

Free german denazification argumentative essay sample

[People](#), [Adolf Hitler](#)



The denazification efforts of the United States in Germany after the Second World War were an attempt to transform the Nazi ideals imposed by Adolf Hitler into the democratic ideals laid by the Americans, which turned out to be a failure. The process of denazification began in Germany after the death of Hitler. Germany split up into four regions as per the Potsdam conference. The Soviet Union, the Great Britain, the United States and France gained each part of the country. Though they had their individual agendas on how to address the country, they placed denazification above all agendas. General George S. Patton Jr. declared about the terms of the Potsdam Conference before the press. He stated that the policies and terms mentioned by General Eisenhower exactly reflect the discussions that happened during the Potsdam conference. He mentioned that they aimed for a complete denazification program as immediate and as quick as possible. Another goal was to care for the displaced persons to the extent of making the Germans carry the burden of their maintenance.

The most important goal was to provide the Germans an absolute standard of living, which is higher than that of the surrounding countries. In addressing denazification, the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces set up a special branch, which followed a set of rules and regulations to implement in the event of dismissing the beliefs of the Nazi system. The Americans wanted to carry out a full scale purge program, which included a board of anti-Nazis that classified the Germans on the basis of their Nazism. In January 1946, the Allied Control Council various certain guidelines and judicial procedures to address certain groups and people. The denazification program administered the military army was an interim policy designed for

the initial period of occupation. The American army was against the recruitment of Nazis in positions held by the government as they had distrust against the Germans for their terrible crimes.

The army wanted the Germans implement the functions of a democratic society. They issued questionnaires to the Germans aged 18 and above to find out their political beliefs and categorize the individuals into five major categories. Critics believed that the army had neither proper policy nor does it have the knowledge of firm occupation in Germany. Though the program received criticism due to the policies of the Army, it didn't turn out to be a failure. In order to solve the criticism that arose due to the questionnaire program, the American army appointed a government called the Lander government; however the government failed to address the situation. The United States lost the very little that it achieved as a part of denazification through the demobilization of the stampede. The denazification programs launched in the United States zone were an outstanding accomplishment. The Americans introduced the democratic elections in Germany as the next step towards denazification.

Though the protests against the severity of the allegations reflected the need for prosecution, they believed in the confidence of the anti-Nazi groups, which took the responsibility of reconstruction of Germany. The Americans wanted to educate the Germans on the benefits of reshaping their communities according to the democratic dogmas. However, their greatest weakness was to re-educate the Germans, in spite of several efforts made through radio, press and the school system. In the school system, the first difficulty was the procurement of well-trained teachers to administer the Law

for Liberation, while the second difficulty was the unavailability of adequate books based on the ideology of denazification. The outset of the denazification program constituted a revolutionary approach to occupation policies. As a part of the denazification program, the American army felt the need for cleansing the judiciary system and professional categories, such as the lawyers and doctors.

The army punished the active Nazis by fines, imprisonment and forbiddance against participation in public life. Since the Germans were not able to overthrow the Nazi system, the American army had to take the responsibility of dissolving Nazi organizations, destroying the Nazi institution, abrogating Nazi laws and eliminating the Nazis from positions of power or influence. The army granted amnesties to certain groups of incriminated persons, such as disabled persons and persons with low income and property. The further damage to the denazification law resulted from the application of the amnesties. Several Nazis escaped prosecution as a part of the principle of amnesties. In the initial stages, the denazification program was slow and fumbling; however, the American army implemented a clear-cut directive and rigorous purge program. The clergy, the teaching profession and the judiciary system were the major targets of the denazification program. The American army couldn't control the outcomes according to their intentions. In spite of the rigor of the American objectives, guilty parties frequently escaped punishment. Most of the individuals avoided sanctions by omitting to register their party affiliations and then by avoiding further attention. The German boards and agencies involved in the denazification program had their own agendas and neglected the orders of the American

army on various occasions. For American occupational authorities, the clear solution to the problem of the denazification program was the capitalization of the German views. The denazification program was unable to redefine the relationship of the American troops with the political class of Berlin. For Americans to view Germans not as subjects but as partners committed to the American principles of democratic reconstruction and ideas for constitution and social reform became a difficult task.

The Law for Liberation ordered the Germans to create a special board to establish German denazification courts. The Germans established more than 545 tribunals, which were not mere courts, but institutions set up to measure political responsibility. These tribunals tried, convicted and sentenced only 930 Germans out of a total number of three million. The determination of the Germans was not as good as that of the American army. General Lucius Clay was the person majorly responsible for the denazification laws. While the Americans felt that denazification was a tool to democratize the German population, the Germans could not withstand the policies and rules imposed by the army of the United States. German denazification officials accepted bribes and threatened the prosecution witnesses. It was impossible for the American army to carry out the occupation without the support of the Germans.

The individuals who appeared before the tribunal before the summer of 1946 had to face a careful scrutiny and stiffer punishments than those whose cases came up in 1948. The Germans in position of importance escaped from the punishments. The law prevented the Germans from employment based on their presumptive denazification classification in the case of pending

cases. The prosecutors invested more time in gathering evidence against the individuals. The defendants with more money were capable enough to afford lawyers and apply delaying tactics to escape the jail sentences. On the other hand, the Americans' ultimate goal was to remove the National Socialists from the positions of power and influence. The bureaucracy played by the elite class in turn affected the general public of Germany. Finally, the American army had to insist on the German law rather than decreeing their power as an army. The Germans preferred the same as it would absolve them of responsibility for an unpopular program. Hence, the denazification program was only a partial success.

General Clay faced criticism in handling the denazification program.

American officials absolved Clay off the blame. The court officials accused Clay for falsifying information. The denazification cases proceeded in the courts; however, the courts amnestied the individuals or modified their decisions in the cases that involve jail sentences and heavy fines. To conclude, the denazification program failed due to the irresponsibility of the officials and lack of proper administration. By the year 1948, the entire denazification program implemented by the United States crumbled and war crime trials soon met the same fate. The denazification program faced criticism that it punished the poor, but not the rich and the elite class.

General Clay had no other option but to shut down the trials as most of the actions that took place during the period aimed to wind up the whole process. Thus, the program of denazification ended up as a failure to fulfill the objectives set by the Americans to democratize the nation.

References

Gimbel, John. *The American Occupation of Germany: Politics and the Military, 1945-1949*. Stanford University Press, 1968.