

# DIE ZEIT

## **Die Zeit: Tension Among Editors About the Direction of a New Journalistic Voice in Postwar Germany**

The Editor-in-Chief Richard Tüngel, the Editor-in-Chief of *Die Zeit* on the Nuremberg Trials (January 22, 1948). *German History in Documents and Images (GHDI)*.

[https://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/sub\\_document.cfm?document\\_id=2309](https://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=2309)

As Germany went into the post-war period after World War II (WWII), the country started to reconstruct society. With this, the need for independent and critical journalism grew. *Die Zeit*, a weekly newspaper founded in Hamburg, Germany, in 1946 under British occupation, emerged as a liberal newspaper aimed at rebuilding the media in post-war Germany. The founders, led by Gerd Bucerius, aimed at promoting moral and democratic rebirth in a country recovering from war. Bucerius viewed the post-war period in Germany as a fresh start, and many editorials openly criticized the occupying Allied forces during this time. The newspaper aimed to promote democracy and free speech, which was essential after controlled Nazi propaganda.

*Die Zeit* had a big influence on shaping Germany after the war and highlighted important historical events that occurred after the war. One of the most influential and criticized publications from *Die Zeit* regards the Nuremberg Trials and the American response. Richard

Tüngel, an editor and the author of the article, was strongly criticized for the opinions expressed. Studies and historical analyses indicate that a significant portion of the German public agreed with Tüngel's perspective, viewing the trials as biased and more about retribution than justice. *Die Zeit* has become an essential part of Germany's cultural and intellectual landscape as it is often seen as a symbol of journalistic integrity, read by academics, the educated public, and professionals.<sup>1</sup>

The first issue of *Die Zeit* was published on February 21, 1946, and reflected on post-war Germany. The issue featured topics connected to the moral and political state and the rebuilding of Germany. The founders of the paper viewed it as a platform for independent journalism and to contribute to democratization.<sup>2</sup>

### **Founders**

The founders of *Die Zeit* include Gerd Bucerius, Lovis H. Lorenz, Richard Tüngel, Ewald Schmidt di Simoni, and Marion Gräfin Dönhoff. Each contributed their perspectives to the paper's ideological foundations surrounding independent journalism and rebuilding Germany.

Gerd Bucerius was a significant figure in post-war German journalism and politics with a mission to promote knowledge within culture and education. Bucerius had a vision for a new post-war Germany. A year before founding *Die Zeit* (1945), Bucerius was a founding member of the Christian Democratic Union of Germany (CDU).<sup>3</sup> Through the ZEIT-Stiftung (the Bucerius Foundation), he later supported various cultural, educational, and social projects. The foundation,

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<sup>1</sup> Kohler, Michael. "Die Zeit – Erfolg mit Qualität." *Goethe-Institut*, May 2012, archived from the original on 17 Nov. 2017.

<sup>2</sup> Kohler, Michael. *Die Zeit*. Zeitverlag Gerd Bucerius, 21 Feb. 1946. <https://www.zeit.de/index>

<sup>3</sup> ZEIT-Stiftung Ebelin und Gerd Bucerius. *Bucerius Summer School*.

Accessed October 31, 2024.

<https://www.bucerius-summer-school.de/zeitstiftungbucerius/>

established in 1971, works to promote academic research as well as provide support for projects that encourage democratic engagement and social responsibility.<sup>4</sup>

Lovis H. Lorenz was an art historian, writer, and journalist born in Hamburg, Germany. Lorenz was granted a license by the British occupation Allies which essentially led to the founding of *Die Zeit*.<sup>5</sup> Before *Die Zeit* and World War II, Lorenz worked as an editor-in-chief for a paper based in Berlin.<sup>6</sup>

Richard Tünel was Hamburg's city planning officer until the National Socialists dismissed him from his post in 1933. Tünel was one of the co-founders of the newspaper and became the second editor-in-chief of *Die Zeit*, which ended with conflict in the editorial office in 1955. He was one of the founders who argued from a right-wing political view. Tünel, following the publication of an article by Carl Schmitt (a former Nazi lawyer), made Marion Gräfin Dönhoff resign from the editorial team. He was later dismissed from the paper by Bucerius.<sup>7</sup> As a conservative editor-in-chief, in one of Tünel's most-read articles in the paper, he criticized the Nuremberg Trials and accused the United States of perverting justice. Tünel's comments resonated with many Germans who viewed the trials as flawed after the war.<sup>8</sup> Internationally, a member of the American prosecutorial team heavily criticized Tünel's claims and questioned his democratic principles. By accusing the United States of twisting justice in the subject, Tünel compared some tribunal procedures to the special courts of the Third Reich,

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<sup>4</sup> *Die ZEIT-Stiftung Ebelin und Gerd Bucerius. German History in Documents and Images*. Accessed October 31, 2024.

<https://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/zeit.cfm#:~:text=Dr.,of%20Germany's%20leading%20weekly%20newspapers>.

<sup>5</sup> "Die Zeit." *Media Ownership Monitor*. Accessed October 31, 2024.

<https://germany.mom-gmr.org/en/media/detail/outlet/die-zeit/>

<sup>6</sup> *Die Zeit*. "Zeit Intern – 'Mit der Zeit': Die Zeit als Marke." *Die Zeit*, February 23, 2006.

[https://www.zeit.de/2006/08/I\\_zeitintern\\_S](https://www.zeit.de/2006/08/I_zeitintern_S).

<sup>7</sup> "Die Zeit." *Media Ownership Monitor*. Accessed October 31, 2024.

<https://germany.mom-gmr.org/en/media/detail/outlet/die-zeit/>

<sup>8</sup> Richard Tünel, the Editor-in-Chief of *Die Zeit* on the Nuremberg Trials (January 22, 1948). republished in *German History in Documents and Images (GHDI)*.

[https://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/sub\\_document.cfm?document\\_id=2309](https://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=2309)

which led to the letter that strongly questioned Tüngel's view on democracy. He believed the trials were not a real justice process but instead were influenced by the winners of the war, which made it biased. Tüngel felt that the trials were more about punishing the defeated Nazis than delivering fair justice.<sup>9</sup>

Ewald Schmidt di Simoni was a salesman in the 1930s since he got banned from his profession due to being married to a Jewish woman. Like other founders of the paper, Simoni was also granted a license by the British for his services.<sup>10</sup>

Marion Gräfin Dönhoff was a post-war German journalist with strong opinions regarding anti-Nazi resistance efforts, which made her widely known. She joined as an editor of *Die Zeit* in 1946 and is included as a co-founder. Dönhoff played a significant role in the 1944 assassination attempt against Hitler. Later she became a strong advocate for German reconciliation with Eastern Europe.<sup>11</sup> Her first article was published on June 27, 1946, and her publications in *Die Zeit* helped the paper to become one of the most influential liberal papers. Dönhoff's contribution and her liberal stance made her one of the most famous female journalists in Germany.<sup>12</sup>

### **German public opinion**

After World War II, Germans worried about retribution from the Allied forces and struggled with how to handle accountability for the Nazi regime and the war. The denazification process showed mixed opinions, some Germans wanted war criminals held accountable, while others thought the punishments were unfair or too harsh. There was also tension within the

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<sup>9</sup> The American Response (February 12, 1948), republished in: German History in Documents and Images, <https://germanhistorydocs.org/en/occupation-and-the-emergence-of-two-states-1945-1961/ghdi:document-2309>

<sup>10</sup> "Die Zeit." *Media Ownership Monitor*. Accessed October 31, 2024. <https://germany.mom-gmr.org/en/media/detail/outlet/die-zeit/>

<sup>11</sup> Connolly, Kate, and Pick, Hella. "Marion Dönhoff: Distinguished Journalist Who Epitomised the Enlightened Spirit of Germany." *The Guardian*, March 12, 2002. <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2002/mar/13/guardianobituaries.hellapick>

<sup>12</sup> All Marion Gräfin Dönhoff writings in *Die Zeit* [https://www.zeit.de/autoren/D/Marion\\_Doehhoff/index.xml](https://www.zeit.de/autoren/D/Marion_Doehhoff/index.xml)

country, with people divided over those who had supported the Nazis and those who hadn't.<sup>13</sup> Public opinion during post-war Germany, especially regarding the Nazi regime, is reflected in the primary source (Tüngel's "Nüremberg Trials," January 22, 1948)<sup>14</sup>. Tüngel's opinion regarding the Nuremberg Trials resonated with many people who viewed the trials as unjust after the war. International perspectives mirrored the skepticism, in an article published in *The New York Times* on October 8, 1946, Aparicio and Gomez report that a Spanish editor questioned the legal authority of the Nuremberg Trials, arguing that the trials were conducted under new rules for crimes that had only recently been defined. This international criticism shows that doubts about the fairness and legitimacy of the trials were not limited to Germany, further supporting the concerns expressed by Tüngel and his contemporaries. The German public opinion regarding the trial was seen as unfair and driven by revenge.<sup>15</sup> After the war, most Germans weren't supportive of holding war criminals accountable, and the Nuremberg Trials didn't have the impact the Allies had hoped for. People believed the victors couldn't deliver fair justice.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> "Fears of Retribution in Post-War Germany." *The National WWII Museum*. September 21, 2021. <https://www.nationalww2museum.org/war/articles/fears-of-retribution-in-post-war-germany>

<sup>14</sup> Richard Tüngel, the Editor-in-Chief of *Die Zeit* on the Nuremberg Trials (January 22, 1948). Republished in *German History in Documents and Images (GHDI)*. [https://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/sub\\_document.cfm?document\\_id=2309](https://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=2309)

<sup>15</sup> Aparicio, Gomez. "Nuremberg Trial Scored: Spanish Editor Questions Legal Authority of Tribunal." *The New York Times*, October 8, 1946. <https://search-proquestcom.proxy.library.ucsb.edu:9443/docview/107558677?accountid=14522>

<sup>16</sup> Jan Rydel, in *European Network Remembrance and Solidarity*. "Nuremberg Is Not Enough" (August 13, 2013). (published in *Rzeczpospolita* daily for the 'Genealogies of Memory' conference on 27 November 2013) <https://enrs.eu/article/nuremberg-is-not-enough#:~:text=In%20the%20initial%20post%2Dwar,prosecute%20the%20Nazis%20quickly%20dampened.>

### Annotated Bibliography in Chronological Order

Kohler, Michael. *Die Zeit*, Zeitverlag Gerd Bucerius, February 21, 1946.

This article explores the establishment of *Die Zeit* under the leadership of Gerd Bucerius, focusing on the publication's early years and its commitment to providing high-quality, independent journalism. It emphasizes how Bucerius' vision influenced the paper's editorial direction and the broader German media landscape.

Aparicio, Gomez. "Nuremberg Trial Scored: Spanish Editor Questions Legal Authority of Tribunal." *The New York Times*, October 8, 1946.

<https://search-proquestcom.proxy.library.ucsb.edu:9443/docview/107558677?accountid=14522>

This article by Aparicio and Gomez highlights the criticism from a Spanish editor regarding the legal authority and fairness of the Nuremberg Trials. The editor argues that the trials were conducted under newly established rules for crimes that were not previously defined, thereby questioning the legitimacy of the trial. This source underscores the international dimension of the criticism towards the Nuremberg Trials and supports the argument that many Germans, along with some international observers, viewed the trials as biased and retributive rather than just.

The Editor-in-Chief of *Die Zeit* on the Nuremberg Trials (January 22, 1948). published in:  
German History in Documents and Images

<https://germanhistorydocs.org/en/occupation-and-the-emergence-of-two-states-1945-1961/ghdi:document-2309>

This document is not only the primary source, but it provides further insight into Richard Tüngel's perspective on the Nuremberg Trials, by exploring his critical stance on the

legitimacy of the proceedings. He argues that the trials mirrored the unfair practices of the Nazi judicial system, undermining their credibility. This created divided opinions, both around the article itself and also regarding Tüngel.

The American Response (February 12, 1948), published in: German History in Documents and Images, <https://germanhistorydocs.org/en/occupation-and-the-emergence-of-two-states-1945-1961/ghdi:document-2309>

This document is the American response to Tüngel's perspective on the Nuremberg Trials. A member of the American prosecutorial team heavily, in this letter, criticized Tüngel's claims and questioned his democratic principles.

Connolly, Kate, and Pick, Hella. "Marion Dönhoff: Distinguished Journalist Who Epitomised the Enlightened Spirit of Germany." *The Guardian*, March 12, 2002.

<https://www.theguardian.com/news/2002/mar/13/guardianobituaries.hellapick>

Marion Dönhoff was a journalist and co-founder of *Die Zeit*. Born into an aristocratic family in East Prussia, she became an anti-Nazi resistance fighter and helped organize the 1944 assassination attempt on Hitler. After WWII, she settled in Hamburg and helped shape *Die Zeit* into a platform for liberal thought. Dönhoff was a strong advocate for German reconciliation with Eastern Europe and contributed significantly to political debates on issues including German unification and the Cold War. She remained a key figure in German journalism until her death in 2002.

*Die Zeit*, "Zeit Intern – 'Mit der Zeit': *Die Zeit* als Marke," February 23, 2006.

[https://www.zeit.de/2006/08/I\\_zeitintern\\_S](https://www.zeit.de/2006/08/I_zeitintern_S).

This article discusses the branding strategy of *Die Zeit* and how the publication positioned itself as a major intellectual force in post-war Germany. *Die Zeit* was able to

build a strong and respected reputation. It also discusses Lovis H. Lorenz who was an art historian, writer, and journalist born in Hamburg who was granted a license by the British occupation Allies which essentially led to the founding of *Die Zeit*, with Lorenz as one of the founders.

Kohler, Michael. "Die Zeit – Erfolg mit Qualität," *Goethe-Institut*, May 2012, archived from the original on November 17, 2017. *Die Zeit – Erfolg mit Qualität.*”

In this article, Kohler discusses *Die Zeit*'s continued success and its commitment to open journalism. It traces the newspaper's evolution, highlighting its role in Germany's post-war recovery and its ongoing influence on public discourse in Germany. The first issue of *Die Zeit* was published on February 21, 1946, focusing on post-war Germany and its rebuilding. It covered moral and political issues, aiming to help reconstruct the country. The founders saw the paper as a way to promote independent journalism and support the process of democratization.

"Fears of Retribution in Post-War Germany." *The National WWII Museum*. September 21, 2021. <https://www.nationalww2museum.org/war/articles/fears-of-retribution-in-post-war-germany>.

Many Germans had concerns after World War II regarding potential retribution from the Allied forces and the internal conflicts that could occur during the occupation. Germans were also facing the consequences of the Nazi regime and their actions. Different opinions were voiced on the subject of war criminals when it came to punishment. The source covers the challenges Germany faced in transitioning into a post-war democracy.

Jan Rydel, in *European Network Remembrance and Solidarity*. “Nuremberg Is Not Enough”



(August 13, 2013). (published in Rzeczpospolita daily for the 'Genealogies of Memory conference on 27 November 2013)

<https://enrs.eu/article/nuremberg-is-not-enough>

After the war, most Germans weren't agreeing with trials for war criminals. They saw them as acts of revenge, with the belief that the victors couldn't deliver fair verdicts. The ENRS focuses on studying and preserving the memory of 20th-century European history, especially around dictatorships, wars, and resistance movements. The source gives the German public opinion in debates like those in *Die Zeit* about how history should be judged and remembered, and the morality of fairness.

Bucerius Summer School. *ZEIT-Stiftung Ebelin und Gerd Bucerius*, October 31, 2024.

<https://www.bucerius-summer-school.de/zeitstiftungbucerius/> This source offers a deeper look at the historical development of *Die Zeit*. It underscores the importance of Gerd Bucerius and the ZEIT-Stiftung in promoting independent journalism in post-war Germany and their contribution to the re-establishment of a free press in the country and freedom of speech. It provides a look at the ownership and management of *Die Zeit*, specifically highlights the role of the ZEIT-Stiftung Ebelin and Gerd Bucerius in maintaining the newspaper's independence within journalism.

*ZEIT-Stiftung Ebelin und Gerd Bucerius*. "German History in Documents and Images." Accessed October 31, 2024.

<https://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/zeit.cfm#:~:text=Dr.,of%20Germany's%20leading%20weekly%20newspapers.> Gerd Bucerius, the founder of *Die Zeit*, played a major role in shaping German media and culture through his ZEIT-Stiftung Foundation, which influenced the ideological foundations of not only Bucerius, but also *Die Zeit* as a paper.

"Die Zeit," *Media Ownership Monitor*, Accessed October 31, 2024.

<https://germany.mom-gmr.org/en/media/detail/outlet/die-zeit/>

This source discusses the publication's commitment to quality journalism and its influence on German media. Ewald Schmidt di Simoni was a publishing salesman, but after the war, he was granted a license by the British for his services, which allowed him to contribute to Die Zeit and its ownership.

"All Marion Gräfin Dönhoff Writings in *Die Zeit*," *Die Zeit*.

[https://www.zeit.de/autoren/D/Marion\\_Doenhoff/index.xml](https://www.zeit.de/autoren/D/Marion_Doenhoff/index.xml)

This source compiles all of Marion Gräfin Dönhoff's contributions to Die Zeit, reflecting her significant influence as an editor and journalist. Known for her insights into human rights and post-war German society, spoke openly about anti-Nazi resistance, Dönhoff's writing shaped Die Zeit's editorial stance in the early years of the publication.