reference to the problem of the surplus of women, 6.3.1948.

The debate proved that the Educational Adviser and Women's Affairs Section had no influence on the policy in respect to vocational training and therefore to the employment opportunities of women, a domain jealously guarded by Manpower Division. There were some further timid requests by Women's Affairs now and then which normally met with a hard rebuke. The second part of this chapter therefore shifts away from Women's Affairs Section activities and concentrates on the policy advocated by Manpower Division towards German women, partly in reaction to the demands voiced by Education Branch or the German Department, but mainly following economic interests back home.

Measures blocked by Manpower Division

What was the attitude of Women's Affairs Section on the one hand and of Manpower Division on the other towards issues like equal pay and participation of women in work councils and trade unions? Military Government was confronted with these questions, as were German women because of the model of how women's employment was organised in the Russian Zone. Here equal pay for men and women had been introduced (in principle) as well as protection laws for mothers and special *Haushaltstage*, a day off per month for women with their own household. Trade union women in the British Zone also put this on their wish-list. In the British Zone the salaries for men and women were frozen to the standard of 1939. The payment in the immediate post-war years was not an issue of tariff agreements between employers and trade unions but was regulated like prices and distribution of consumer goods and therefore was decided by the Control Commission. With its Directive No 14 from 12.10.1945 the Control Commission ordered a continuation of the wage freeze. On 13 September 1946 the Directive No 14 was supplemented by an article which said that wages for women and youth could be raised to the wage level of men if equal productivity was reached. This clause had little practical meaning. [53]

As with the Labour government in England in 1947, Manpower Division in Germany thought the right means to bring women into industry was through information campaigns and not by an increase of wage. Exhibitions organised by Information Services Division at *Die Brücke* centres under the headline 'Women at work' showed 'unusual work' done by women in the UK. There were similar

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[53] Schubert, 'Frauenarbeit 1945-1949', p. 94.

exhibitions arranged by certain officers of the German Labour administration. The German exhibitions, however, were no longer possible after currency reform for lack of funds. The wage question was considered at the highest levels of Military Government between Lord Pakenham and General Robertson in February 1948.[54] Pakenham stated that despite the Control Commission Directive No 14, the wages for women were in many cases much lower than justified by the output and very few women had yet been appointed in positions of authority. If women were admitted in larger numbers into industrial employment they would require more equal treatment with men.

The 'equal pay' question was firstly debated - as it was the case in England - with respect to the Civil Service.[55] Governmental Structure Branch thought it doubtful whether differences in rates of pay and pensions could be considered as unfair discrimination against women since a man was still looked upon as the normal breadwinner of the family. It was probable that there would be financial objections to such a proposal, particularly in the view of the present strained state of German public finances. And Luce informed Birley: 'I feel too, that by making provision in our wages directives to permit equalisation of men's and women's pay we have done all that British authorities can reasonably do. Once more we are vulnerable to comparison with the position in GB - particularly in the Civil Service.'[56] In March 1948 Wage Section of the CCG informed Lord Pakenham and the Foreign Office that employment of women in Germany was not so much a question of wage as one of whether employment was attractive. In the present situation of acute shortage of all kinds of consumer goods, women like men were more willing to take up employment which offered amenities on compensation, for example food, clothing etc. Wage rises did not seem to be the necessary method to increase the number of women in industry, even if there were some strong points in favour:

> I feel that the problem of absorbing women into industry should also be regarded as a part of our anti-Communist campaign, and, indeed, I would go so far as to say that there may be one or two things which we can learn from the Russians in this respect as they have gone much further than we have in absorbing women into the economy. While we are undoubtedly right in insisting that the provision for equal pay in Directive 14 should be permissive

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[54] PRO FO1030-94, Pakenham to Robertson, 2.2.1948.
[55] PRO FO1050-1211, Governmental Structure Branch, Comment by Anderson, February 1948.
[56] PRO FO1051-87, Luce to Political Adviser re Miss Boyes' report, 24.8.1948.

> and not a compulsory basis, I am beginning to wonder whether we should not put some pressure on Trade Unions to institute further wage claims under this clause of the Directive. As women comprise the greater part of the electorate, the Communists would have a very good slogan at the next election if they said 'Vote K.P.D. and get equal pay'.[57] Apart from the political aspect, however, incraesed pay for women would go a long way to encourage them to enter industry.

Women's Affairs Section also became interested in the matter mainly from the anti-Communist angle. Youard asked Evans in summer 1948 for instructions since she had read in the Monthly Statistical Bulletin that the average gross earnings per week for women were RM 21,33 against RM 39,7 for men.[58] Youard wanted to know whether after currency reform a machinery was going to be set up to implement the policy for equal pay. Some German women, she reported, were anxious to have a public declaration or some public encouragement with which to counter the equal pay policy and the more effective policy towards women generally in the Russian Zone. Evans enquired at Manpower Division what the situation was and received the answer that as from 16 August 1948 responsibility for wages was handed over to the Germans there was little Manpower Division could do except through advice and suggestion. It had always been Manpower policy to encourage voluntary negotiations between the two sides of industry and not to impose a solution from above.[59] The trade unions were perfectly free to negotiate equal pay agreements, and the best policy for women to pursue was to join the appropriate trade union and galvanise it into action in this matter. Manpower ensured that they would do what they could to keep the problem before the German labour administration and to encourage Trade Unions to pay attention to it. Primarily, Manpower declared, it was up to the women themselves to press for equal pay through their trade unions.

Vocational training for women, equal pay for equal work and the introduction of one free day each month for housework for all women with responsible household duties were the major demands of women in the Women's Trade Union Conference on

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[57] PRO FO1051-596, Blumer to Luce, 4.2.1948, refers to Lord Pakenham's letter to Robertson of 2.2.1948.
[58] PRO FO1013-716, Youard to Evans re equal pay for equal work, 18.6.1948.
[59] The same argument, that equal pay would interfere in the independent pay negotiating machinery, was used in the UK when equal pay for women and men teachers was discussed. Jones, *Women in British Public Life, 1914-1950*, p.200.

28 to 30 October 1947 in Bielefeld attended by 720 delegates from the British Zone.[60] A special women's section of seven members had been formed on the top level of the organisation in the British Zone and women's committees were formed in the unions at *Kreis* and District level. In October 1948 the Trade Union Council took up the question of the protection of mothers at work and forwarded a petition to the Director of the Labour Administration for the reintroduction of these provisions. Laws concerning what were called *Haushaltstage* were passed in 1948 in Bremen, Hamburg, and Lower Saxony.

However, women were hardly represented at the top levels of trade union movement and in the work councils. The Visiting Expert in Manpower questions, Boyes, suggested emphasising to the trade unions the importance of women representatives and showing the employers an example by training their own women for this purpose.[61] Manpower Division was of the opinion that the Trade Union leaders in Germany were very well aware of the necessity to encourage women to take a much more prominent part in trade union affairs. It was the fault of the women that they did not come forward to take leading positions:

> This is another of these ideological abstractions of which Women's Affairs Officers are so fond. No trade union in Germany needs to be persuaded that women can play an important part in trade unionism. The problem is to find the women who are prepared to undertake this important work, and more important still, the problem is to get the women who are not in the trade union movement to take an interest in it.[62]

At the Inaugural Union Congress in Munich in October 1949, for example, 487 delegates were present of whom only 14 were women. Only one of the eight members of the full-time executive committee was a woman.[63] The Manpower Adviser explained to Birley in respect of the proposal that the governing bodies of the Trade Unions should provide places for women in proportion of the women's membership, that this would take not account of ability, the common interests of men and women, and the operation of the democratic system of elections which permitted women to vote men into office if they so wished. He also stated: 'We could make to look silly if

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[60] PRO FO1051-600, Trade Union report to the recent DGB Congress at Hannover in September 1949, Report about Bielefeld included.
[61] PRO FO1013-1846, Summary of Boyes report, August 1948.
[62] PRO FO1051-600, Barber, Office of the Manpower Adviser, to Cullingford, 22.6.1949.
[63] Thea Harmuth, a CDU member.

comparison were made with British Trade Union movement.'[64] Women's Affairs wished that the British Trade Union delegations to Germany should include women in order to encourage more German women in trade union activities. Manpower replied that with the TUC delegations there was no distinction between men and women delegates.

German trade unionists invited to England were not convinced that in England the situation in respect to women was much more advanced. They learned that 'the same problems e.g. equal pay for equal work, have to be solved'.[65] They even got the impression that 'women's activities in the English Trade Unions were neither as intensively active or extensive as I had imagined' and that 'they cannot in any way serve as an example for our women's activities'. Although women held high positions in the English trade unions they were not exclusively concerned with women's questions, but acted as functionaries for male as well as female members. Women's committees, specialists in women's affairs and advisers such as the German trade unions had in large numbers, particularly in the lower levels of administration, were scarcely known in England.

Boyes further recommended the appointment of Women Sub-Committees to all *Landesarbeitsämter*. Manpower should stress to *Landesarbeitsämter* the importance attached to women's organisations as consultative bodies. Boyes raised the question of such a committee in many conversations with the staff of *Arbeitsämter* and her suggestion was welcomed in many places. Women were to be represented also at the Advisory Committees at *Arbeitsämter* which consisted of representatives chosen by the employers, trade unions and local authorities. Manpower agreed the Women's Sub-Committees would be valuable, and the German Labour Administration was advised to establish them.[66]

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[64] PRO FO1051-87, Luce to Political Adviser and Educational Adviser, 24.8.1948.
[65] A delegation of four German women went on Women's Affairs money to the UK in February and March 1948 and participated in a four week training course for Trade Union representatives. The group included Erna Schaumburg, Women Secretary of the German Employees' Union Hamburg, Paula Schmidts, Women Secretary of the Felsburg District, Elsbeth Stahl, Miners Trade Union, Moers. PRO FO1049-1247, visit of Women Trade Unionists to the UK, June 1948, by Elsbeth Stahl and Paula Schmidt.
[66] Ruhl, Verordnete Unterordnung: Berufstätige Frauen zwischen Wirtschaftswachstum und konservativer Ideologie in der Nachkriegszeit (1945-1963), p. 104, pointed out that in the British Zone on the 14 April 1948 at the directive of the President of the Zentralamt für Arbeit Advisory Committees had already been established and in particular Women's Committtees for women's affairs at the Landesarbeitsämter. From 25 May on representatives of employers,

At the *Landesarbeitamt* Düsseldorf a Women Sub-Committee had already been in existence since May 1948.[67] The purpose of this committee was to act in an advisory capacity on questions and problems anticipated with the currency reform; for example, to prevent dismissals of women. Secondly, it was concerned with the planning of the female labour supply. At the meeting in August 1948 for example, the Committee discussed the development of a course in domestic work and introduction of a training scheme for domestic workers. It was suggested that older women should be encouraged to obtain master's certificates in handicraft and girls should be encouraged to work in trades and industry by provision of training courses and limitation of number of men allowed in these trades. The Committee found, however, that finally only a change in economic conditions and public opinion could address the problem. Attempts were made to change public opinion by exhibitions and a brochure was prepared for general distribution. All in all the influence of this Women's Sub-Committee seems to have been very limited. From minutes of further meetings it can be inferred that it lacked the power to prevent one single dismissal of women from the workplace.

When Kathleen Walker, Education Branch Düsseldorf, learnt about the existence of this Women's Sub-Committee, she wrote to the *Landesarbeitsamt*, and asked to be notified of future meetings as she would be interested in attending. She also suggested that Frau Meinerzhagen, *Referentin für Frauenbildung* at the *Kultusministerium* in Düsseldorf, might be included among the members of the committee. She also wanted to know how the housewife member of the committee was selected and whether she represented any of the women's organisations. A copy of her letter arrived at Employment & Labour Supply in Lemgo which in turn informed the Chief Manpower Officer in Düsseldorf that it was extremely undesirable that Miss Walker should correspond in this way directly with the German labour administration. As the Committee was entirely German, it was not necessary for Miss Walker to attend. Manpower Düsseldorf let Walker and Evans know that they did not wish any intervention from Women's Affairs in Manpower policy.

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employees and different organisations met at irregular intervals in order to advise the Landesarbeitsamt NRW on the subject of women's employment. At the meetings in the years to follow, relevant topics were discussed such as careers guidance for girls, employment of women not fully employable, compulsory direction to work, and the situation in the labour market in qualified women's professions.

[67] PRO FO1049-1248, Minutes of the first meeting of the Committee for Women's Problems at the LA NRW held in Düsseldorf 25.5.1948; by Wilrodt, President of the Landesarbeitsamt.

Evans replied to Employment & Labour Supply that she appreciated that the liaison with the German Labour Administration was the function of Manpower Division, but she could not agree that this should exclude the liaison of any other interested person 'It would seem that there is so much work to do in the field of women's employment that our activities can surely be complementary to each other and not regarded as impinging on the powers of any particular Branch or individual.'[68] Employment & Labour Supply insisted that in their view it was not desirable for two British authorities to be approaching the same German authority on the same subject, especially if there was the danger that one might contradict the policy of the other.

In general, Women's Affairs was on the 'losing end' of the argumentation. Manpower Division, directed by economic and practical needs, showed no understanding and patience with the quite idealistic approach of 're-education' and of raising the status of German women in society. Here the limitations of an educational approach towards women became obvious and also the lack of actual influence which Women's Affairs and even the Educational Adviser exercised within the structure of the Control Commission. The message actually sent to the German women about their role in society and in the work place was quite in contrast to the one advocated by Education Branch and Public Relation Division.

Measures supported by Manpower Division

After currency reform the number of women who registered as unemployed increased. In the climate of rising unemployment after 1948, the protective clauses for women were removed to enable employers to dismiss pregnant women and to avoid having to grant maternity leave. [69] On the one hand women in qualified professions and administrative positions, teachers and Civil Servants lost their jobs. Married civil servants were fired on the grounds of *Doppelverdienertum* argument (two incomes in one family).[70] On the other hand women were encouraged to do domestic or similar work.

There were basically three outlets created for 'surplus' women after the currency reform. Firstly, there was an attempt to make the work as domestic helps more attractive by introducing measures to improve and regulate their positions.

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[68] PRO FO1040-1248, Evans to Employment and Labour Supply, 23.8.1948.
[69] Eva Kolinsky, *Women in West-Germany* (Oxford, 1989), p. 36
[70] Schubert, 'Frauenarbeit 1945-1949', pp. 101-105.

Secondly, in some regions such as North Rhine-Westphalia the compulsory service year (*Pflichtjahr*) for single women under 21 years of age was re-introduced but with 'the Nazi element eliminated'. This occupied younger women and was also useful to bridge the shortage of domestic help[71] and of labour in agriculture. The *Pflichtjahr* had to be certified in the labour administration before a girl could be employed as industrial worker or as white collar worker. Thirdly, the 'North Sea' emigration scheme transferred thousands of German girls and women as domestic helps to the UK. All these measures were supported and partly initiated by Manpower Division of the British Military Government.

The shortage of domestic labour was a major concern in England as well as in Germany.[72] In 1947 an Institute of Houseworkers was opened in England, run by Dorothy Elliott, Chief Women's Affairs Officers of the National Union of General and Municipal Workers, and sponsored by the Ministry of Labour. She came to Germany in 1947 and in 1950 and tried to convince trade unions and housewives' organisations of the usefulness of such an Institute for German women. The Institute was established to make domestic work a profession with standards and exams, but also with rules for working conditions and payment and so attract more women into this kind of work.[73] Elliott described the National Institute of Houseworkers at various press conferences.[74]

Hausfrauenvereine in Germany, however, were sceptical about the possibility and even the desirability of an Institute of this kind run as a part of a government department and giving free training and maintenance. Elliott told them that it was not possible to raise the status of domestic workers by the method of apprentices in 'master households' as it was usual in Germany. They would not go very far in view of the low wages proposed. The main opposition to the *Hausfrauenvereine's* apprenticeship scheme were on grounds of exploitation and lack of status. Elliott also advised *Hausfrauen* to press the local authorities to start a 'Home Help' scheme in order to relieve the hospitals, old people's homes etc. This was a comparatively inexpensive service for a public authority to run and opened up possibilities for the

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[71] Ibid. p. 104. In June 1949 40% of all job offers at the Labour Exchange were in the category of *Hausgehilfen und verwandte Berufe.*
[72] Wilson, Only Halfway to Paradise: Women in Postwar Britain 1945-1968, pp. 21-22.
[73] PRO FO1049-1047, Miss Elliott visiting 24 hours to Hamburg Frauenverein, report by Miss Bliss, Hamburg, 22.11.1949.
[74] Newspaper articles appeared in the *Hamburger Echo* and the *Hamburger Allgemeine Zeitung*.

employment of domestic helps. German visitors were shown the Institute of houseworkers when over in Britain.[75]

On her visit in 1950, Elliott reported proudly that the diploma given by the Institute was now held by 1000 workers.[76] Contacts had been developed with the Ministry of Health in connection with training schemes for domestic workers in hospitals in order that they might qualify for the Institute's diploma. The improved status of domestic work, as symbolised by the diploma seemed already to have made its impression on the younger school leavers, as many of them wished to enter the Institute. In April 1950 they had 272 workers employed in Daily Houseworkers' Services, servicing 1,200 households each week. On the whole, householders were co-operative in providing conditions laid down for members and they, as well as the workers, were prepared to look upon housework from a new point of view. There were Club meetings of associated members of the Institute in an area with discussions on wages and conditions of work, visits to places of interest, demonstrations of electrical and gas equipment etc.

Despite this seemingly successful undertaking, the Institute of Houseworkers did not prevent the number of domestic workers dwindling steadily (though in 1951 there were still 750,000 women in domestic service in Britain!). It also turned out that the women did not want the sort of scheme the Government was proposing. Middle-class mothers expressed suspicion of servants who were too highly trained - it was no longer possible to tell them what to do - and working class women knew that they could not afford them. The 'Institute of Houseworkers' did not become a model for *Länder* governments in the British Zone.

In September 1945 a slightly changed version of the so-called *Pflichtjahr* (Women's Service Year) for girls was introduced in the North Rhine-Province, and later also in other German regions, a measure which continued a tradition of the National Socialist regime. Suggestions for the introduction of a year of apprenticeship in a household (*hauswirtschafltiches Lehrjahr*) for girls came amongst others from Professor Nohl, a liberal educationalist in Göttingen with good contacts to the British,

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[75] PRO FO1050-1231, Bericht M. Böckling, Arbeitsamt Düsseldorf, delegate to visit the Labour Exchange in London, 25.10.1949.
[76] PRO FO1013-2228, Elliott to Broome re meeting Women Trade Unionists in Düsseldorf to talk about the National Institute of Houseworkers, 26.4.1950.

who published a pedagogical journal *Die Sammlung*.[77] Deneke, who admired Professor Nohl, published for example an article about the educational work of Women's Institutes in this journal. Nohl thought that the *Pflichtjahr* could make use of the opportunity to spread the knowledge of women's movement and propaganda for the improvement of women's position in German society. He felt that something of this kind was needed in order to arrest the demoralisation of the younger generation of women which might otherwise be irreparably harmed. What the improvement of women's position should look like he explained in an article in *Die Sammlung*.[78] Nohl was like many of his contemporaries very much concerned with the 'deep destruction of the basis of German life'. What was needed was female and motherly strength and the ability to heal what had been destroyed. What, he asked, were the tasks of woman? Firstly, she had to foster respect for the individual person, something that comes naturally to her. Secondly, she had to reintroduce a *geistige Auffassung* (spiritual attitude) towards sexual life, because 'when the woman gives up her shame and modesty and surrenders herself to the man as a source of pleasure, she loses her position in the people as a whole and the people goes to wrack and ruin.' Thirdly , the woman was responsible for the next generation. Here, Nohl advised, 'the education of young women should come in, as in the motherhood schools of the *Frauenschaft*. One is certainly inclined to reject every national socialist organisation, but these courses on motherhood were a good thing.'

Nohl also recommended that German women become active in parish, local community and local government, especially in the field of education and social welfare, and here he was in full agreement with Military Government. The two major tasks for women's organisations he saw in the re-establishment of the *Weiblicher Arbeitsdienst* and the reorganisation of the *Soziale Frauenschulen*:

> Moreover, there are two great institutions and women's vocations, which are originally the creation of women, and whose re-establishment and development would also be above all the concern of women today. One of them is the Women's Service Year. This was thought through and promoted from all sides,

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[77] Eberan, Luther? Friedrich "der Große"? Wagner? Nietzsche?...?...? Wer war an Hitler schuld? Die Debatte um die Schuldfrage 1945-1949, p. 54. 'Die Sammlung, published by three well-known educationalists – Hermann Nohl, Otto Friedrich Bollnow, Wilhelm Flittner – and one philosopher – Erich Wegner – was given a license as only the second journal after Aufbau in the British Zone as early as October 1945. Its task was to demonstrate new methods of education. Die Sammlung gave a voice to the not so young generation with a classical academic education and humanist ideals.

[78] Herman Nohl, 'Die heutige Aufgabe der Frau', *Die Sammlung* 2 (1947), pp. 353-357.

including church groups and democratic parties, following the initiative of Frau v. Kortzfleisch in 1907 with her demand for a women's service year. I recall only the memorandum of Frau Gertrud Bäumer in 1932. The youth movement had made a beginning with its voluntary service year; National Socialism then took up the good idea, as was so often the case, and developed it on a large scale as its own invention, and instituted it compulsorily, and thus many look upon it still with mistrust. With the hasty creation of this huge organisation—there were in the end 10 000 female leaders—it was indeed inevitable that much would go awry; however, the women personnel in the leadership succeeded in maintaining the genuine women's-oriented and educational purpose (*den echten fraulichen und pädagogischen Sinn*) of the service year and to keep it clean, until the end of the war when the men took over the leadership and misused the girls for military purposes. Where the Women's Service Year functioned correctly and healthily, above all in the villages of the East, it had a beneficial influence and was a productive force for the whole environment, and the girls received an education for all future duties as wife and mother thanks to the community of their camp and its good rules.[79]

The introduction of the service year for girls was discussed in March 1948 between Mr Wint, Political Liaison officer of the Educational Adviser, and Mrs Reeve, of the German Department.[80] Wint took up Nohl's suggestion and remarked that it would be necessary to change the title and to alter the set-up entirely or it would rightly cause suspicion. He suggested trying out the idea on example groups of German women. It was essential that the movement would appear to start up as a German initiative, and that it would remain entirely unpolitical. Birley too, thought that Nohl's views on the *Weiblicher Arbeitsdienst* were of some value.[81] But first Education Branch had decided to ask various German circles their opinion before proceeding with any kind of scheme. It is worth noticing that despite the absence of further CCG files which would prove a large scale involvement of the British Military Government in the introduction of the *Pflichtjahr* for girls, it was in agreement with the British view of how to handle the women's problem.

Nohl's idea of the re-opening of *Mütterschulen* as offered by the NS *Frauenschaft* was also taken up by Education Branch.[82] Kathleen Walker had an interview with Fräulein Gruben of the *Berufsverband der Fürsorgerinnen* who

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[79] Ibid. Translation mine.
[80] PRO FO1049-1246, Conversation between Mrs Reeve and Mr Wint, minutes by Mrs Reeve, 24.3.1948.
[81] PRO FO1049-1246, Birley to Crawford, FO, 24.3.1948.
[82] PRO FO1050-1214, Walker to Evans, Conversation with Frl. Gruben, Bochum (Jugendamt chairman of the Berufsverbände der Fürsorgerinnen, Bochum), 11.2.1949.

immediately jumped at the suggestion of *Mütterschulen* and said that Military Government should urge the formation of these schools by all municipal authorities. These schools were the best means of reaching the ordinary woman and served useful functions in pre-Nazi days but were now suspected because they had been merged into the *Frauenschaft* and used for propaganda purposes. Walker thought that if they were to be of real use, the *Mütterschulen* would have to provide something more than instruction in the care of infants or sewing and embroidery classes. They were to help families to deal with educational and psychological problems.

Walker outlined her plan which she intended to discuss with the German authorities, to Evans. The *Kultusministerium* in NRW, with the co-operation of women's organisations, hoped to found a Research and Testing Institute of Homecraft in connection with the *Textilingenieursschule* in Krefeld. This institute could have a much broader function. It was to be not only be a research and testing institute undertaking the approval of goods. It should undertake to issue pamphlets on all kind of problems of family life as well as on housekeeping questions. This institute should be the authority to undertake the organisation of *Mütterschulen* and the provision of material for instruction. It would be therefore some time before *Mütterschulen* could be organised. The *Soziale Frauenschulen* and the Schools for *Jugendleiterinnen* would welcome the setting up of *Mütterschulen* as they would provide posts for students. Walker expected the *Kultus-und Sozialministerium* also to be interested because the idea would presumably fit in with the German concept of women's place as well as providing further openings for women in line with traditional professions. It is not clear whether Walker pursued this idea and whether the Institute of Homecraft was set up.

The most important employment scheme that Manpower Division initiated was the 'North Sea Scheme', which included thousands of German women. In March 1948 a party of 14 members representing the British cotton and textile industry, visited Austria and Germany to examine the recruitment of foreign workers for employment in the UK.[83] In the UK manpower targets had been fixed by the cabinet in relation to their industries, and the manpower in cotton had to be raised from 265,000 to 325,000 by the end of the year. The Foreign Secretary Bevin personally had assured the support

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[83] PRO FO1051-702, Ministry of Labour and National Service, Textile Mission to Austria and Germany, March 9th to 17th 1948.

of Military Government for the selection of politically reliable women for emigration to the UK. 72,593 persons of whom 15,542 were women emigrated to the UK with the recruitment scheme for Displaced Persons named 'Westward Ho' which started in spring 1947. But the supply of women from this source was drying up. The Austrian Minister of Social Administration and the Austrian Trade Union Congress approved a programme of recruitment of 3,000 women who were not necessary for the Austrian economy. Resources in the British Zone - with 2 million refugees in October 1947 - seemed to be even more promising.

The problem was that the trade union representatives in the Textile mission did not accept German workers. What they were looking for was refugees known as *Volksdeutsche*, though they were seemingly unaware that *Volksdeutsche* were in fact ethnic Germans. However, *Volksdeutsche* from Yugoslavia and Hungary, for example, were negligible in number and the mission was confronted with a mixture of 50 'real' Germans and *Volksdeutsche* at the Labour Exchange Hanover. The mission showed no sign of change in attitude. When they discovered that the refugees to whom they were speaking were Germans, they indicated that they had no further interest. The rest of the programme was cancelled.[84]

Only a few months later an official announcement was made that employment of German women was possible, not by the British textile industry, but as domestic servants in British hospitals and households.[85] Only single, unattached women were wanted. The Ministry of Labour had also obtained cabinet approval for the recruitment of German women as trainee-nurses in Great Britain. The shortage of nurses was estimated to be 30,000 and this situation had been aggravated by the coming into force of the National Health Service in June 1948. The position could be relieved by the supply of hospital domestics. The National Council of Nurses and Midwives had - as had the Trade Unions in the textile industry - little sympathy for a scheme of recruiting German women, but had been persuaded to the extent that they agreed to an experimental scheme for the recruitment of 50 German girls to be trained as nurses for hospitals. A high standard of qualification was required for the recruits for nursing, normally six years of secondary school education and a standard of English

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[84] PRO FO1051-702, Recruitment of foreign workers: Textile Mission to Austria and Germany, 10.3.1948 .
[85] PRO FO1051-702, Employment of German women in private domestic service in the UK, 20.4.1948.

comparable to the *Abitur* with English as a subject. The girls had to be between 20 and 22 years of age. They were engaged for a period of three years. At the end of this period it was possible for them to sit for an examination to qualify as State Registered Nurses. The group of fifty German women selected for training as nurses travelled to England on 14 August 1948. This was, however, only a small percentage of German volunteers. The large majority were to be employed as domestic servants and hospital orderlies.

In May 1948 a draft scheme for the recruitment of German women was set up by the Foreign Office and sent to the appropriate Branches of CCG.[86] In June the German Labour Administration was informed about the procedures. To the British public, which was not very favourable towards receiving large number of German women, the situation was explained at a Press conference with mainly female British journalists in Lemgo.[87] The journalists were told that 250,000 women could be spared from the British Zone without damage to the German economy. German women were willing to come and the only difficulty was the uncertainty about public opinion in Great Britain. Four women MPs and Miss Nancy Adams for the trade unions came as a delegation to the British Zone to look at the machinery of recruiting European voluntary workers and to consider the possibility of extending recruitment to German women. Journalists tried to sell the North Sea Scheme to the British public as a contribution to the democratisation of Germany. Alison Settle for example wrote for the *Observer*:

> It has been proposed that up to 250,000 German women with textile and other industrial skills should come to Britain to aid the export programme. That is a large order, but if accommodation could be found for some of them (and if Lancashire is particular willing) they would return with the democratic way and purpose in their minds. The spread of this knowledge would be precious.[88]

Applications of German women were invited by publicity in Press, radio announcements and posters. Leaflets were prepared in German and English setting out the terms and conditions of the emigration scheme. The age limit for applicants was set 18 to 28 years for the official reason that person born after 1 January 1919 were

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[86] PRO FO1051-702, Draft scheme for the recruitment of German women, 20.5.1948.
[87] PRO FO1051-702, Notes of an interview with women journalists in Lemgo, 24.6.1948. The journalists came from the following newspapers: Daily Herald, Women's Own, The Times, Daily Telegraph, News Chronicle, Daily Mail, The Observer.
[88] *The Oberver*, 11 July 1948.

exonerated from denazification and therefore screening of these candidates would be much easier. In addition, Manpower thought that women from 18 to 25 were more satisfactory industrially.[89] The girls had to be single or widowed and have no children. The contract they signed was for two years at a job in which they were placed by the Ministry of Labour. They were not allowed to leave or change employment without the consent of the Ministry of Labour. The entire period of permitted stay could be extended if the volunteer complied with these conditions and if the extension was desired by both the volunteer and the British authorities. Volunteers were employed under exactly the same conditions as British workers and received the same wages as British women. They got British ration cards and clothing coupons, paid income tax and were eligible for benefit under the new National Health and Insurance Scheme.[90] Volunteers who were unable to continue in employment owing to sickness, or who were found to be unsuitable, or whose services were no longer required, or who had been in Great Britain for two years and desired to return to Germany were repatriated at the expense of the British Government.

Volunteers had to apply at the nearest *Arbeitsamt* which had to satisfy itself of the general suitability of the candidate before allowing her to proceed to the next stage. The names of women were sent to the head of the police station of the *Kreis* and were checked against police records. In addition the *Arbeitsamt* was to obtain evidence of good character in the form of two references from reputable citizens (such as doctor, minister of religion etc.) who could speak of their own knowledge of the candidate's worth. The *Arbeitsamt* then arranged for a medical examination which included an X-ray examination to detect pregnancy.

The Ministry of Labour Regional Office arranged a round of visits to see each woman who had passed all stages putting questions through an interpreter. If the woman was considered to be suitable, the officer stamped the application form and the women's personal answers for acceptance. Copies of the application form were sent to the British Security Office for the District who checked against their records. Minister of Labour then send the application with photographs of women for whom clearance

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[89] PRO FO1051-702, Notes of a meeting held on 11.3.1948 to discuss Textile Mission, Discussion between Manpower Division, Public Safety, Intelligence and Home Office and the Ministry of Labour.
[90] PRO FO1050-1299, Meeting at Sterling House, Niedersachsen, Standing Committee on Women's Affairs, 8.2.1949.

had been given to Entries and Exit Regional Office. The women were then ready for movement to Great Britain.

At the first stage they were transferred to a special Assembly Centre set up for German women at Mecklenbeck near Münster in North Rhine-Westphalia. The Assembly Centre was laid out for 150 persons, administered by an all German staff, but with two British officers for supervision and co-ordination. On arrival in the UK volunteers were given a grant and some pocket money and free board and accommodation in a holding hostel until they were placed in employment. When in employment, they lived either in hostels or in private lodgings.

The recruitment procedure started on 26 July 1948. The response was good, and a total of 4,168 women applied at the *Arbeitsämter* up to 2 September 1948.[91] 1,656 of these were interviewed and 1,383 accepted. Manpower Division Lemgo stated that a great deal of interest was being shown in the scheme by the *Arbeitsamt* officials who were very co-operative. Care was necessary at the interviewing stage as a number of women with children had volunteered, and others rejected included those whose obvious intention was to marry Englishmen.

The first party of 100 German women left Hook of Holland on 5 September and thereafter parties of 100 left every fourth day.[92] Regional quotas for recruitment for each sailing were fixed: Lower Saxony 33, Schleswig-Holstein 33, North Rhine-Westphalia 34, Berlin was only included later. The first sailing of German volunteers to the UK was a media event. The Minister of Labour in NRW, Herr Halbfell, spoke at the Mecklenbeck Transit Camp to the volunteers, and the NWDR and the German Press reported about the scheme.[93] The attitude of the German public in general towards the scheme seems to have been positive.

In August 1948 the Scottish textile industry was prepared to take German women as workers. The new recruitment was grafted into the existing scheme for recruitment of domestic servants. Now volunteers could express preference for industrial work but there was no guarantee of placing in such work. All volunteers had to be prepared to take the work selected for them by the Ministry of Labour in the UK.

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[91] PRO FO1051-248, Note from Ministry of Labour, Lemgo 2.9.1948.
[92] PRO FO1051-248, Ministry of Labour to Regions, 31.7.1948.
[93] PRO FO1051-248, Note on visit Herr Minister Halbfell on 3.9.1948; His main message to the volunteers was that women going to Great Britain were ambassadors for Germany and they should conduct themselves accordingly.

From 14 August 1948 to December 1949, 7,895 German women were brought over to the UK under the North Sea Scheme, and in addition 772 Sudeten Germans.[94] Further 951 candidates had been accepted and were awaiting final processing. Volunteers for the North Sea Scheme up to December 1949 were employed in the following sectors: Domestic workers: 5,183; Industrial workers: 1,292; Hospital Orderlies: 844; Student Nurses: 549; Trained nurses: 28.[95]

In addition in February 1949 a private recruitment scheme known as the 'Nomination Scheme' started and was used mainly by private persons who wanted domestic help in their homes.[96] Here the employer nominated a particular person whom he wished to employ and had to obtain a labour permit from the Ministry of Labour. Once the permit had been issued the employer had to undertake to pay the fare for the girl to England and back to Germany after the completion of the two service years. The girls were still subject to the Control of Employment Order and were not allowed to change their jobs or find employment without consulting the Ministry of Labour. It is not known to me how many German women came via this private scheme to England and Scotland.

What was the attitude of Women's Affairs Section towards this scheme? Women's Affairs advocated that vagrant girls in need of help should be included in the scheme and that the regulation which required two years of residential qualification should be changed. It appeared to be foolish to send workers who already had roots in the community instead of the 'first class material available with no roots'.[97] Youard in NRW was especially opposed to the gynaecological examination of women in the selection process. She argued that there was no absolutely certain way of excluding girls from entrance to England who either were pregnant or may become so within a few weeks of landing. The most satisfactory way to achieve this was to attract girls of good reputation and character. Therefore recruitment should be carried out through Domestic Schools and Women's Societies first and only the administrative arrangements should be left to the *Arbeitsämter*. To use a medical certificate which

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[94] Ruhl, Verordnete Unterordnung: Berufstätige Frauen zwischen Wirtschaftswachstum und konservativer Ideologie in der Nachkriegszeit (1945-1963), p. 107. Ruhl also confirms that between 1948 and May 1949, 3900 domestic helps were brought from Germany to the UK.
[95] Numbers were given at the 7 Conference of Women's Affairs Officers, 14.1.1950. PRO FO1051-600, Operation North Sea, 9.12.1948.
[96] PRO FO1050-1229, Meeting at Sterling House, Niedersachsen, Standing Committee on Women's Affairs, 8.2.1949.

labelled the girl either 'virgo intacta' or not was utterly in conflict with any policy of restoring in Germany an ideal of human dignity or respect for women.[98] Employment & Labour Supply Lemgo commented that the object of a medical examination was to ensure that people were not admitted to the country who were likely to impose a further strain on the health service at a time when these services were already insufficient for the needs of the British people.[99] Youard was not satisfied with this answer. The Standing Committee on Women's Affairs in NRW put the matter to the *Landesarbeitsamt* German Women's Standing Committee and assured them that they would be supported, should they wish to take it up.

The problem of selection of the girls, their conduct in the UK, but also their treatment by the employers remained a topic of discussion.[100] Letters written by German girls to Fräulein Fuhrmann, one of the German officers at Mecklenbeck Collecting Camp, prove that many girls felt unhappy and lonely and generally misled about conditions when volunteering for work in the UK.[101] German visitors to England warned the German Labour administration that girls should be told that they must take signing to the agreement seriously and not think everything would turn out for their best once they were over there.[102] It was seldom possible to change one's place of work. In most cases the anti-foreign attitude of the trade unions, the Ministry of Labour and Labour Office made this impossible. There were no bodies to which to appeal or which could intervene. Domestic helps were mostly placed in country households or those of vicars and doctors. Industrial work was often low grade such as repairing and making nets in the textile industry.

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[97] Ibid.
[98] PRO FO1050-1299, Youard to Birley, 20.7.1948.
[99] PRO FO1051-597, Comment on minutes of Meeting of Regional Standing Committee on Women's Affairs, NRW, 22.7.1948; by Employment & Labour Supply Lemgo 17.8.1948.
[100] PRO FO1049-1845, German Textile Workers Camp, letter by Anneliese Schröder to Gräfin Waldersee (Red Cross Düsseldorf), English translation, 23.6.1949.
[101] PRO FO1051-249, Letters of German girls from England.
[102] One of the officers of the Assembly Centre thought that the unhappy cases and complaints were numerous enough to justify bringing them to the notice of the Ministry of Labour & Social Services. He suggested telling the girls the conditions most clearly, enlisting the help of many British Voluntary Societies and arranging that some could visit these girls soon after their arrival in their new homes. It was useless to tell the girls in Germany to go to the British *Arbeitsamt* Welfare officer, if, when she got to England, she did not know where such a person could be found or how to get there. Such a visitor should also be able to put the girl in touch with some local young people's club or even with the church. The Local Ministry of Labour & National Service Officer could supply lists of names and addresses to responsible representatives of societies such as the Salvation Army or Women's Voluntary Service. These suggestions were considered by Ministry of Labour Lemgo. (PRO FO1051-249, Methods of recruitment of German women, Ministry of Labour & National Service, Lemgo 24.9.1949).

Offers for help with the recruitment of suitable German girls and women came from women's organisations in Germany. The *Berliner Frauenbund*, for example, asked in August 1949 the Labour Exchange Wilmersdorf in Berlin to re-organise the recruitment of German women for work in the UK and to set up a sub-committee for that purpose in the *Abteilung für Arbeit* in Wilmersdorf.[103] The German side was to have knowledge of the living and working conditions in England, and women's organisations, technical schools and members of the churches could advise the girls. In England there would be an organisation which informed the German mediators.

To conclude, the British Control Commission as a whole made more contributions to promoting the sex-division of labour and vocational training than it supported measures to diminish it. Finally, economic necessities in Great Britain and in the British Zone were more important than well-meaning ideas about the improvement of the status of women. The North Sea Scheme in particular contributed much to the disillusion of Women's Affairs Officers about the effect of their work in the context of occupation policy as a whole. Youard, who resigned in summer 1948 from her job as Women's Affairs Officer in NRW to follow her husband back to England, sent a private letter to Birley which summed up her experience of the work in Germany. Youard was on close terms with Birley, so her letter is relatively frank. [104] She wrote:

> But if I was right in thinking that our real purpose was to increase the influence of women in the community as a whole by raising their status, then I cannot understand why we, so far as I know, have done nothing towards a) Abolishing the registration of prostitutes and the licensing of brothels, b) Giving married women full rights over their property and mothers rights over their illegitimate children. All of which are symbols of the status of women. Worst of all, we have consented to a scheme for the recruitment of girls for employment as nurses and domestics in England which requires a V.D.test and full Gynaecological examination to detect pregnancy. These girls will go over in effect with certificates of virginity or 'not a virgin but unlikely to be pregnant'. This is an admirable administrative provision if women were cattle but utterly

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[103] PRO FO1049-1847, Letter by Agnes von Zahn-Harnack (Berliner Frauenbund) to Stadtrat Fleischmann, Abteilung für Arbeit, Berlin Wilmersdorf, 30.8.1949.
[104] PRO FO1050-1229, Youard to Birley, 20.7.1948.

in conflict with any policy of restoring in Germany an ideal of human dignity or respect for women. It seems to me that not nearly enough thought has been given to the elucidation of the real problem of Women's Affairs or if it has, it has not been passed on to the Regions.

9. Conclusion

This dissertation attempts to illuminate the role British Military Government and its policy of 're-education' played in the reinforcement of traditional gender roles in post-war Germany. A shift of gender relations was promulgated in the beginning of occupation by Administration & Local Government Branch and was the major objective of the Civic Development Section, but it was never put into practice. It was seen as a means of stabilising democracy and in this way securing occupation policy rather than as an end in itself to the advantage of women. CCG pursued a policy towards German women similar to one pursued in Britain during the war when great emphasis had been laid on women's contribution to the war effort and the importance of women taking up paid employment. This policy was fundamentally conservative. Neither CCG nor British women's organisations involved in the work of 're-education' launched a radical programme for women. Neither in Britain nor in Germany was there any fundamental shift in gender relations nor was there intended to be one.

In spring 1946 with local elections in sight and with the re-establishment of a number of women's organisations, German women became a special target group for British 're-education'. Not much thought had been given to the position of women before, and action was not immediate. The CCG groped around for an appropriate response to a situation over which there was no internal agreement, except that the role of women would be crucial, and that fostering democracy and citizenship among them was vital because they represented the majority of the population. A Civic Development Section, which later was renamed into Women's Affairs Section, was established on the initiative of Administration & Local Government Branch. The policy of this new section was designed by its first (female) officers and was closely connected to the overall policy of re-education to develop a community spirit for men and women, but soon women became the single target group. Other Branches, such as Education and Political Branch also had officers who were concerned with women's affairs.

CCG officers and Visiting Experts from Britain approached German women with a particular image in mind largely influenced by preconceptions of national character used in war propaganda. According to this image German women were confined to *Kinder, Küche, Kirche* and their subservience was one of the traditional

and dangerous features of the German nation which reached far beyond National Socialism. On the one hand, they seemed especially backward in their development in comparison to women of other Western nations. On the other hand, here was a potential to be exploited. German women were held to be victims of the Nazi regime, which made them suitable material for becoming good democrats, providing they received education to that end.

The British 're-education' of women aimed not at more equality with men. It was a special reminder that before rights there were duties, that is, that social, political and legal rights had to be earned. The duties of women had been defined early in November 1945 by the Military Governor. Women had to educate their children to become democratic citizens; they had to educate themselves accordingly and participate in the reconstruction of the country. The duties of women were mainly dictated by necessities of occupation policy.

Neither Women's Affairs Officers nor Visiting Experts were interested in the debates on the inclusion of the equal rights article into the Basic Law. Even the politically conscious journalism in some of the women's magazines passed unnoticed by Women's Affairs.[1] I could find no indication for the claim that British Military Government organised 'innumerable meetings and lectures' in order to mobilise women's organisations in this question, that they started campaigns in the media or that they tried to lobby members of the Parliamentary Council during the time of discussion 1948/49.[2] Nor could I find proof for the claim that in the following years the British heavily supported the German women's fight for the reform of the family

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[1] Whether it offered an all-embracing 'utopian political model' as Annette Kuhn has claimed is open to question (Kuhn, 'Power and Powerlessness'.). Kuhn shows that women's programmes for new politics of society, more envisaged rather than developed systematically, rapidly degenerated into a 'typically feminine' attitude to politics. With the 'normalisation' of public and private life, women's politics slipped into the place assigned to it in the dominant definition of politics, and resumed that bad tradition of publicly organised motherliness that had existed as masculine policy and ideology since the Kaiserreich. In place of the vision of politics which ranged from housing and food to war and peace, politics was again dismembered and the fragments distributed between the sexes. Accordingly, there were once again the big politics of men, which concerned itself with economy (but excluded women's housework), with war and peace, and so on; and a little politics for women, which was limited either to the realm of private household or, in the public sphere, to particular women's issues such as family, health and youth.

[2] As Grundhöfer claims: Grundhöfer, 'Britische und amerikanische Frauenpolitik in der Nachkriegszeit - "To help German women to think for themselves".', p. 17.

law in the Civil Code (*Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch*). It is likely, however, that American Military Government was more active in this respect than the British.

The view of Military Government on women's role in reconstruction was of a very practical nature and determined by economic difficulties. This becomes evident if one looks at the employment policy. When women were needed in the labour market to replace men killed or imprisoned during the war, laws that forbade female labour on building and reconstruction were repealed. Efforts were made to change public opinion about appropriate work for women in order to get more women into male professions. Otherwise not much changed. Women typically continued to be employed in poorly paid, low status work with poor prospects. CCG saw it as the responsibility for German women to join trade unions and press for equal pay themselves. Directive No 14 only made it optional to provide equal pay. After 1948 the responsibility for wages policy was handed back to the Germans.

In 1947 Caroline Haslett made the suggestion that the German woman might be re-educated to more responsible citizenship by simply seeing that she was receiving vocational training and taking responsibility in her job. The Educational Adviser argued in support of Haslett that it was necessary to get women into industry in order to break down the subservience to men which had in the past fostered such domineering and aggressive spirit in the Germans. Calls were made for better training for women in industry and for tackling at all levels, from *Kindergarten* to university, the traditional attitude towards women. Breaking down those attitudes could be helped, so the Foreign Office believed, by exposing Germans to the British way of doing things, as for instance in the field of social work. Even providing training for a handful of German women was not a policy supported by Manpower Division, which claimed it was unnecessary in the face of the number of unemployed men. After currency reform women would no longer be needed in the labour market. Instead Manpower advocated the training of women in typical female spheres such as social welfare and domestic work. Women were seen by German and British administration alike as a cheap temporary workforce which could be called upon (even as temporary workers in Britain) and sent home when no longer needed. It was especially this employment policy which made it clear to Women's Affairs Officers that the claim to change the traditional status of German women was not in step with actual policy.

The officers of A&LG Branch were concerned with encouraging women to take an active part in local government and public service. If this was achieved it was

hoped that women would be in a position to advance in state and later national government. Despite the efforts made in some of the *Kreise* (to what precise degree is completely obscure), especially by *Kreis* Resident Officers, women remained under-represented in public life and administration. The first step to local government for the majority of yet 'unenlightened' women was thought to be the kind of work British women did in Women's Institutes and Townswomen's Guilds. British strategy aimed to promote non-party women's organisations, modelled on these British organisations. Within those organisations women could learn to practise democracy on a local and very practical level. The starting point of 're-education' was a concept of deficiency. In contrast to men, women had to learn the rules of democratic behaviour, i.e. how to hold a meeting, how to conduct a proper discussion, before they were thought to be fit to enter 'real' political life. Although middle-class women's groups in Germany were in agreement with this assumption, they objected to many British initiatives which aimed at transferring British models to Germany which did not meet the traditions and ideals of German women. Courses in civic education for women initiated by CCG officers at *Volkshochschulen* did not meet with great response. The same is true for initiatives to enforce the formation of non-political women's organisations (basically *Frauenringe*) at local level.

The stereotypical reaction of German women to British attempts for their 're-education' was that they claimed to be largely overworked and that housework did not leave time and energy free for public activities. If German women pointed to the poor food and housing situation this was often interpreted by the British as unjustified self-pity. German women refused to become members of properly-organised associations with a constitution and subscription because they were afraid of everything 'political' after their experience with National Socialism. Some middle-class women believed that women in politics and profession would lose their femininity. All these excuses were seen with some scepticism by Women's Affairs Officers since Communist women seemed not to encounter such problems when they campaigned amongst women for membership in organisations dominated by them.

CCG favoured organisations that would concern themselves mainly with problems 'of special interest to women' such as juvenile delinquency, social service, children's shoes, make-do-and-mend, food rationing, integration of refugees and returned prisoners of war. In short, women's tasks and women's interests were basically defined as being limited to voluntary work. This implied that the negative

results of the war and of the policy thereafter, of rationing and dismantling, were considered to be problems left to women because they were 'naturally' interested in these tasks. Therefore they could (and were expected to) discuss those problems regardless of party convictions according to the British model of the Standing Conference of Women's Organisations. Women were defined as being peaceful, healing, selfless and co-operative by nature. It was hoped to mobilise these forces to the benefit of the 'common good' and for reconstruction work. The British distinguished between 'real' problems, which had to be overcome by the supreme effort of all parts of the population, and 'political arguments', which were considered to be a waste of time and energy. For women's organisations 'non-political' meant 'a well balanced volume of neutral opinion which could act as healthy binding force and tone down the existing dogmatic tendencies in German women's organisations'.[3]

The British wished to have a special type of non-political women's organisation and were less willing to accept organisations in their view prone to Communist influence. In all larger cities women's committees (*Frauenausschüsse*) were formed, with political aims ranging from immediate material provision for the population to more comprehensive antifascist and antimilitarist, pacifist and democratic programmes. *Frauenausschüsse* were considered to be not democratic because they had no individual membership and often no constitution.

Political parties were criticised by the British for showing an unrealistic attitude to the fact that women comprised the majority of the electorate. None of the parties, except the KPD, gave serious attention to the needs of women. Traditionally the SPD and bourgeois feminist organisations had been rivals and the SPD was critical of British attempts to foster women's organisations. The SPD women's organisation imposed a ban on its members belonging to non-party women's organisations, which re-enforced the aversion of Women's Affairs Officers towards the SPD women's section and its leaders.

The *Frauenring*, the German equivalent to the British National Council of Women, was seen as growing out of a compromise made by housewives who were loathe to join a political party but nevertheless wished to make a contribution to

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[3] PRO FO1051-600, Background letter no 24, The place of women in Germany today, 10.3.1949.

public affairs. The *Frauenring* focussed on administration, professional interests, consumer protection and consumer advice. As a middle-class women's organisation in the first decade of the post-war era with a predominantly elderly membership, it hardly was interested in socio-economic change. Education in citizenship was the most abstract denominator of the different affiliated women's organisations. The *Frauenring* propagated a new policy for women which finally committed women to traditional values in areas such as welfare, youth, education and health, a place on the margins of politics.

The *Frauenring* was created as a counter-organisation to the large women's organisation in the Russian Zone, the *Demokratischer Frauenbund Deutschlands*. Women's Affairs hoped that the *Frauenring* as a Zonal organisation would develop into an instrument for the representation of public opinion upwards, i.e. to the Military Government and for influencing the opinion downwards, through various organisations represented within it. The *Frauenring* was supported by the provision of British lecturers, by larger paper supplies for its publications, by invitations to conferences abroad, means of transportation, Exchange Programmes and Adoption Schemes. Whereas middle-class organisations as the *Frauenring*, the Federation of Business and Professional Women and other professional women could profit from private invitations and contacts to British officers, other organisations were merely observed. The support of trade union women, religious or pacifist groups (whereby Protestant groups doing welfare work as the *Evangelische Frauenhilfe* were much more acceptable than Catholic groups in the Rhineland which were thought to drive women back to the old traditions), was not thought to be the task of Women's Affairs Section but fell in the remit of other Branches of CCG. Women's Affairs was finally disappointed that the *Frauenring* was unable to activate and unify – as had been hoped – the mass of German housewives. Their organisation refused to join the *Frauenring*.

Grundhöfer claims that most of the women's committees would not have existed without the British and American support and in this way wants to emphasise the immense importance of the role occupation forces played in their field.[4] Here we

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[4] Grundhöfer, 'Britische und amerikanische Frauenpolitik in der Nachkriegszeit - "To help German women to think for themselves".', p. 17.

clearly have to differentiate. It is certainly correct that many local committees and welfare organisations were initiated by foreign welfare workers or officers. It is also obvious that there would have been fewer *Frauenringe*, if a number of them had not been established by *Kreis* Resident Officers at Women's Affairs direction, whereby it would be interesting to see on a regional basis whether those *Frauenringe* which relied heavily on CCG support were able to survive after British occupation had ended. On the other hand, there would have been probably more committees of a left wing tendency if they would not have been banned de facto by CCG when their connection with the DFD seemed obvious.

From the very beginning the work of officers concerned with women's affairs was hampered by a lack of financial means and of influence within the CCG. Attempts to reach the mass of unpolitical German housewives via media - one of the major tasks formulated when Women's Affairs Section was first established - met with difficulties. There were no special women's magazines licensed in the British Zone for several years which would print CCG authorised articles devoted to women's problems. The radio broadcast for women at NWDR for 15 minutes three times a week was devoted mainly to household tasks. There were no funds to provide German women's organisations with printed guides for the proper conduct of meetings.

Women's Affairs was, however, successful in getting more women councillors into courses at Local Government School in Hahnenklee. Anglo-German women's clubs opened up facilities for selected middle-class women to meet on a private basis with British women. Exchange Programmes and Adoption Schemes presented professionals and leaders of women's associations with a view of the 'British way of life'. These were offers gratefully accepted by a small, educated, English speaking, elite.

Townswomen's Guilds, Women's Institutes, the National Council of Women and Co-operative Guilds took the initiative in establishing links with German women. Some of the British organisations may have felt honoured that they were invited by the Foreign Office to participate in occupation policy. As part of international organisations they had ambitions of (re)building their German affiliations. Representatives of British women's organisations felt themselves competent enough to share their experience in the proper conduct of women's work. All these organisations had co-operated closely with the government during the war. The major

emphasis of the programmes they offered to German women was on the welfare sector. Women who profited from these Exchange Programmes were not the older leaders of the 'old' women's organisations, but the mostly middle-class younger professionals who had no political career before; although few were under thirty years. It is difficult to establish to what extent these women used their new experiences when back in Germany. It would be interesting to see if papers of *Frauenringe* could be found that would demonstrate on a local basis the influence of English examples. It would also be helpful to have private papers of German women who participated in such programmes. The value of the educational programmes is, however, doubtful, especially when combined with the notion of collective guilt and the idea that Germans had nothing to contribute to exchange. Germans did gain from their visits, but not so much for the reasons the British intended. The British assumed that if they showed the Germans the British way of doing things, the Germans would learn about a system superior to their own. The official feedback which the British received from German women who visited Britain would have reinforced this assumption. But as Helen Jones could prove with private letters of one of the participants, the formal thanks did not always necessarily tie in with private views. Jones even argues that the only solid by-product of British policy was the opportunity it afforded a few middle-class women to take up public activities and in some cases to make a brief escape from the depressing struggle for a day-to-day existence. This was a building block for Anglo-German relations, it had nothing to do with gender relations.[5]

Even if they had wanted, Women's Affairs Officers were hardly in a position to pursue a radical policy for women because they were powerless within the hierarchy and did not gain support from other parts of CCG. The existence of Women's Affairs Section mainly had an alibi function to show that something was being done for women. Women's Affairs remained a small female section with about 10 to 12 officers at Regional level and could only ever play an advisory role within CCG. It was supposed to be a sort of co-ordinating body for the 'women's side' of activities of other Branches. The Section had a small budget, no clear policy lines,

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[5] Jones, "Creating Good Citzens: British Attitudes towards Women in Occupied Germany (unpublished paper),".

organisational difficulties and long administrative procedure that hindered its work. In addition that work was limited by the personal qualifications of the officers who were educated middle-class women but mostly without knowledge of German language, culture and history. They were not qualified to work out a coherent policy for women's affairs, even if this had been possible. For practical work there existed only rough ideas – such as the support of above-party women's activities.

British occupation policy in Germany provided an opportunity for British women in public life, for politicians, civil servants and leaders of women's organisations to participate in the formulation of this policy. British women tried to influence policy in Germany as they tried to participate in the formulation of domestic policy at the time. They were not very successful in either of the two fields. As Helen Jones has pointed out: the fact of the presence of women within the CCG and as Visiting Experts does not mean that they had any influence in policy-making. In fact, quite the contrary seems to be the case.

British were invited by the Foreign Office as Visiting Experts in fields related to women to visit the British Zone and after their return to report their findings in order to advise on policy. Recommendations given by Visiting Experts could be followed up but they also could easily be ignored, what seems to have been the fate of most of the reports. Some organisations demanded to be involved, as for example the Joint University Council which felt to be the proper institution for the reform of Social Service in Britain and Germany. The sending of the official of the Ministry of Labour, Miss Boyes, happened in reaction to the pressure applied by Caroline Haslett and the club around Violet Markham. It was done in order to avoid measures that went further as for example the employment of a senior woman in Manpower Division. However, most Visiting Experts confirmed CCG policy which was already in force and suggested that the British model be followed, in whatever their field of expertise was. Visiting Experts as representatives of women's organisations whose suggestions contradicted CCG policy were silenced or not invited to Germany again. To avoid any conflicts visitors were briefed about the special ideological situation in Germany and asked not to answer general questions.

Visiting Experts joined forces with Women's Affairs and formed a pressure group under the chairmanship of Violet Markham and Nancy Astor. There were attempts to widen the Section's power and capacities. It was suggested that the work of Women's Affairs should get more publicity in Britain, that their grade should be

raised, and that expert women holding posts of high responsibility would go to Germany working independently of CCG! Presumably this was even put before Pakenham, but no action followed. Male officers in the CCG departments saw that no woman interfered with their work. All of them refused to have a high-ranking woman on their staff.

The main problem remained the lack of clear directives and of a woman sufficiently senior to carry weight with all departments at Headquarters. In 1948 the status of the Section was raised when it was transferred to the office of the Educational Adviser, but the Section never gained the status in the CCG hierarchy it needed to have a serious influence on women's policy. The responsibility of the Section was basically reduced to the organisation of Exchange Programmes and Adoption Schemes between German and English women, the observation and partly the support of women's organisations. CCG was certainly not the desired role model for the status and the participation of British women in public affairs. For Women's Affairs Officers this meant that they themselves became more and more frustrated as Youard wrote to Birley when she left her job as Women's Affairs Officer:

> I leave with less regret owing to a growing feeling that our policy with regard to women is bogus. Our only policy pronouncements as regards women enunciate I believe that women should be encouraged to play a larger part in politics and that they should be encouraged to enter industry and employers should accept them. I took it that apart from these practical hints, our re-education policy as a whole involving raising the whole status of women in the community as without equal respect for women the idea of the value of human personality is meaningless. I must admit that I can find nothing on paper to justify my having thought this. However, I must point out that if we are only concerned with women in politics and employment a) There are more women in the Landtag in this Land in proportion to total numbers than in the House of Commons. b) In many Kreistage there are as many women if not more than on local councils at home. c) There are more German women holding high offices in the Civil Service than at home. In the Control Commission I do not know of any woman over the rank of S.C.O. d) German women civil servants have achieved a measure of equal pay which British women have not.
> What evidence have we for thinking that the measures we are advocating here are likely to be more successful than they are at home, for instance encouraging women into non-party activities? On the other hand, in spite of exhorting women to take more interest in public affairs, I do not know of any efforts we have made to introduce registration of customers so as to reduce the

amount of time spent in queuing and thus have time and energy free.[6]

The work of the British and American Women's Affairs Section during the time of occupation has been forgotten. Even at the time it hardly appeared in the media or in later years in the memoirs of German women, who, after all, profited from British support. Grundhöfer found in the German Press only very few remarks on the work of British Women's Affairs Officers, mostly in connection with the conduct of international congresses.[7] She gives three reasons for this fact. Germans were not informed on the internal issues of the CCG or the High Commission and therefore could not know that a Women's Affairs Programme existed. Furthermore, the work of Women's Affairs was of subsidiary character. The British always saw to it that the initiatives seemed to be entirely German and in the public media it was represented in this form. The boundary between genuine German commitment and efforts of occupation forces were often fluid and difficult to reconstruct. Finally, with the emergence of the 1968 women's movement in Germany, groups that were politically oriented to the left dominated the scene and dissociated themselves from the bourgeois women's leaders of the old women's associations. It also has to be considered that German women wanted to avoid giving the impression that they had too close ties with occupation forces.

What remains of the British re-education of German women? Its success in democratising German women is difficult to measure. OMGUS and CCG claimed in the end that there was a change in consciousness of German women which made them better prepared to take on responsibility in public life and that this change was due to their work. The German public was made aware of women's problems. Grundhöfer's argument that the public arena for women would not have developed in this way without Women's Affairs applies much more to the contribution of OMGUS, which in the early 1950s gave major financial contributions to women's organisations of their liking such as the *Staatsbürgerinnenverband*.[8] OMGUS also financed the start-

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[6] PRO FO1050-1229, Youard to Birley, 20.7.1948.
[7] Grundhöfer, 'Britische und amerikanische Frauenpolitik in der Nachkriegszeit - "To help German women to think for themselves".', p. 18.
[8] Pilgert and Waschke, Women in West Germany. With Special Reference to the Policies and Programs of the Women's Affairs Branch Office of Public Affairs Office of the U.S. High Commissioner for Germany.

up of the *Informationsdienst für Frauenfragen.* To what extent this organisation contributed to a change of status of women in society, is difficult to judge. Women's Affairs Officers themselves were more sceptical about the results of their work than the male representatives of CCG, who argued in 1951 that the Section had successfully fulfilled its tasks and could reasonably be abolished. When Women's Affairs Officers spoke about results of their work, it was to prove the usefulness of the Section and has to be viewed sceptically as well. Helena Deneke perhaps best sums up the success of her work and that of Women's Affairs:

> For non-political societies English influence was important at their birth and growth. For many leading women England became the prototype and the *Landfrauenvereine* accepted the Women's Institutes. (...) Mistakes were made in re-education and it would be too much to claim that we were never blind to German susceptibilities which it was unwise to disregard; nor did we always keep in view the fact that their idea in practice in democracy would never exactly match ours. Yet by and large I do think our people in Education Section were alive to the issue of re-education and to the limitations in what must be expected. I think we were agreed for our part that we could help Germans best by living the ideal of democracy in the spirit of 'fellowship', truth, tolerance and justice' rather than by preaching its theory. Certainly I myself found one could help most by remaining a realist and trying to find and interpret the ideal in practical terms and concrete examples. The German women who met us in good will wanted to 'build bridges' and used the words 'Brücken bauen' to describe their co-operation with us. In personal contact it became possible to cross such bridges at times and reach understanding in spirit and factual terms. In casting one's bread on the water one cannot calculate its return.'[9]

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[9] Deneke papers, The Women of Germany, vol 2., p. 10.

Appendix

List of Women's Affairs Officers in the Regions of the British Zone

The list may be not complete.

Berlin: Miss Jacobs (summer 1947 to November 1948), Mrs Ursula Lee (winter 1948 to summer 1950), Mrs Preston (from June 1950)

Hamburg: Mrs Ursula Lee (September 1946 to winter 1948), Miss Barbara Bliss (spring 1949 to summer 1951)

Düsseldorf: Mrs Grennan (from March 1947) together with Miss Kathleen Walker (who worked in Education Branch); Mrs Youard (January 1948 to November 1948); Miss Barbara Bliss; Dr Dorothy Broome (January 1949 to July 1951) together with Miss Horsfield; Miss Ursula Harman was interpreter.

Hanover: Miss Alice Cameron (June 1946 to August 1948), Miss Veronica Williams, Mrs Westland (in 1951)

Kiel: Miss Vaughan-Johnson (May 1947 to autumn 1947), Miss Bertha Bracey (first mentioned in November 1948) together with Miss Gentry.

British Visiting Experts to Germany in Women's Affairs

This list is not complete. It has been compiled from the still existing reports written by Visiting Experts and from Women's Affairs correspondence in the CCG files:

1. Nancy **Adams**, Chief Woman Officer of the Trade Union Congress, studied the prospect of employment of German women in Great Britain (North Sea Scheme) from 28 to 30 June 1948 on invitation of the Ministry of Labour and the FO. She came with a delegation of five: Viscountess Davidson, Lady Hegan, Lloyd George MP, Mrs Barbara Castle M.P.; Mrs Muriel Nicholl MP.
2. Peggy **Alexander** was working with the National Council of Social Service on new methods of informal adult education and promoted the formation of homemaking centres; visited Schleswig-Holstein from 20 May to 10 June 1950 and met *Frauenringe*, Business & Professional Women's Clubs, university women and *Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Frauen-und Mädchenbildung*; sponsored by Women's Affairs Section.
3. Barbara **Ayrton-Gould**, Labour M.P.; went to Germany from 17 to 26 April 1948 for a lecture tour to address a general and British audience on the progress of post-war reconstruction in England and the Marshall Plan and on the contribution of women in English society and economy.
4. Mrs **Barton**, representative of Co-operative Women's Guilds came to Germany in June 1948 for four and a half weeks at the invitation of Women's Affairs Section to visit Co-operative women.

5. Mrs **Bell,** wife of the Bishop of Chichester, visited Germany with a delegation of British churchwomen in autumn 1947.
6. Miss **Black**, expert on social science at Liverpool University, represented the Joint University Council for Social Studies and Public Administration, was in the British Zone from 9 August to 10 September 1948 to report on Social Welfare Training.
7. Margaret **Bondfield,** Labour MP, came in November 1947 to meet SPD women and trade union women.
8. Miss **Boyes**, Principal at the Ministry of Labour & National Service, visited the British Zone from 1 to 18 June 1948 at the invitation of Manpower Division to study and advise on steps to be taken to increase the number of women in the labour force.
9. Dame Dorothy **Brock**, Headmistress of Mary Datchelor Girls School since 1918, member of the Consultative Committee Board of Education 1931-1940, President of the Association of Headmistresses. She read on the use and value of schools such as Mary Datchelor School to students in universities and teacher training colleges.
10. Miss **Cowan**, president of the National Council of Women in Great Britain, came to the British Zone from 30 August to 9 September 1946 to make contact with the German NCW. In February 1949 she stayed for four weeks, mainly to establish contacts with different groups of *Frauenringe*.
11. Miss N. **Dawson**, warden of Birmingham Settlement, came for two weeks in October 1947 to read on Settlement work to social workers and their students.
12. Phyllis **Deakin**, journalist of the *Times* attended the conference of the *Frauenring* in Bad Pyrmont from 7 to 10 October 1949.
13. Helena **Deneke**, representative of the National Federation of Women's Institutes, made seven tours to Germany between 1946 and 1951: 1. For seven weeks in August/September 1946 (together with Betty Norris) to advise CCG on women's policy and to report on the present work of German women's organisations and on the prospects of further development. 2. From 20 June to 19 July 1947 to report on the development of women's organisations in Germany. 3. From 26.September to 30 October 1948 to report on *Landfrauen* and to follow up contacts already established with British women's organisations. 4. From 27 June to 13 July 1949 to visit *Frauenring*s at the request of Theanolte Bähnisch. 5. From 7 September to 23 September 1949 (together with Margaret Cornell) to visit *Landfrauen* in Lower Saxony and Schleswig-Holstein. 6. From 18 September to 2 October 1950 she visited Berlin and the Chiemsee Conference at Reichenhall as well as *Landfrauen* in Berlin. 7. From 27 March to 24 April 1951 (together with Margaret Cornell) to visit *Frauenring*s in the Rhineland and Westphalia.
14. Mrs Muriel **Duncan**, representative of the Women's Guild of the Church of Scotland, visited in May 1948 churchwomen in Hanover and Göttingen and attended the conference of the *Evangelische Frauenarbeit in Deutschland* at Treysa near Kassel in the American Zone.
15. Mrs **Duncan-Harris**, president of the British Women's League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) visited Hamburg together with Mrs **Phillips**, secretary of the Nottingham Branch, from 9 to 16 May 1947 to see organisations of the WILPF and to study conditions in Germany.
16. Dorothy **Elliott**, leading trade union official and official of the Institute of Houseworkers, visited the British zone three times: 1. In November 1947 she made contact with trade union members. 2. From 3 to 5 April 1948 she came at

the inviation of Herta Gotthelf to Berlin to speak at the SPD rally for the elections. 3. From 7 to 17 November 1949 she met the *Hausfrauenverein* in Hamburg, women of the *Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund* and the *Deutsche Angestelltengewerkschaft.*

17. Mrs Walter **Elliott,** Chairman of the National Association of Girl's Clubs & Mixed Clubs, visited Germany together with **Lady Doris Blacker,** Juvenile magistrate and Rural District Councillor, in November 1947 to read on youth work and education in general.
18. Mrs **Emmett** came for 12 days in autumn 1947 to read on Local Government, education and child guidance.
19. Kathleen **Gibberd**, lectured on topics in civic education such as 'The individual and the community in England' from 14 June to 11 July 1949.
20. Miss Vera **Grenfell**, vice chairman of the National Association of Girls Clubs and Mixed Clubs, specialist in settlement work, planned to go to Germany in September 1947 to read on women's co-operation in voluntary work with local government to Youth and Social workers.
21. Dame Caroline **Haslett**, visited Germany at the invitation of Women's Affairs 1. From 27 August to 1 September 1947 to lecture to trade unionists, students and Business & Professional women on the contribution women can make to the national economy and on civic education. 2. From 29 October to 8 November 1948 to make contact with German industrialists and leading German women as well as leading members of the CCG on the subject of the use to be made of German women in industry at executive and technical levels.
22. Miss D.W. **Homer**, secretary of the Women's Group on Public Welfare (together with Mrs Mess of the NCSS) was in Germany from 14 to 30 November 1949 to investigate the extent to which the liaison scheme between German women's organisations and those in the UK was operating and to visit some of the outstanding German women who had been in the UK as visitors of the WGPW.
23. Mrs G. **Horton**, former secretary of the Townswomen's Guilds was invited to the *Deutscher Frauenkongress* at Bad Pyrmont in October 1949. During their stay from 7 to 20 October 1949 she met *Frauenring* groups in Hamburg, Kiel, Osnabrück and Düsseldorf.
24. Eva **Hubback,** Honorary Secretary of the Association for Training in Citizenship, met during her stay in Germany from 5 to 21 November 1947 with teachers in technical institutions and spoke on education for citizenship and the need for general education to technical teachers in *Fachschulen* and *Berufsschulen.* She was invited by Education Division.
25. Miss **Jessop**, representative of the National Union of Townswomen's Guilds was in Germany from 30 December 1948 to 25 January 1949 at the invitation of Women's Affairs Section.
26. Dr Margaret **Lambert** lectured on civic education in the British Zone from 23 August to 9 September 1948.
27. Dame Vera **Laughton-Mathews** met Catholic women and girls in March 1951 in Düsseldorf and Berlin.
28. Mrs B.E. **Lewis**, lecturer and tutor in social studies at Birmingham University, visited *Soziale Frauenschulen* in July 1947.
29. Violet **Markham** addressed six groups of women including middle-class, professional and trade union women in Hamburg, Düsseldorf, Cologne and Berlin from 2 to 12 December 1947.
30. Majorie **Maxse**, Conservative MP, addressed women's mixed groups on different

topics as unemployment, housing and refugees from 29 June to 11 July 1949.

31. Mrs Dora **McClellan,** former secretary of the Federation of Business & Professional Women's Clubs, Executive Officer to the Federation of Soroptimists in London was in Germany together with Caroline Haslett from 29 October to 8 November 1948.
32. Lucy **Middleton**, Labour M.P., visited SPD members in October 1949.
33. Theo **Naftel**, General Secretary of the International Women's Co-operative Guilds (up to 1947) made contact with German Co-operative women in October 1946.
34. Miss H.E. **Rees** of the Institute of Almoners, Tavistock House London, read in 1947 to students in universities and training colleges on after care of hospital patients, the rehabilitation of disabled and social work as a profession.
35. Miss Jean **Rowntree** came in October 1947 to Germany to see Co-operative work in Hamburg.
36. Lucily **Sayers**, former chairwoman of the Central Women's Advisory Council of the Conservative Party, then Vice-Chairman of the Executive Committee of the National Union of Conservative and Unionist Associations (mixed group), lectured on Conservative and Liberal thoughts without entering party politics in June 1950. The visit was arranged by Women's Affairs Section.
37. Dr Richenda **Scott**, Economic historian, expert in Rural Survey work, Quaker and companion of the Women's Affairs Officer for Schleswig-Holstein, Bertha Bracey, gave on her lecture tour from 8 March to 6 April 1949 in Schleswig-Holstein an account of methods of research local surveys as providing a sound basis for future planning in a distressed rural area. She was invited by Women's Affairs Section.
38. Evelyn **Sharp** paid visits to *Fauenausschüsse* in NRW from 22 February to 10 March 1951 in order to stimulate *Frauenausschüsse.* Her main lecture was on the topic 'Principles and history of Standing Conference of women's organisations in England'.
39. C. **Simmins**, senior educational psychologist at the Institute for social studies in Tavistock was in Lower Saxony from 7 to 29 June 1949 following the visit by Miss Black.
40. Mary **Sutherland**, leading women official in the Labour Party, secretary of the Standing Joint Committee of Working women's organisations, member of the board of directors of the Institute of Houseworkers, British delegate to the United Nations Commission on the Status of women, came to Germany from 4 to 20 November 1948 to contact leading women in the Zone in party and non-party organisations. She was invited by Women's Affairs Section.
41. Mrs **Whittaker**, National Council of Women, was in the Zone for three weeks between summer 1948 and 1949.
42. Mrs G. **Williams**, Bedford College, London University, reader in social economy, Honorary Secretary of Joint University Council for Social Science and Public Administration, during the war in charge of the recruitment for Women's Services, was in Germany in September 1947 to read to any groups interested in social and economic problems.
43. Mrs **Yeo**, representative of Women's Institutes, visited *Landfrauenvereine* from 18 to 26 October 1949.

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