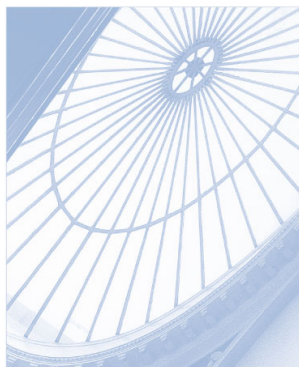


Zitierhinweis

Mühle, Jakob : recension de : Luke Daly-Groves, The British and American Intelligence Divisions in Occupied Germany, 1945–1955. A Secret System of Rule, Cham, Switzerland : Palgrave Macmillan, 2023, dans : German Historical Institute London Bulletin, Vol. XLVII (2025), 2, p. 98-103, <https://recensio-stag.lorax.syslab.com/r/0033a88ea5484afe9af93c06c59e4be8>

GERMAN HISTORICAL INSTITUTE LONDON

Bulletin



copyright

Dieser Beitrag kann vom Nutzer zu eigenen nicht-kommerziellen Zwecken heruntergeladen und/oder ausgedruckt werden. Darüber hinausgehende Nutzungen sind ohne weitere Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber nur im Rahmen der gesetzlichen Schrankenbestimmungen (§§ 44a-63a UrhG) zulässig.

LUKE DALY-GROVES, *The British and American Intelligence Divisions in Occupied Germany, 1945–1955: A Secret System of Rule* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023), 373 pp. ISBN 978 3 031 50199 9. £118.90.

Forty years have passed since British historians Christopher Andrew and David Dilks identified, in their history of secret intelligence services,¹ the ‘missing dimension’ in the international politics of the twentieth century. While this diagnosis was made in 1984 against a backdrop of restricted access to relevant sources under secrecy laws, the situation has changed somewhat since the end of the Cold War. Since then, there has been greater scope to conduct historical research on secret services in their political, social, and cultural contexts.² In addition, international intelligence history has focused on occupied post-war Germany, which—in terms of the development of the Cold War—has been historicized as an East–West ‘battleground’³ and a hotbed of intelligence activities.⁴ Now this study, submitted as a PhD in 2020 and published in 2023, uncovers another ‘missing dimension’ in the field. In it, Luke Daly-Groves tells the story of the British and American Intelligence Divisions (IDs). These two intelligence services developed out of the joint headquarters of the British and American Allied forces in Europe after 1945. As the study shows, after the end of the war, the IDs played a central role in securing the British–American occupation and its political goals in Germany.

The role of the IDs has hardly been examined in the historiography to date because, as Daly-Groves convincingly argues in his introduction, research has focused on well-known intelligence organizations that still exist today, such as the CIA, MI5, and MI6. The IDs, which

Translated by Marielle Sutherland (GHIL).

¹ Christopher Andrew and David Dilks (eds.), *The Missing Dimension: Governments and Intelligence Communities in the Twentieth Century* (London, 1984).

² For a comprehensive overview of the development of intelligence history, see Rüdiger Bergien, ‘Intelligence History’, *Docupedia Zeitgeschichte* (3 Aug. 2021), at [<http://dx.doi.org/10.14765/zzf.dok-2304>].

³ David E. Murphy, Sergei A. Kondrashev, and George Bailey, *Battleground Berlin: CIA vs KGB in the Cold War* (New Haven, 1997).

⁴ Paul Maddrell, *Spying on Science: Western Intelligence in Divided Germany 1945–1961* (Oxford, 2006).

at times were among the largest and most influential intelligence services in the British and American zones, have often been neglected. For his systematic investigation of the structures and practices of the IDs and their cooperative and competitive relationships, the author draws on previously unknown or recently declassified sources in the British and American National Archives. He does not limit himself to the immediate post-war period and the direct occupation administration, but also looks at the early 1950s—that is, the phase after the founding of the Federal Republic through to the end of the Occupation Statute, during which the occupation regime underwent a transformation. The study makes two central arguments: first, that the relationship between the British and American IDs reflects far-reaching ‘Anglo-American intelligence cooperation in occupied Germany’ (p. 19); and second, that this ‘intelligence liaison’ was an expression of a ‘secret system of rule’ which formed the ‘real backbone of the British and American occupation of Germany’ (p. 2) and ‘significantly influenced the course and outcome of the occupation’ (p. 20). The book is thus also an example of the broader shift in historiographical perspectives on the Western Allied occupation, which is no longer merely seen as a prelude to the Cold War or the division of Germany, but historicized as a period in its own right, and a complex social system.⁵

Besides the introduction and conclusion, the book is divided systematically into six chapters, the first of which deals with the highly disjointed organizational history of the IDs. The British and American IDs were renamed and reconfigured several times in the post-war period. As Daly-Groves argues, this organizational fragmentation is one reason why the IDs have been under-researched to date. One of the merits of the study is that, by demonstrating organizational continuity within the IDs, it turns them into a tangible subject of research. After the end of the war and the dissolution of the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force in July 1945, the British and American administrations developed independent intelligence structures in their occupation zones. First, in 1945, an ‘Intelligence Group’

⁵ See e.g. Camilo Erlichman and Christopher Knowles (eds.), *Transforming Occupation in the Western Zones of Germany: Politics, Everyday Life and Social Interactions, 1945–1955* (London, 2018).

was established within the British Control Commission Military Section; this was renamed the 'Intelligence Division' in 1946 and was temporarily stationed in Herford. A counterpart organization (G-2 USFET) was created in the American zone at the same time, but was not known as the Intelligence Division until 1948. The American ID, based in Heidelberg, was under the command of the US forces in Europe (from 1947 EUCOM, or United States European Command). Daly-Groves characterizes the relationship between the IDs and their predecessors as 'ad hoc', barely formalized, and based primarily on shared convictions and direct contacts. This led to the creation of a system of 'liaison officers' in 1946 as the 'most important link between the many different forms of cooperation' (p. 55). According to the author, this formed the basis for a comprehensive exchange of intelligence between the Americans and the British, from which the French services were largely excluded for security reasons.

Daly-Groves goes on to analyse the practices and modes of operation of the IDs and their cooperation within various fields of intelligence: military, scientific and technical, security, and political. This systematic approach allows him to present the broad spectrum of their functions within the British-American occupation regime. Yet this structure comes at the cost of some redundancy: as the author himself notes in the introduction, the individual fields of action cannot always be clearly distinguished in practice. Daly-Groves sees the IDs as playing a central role in the field of military intelligence (ch. 3). In the context of the beginning of the Cold War, the focus of intelligence shifted from the fear of German remilitarization to the Soviet armed forces. The author emphasizes that 'military intelligence played a crucial role in preventing an escalation from cold to hot war in post-war Germany' (p. 86). He bases this claim on military insights acquired by the IDs, which made it possible to distinguish between war preparations by Soviet troops and mere manoeuvres, thereby preventing any overreaction in Washington and London. Daly-Groves comes to a different conclusion for the field of scientific and technical intelligence (ch. 4), whose role in ID operations he considers to be overstated in the literature. Although the emerging East-West conflict increased the strategic importance of espionage in this field too, he argues, it was never a priority.

For Daly-Groves, the IDs' primary role was in the fields of security intelligence (ch. 5) and political intelligence (ch. 6). Security and political control were closely linked in the 'secret system of rule' that the author characterizes as the basis of the British-American occupation. The IDs thus made an important contribution to securing and enforcing the political goals of denazification and democratization in the British and American zones. In the immediate post-war years, the focus was on Nazi underground networks. According to the author, cooperation in this area was particularly close. Between 1945 and 1948, the IDs and other British and American intelligence services launched a series of operations targeting actual or purported sabotage and insurrection plans by groups of former Nazis. From the late 1940s onwards, British and American interests diverged against the backdrop of the escalating conflict between the capitalist and communist systems. While the British ID focused equally on communist and Nazi groups, the Americans put less effort into their surveillance of right-wing extremists, concentrating instead on communist networks, such as the KPD. According to Daly-Groves, this was evident in the handling of the Naumann affair in 1953: while the British intelligence services recognized early on that Werner Naumann – former Nazi State Secretary and Goebbels' adviser – was attempting to infiltrate the Free Democratic Party, and took action against his group by making arrests, the American ID did not perceive the Naumann circle as a relevant security threat.

Nevertheless, the author sees the relationship between the British and American IDs as a key factor in the successful establishment of a stable democracy in West Germany after 1945 (ch. 7). The IDs were not merely observers, but actively shaped the political conditions in West Germany. Although Daly-Groves characterizes their influence as often paternalistic, he ultimately sees it as a prerequisite for the stabilization of West German democracy. The role of the British and American services in establishing the Federal Republic's own security agencies was particularly central. British-American cooperation always prevailed, especially in the face of increasing West German agency. However, the author emphasizes the diverging British and American interests in this area too – for example, when it came to the Gehlen Organization (the Org). While the American ID provided significant support

for the establishment of a West German foreign intelligence service under former *Wehrmacht* general Reinhard Gehlen, seeing this as a useful instrument in the early Cold War, the British remained sceptical in view of Gehlen's Nazi past and that of many of his colleagues, and merely tolerated the Org for strategic reasons. The American ID, on the other hand, continued to work closely with Gehlen even after the CIA took over the Org in 1949, helping with its evolution into the West German foreign intelligence service (Bundesnachrichtendienst, BND). Although the US Army's contribution to this is already well known, Daly-Groves' consideration of the specific role of the IDs is an important addition to the latest German-language research on the origins of the BND.⁶

In light of such a wealth of exciting findings, minor criticisms are of little consequence. In addition to the occasional redundancies I mentioned earlier, the author sometimes tends to overstate his arguments and research findings. Whether the relationship between the British and American IDs was 'the real backbone of the occupation of Germany' (p. 314) or merely one important factor alongside other instruments of power is certainly open to debate, given the complexity of the British-American occupation system.⁷ Wordings like this are probably intended to emphasize the relevance of the topic, which has received little attention to date. The author's findings, however, speak for themselves. With his comprehensive and detailed history of the British and American IDs, Luke Daly-Groves proves once again that the history of the twentieth century is incomplete if no consideration is given to the role of secret intelligence.

⁶ Thomas Wolf's comprehensive study on the creation of the BND generally mentions the central role of the US Army, but only touches on the American ID's contribution in the footnotes. Thomas Wolf, *Die Entstehung des BND: Aufbau, Finanzierung, Kontrolle* (Berlin, 2018), 162, 192.

⁷ Lena Rudeck, for example, recently emphasized the socio-cultural function of the Allied soldiers' clubs as an expression of 'occupation from below' and an important pillar of occupation rule. Lena Rudeck, *Vergnügen in Besatzungszeiten: Begegnungen in westalliierten Offiziers- und Soldatenclubs in Deutschland, 1945–1955* (Bielefeld, 2023).

JAKOB MÜHLE is a doctoral researcher at the Leibniz Centre for Contemporary History Potsdam (ZZF). He is currently working on a dissertation on the West German Federal Intelligence Service's political espionage against the GDR in the second half of the Cold War. Together with Rüdiger Bergien and Jens Gieseke, he recently published an anthology on the history of the West German Federal Intelligence Service in the 1970s and 1980s. His research interests include the history of secret intelligence in the twentieth century, the history of the Cold War and German–German relations, and the history of knowledge.