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The Creation and Contention of the 1946 Denazification Questionnaire: Fragebogen

Denazification Questionnaire (1946), published in: German History in Documents and Images,

https://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_image.cfm?image_id=1012

In 1946, the The U.S. zone implemented a comprehensive survey that was used to identify the level of involvement post-war Germans had with the Nazi regime. It aimed to identify and purge Nazi influence from positions of power and public life. The survey consisted of 131 questions that asked about personal information, political affiliation, military service, professional activities, financial & social status, and cultural & educational activities. The vast variety of questions gave Allies the ability to assess, categorize, and determine eligibility for positions in government, education, and business.

The creation of the denazification questionnaire was not done by one individual, but instead the work of an organization. The Office of Military Government, United States (OMGUS) was responsible for creating the questionnaire and implementing the denazification program.¹ The OMGUS ran the denazification operation and created its own newspaper, *Die Neue Zeitung*.² The newspaper had the goal of destroying what was left of Nazi culture and encouraging a democratic society like the United States.

¹ "Office of Military Government, United States." *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 21 Oct. 2024, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Office_of_Military_Government,_United_States.

² "One Page from Newspaper Die Neue Zeitung, 1948 Oct. 9, from the Walter Horn Papers, 1908-1992, Bulk 1943-1950: Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution." www.aaa.si.edu/collections/items/detail/one-page-newspaper-die-neue-zeitung-13228. Accessed 18 Nov. 2024.

In German, the denazification questionnaire was called the *Fragebogen*. An early draft was created in 1944 by the Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF).³ This original version of the *Fragebogen* set the foundation of questionnaires that were later created by the Allies in the different occupation zones. The early version consisted of 78 questions and asked questions about one's profession. In comparison, the 131 question survey asked more personal related questions and gave respondents the ability to write comments/explanations for any responses that may need clarification.

The inspiration for both variations of the questionnaire came from the *Scheda Personal*. This was created in 1943 by a political scientist Aldo L. Raffa.⁴ The goal of the document was similar to the denazification questionnaire but instead it was the defascistization of Italy from the former fascists under Mussolini⁵.

The use of questionnaires was very familiar to Germans during this time. German citizens had experience with filling out surveys in the past dating back to the late 19th century. This was especially the case with the Nazi's and their use of surveys to determine family history, citizenship, and any criminal convictions. In a 2013 interview, a German man named Rudolf Dorner described the questionnaire as feeling 'new' to the German people but also felt familiar to the Nazi times.⁶

The creation and implementation of the 1946 denazification questionnaire was highly controversial. Many Germans believed it was an overreach and it made them feel like they were 'guilty by association'. Simple mandatory membership in Nazi-affiliated organizations raised

³ Staff Study, "Measures for Identifying and Determining Disposition of Nazi Public Officials in Germany," May 28, 1944, NARA, RG 331, SHAEF, GS, G-5, IB, HS, Box 104, p. 7, Doc. 9959/181.

⁴ Aldo L Raffa, NARA, RG 331, SHAEF, GS, G-5, IB, HS, Box 119, Doc. 5601/620; Personnel File, "Raffa, Aldo L.," NARA, RG 226, OSS, Box 630.

⁵ Dack, Mikkel. *Everyday Denazification in Postwar Germany: The Fragebogen and Political Screening during the Allied Occupation*. Cambridge University Press, 2023, Page 70.

⁶ Dr. Rudolf Dorner in discussion with Mikkel Dack, author of *Everyday Denazification in Postwar Germany: The Fragebogen and Political Screening During the Allied Occupation*, in Hamburg, July 24, 2013.

automatic suspicion. Many different kinds of works like books and songs were created that illustrated the controversial nature of the questionnaire. People who disagreed with the questionnaire implementation believed ordinary Germans were seeing harsher scrutiny in comparison to many high-ranking Nazis who avoided punishment by falsifying their responses or finding holes in the system. German author Ernst von Salomon wrote about his experience with the questionnaire in a book called *Der Fragebogen*. He describes the questionnaire as ‘demanding’ and ‘cold’.⁷ In a journal entry, another respondent complained how the questionnaire took too long to complete and that they spent “half the night” completing the form.⁸ Nonetheless, the 1946 Denazification Questionnaire became one of the most important tools used during the denazification processes.

⁷ Salomon, Ernst Von. *Der Fragebogen*. Rowohlt Verlag Hamburg, 1951.

⁸ As quoted in Leßau, Entnazifizierungsgeschichten, 90-91.

Annotated Bibliography in Chronological Order

“Governo Militare Alleato - Scheda Personale Non Compilata Wwii Vicenza 1943.” *eBay*, www.ebay.com/itm/362991894881. Accessed 19 Nov. 2024.

This is the 1943 Italian defascistization questionnaire called *Scheda Personale* that inspired the creation/format of the denazification questionnaires in Allied occupation zones. The questionnaire was created by a political scientist named Aldo L. Raffa and it consisted of 75 survey questions that aimed to identify and purge fascists that were in Italy. This was also very hard to find an image of and it was only found being sold on Ebay.

Limited, Alamy. “Mannheim, DEU, 03.03.1944, Military Government, Questionnaire of US Administration to the Denazification Stock Photo.” *Alamy*, www.alamy.com/mannheim-deu-17032005-military-gouvernement-questionnaire-of-us-administration-image6674189.html?imageid=08C1CE0B-F7D0-4712-AB5A-F73242C6EE15&p=21704&pn=1&searchId=36d76308087ad18e54777427870d0dcf&searchtype=0. Accessed 19 Nov. 2024.

This is the first page of the very hard to find 1944 Denazification questionnaire. This questionnaire consisted of 78 questions instead of the 131 questions found in the 1946 version. The questionnaire was created by American and British civilians in a combined effort with the Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF). In Spring 1944, the first denazification questionnaire was created.

“1946 Denazification Questionnaire .” *Ghdi - Image*,
germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_image.cfm?image_id=1012. Accessed 19 Nov. 2024.

This is the infamous 1946 Denazification Questionnaire that was given to millions of Germans in the American occupation zone. The survey type questions that were asked were about personal and professional activities. This in depth survey style made it easier for Americans to categorize Germans based on how involved they were with the Nazi party.

“Die Neue Zeitung.” *Die Neue Zeitung – Historisches Lexikon Bayerns*, 1945,
www.historisches-lexikon-bayerns.de/Lexikon/Die_Neue_Zeitung#/media/Datei:Die_Neue_Zeitung_Erstaussgabe.jpg.

This is the first page of a Die Neue Zeitung newspaper that was created in 1945 by The Office of Military Government, United States (OMGUS). The mission of the newly created newspaper was to destroy the remnants of Nazi culture and encourage a shift to a more democratic society like America. It was also part of the US Army's Psychological Warfare Division.

Salomon, Ernst Von. *Der Fragebogen*. Rowohlt Verlag Hamburg, 1951.

This book is a satirical and autobiographical novel that critiques the process of Allied denazification. It was a bestseller in Germany at the time because of how well it showed Germans' discontent with Allied occupation policies, specifically the 1946 Denazification Questionnaire.

Dr. Rudolf Dorner in discussion with author Mikkel Dack in Hamburg, July 24, 2013.

This is an interview that was done in 2013 between A German man named Rudolf Dorner and an author/historian named Mikkel Dack. In this interview Rudolf recounts his life in post World War 2 Germany as a young man. He recalls the denazification questionnaire as being ‘new’ to the German people, but also described how it reminded Germans of the ‘Nazi times’. The interview provides readers with valuable insights while offering a fresh perspective on how the German people perceived the denazification questionnaire.

Leßau, Hanne. *Entnazifizierungsgeschichten. Die Auseinandersetzung mit der eigenen NS-Vergangenheit in der frühen Nachkriegszeit*. Göttingen: Wallstein, 2020.

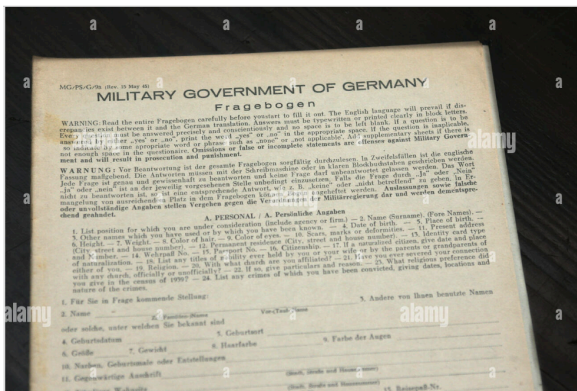
This book examines the German people's experiences during the denazification process after the war. It examines personal accounts/opinions that people recorded in journals. Some of the journal entries express the frustration that respondents had with the lengthy and time consuming questionnaire. While the denazification process is a large part of the book, it also examines how German people came to terms with their Nazi past.

Dack, Mikkel. *Everyday Denazification in Postwar Germany: The Fragebogen and Political Screening during the Allied Occupation*. Cambridge University Press, 2023.

Mikkel Dack’s book on the denazification process has to be one of the most in depth researched books on the topic of denazification. It goes into all the details of the 1946 Denazification Questionnaire and discusses many of the aspects of the different questionnaires post World War 2. Mikkel Dack is a historian who specializes in denazification processes.



“Government Militare Alleato - Scheda Personale Non Compilata Wwii Vicenza 1943.” eBay, www.ebay.com/itm/362991894881. Accessed 19 Nov. 2024.



Limited, Alamy. “Mannheim, DEU, 03.03.1944, Military Government, Questionnaire of US Administration to the Denazification Stock Photo.” Alamy, www.alamy.com/mannheim-deu-17032005-military-gouvernement-questionnaire-of-us-administration-image6674189.html?imageid=08C1CE0B-F7D0-4712-AB5A-F73242C6EE15&p=21704&p=n=1&searchId=36d76308087ad18e54777427870d0dcf&searchtype=0. Accessed 19 Nov. 2024.

MILITARY GOVERNMENT OF GERMANY
PERSONNEL QUESTIONNAIRE

FRAGEBOGEN
PERSONNEL

WARNING: In interests of clarity this questionnaire has been written in both German and English. If discrepancies exist, the English will prevail. Every question must be answered as indicated. Omissions or false or incomplete statements will result in prosecution as violations of military ordinances. Add any supplementary items if there is not enough space in the questionnaire.

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A. PERSONAL
PERSONNEL

| | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| Name Name | Zuname Surname | Vorname Middle Name/Christian Name | Anwieskarte Nr. Identity Card No. |
| Geburtsdatum Date of birth | Staatsangehörigkeit Citizenship | Standort Wohnort Present residence | Geburtsort Place of birth |
| Gegenwärtige Stellung Present position | Stellung vor dem Jahre 1933 Position before 1933 | Gegenwärtige Anschrift Present address | Beruf Occupation |
| | | | Stellung für die Bewerbung eingereicht Position applied for |

B. MITGLIEDSCHAFT IN DER NSDAP
1. Waren Sie jemals ein Mitglied der NSDAP?
Ja _____ Nein _____
2. Daten _____

B. NAZI PARTY AFFILIATIONS
Have you ever been a member of the NSDAP? yes, no; dates.
Have you ever held any of the following positions in the NSDAP?
RECHSLEITER or an official in an office headed by any Reichsleiter? yes, no; title of position, dates.
GAULEITER or a Party official within the jurisdiction of any Gau? yes, no; date; location of office.
KREISLEITER or a Party official within the jurisdiction of any Kreis? yes, no; title of position; date; location of office.
ORTSGRUPPENLEITER or a Party official within the jurisdiction of an Ortsgruppe? yes, no; title of position; date; location of office.
An official in the Party Chancellery? yes, no; date; title of position.
An official within the Central NSDAP headquarters? yes, no; date; title of position.
An official within the NSDAP's Civil Education Office? In the office of the Führer's Representative for the Supervision of the Entire Intellectual and Political-philosophical Education of the NSDAP? Or a director or instructor in any Party training school? yes, no; date; title of position; name of unit or school.
Were you a member of the COLEPS OF POLITICAL LETTERS? yes, no; date of membership.
Were you a leader or functionary of any other NSDAP offices or units or agencies (except Formations, Affiliated Organizations and Supervised Organizations which are covered by questions under C below)? yes, no; date; title of position.
Have you any close relatives who have occupied any of the positions named above? yes, no; if yes, give the name and address and a description of the position.

C. TÄTIGKEIT IN NSDAP HILFSORGANISATIONEN
1. Waren Sie jemals ein Mitglied des KÖRPER DER POLITISCHEN LETTERS? Ja _____ Nein _____
2. Daten _____
3. Waren Sie ein Leiter oder Funktionär in irgendeinem anderen Amt, Einheits- oder Stelle (ausgenommen sind die unter C unten aufgeführten Gliederungen, angeschlossenen Verbände und betreuten Organisationen der NSDAP)? Ja _____ Nein _____
4. Daten _____
5. Haben Sie irgendwelche Verwandte, die irgendeine der oben aufgeführten Stellungen bekleidet haben? Ja _____ Nein _____
Wenn Ja, geben Sie deren Namen und Anschriften und eine Beschreibung deren Stellung an _____

C. NAZI "AUXILIARY" ORGANIZATION ACTIVITIES
Indicate whether you were a member and the extent to which you participated in the activities of the following Formations, Affiliated Organizations or Supervised Organizations:

“1946 Denazification Questionnaire .” Ghdi - Image, germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_image.cfm?image_id=1012. Accessed 19 Nov. 2024.



“Die Neue Zeitung.” Die Neue Zeitung – Historisches Lexikon Bayerns, 1945, www.historisches-lexikon-bayerns.de/Lexikon/Die_Neue_Zeitung#/media/Datei:Die_Neue_Zeitung_Erstaussgabe.jpg.