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German National Registration System As Means of Police Control of Population, The

Robert M. W. Kempner

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THE GERMAN NATIONAL REGISTRATION SYSTEM AS MEANS OF POLICE CONTROL OF POPULATION

Robert M. W. Kempner

(That government authorities in Germany have employed a rigid and fearsome system of records and recording as a means of maintaining a vicious control over the populace is known. How the Nazis utilized the German national registration system as a means of police control over population is not so well known. Nor have many realized the enormous importance which these registration records can play in our post war efforts to identify war criminals and to point out their place in Germany's war guilt. In the following article Dr. Kempner describes Germany's national registration system in detail and how the records maintained can aid the allied cause in seeing that justice is done. The author holds degrees in law and public administration, was formerly a judge in Berlin and chief legal counselor of the pre-Hitler Prussian police administration—a force comprising some 80,000 men. Back in 1930 he officially urged the dissolution of the Nazi party and the criminal prosecution of Adolf Hitler and his accomplices for high treason and perjury. In 1939 the author, now an American citizen, received appointments at the Institute of Local and State Government of the University of Pennsylvania, and later lectured at West Point, Columbia, Northwestern and other universities. He is now in Germany serving as expert consultant in German law and administration to the Departments of Justice and War.—EDITOR.)

I. SYNOPSIS

Throughout the centuries, one of the basic concepts of government in Germany has been the very tight control of all inhabitants by the State. One of the main administrative institutions, through which the grip of the government upon every single inhabitant was and is exercised, is the registration system which assures a follow-up of each person's family status, movements, activities and occupation, from the cradle to the grave. Under the totalitarian regime, registration systems — once organized for tax, military and school purposes — became all-embracing. Despite the defeat, the registration systems administered on a local level are still intact especially in the American zone of occupation.

A knowledge of the system is necessary for everybody working in the field of occupational or post-war German administration. It conveys invaluable information on the inhabitants of a given district, means of identification, number of males and females, persons belonging to a certain age class, profession, occupation, religion, exact address, etc.

The law enforcement and counter intelligence officer can use the registration system as one of his foremost sources of information and means of control and supervision of politically dangerous persons and criminals. The war crime or economic investigator will be able to discover in the various registration records the names of murdered and deported persons, the Nazi Party status of non-political individuals, the whereabouts of witnesses, the location of real estate and securi-

ties illegally acquired. The checking of the German registration files against registration returns of the occupational administration will lead to important discoveries.

The relief worker will find in these registers information valuable for his work, e.g. the number of children and aged or people with handicaps.

The administrator and planner, interested in the migration and movement of population, can obtain a picture of the population structure, the relative permanence of residence, and the number of migrants, foreign workers and other newcomers shifted or driven to this particular area. With the help of the registration system he is able to control, to promote or to restrict population movements. Furthermore, the allocation of manpower, e.g. to public works and labor projects is facilitated considerably by the availability of the inventory of human resources.

Attempts will be made to destroy or falsify registration files or documents in order to make identification impossible. However, such attempts will be fruitless, since most registration files are correlated to other files, located at different places. Furthermore checks can be made against the results of registrations made by the occupational forces. Finally a person in Germany, who really wants to establish his real identity will always be able to present witnesses who have known him from

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childhood, either relatives, friends, schoolmates, or fellow workers.

II. POLICE REGISTRATION SYSTEM

The backbone of the various German registration systems is the general police registration (*Polizeiliches Meldewesen*). It is a nationwide system of continuous registration of all inhabitants which is locally administered and is constantly revised so that it is always up to date. This system is administered by the German administrative police. It has to be emphasized that the police system was a national apparatus before the occupation and that its officials, even in the smallest communities, were controlled by the Reich Fuehrer of the German Police. Now, after the break-up of the uncentralized police system, the registration system functions locally throughout the county or within the district as established by the occupational forces.

The registration system is based upon the *Reichsmeldeordnung* of January 6, 1938, and the Ministerial Orders of January 24, April 4, August 26, 1938, and September 6, 1939.¹

The system was broadened by Ministerial Orders concerning the People's Card Index (*Volkskartei*) of January 18, Febru-

¹ *Reichsgesetzblatt* 1938, I. p. 13, and 1939, I. p. 1688; *Reichsministerialblatt fuer die Innere Verwaltung*, 1938, pp. 91, 689, 1371.

ary 15, July 28, November 14, December 20, 1938 and March 14, 1940.¹

The *Reichsmeldeordnung* and the decree on the *Volkskartei* are the pillars of the present set-up of the registration system of Germany administering the following registers:

- A. Register of Persons (*Melderegister*).
- B. Register of Buildings (*Hausregister*).
- C. People's Card Index (*Volkskartei*).
- D. Alien Card Index (*Auslaenderkartei*).

A. REGISTER OF PERSONS

The most important is the Register of Persons (*Melderegister*) i.e. the register of all inhabitants. It consists of a card index of the persons registered within the jurisdiction of the respective registration office: citizens, and non-citizens, residents and non-residents. This card index is organized in alphabetical order, or phonetically as a sound index, according to the last name of the registrant. Identical family names are filed in the alphabetical order of the first names and, among the same first names the cards are arranged according to age.

The Personal Registration Card (*Personenregisterkarte*) is white for males and blue for females. The personal data compiled on the card are as follows:

Name, date of birth, place of birth, marital status, religion, race, occupation, citizenship, military status, criminal record; name, date of birth, place of birth, religion of parents, of husband or wife, and of the parents of husband or wife. Further remarks on the personal registration card refer to unmarried children and to the possession of a passport or licenses for weapons, hunting, driving, or piloting.

The main significance of this alphabetical registration of persons lies in the complete listing of all inhabitants of the respective district. In normal times it should also include travellers, migrants, etc. It is a kind of official address book and continuously reveals the fluctuation of the population. Whereas in countries without general registration, a large amount of effort is expended for the sole purpose of tracing persons, in Germany the whereabouts, the family status, and other necessary data can be obtained in a very short time.

B. REGISTER OF BUILDINGS AND REAL ESTATE

The second index is the *Hausregister*, the card index of buildings, or in smaller municipalities, the book in which all buildings of the registration districts are listed. It should not

¹ *Reichsministerialblatt fuer die Innere Verwaltung*, 1939, pp. 321, 1420, 1531, 2360, 2617, 2404, and 1940, p. 497.

be confused with the surveyor's record (*Kataster*), or with the *Grundbuch* which lists the owners of real estate, mortgages, etc.¹ The *Grundbuch* kept by the *Amtsgericht* (Municipal Court) is of utmost importance for war crime investigators because it shows the change of ownership of real estate and presents evidence of looting, illegal confiscation, etc.

The white building card of the *Hausregister* lists the name and address of the owner and of the superintendent. The *Hausregisterkarte* (Building Registration Card) is supplemented by individual cards for the tenants and farm tenants. This index is the backbone of any investigation as to whether a certain person has lived in a certain building.

C. PEOPLE'S CARD INDEX

In 1938 the High Command of the German *Wehrmacht* requested the establishment of an index of human resources, organized according to age groups. For that reason, the People's Card Index (*Volkskartei*) was established by a Ministerial Order of January 18, 1939.

The People's Card Index is of special value in recruiting people of certain age groups or occupations in a given district, e.g. of laborers, public health officers, engineers, people with knowledge of foreign languages, or children between five and fourteen years.

The People's Card Index is arranged according to year of birth. These cards (of year of birth) are organized in alphabetical order according to names or, in some municipalities, to birth dates. In contrast with the other two registers, the People's Card Index contains no children under five years of age and no persons over seventy-four years. It includes the age groups of all people born between 1869 and 1938, except aliens.

The index cards are brown for males and green for females. The first item is year, day, month, and place and county of birth. Then follow the statements about occupation, name, marital status, school, and professional education, examinations passed, residence in foreign countries, knowledge of foreign languages, special abilities, service in the armed forces, or in the labor service, and residence. The card index for females contains additional statements about experience in office work, home economics, agriculture, factory work, nursing, work with the Red Cross, etc. Cards of Jews are marked by black index tabs. These cards might furnish evidence on the disappearance of Jews from the individual communities.

¹ Grundbuchordnung of March 24, 1897 and May 20, 1898.

D. ALIEN REGISTRATION

A special register is provided for aliens and stateless persons in addition to their inclusion in the Register of Persons. It is called Alien Card Index (*Auslaenderkartei*).

In addition to the usual questions, the aliens must answer questions about their mother tongue, date of entry into Germany, date of visa, proposed sojourn, means of subsistence, work permit, etc. The Registration Office notifies the Alien Office (*Auslaenderamt*) about the in or out registration of non-citizens. Alien Offices are located at the seat of the County Administrator (*Landrat*), and at the 125 field offices of the national police. They administer admittance, period of stay, expulsion, and deportation of aliens. Foreign laborers if housed in barracks were only registered with the manpower office.

E. REGISTRATION AUTHORITIES

The three card indexes, the *Personenregister*, the *Hausregister*, and the *Volkskartei* are administered by the Registration Offices (*Meldebehoerde*). According to Section 8 of the *Reichsmeldeordnung*, the 125 national police field offices are designated as Registration Offices. In all other municipalities the mayor, in his capacity as local representative of the National Police acts as registration officer. These offices still exist under the occupational setup although they operate on a local basis. Usually the chief of an *Einwohnermeldeamt* (registration office) is a chief police clerk, a so-called *Polizeiinspektor* or *Polizeirat*.

Before the end of the war, the registration branches of the 125 national police field offices covered the majority of all inhabitants. The smaller part was registered with the thousands of mayors of German cities, boroughs, townships, and other municipalities. Today this situation is reversed because of the migration of the population to smaller cities and rural areas. Depending upon the size of the municipality, the registration system is administered either by a local police chief or, in small municipalities, by the mayor himself.

Theoretically, the registration system is nation-wide. It was under the jurisdiction of the Reich Minister of the Interior (*Reichsminister des Innern*) as Police Minister. He issued all rules and regulations about the techniques and procedures of the registration system. The thousands of registration offices kept each other informed as to in and out registrations within their respective districts. As a result of the break-up of a national German registration, the exchange of registration reports is limited to districts. The registrations function on a regional basis as it was under the Hitler regime and each regis-

tration office operates the registration of the inhabitants of its districts. Therefore, its functioning is not endangered by the separation of occupational areas into various zones.

The only central agency which kept a duplicate of each personal registration card was the Reich Statistical Office in Berlin (*Statistisches Reichsamt*). However, this office did not operate in the field of registration but is concerned only with statistical and census matters.

F. REICH REGISTRATION DECREE

The procedure which continuously brings the registration system up to date and determines the registration duties of the population is revealed in the Reich Registration Decree (*Reichsmeldeordnung*) of 1938. The translation of pertinent parts is set forth in order to show the registration duties of the population of Germany. The strict functioning of the system should be enforced in the interest of public safety.

REICH REGISTRATION DECREE¹

(*Reichsmeldeordnung*)

Based upon the laws about passports, alien police, registration, and identification of May 11, 1937² the following is decreed in agreement with the Reich Ministers concerned:

I.

COMPULSORY REGISTRATION

(*Meldepflicht*)

Section 1

Whoever resides in the territory of the German Reich must register, according to the following regulations:

Section 2

(1) Whoever moves into a lodging (*Wohnung*) has to register within a week after moving in, with the registration authority (*Meldebehorde*). If he moves from another municipality, he has to present the confirmation of his out-registration (*Abmeldung*) if he does not keep his former lodgings also. Whoever maintains his former lodgings in addition to the new one must report this when he registers.

(2) Lodging, as used in this decree, includes every living room even if used only for sleeping. (*Schlafstelle*).

(In wartime — registration within three days; for aliens, within twenty-four hours.)

¹ *Reichsgesetzblatt* 1938, I, page 13.

² *Reichsgesetzblatt* 1937, I, page 589.

Section 3

(1) Whoever moves out of a lodging must notify the Registration Office about his new lodging within a week, or if he does not have a new lodging, must leave information about his whereabouts.

(2) Change of lodging within a municipality requires only the notification about the new lodging according to Section 2, paragraph 1, sentence 1.

Section 4

(1) The in and out registration (*An und Abmeldung*) has to be performed by the person who is moving in or moving out as the main registrant (*Hauptmeldepflichtige*). The head of the household (*Haushaltungsvorstand*) is obliged to register children up to fifteen years of age if they are living in the household of their parents. If the child is not living with its parents, the landlord must register. In case of guardianship the legal guardian must register.

(2) Besides the main registrant, the following persons must register:

a. The proprietor of the house on behalf of all persons living in the house.

b. The landlord on behalf of all his tenants.

(3) In case the proprietor has appointed a superintendent for his property, the superintendent must register.

Section 5

(1) The main registrant meets his obligation for registration in filling out two registration blanks which are signed by the landlord and the proprietor (superintendent) and also by himself, appearing in person at the registration office with his identification papers. In case he should be unable to appear personally, he may, as an exception, be represented by an adult member of his family or, if a boarder, by the landlord; if a tenant, by the proprietor (superintendent) or the adult members of their respective families. Reasons for his non-appearance must be stated.

Section 9

The registrant must give the necessary information, present the necessary identification papers and must upon request also appear in person.

Section 10

(1) The registration blanks must be used according to instructions issued by the Reich Minister of the Interior (*Reichsminister des Innern*) for in and out registration.

(2) The in-registration blank contains the following declarations besides the statement about new and former lodging:

- a. Family name. Wives must also give maiden name and, if necessary, the name of the last previous spouse.
 - b. All Christian names (underline name used).
 - c. Marital status: single, married, widowed, divorced.
 - d. Occupation (exact specification of occupation and statement whether independent or employee, worker, etc.)
 - e. Date, place and county (*Kreis*) of birth. (If born in a foreign country, also the name of country).
 - f. Citizenship (if more than one citizenship, all citizenships have to be stated; if stateless, state last citizenship.)
 - g. Religion (statement whether member of a religious or ethical society, believer in God (*gottgläubig*) or atheist. (Note: mostly used for indeterminate religious adherence by Nazis in good standing).
 - h. Military status, service number, last Military Recruiting Office (*Wehrersatzdienststelle*).
 - i. Participation in civilian air protection.
 - j. Residence (place, county (*Kreis*) street, house number) at the time of the last personal registration or on the last October 10 previous to the present registration.
 - k. In case of moving from another municipality: a declaration must be made whether the person moving in has previously lived in this municipality, where and when:
 1. In case of maintaining the old lodging in addition to the new one, statement about the purpose of residence in the new municipality and the approximate length of stay:
 - m. In case of moving from a foreign country, from travels, migration (*Wanderschaft*) and voyages, as well as from Reichs Labor Service or service with the Armed Forces: date and place of registrant's last inland registration.
 - n. Foreigners must indicate their identification papers (passport, substitute for passport, number of the paper, date of issue, issuing authority).
- (3) The registration blank to be used for out-registration does not contain the last four declarations (k, l, m, n).
- (4) Stateless persons must be considered as foreigners.

Section 11

(1) The registration offices provide the registrant with a written confirmation of the registration (*Meldebestätigung*) if the registrant does not present a third blank to be stamped, which he retains.

(2) In cases of out-registration, the registrant must always present a third copy of his registration form which must be returned to him, in order that he may present it to the registration office of his new residence.

II.

EXEMPTION FROM REGISTRATION

Section 14

The following are exempted from registration:

1. Unmarried members of the armed forces as long as they live in barracks or quarters provided by the armed forces, or are on board ship. These regulations are also to be applied to the Armed Units of the SS Elite Guards (*SS Verfuegungstruppen*).

2. The male members of the Reichs Labor Service (*Reichsarbeitsdienst*) as long as they live in their quarters.

3. The inmates of penitentiaries, prisons, persons in protective custody (*Sicherungsverwahrung*), in workhouses, institutions, camps, and police jails.

4. Foreigners who are not subject to German jurisdiction, according to Section 18 of the *Gerichtsverfassungsgesetz* (Code of Court Administration) or who are active as chiefs of a foreign consulate in the Reich.

5. Also exempted from registration are foreigners who

a. act as officials or employees of a foreign consulate in the Reich.

b. are members of the families of the chiefs of these consulates offices or their officials living with them.

c. are servants of these persons, living with them.

This exemption can be applied only in case of reciprocity and if the chief of the consulate makes the names of those persons listed under a to c available to the police office.

III.

SPECIAL CASES OF COMPULSORY REGISTRATION

Section 15

(1) The owners and superintendents of commercial or non-profit institutions for lodging of strangers, travelers and vacationers, are required to register the persons sheltered within a period of twenty-four hours after their arrival with the proper registration office, according to the special form for such institutions ordered by the Reichs Minister of the Interior. This includes e.g. hotels, taverns, boarding houses, charitable institutions, convalescent homes, shelters, asylums for the homeless, cloisters, institutions of religious orders, homes of religious societies. Exempted from these regulations are homes of sport associations, homes for youth and youth hostels.

Section 16

The registration blank for lodging institutions contains a description of the shelter as well as the date of arrival of the guest, his name and the following statements:

- a. Christian name and family name of the guest; also maiden name of married women.
- b. Occupation (exact description).
- c. Date of birth.
- d. Place of birth, county (if born in foreign country, also name of foreign country).
- e. Citizenship.
- f. Residence, street, house number, county, State (if foreign country).
- g. Foreigners must give the number of their passport, date of issue and issuing office.

Section 22

(1) The managers of sport homes, tourist homes, homes for youth and youth hostels (hostel father, hostel superintendent or their deputies) must keep a hostel visitor's book containing statements according to No. 16 of the person sheltered and also the day of his departure.

Section 23

(1) Managers (superintendents) or their deputies, of hospitals, clinics, maternity clinics, nursing homes, sanitariums, and similar institutions in municipalities with more than ten thousand inhabitants must register with the registration office all persons fifteen years or over admitted for treatment in the institution within three days' time after their admission. This must be done by the registration blank for hospitals.

(4) Persons who are brought in with a bullet wound, knife wound, or wound from a blow or in a condition hinting a punishable action must be registered immediately, if necessary first by telephone, stating the particular kind of injury, to the police office.

(5) All hospitals, etc., must immediately report persons, especially minors, where the circumstances of their admission or their own statements make it quite obvious that they are imbecile, runaway or fugitive.

Section 24

(1) The same regulations as provided by Section 23 must be applied by the superintendent of mental institutions, of nursing, protective, and corrective institutions, as well as of infirmaries.

(In war time obligations according to Nos. 23 and 24 are enforced for all hospitals and similar institutions).

Section 25

(1) Whoever moves from one place to another without being registered according to Section 2 or takes up lodging according to Sections 2 or 15, must register in person with the

registration office of the place where he intends to spend the night, immediately after his arrival, but not later than the forenoon after his arrival. At the same time he must present the necessary identification papers and give truthful information about the members of his group if they are not members of his immediate family or are not employed by him.

(2) This does not concern the special regulations about gypsies and persons traveling about like gypsies as well as vagrants.

IV.

PENALTIES

Section 26

(1) Whoever intentionally or negligently fails to observe his obligation to register or neglects his responsibility in registering at the appropriate time or acts contrary to Section 9, is subject to a fine up to one hundred and fifty Reichsmarks or imprisonment (*Haft*) up to six weeks.

(2) The same punishment must be applied to the person who deliberately makes false or incomplete statements.

(3) Whoever registers wilfully in a lodging where he has not really taken up lodgement or consciously participates in a pseudo-registration may be punished with imprisonment (*Haft*) up to six weeks; in less serious cases with a fine up to one hundred and fifty Reichsmarks.

V.

ENFORCEMENT

Section 28

(1) The decree takes effect May 1, 1938.

(2) Upon this day, all previous regulations of the single States about registration become invalid.

(3) Future regulations about compulsory registration are permissible only within the framework of this decree.

(4) The Reich Minister of the Interior gives instructions about the date for the transfer of the registration system to the State police authority for municipalities with State police administration where at present the compulsory registration is administered by the municipality itself.

Berlin, January 6, 1938.

The Reich Minister of the Interior
(signed) FRICK.

(The wartime provisions were decreed on September 6, 1939, *Reichsgesetzblatt*, 1939, I, page 1688).

G. WHERE TO FIND REGISTRATION FILES

German bureaucracy is the outstanding file-saving organization of the world. Kings, dictators, Nazi bosses, buildings, fac-

tories, and monuments might disappear—administrative files and records remain. Therefore, despite the effects of bombing, hiding, and moving, the occupational officials can be sure that the majority of registration files can be discovered. These are the places where they are normally located:

1. Police Headquarters and City Hall.

The inquirer should go to Police Headquarters (*Polizeipraesidium*, *Polizeidirektion*, or *Polizeiamt*) of the given municipality. There he must ask for the *Einwohnermeldeamt* or the *Polizeisekretaer*, *Stadtschreiber*, *Ratschreiber* etc. The location of the *Polizeiamt* is in most cases identical with the City Hall (*Rathaus*). Sometimes Police Headquarters (*Polizeipraesidium*) are located in a special building. Having located the registration office, the inquirer will find the *Personenregister*, and the *Volkskartei*. Most of the cards are handwritten, since they are filled out by the registrants themselves.

Should it be found that the original registration cards have been destroyed, the inquirer may find duplicates in the following places:

In larger cities with numerous police precincts (*Polizeiamt* or *Polizeirevier*) he will find duplicates in the individual precinct offices.

2. County Administrator's Office.

In smaller municipalities which are not county-cities (*Stadtkreis*) but belong to a rural county (*Landkreis*), a duplicate of the *Volkskartei* is located at the office of the county administrator (*Landrat*). In the *Landrat's* office is also an alphabetical index of all inhabitants of the rural county. Another copy may be available in the tax section of the county administration. There were about 800 rural counties (*Landkreis*) in Germany and the annexed areas. Bavaria has 168, Wuerttemberg 32, and Badenia 26 counties. The county seat is the so-called *Kreisstadt*, the office building is called *Landratsamt* where the inquirer also will find the Alien Registration Cards of the districts.

In order to obtain a complete registration file on a district larger than a city or a rural county, (as for example the registration cards of a governmental district (*Regierungsbezirk*)), the following administrative procedure should be followed: The *Regierungspraesident* instructs all registration offices of his district to report the desired data, e.g., all inhabitants, or all children of one particular age group, all engineers, or physicians in his district. The same procedure may be followed in a province by the Provincial Governor (*Oberpraesident*) or, in Bavaria and Wuerttemberg, for the state area.

3. Reich Statistical Office.

National figures may be obtained at the Reich Statistical Of-

fice (*Statistisches Reichsamt*). This office, which had its seat in Berlin, is in charge of the census; most of its data were kept current because the movement of population was constantly reported to the *Statistisches Reichsamt* by the registration offices.

III, OTHER COMPREHENSIVE REGISTRATION SYSTEMS

Let us assume that the police registration files are no longer available. Where are copies available?

A. CHURCH CARD INDEX

Since the Protestant and the Catholic churches embrace more than 90 per cent of the whole German population, and since the churches keep a record of members who left the church, the registration duplicates of the Protestant and the Catholic churches are nearly complete. Police registration offices have continued to inform the church authorities of the whereabouts and the status of their members. This was done as a routine matter and also because the national internal revenue collectors were still acting as collectors of the compulsory church tax which is a percentage of the national income tax. The administrative offices of the church are located in the church or in the parish building.

B. NATIONAL INTERNAL REVENUE INDEX

Another duplicate of the resident registration files is available at the National Internal Revenue Office (*Finanzamt*). The seats of the *Finanzaemter* are located in general at the county seat (*Kreisstadt*). Tax offices are quite conservative in keeping their records; in general, they have no political reason for destroying the tax files. In addition to general information, the tax files are of special value with regard to the property and income situation. These files will facilitate the tracing of war criminals and other persons of interest to the occupational forces.

The title of the chief clerk in charge of the files of a *Finanzamt* is *Steuerinspektor*; the chief of the agency is usually a government counselor (*Regierungsrat*).

C. LOCAL GOVERNMENT INDICES

Another complete set of the registration cards may be found in local government offices. According to the rules and regulations of the police registration system, the local governments are kept informed concerning all in- and out-registrations.

1. Local Tax Office and Ration Board.

- a. The Local Tax Office (*Stadtsteuerstelle*) is one of the places where the records are available.
- b. The Local Ration Board (*Gemeindeernaehrungsamter*) have their own card indices all located in City Hall. In

rural districts (*Landkreis*) these records can be found at the County Ration Board (*Kreisernaehrungsamt*), located at the county seat.

2. Civil Status Office.

Other local governmental registers are the Civil Status Registers (*Standesamtsregister*) such as the register of Birth (*Geburtsregister*), Register of Marriage (*Heiratsregister*), Register of Deaths (*Sterberegister*). These registers, which also are kept in City Hall, include the persons whose civil status affairs have been administered in the municipality, regardless of their place of residence. These records are of importance for identifying persons who come from other districts.

3. Public Health Registers.

Another important card index locally administered is that of the public health office. It comprises card indices of babies, pregnant women, persons with contagious diseases, prostitutes, and the personnel of the public health service.

4. School Register.

Since German law provides compulsory school attendance for children between six and fourteen years, school records of every person are available.

Finally, the election card indices should be mentioned which were correct before the Nazis came to power. They might be still of limited value but can be used only as a basis for a new voters registration if elections are considered.

D. NAZI PARTY FILES

Duplicate of all resident registration cards were available at the local headquarters of the Nazi Party (*Ortsgruppe der NSDAP*), which has also the special index of Party members. The police registration office regularly notified the local Party headquarters about all in- and out-registrations in the districts.

1. Index of Inhabitants.

The Party used the files of all inhabitants for the supervision of the population by the Nazi *Blockwarts*, for the collection of the Nazi Winter Relief Work (*Winterhilfswerk*), and similar purposes. These cards might contain interesting remarks about the political attitude of residents.

2. Index of Party Members.

This index of the whole population should not be confused with the register of members of the NSDAP. They had to register with their local Party office according to Party orders of April 29, 1935, reporting change of residence, absence, etc. The centralized file of Party members was kept in the Party headquarters in Munich; duplicates were in Berlin. Each *Gau* (province), *Kreis* (county), and *Ortsgruppe* (local unit) kept membership indices for its district. A part of the latter might

still be existent. The Party has a special registration system for the members who must report each change to the Party office. It will be of interest to find out whether this Nazi registration system is still working under cover.

3. Index of SA, SS, etc.

In addition to these Nazi Party registers, there are the indices of associated and affiliated Party organizations: e.g., membership indices of the Storm Troops (*SA*), the SS Elite Guards (*SS*), the NS Reich Soldiers Bund (*NS Reichskriegerbund, Kyffhaeuserbund*), the Hitler Youth, and of the professional, occupational, and labor-front units of the Nazi apparatus. All these organizations had local and county offices where the cards were located.

4. Index of Free Corps Fighters.

One register which is kept in the files of the N. S. *Reichskriegerbund, Kyffhaeuserbund*, is the card index of former Free Corps Fighters (*Freikorpskämpfer*), the members of the para-military organizations and secret societies established after World War I. These men, the majority of whom were quite active in all kinds of sabotage against the occupational troops of the Allies and the democratic German administration especially in Upper Silesia, the Ruhr Valley, and in Germany itself, are listed in the *Kyffhaeuser* files in the central office in Berlin and in the corps districts, because they had to be cleared through this organization before they received the so-called Free Corps medal.¹

IV. SPECIALIZED REGISTRATION SYSTEMS

A. Gestapo Card Indices

Besides the complete card indices which include all inhabitants, there are numerous specialized card indices. Most of them are administrative appendices of the police registration system which was in constant communication with these specialized registration offices.

1. Register of Political Enemies, Jews, etc.

The most important are the Gestapo card indices: the register of persons politically undesirable to the National Socialist regime, such as former members of democratic parties, lodges, etc. This register consists of five different sets of alphabetical card indices for (1) highly dangerous persons, (2) less dangerous persons, (3) dangerous persons, (4) Jews, (5) part Jews (*Mischling*). These card indices were kept in the offices of the Secret Police (*Gestapo*), i.e., in the central headquarters of the *Gestapo* in Berlin, Prinz Albrechtstrasse. Duplicates were kept by the supervisory offices (*Staatspolizeileitstellen*) or the approximately 100 district offices of the secret police

¹ Circular of the Reich Minister of the Interior of October 31, 1937.

(*Staatspolizeistellen*) which are located in the larger cities throughout Germany, e.g., in Munich, Stuttgart and the seats of the district governments.

2. Register of Inmates of Concentration Camps.

The Gestapo offices also kept the register of inmates of concentration camps. Copies have been found in the concentration camps themselves.

3. Register of Political and Other Organizations.

Of special interest from the viewpoint of internal security of liberated areas are the registers of persons belonging to certain organizations. The Gestapo had membership lists of dissolved organizations, such as the German political parties. The latter lists are not complete because many organizations destroyed their indices when the Nazis came to power in 1933. However, even fragments, or lists of certain districts will be of value to the civil affairs officials. Duplicates of the lists of chairmen of these organizations are frequently available at the Register of Organizations (*Vereinsregister*) located at the Municipal Court (*Amtsgericht*). These courts are mostly located at the county seats. The courts also hold the register of commercial corporations (see below "G").

4. Index of Spies and Contact Men.

Political card indices of utmost importance are those of the contact men and agents in foreign countries. There is no doubt that some of these will disappear, whether they have been under the administration of the *Gestapo* or the espionage branches of the armed forces. However, there is a possibility that the registers of "scientific" organizations, which contain in part the same names, might remain. These are the card indices of the Ibero-American Institute (*Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut*), and of the America Institute (*Amerika Institut*), both connected with the University of Berlin. Similar indices existed at the several university departments in Southern Germany. Other names of this sort are listed in the indices outlined below in the chapter "Germans Abroad."

Duplicates of most political registers can be found at the Berlin Headquarters of the Security Service of the SS (*Sicherheitsdienst der SS, the SD*).

If the card indices of the central headquarters of the *Gestapo* and of the *SD* are destroyed, some of the 100 district card indices of the *Gestapo* may still be available because many clerks of the district offices of the *Gestapo* were ordinary civil service clerks.

B. GERMAN MINORITY REGISTRATION

1. Re-Migrants.

Another card index of the *Gestapo* is that of those German citizens who in-registered in Germany after having lived in a

foreign country for more than three months. Among them are many so-called re-migrants (*Rueckwanderer*) who might be in charge of maintaining contacts with Germans abroad.

2. Folk German Repatriates.

Another register of the *Gestapo* is the register of Folk Germans (*Volksdeutsche*) migrants from foreign countries. It contains all persons of German descent (many of them not as yet naturalized) who entered Germany after 1938 as repatriates or as members of German minority groups. This register contains the names of the German minorities from Tyrol, Russia, Lithuania, Latvia and the Balkans, as well as those of individual repatriates from the United States and South America. These registers are administered by a special branch of the police, the Coordinating Office for People of German Folkdom (*Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle*). The headquarters are located in Berlin. Duplicates of this register are to be found at the Bund for Germandom Abroad, (*Volksbund fuer das Deutschtum im Ausland, VDA*), Berlin W., Martin-Lutherstrasse, its district offices, and probably at the German Foreign Institute (*DAI*) at Stuttgart.

3. Central Register for Germans Abroad.

A central register of all German citizens living abroad was established on March 29, 1940. This register is of significance from the point of view of subversive Nazi activities in foreign countries.

It is administered by officials of the Registration Office of the Berlin Police Headquarters but located in the headquarters of the Foreign Section of the Nazi Party, the so-called *Auslandsorganization* (AO), Berlin-Wilmersdorf, Westfaelischestrasse 1.

This central file in Berlin includes all names of German citizens registered with the German Consulates abroad, according to the law of February 3, 1938.¹ This register and the consular registers are of particular interest because they include many persons with dual nationality, German and foreign, as provided in Section 25 of the German Nationality Act (*Staatsangehoerigkeitsgesetz*) of July 22, 1913.²

A duplicate of this register can be found at the German Foreign Institute (*Deutsches Auslands-Institut, DAI*) Stuttgart. Danziger Freiheit, and at the Bund for Germandom Abroad (*Volksbund fuer das Deutschtum in Ausland*) Berlin W. 30. Martin Lutherstrasse. Both institutions, which have official character, have also the card index of folk-Germans (*Volksdeutsche*) who are technically foreign, not German citizens, but regard themselves as racial blood brothers owing allegiance

¹ *Reichsgesetzblatt* 1938, I, p. 113.

² *Reichsgesetzblatt*, 1913, pp. 583 ff.

to Germany. Various University Seminars or special libraries and societies which were in charge of "maintaining contacts" with German groups in foreign countries were keeping card indices of persons of whom they "took care." The universities in the frontier regions, museums, and "hyphenated" societies are the most probable locations.

Besides the German citizens abroad listed by the *AO* and the persons of German descent who migrated to Germany and are listed by the *Gestapo*, another group has to be mentioned: People of foreign nationality who discovered their German origin after the occupation of the Eastern European areas. These people are listed in the "Folk List" (*Volkliste*) a card index kept at the bureaus of the German district governments (*Regierungsbezirk*), especially in Upper Silesia and Alsace Lorraine. This card index classified the population into the following groups:

- a. Activists, i.e., the collaborationists who worked with the Nazis.
- b. Inactive cultural Germans.
- c. Renegades who have been transferred into German territories for assimilation of Germandom.
- d. Incurables.
5. Seamen's Register and Blacklist.

Another specialized index is that of German seamen (*Seemannskartei*) which includes German seamen all over the world. It is located and administered at the police headquarters in Hamburg, the *Polizeipraesidium*. Copies were kept in the police headquarters of Bremen and other harbor cities.

The police of the harbor cities had another card index of seamen, the Central Blacklist for Seamen (*Seemannswarnkartei*). The purpose of this blacklist is to exclude from navigation all seamen who are undesirable from the Nazi viewpoint for political or criminal reasons. The central file was located at the Hamburg *Gestapo*.

C. CRIMINAL RECORDS

Criminal records and card indices of criminals are available in four different places:

1. The Registration Offices.

Excerpts of records are kept together with the registration card of each inhabitant. Through these excerpts the criminal files can be traced easily.

2. District Attorney's Indices.

A most important criminal file is kept by the Criminal Record Office of the Public Prosecutor (*Strafregisterbehoede*). Each District Attorney's office (*Staatsanwaltschaft*) keeps the Criminal Record Card (*Strafregisterkarte*) of the persons born

in its district. For persons born outside Germany, the criminal records are kept by the Reich Ministry of Justice (*Reichsjustizministerium*) in Berlin. The district attorney's offices also keep the files in criminal investigations, court procedures and the decisions in criminal cases.

3. Reich Criminal Police Indices.

A third place where card indices of criminals and potential criminals can be found is the Reich Criminal Police Bureau (*Reichskriminalpolizeiamt*) in Berlin, Molkenmarkt, and its sixty-five field offices throughout Germany. These field offices are called *Kriminalpolizeistellen* and are mostly located in the *Polizeipraesidium*. Only the criminal police offices are keeping fingerprint files. In general, identification through fingerprints is less usual and less necessary in Germany than in the United States because of the existence of the police registration system.

a. Professional Criminals.

Card indices of the following are kept by the *Reichskriminalpolizeiamt* and its field offices: traveling criminals, sex criminals, narcotic addicts, professional racketeers, embezzlers, counterfeiters, extortionists, gamblers, pickpockets, burglars, arsonists, dealers in obscene literature, persons engaged in white slave traffic, etc. Furthermore, there are the notorious card indices of race polluters and homo-sexuals, used by the administration of the Third Reich mostly for political frame-ups.

b. List of Gypsies, Criminals in Camps and Wanted Persons.

The index of gypsies and that of inmates of camps for professional criminals are kept by the criminal police offices. The latter register contains all persons who were sent to camps by police order, without judicial procedure. Some of the inmates are in fact professional criminals. Others were stigmatized as criminals but in reality were politically undesirable. Duplicates of these card indices are maintained at the camps themselves.

3. A continuous registration of wanted criminals is maintained in the Register of Wanted Persons (*Steckbriefregister*). Copies of this register were regularly transmitted to all registration offices in order to assure the necessary cooperation between the criminal police and the registration system. The personal registration cards of wanted persons are marked with special tabs. It is to be assumed that similar lists will be published on a district basis.

4. Prison Records.

The prison records contain materials on the former inmates and many serve as valuable sources of information.

D. ADMINISTRATIVE POLICE INDICES

1. Civilian Air Protection.

An appendix of the police registration system was the index of the Civilian Air Protection Service (*Ziviler Luftschutz*). Its offices were sometimes identical with the police precinct offices.

2. Licensed Persons.

Other police registers are the register of persons with driver's licenses and pilots' licenses, and the register of persons owning trucks and cars. These registers are to be found in the Traffic Bureau (*Kraftverkehrsamt*) of the police headquarters in the larger cities. In smaller cities and rural districts, these registers are administered by county administrators (*Landrat*).

Another register lists the licenses for firearms. This register is kept by the local field office of the police and at the county seats. There are many other card indices of the administrative police containing the names of people with various kinds of licenses, e.g., traveling salesmen.

E. OCCUPATIONAL REGISTRATION

1. Cultural and Industrial Authorities.

Closely interrelated with the *Volkskartei* of the registration system are the occupational files of the various authorities or estates (*Stand, Kammer*) of the Nazi totalitarian set-up. These files frequently indicate the political reliability of a person from the Nazi point of view. Card indices of all newspaper men, writers, publishers, moving picture people, etc., are kept in the files of the Reich Cultural Authority (*Reichskulturkammer*). The authorities of the physicians, lawyers, teachers, professors, technicians, etc., have their own card indices. Similar indices exist at the Reich Industrial Authority (*Reichsstand der Deutschen Industrie*), at the Reich Trade Authority (*Reichsstand des Deutschen Handels*), at the Chamber of Commerce (*Handelskammer*), at the Reich Authority for Craftsmen (*Reichsstand des Deutschen Handwerks*), at the Reich Peasant Authority (*Reichsbauernschaft*). In addition to the central file, each district has its own card index, maintained by the district or local field office of the professional organization.

2. German Labor Front.

A comprehensive index of workers and employees is in the hands of the German Labor Front (*Deutsche Arbeitsfront*) which is an organizational branch of the Nazi Party but includes nearly all workers. The central register is located in Berlin. Regional registers can be found at the Labor Front offices attached to each Gau administration of the Nazi Party.

3. National Employment Office.

Another comprehensive card index of workers and employees is available at the National Employment Office (*Ar-*

beitsamt). Their registration system has been tremendously enlarged during recent years as a result of the manpower shortage. Besides possessing complete files of all German workers, the employment offices also had registers of foreign labor. This is of utmost importance since foreign labor, so far barracked, is partly not registered with the general registration offices. The seat of the *Arbeitsamt* is usually identical with the county seats.

4. Sickness Insurance.

A further duplicate of labor registration is available at the office of the compulsory Sickness Insurance Agency (*Krankenkasse*) located throughout the country.

F. COMMERCIAL REGISTERS

The municipal courts have the commercial register (*Handelsregister*¹), which is of the utmost importance for commercial investigations; it reveals details about the owners of business firms and corporations. Another court register is that of bankruptcies (*Konkursregister*).

Patents are listed in the Reich Patent Office (*Reichspatentamt*) in Berlin; descriptions of patent registrations can be found in various magazines and technical libraries.

In order to obtain details on financial manipulations between husband and wife or parents and children, the *Gueterrechtsregister* and the records of wills should be consulted. They are also kept at the municipal court (*Amtsgericht*). See also the chapter on Internal Revenue files. (III.B.)

G. MILITARY REGISTRATION

1. Recruiting Files.

The military files and index cards were established according to the *Wehrgesetz* of May 21, 1935.² The records contain a large amount of information on each soldier. They are kept at the *Wehrersatzinspektion* e.g. in Ulm, Stuttgart, Nuernberg, etc., and the district offices, called *Wehrbezirke* (Army Recruiting Districts). These files have to be watched in order to avoid their misuse for secret re-armament for which they were used after World War I.

2. Register of Casualties.

This army register reveals the number of dead, wounded, and missing soldiers.

The army registration files are obtainable at the Army Recruiting Offices (*Wehrersatzdienststellen*) and at the central and regional offices for war casualties in Berlin and throughout Germany.

¹ *Reichsgesetz ueber die Angelsenheiten der freiwilligen Gerichtsbarkeit*, May 17, 1898.

² *Reichsgesetzblatt* 1935, I, p. 609.

V. IDENTIFICATION PAPERS

A. Passport and Identification Card

In general, people in Germany are much more document-minded than people in the Anglo-Saxon countries. This is due partly to the influence of the Roman law which prefers the document to the testimony of fellow-men as evidence. In addition, the belief in the validity of personal documents is one of the results of the elaborate registration machinery and its tradition.

The issuing of certain identification papers is under the jurisdiction of the police registration system. Thus this registration system is bi-directional since it is possible to go both ways: from the person to the card index and from the card index to the person. However, the bi-directional system is only partial since not all persons in Germany were compelled to have identification papers.

There are two high-level identification papers issued by the administrative police based upon the registration files. These are the passport (*Reisepass*) and the identification card (*Kennkarte*). Both include photographs, signature, description of physical characteristics; the latter card includes fingerprints. The issuing of passports is regulated by the law about Passport, Alien Police, Registration, and Identification of May 11, 1937.¹ The issuing of identification cards is regulated by the decree regarding identification cards of July 23, 1938.²

Whereas a passport is required only for persons traveling to foreign countries, certain persons are required to carry an identification card within Germany. In this category belong all males over eighteen years of age and all Jews, the latter having a special identification card stamped with a "J". This "J" is also stamped on the passports of Jews. The personal registration card and the people's card index carry a notation indicating whether or not the individual is in possession of an identification card or of a passport, or whether he is under passport ban.

Besides the usual passport with brown cover, there exists the green service passport (*Dienstpass*) for German officials and the grey passport for stateless (*Staatenlosenpass*), a travel document issued by the police to residents whose nationality cannot be determined.

B. Drivers' Licenses and Certificates of Conduct.

Another high level identification paper issued by the police is the driver's license with photograph. Police certificates frequently used for identification purposes are the certificate of conduct (*Fuehrungszeugnis*) issued by the Resident Regis-

¹ *Reichsgesetzblatt* 1937 I. p. 589.

² *Reichsgesetzblatt* 1938 I. pp. 913, 921, 922.

tration Office. It attests to the fact that a person has lived at a certain place and has no police record. Not an identification document, yet it is frequently used as such and is a stamped duplicate of the last in-registration. Furthermore, the *Invalidentkarte*, issued by the administrative police, should be mentioned. It certifies payments of the employees' compulsory invalidity insurance.

C. BIRTH CERTIFICATES

The most common but low-level identification papers in Germany are the birth, marriage, and death certificates, all issued by the Civil Status Office (*Standesamt*). It is more common in Germany than in the United States for people to have their birth certificate because the Civil Status Offices have been operating in most parts of the country for more than one hundred years.

D. CITIZENSHIP PAPERS

The official documents proving German citizenship are not a passport but the citizenship document (*Staatsangehorigkeitsausweis*) and the certificate of origin (*Heimatschein*), issued to Germans abroad. These documents are issued by the District Government (*Regierungspräsident*), or in Berlin, by the *Polizeipräsident*. In order to obtain a citizenship document the applicant has to prove that his father possessed German citizenship at the time of birth of the applicant, or that the applicant had been naturalized.

E. MILITARY, WORKING AND PARTY CERTIFICATES

Two other groups of identification papers are quite common in Germany. The first group are such military identification papers as the military passport (*Militärpass*) and the identification tag (*Erkennungsmarke*) worn by former soldiers. Genuine and forged passports will play a role during the occupational period.

Another paper frequently used for identification purposes is the working book (*Arbeitsbuch*). Other people have a registration card of their professional or occupational authority (*Berufsstand*) which is a prerequisite for working in the special field, as, for example, the membership card of the Reich Press Authority (*Reichspressekammer*).

Finally, membership cards of the Nazi Party and its branches should be mentioned. Many documents will be destroyed but the document-saving Germans will preserve a large amount which will become of utmost value to the occupational authorities.

VI.

COMPARISON BETWEEN THE U. S. AND THE GERMAN SYSTEM

The main differences between registration systems in the United States and Germany are as follows:

1. The United States has no comprehensive *national* registration system.

2. The partial registration systems functioning in the United States are not determined by a national-federal-police administration.

3. There does not exist in the United States that intimate relationship between local police precinct and resident which is so characteristic of the German *Polizeistaat*. In Germany the local police headquarters *is* the registration office.

4. In Germany, in contrast to the United States, the identity of persons can be established through registration records. This is the result of the growth of Germany's permanent bureaucracy and the accumulation of records kept up-to-date for many generations.

Therefore, fingerprinting and photographing play only a minor role not only in German but also in other continental registration systems. Fingerprinting is mainly used in areas where emergency registration becomes necessary, especially for non-German labor prisoners or for Germans repatriated from abroad — in short, for persons lacking documentary evidence of identity.

VII.

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