H-Net Reviews
in the Humanities & Social Sciences

Helmut Vogt. *WÖÂ¤chter der Bonner Republik.* Paderborn: Ferdinand SchÖÂ¶ningh, 2004. 307 pp. EUR 29.90 (cloth), ISBN 978-3-506-70139-8.

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Published on H-German (May, 2006)

The ongoing war and military occupation of Iraq by the United States and its allies has inspired some commentators to note that the United States has had little experience with military occupation and nation-building, and therefore, its mistakes are understandable and come from inexperience. To scholars of the postwar period, this is a puzzling assertion, because in fact the United States has had a great deal of military occupation experience, beginning as early as the turn of the twentieth century with the U.S. Army occupation of the Philippines and the U.S. Marine Corps occupation of the Panama Canal Zone. This list does not include, of course, the occupation of the trans-Mississippi West in the second half of the nineteenth century.

The U.S. military as a global force came into its own during and after World War II, when American troops were stationed in dozens of nations all over the world. Not surprisingly, the post-1945 occupations of Germany and Japan have garnered the most attention from historians and scholars. A reasonably substantial body of scholarship on the military occupation of Germany has emerged and continues to develop; this is perhaps less true of Japan, but research on the United States in Asia is increasing. Generally speaking, the consensus seems to be that the American occupations of Germany and Japan were somewhat ad hoc in spite of a few wartime planning efforts; mistakes were made and tasks left undone; but by and large the occupiers devoted their energies to reconstruction and rehabilitation, rather than exploitation or revenge. American military occupations after World War II, in short, were a success.

A substantial body of scholarship also exists on the early years of the Federal Republic of Germany and its pre-history as British, American, and French occupied zones. German, American, and British scholarship includes research on the development of regional and national governments, the re-creation of economic and social institutions, reform of education, the churches and other cultural bodies, and much more. Debate continues over how autonomous the new nation really was in shaping its future, but most studies, while acknowledging the importance of Allied guidance, point to domestic efforts, especially Adenauer's success in working with the Allies to the benefit of his nation, even opposing Allied wishes when necessary.

Helmut Vogt does not disagree with any of the major conclusions of the scholarship on the American occupation of postwar West Germany, but he does provide new detail on the establishment, the workings, and the conclusion of the Allied High Commission (HICOM), an institution that has been relatively neglected by historians. Generally speaking, more attention has been paid to the

first phase of the Allied occupation of Germany, which ended in 1949 when the three occupation zones of the western allies gained sovereignty and became the Federal Republic. But HICOM, made up of representatives from France (Andre FranÃ§ois-Poncet and later Armand Berard), Great Britain (Sir Brian H. Robertson and later Christopher Steel) and the United States (John J. McCloy and later George P. Hays), continued to guide and monitor the government of the FRG in its first years, advising it on many aspects of domestic and especially foreign policy. No previous study has examined HICOM in as much depth as this one. Vogt describes HICOM's creation, its personnel, where it was located, its activities in its more active first phase (1949-1952) as well as its "sleeper" phase (1952-1955), and its dissolution on the "Day of Sovereignty."

The story of HICOM is generally peaceful and undramatic, and it is sandwiched between more eventful eras. That does not mean, however, that HICOM is not deserving of study. The most noteworthy aspect of the relationship between the FRG and the western Allies is its success, and this success is worth close examination. HICOM was a strange hybrid of occupation authority, international advisory body, and nascent alliance, and as such it helped bring West Germany back into the community of nations and heal the wounds left from the war. The combination of power and modesty demonstrated by HICOM is a good example of how to exert influence in a positive way while minimizing conflict and resentment.

Not that the relationship between HICOM and the West German government was conflict-free. During its six years of existence, contentious issues arose, such as charges of "occupation mentality" and overly free requisitioning leveled against the Allies, and demands that the German government more fully face its responsibility to deal with the past. There were also numerous disagreements among the allies themselves. But disagreements were addressed in discussion and negotiation, and the fact that they never degenerated into acrimony supports Vogt's view that the HICOM era was largely successful. In fact, Vogt's study demonstrates an important and often overlooked point, which is that the western allies and West German leaders created and fostered an alliance that was not simply a function of Cold War tensions, but likely would have existed even if the imperative from the Soviet Union had not been there.

Is the HICOM era a model for nation building elsewhere in the world? In many ways West Germany was unusual, even unique, and the utter collapse of the Nazi regime and ideology provided an opportunity for instilling, or re-instilling, democracy that does not come often in world affairs. But the methods of HICOM are worthy of close examination, even if the particular situation is nontransferable. Interestingly, the U.S. Department of State collected a team of historians to follow and record the activities of HICOM, because of the possibility that "sometime in the future the nation would be faced with a similar or identical situation" (p. 256).