



The military and society: a German approach

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L'Armée de Terre dans la société

The place of the military in German society is singular. Originally tolerated by a society marked by the ruins of war and the defeat of 1945, the German armed forces were gradually adopted. But a certain mistrust of the military remains in an environment more concerned with economic prosperity and comfort than with political and military action.

The place of the German soldier in society is marked by the reduction, as far as possible, of any "military" singularity, the adoption of a smooth profile, and a certain permeability to external influences, which in turn allows for unborn participation in the military. The military elites are gloriously involved in defence policy orientations and decisions, while a range of influential associations represent the concerns and interests of the military and the defence community in society.

The weight of history: soldiers "tolerated" after two centuries of "militarism".

Prussian Tradition and "State within the State"

According to a reflection attributed to DIDEROT, states have armies, whereas Prussia in his time was an army with a state. The line is obviously forced, but the fact remains that the rise of Prussia, German unification and the cohesion of the Hohenzollern Empire owe much to an army totally devoted to its sovereign and enjoying a privileged position in society, alongside a fussy but active bureaucracy and, from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, a first-rate industrial power.

This situation persisted despite the prescriptions of the Treaty of Versailles, and the organisation and cohesion of the Reichswehr allowed the spectacular rise of the Wehrmacht to a position of power in the 19th century. This was marked by the ambiguity of its leadership's attitude towards National Socialism, but it was blamed for the crushing defeat of 1945.

Pacifism, effacement, tolerance

Germany as a sovereign state disappeared in 1945, its industrial power was partially dismantled, and the creation of the two German states with limited sovereignty from the respective zones of occupation in 1949 was the result of rivalry between the victors.

These two states were under occupation for several years (until 1955), and there was no question of German armed forces at that stage. The former military cadres turned to private activities in a space undergoing reconstruction, and soon, in the western part, in strong growth. Chancellor ADENAUER's attempt to set up a German contingent as part of a European defence was rejected by the Bundestag in its inaugural foreign policy debate on 24 and 25 November 1949.

The growing need for security on the eastern border of the Federal Republic led to the creation of a European police force in 1951. The growing need for security on the eastern border of the Federal Republic led to the creation of a border police force (BGS) in 1951, which was militarily organized and encased, but under the Federal Ministry of the Interior. Its counterpart in the GDR, the encased People's Police (WP), created in 1952, is dedicated to the maintenance of law and order. Both were to form the nucleus of the armed forces that were later re-created, the Bundeswehr in 1955, the NVA in 1955 and the NVA in 1955.⁴³ in 1956.

The reconstitution of the armed forces in the West as a consequence of the failure of the EDC⁴⁴ The first, after ten years of "military absence" and six years after the formation of the two states. In the East, the NVA is a clearly political army, recruited from the popular strata of the population and strongly supervised by the Communist Party and the "political officers" present in the units. It was originally a professional army; conscription was only introduced in 1962.

The Bundeswehr, on the other hand, is conceived from the outset as a conscript army, intended exclusively to occupy a niche in forward defence in numbers. The first conscripts were incorporated in 1958, the provision of the twelve divisions of its army to NATO was to take effect in 1959, followed by that of the Luftwaffe and the Bundesmarine in 1960. The beginnings are difficult, due to reluctant public opinion and recruitment difficulties in a period of strong economic growth. It was not until 1962 that the last division assigned to NATO was made available. It was in the same year that the Bundeswehr gained legitimacy in the eyes of the public by intervening alongside the British and Americans in the relief operations during the Hamburg tidal wave in February 1962 (340 dead).

Germany as a Cold War battlefield and military "saturation".

German territory was then the stake and potential battlefield of a European conflagration. Above all, it is the actual area of deployment of 26 NATO and 30 Warsaw Pact divisions on both sides of the German border. For almost four decades, military activity was intense there and Sy exercises followed one another, generating real nuisances, but above all well exploited in the West by pacifist and anti-militarist movements. The presence of numerous garrisons undoubtedly benefited the local economy, but the image of the military, including that of the Bundeswehr, suffered as a result. Nor has the presence of garrisons facilitated contacts between the population and its soldiers. Since most of the existing military installations were used by the occupying forces and later by the allies, the Bundeswehr had to establish itself in new barracks, located according to the requirements of the artificial border created by the Cold War. One of the consequences of these new barracks, which were often located far away from the cities, was the development of a life in isolation and of "military ghettos", especially since the development of society in the past few years has been accompanied by a change in the way in which the Bundeswehr has lived and worked in these ghettos. The evolution of society, and in particular the work of spouses, has rapidly contributed to the development of geographical celibacy, which is not conducive to the local integration of the military community.

Changing circumstances and new challenges for reunified Germany

The end of the Soviet threat and the division of the country naturally changed the situation, as the original and main justification for the Bundeswehr disappeared. The theoretical strength of the German armed forces, which in 1989 consisted of 495,000 Bundeswehr personnel and 170,000 NVA personnel, was drastically reduced to 370,000 by the 4+2 Treaty and then steadily decreased to a minimum of 185,000 in 2016, with the Bundeswehr becoming more professional in the meantime (2011). At the same time, Germany regained full sovereignty in 1990 and, not without domestic political difficulties, established a national command and strategic planning capability. Germany's recent but asserted determination to play a greater strategic role and the analysis of the risks linked to instability in eastern Europe have reversed the downward trend in troop numbers and led to a certain increase in the strength of its forces, the target being 192 500 troops by 2023. This is a budgetary target, with actual numbers slightly below. The problem of career attractiveness is a constant in the history of the Bundeswehr, which recruits more in the new and eastern Länder than in the old Länder, where the job market is more flourishing.

Primacy of Politics and Dilution of the Military in Society

Innere Führung and Uniformed Citizen

The "founding fathers" of the Bundeswehr were concerned to avoid any "militaristic" drift and any rapprochement with the armed forces of the past and sought to create a modern

type of soldier whose way of thinking and acting is in no way different from that of civil society. The soldier will defend the society to which he belongs all the better if he is in perfect symbiosis with it, sharing its democratic and moral values. The principle of Innere Führung, and of the entire organization that results from it, aims at the voluntary adherence, "from within" the individual, to the cause that he defends, and at the adoption of appropriate behaviour. It is an ongoing battle, with a large number of courses, seminars and other activities taking place in the training of military personnel and in the life of the units.

Every soldier also has a right of representation, a tradition dating back to the "Freikorps" of 1918, through the intermediary of "trusted men" within the units, who have the ear of the command, and to whom everyone can turn without an intermediary.

Parliamentary control is closely exercised and ensures that the political line of the Bundeswehr is maintained. It is exercised at various levels, starting with the strategic level. The Bundestag decides on the deployment of forces, except in emergencies, and sets a ceiling for each operation and for a specific period of time. It also takes the form of regular visits to the units by members of the Bundestag Defence Committee and the Wehrbeauftragter, delegated by the Bundestag to the Bundeswehr. It is also reflected in regular visits to units by members of the Bundestag Defence Committee and in the existence of the Wehrbeauftragter, a parliamentary defence lord from the ranks of the Bundestag, who can be approached by any military or civilian member of the armed forces with a claim to make. This deputy produces an annual report on the state of the Bundeswehr.

These provisions naturally raise the question of hierarchical relations and the exercise of individual rights and freedoms, since soldiers are, as a matter of principle, just as much citizens as their leaders. The exercise of command is not made any easier by this, but it does accommodate this state of affairs, no doubt helped by the sense of discipline and efficiency that characterizes our German friends.

Participation and involvement of the military in political life

The principle of "citizen in uniform" includes the participation of military personnel in political life. The Military Personnel Statute (Soldatengesetz) provides that military personnel may exercise all the political rights enjoyed by other citizens, provided that their political activity does not interfere with "comradeship", i.e. the cohesion of units. Thus, the participation of military personnel in political meetings is permitted, the wearing of uniforms on such occasions is prohibited, as is propaganda activity within military compounds.

A member of the military may hold elected office, but such office may not be set against the good of the service, for example, designation for an external operation. Military status does not preclude membership of a political organization or party, and a "political" profile is not necessarily detrimental to a career. An extreme case is that of the former ECS, General Harald KUJAT, former commander of a Luftwaffe training battalion, whose career was divided between the US and Canada. His career was divided between NATO staffs

and the EMA, in the shadow of SPD personalities, in particular Ministers LEBER, APEL, and SCHARPING, whose planning staff he commanded before serving as Generalinspekteur from 2000 to 2002.

Strategy, policy and collusion

Military participation in strategic decisions

Under the authority of the Minister of Defence, head of the armies in peacetime, the CEMA (Generalinspekteur) and the EMA (FüS) have gradually taken a prominent place within the Ministry.

Since 2012 (Dresden decree), the CEMA has been responsible for general planning, operational readiness and the conduct of engagements. It thus has control over all planning, including equipment, and the EMA constitutes a ministerial department in which 1,125 military personnel and 1,566 civilians (as of 30 September 2019) share responsibilities.

The longevity of the various EMAs in their functions, often more than five years, and the homogeneity of their curricula, most of them coming from artillery and armoured weapons. The longevity of the various CEMAs in their functions, often more than five years, and the homogeneity of their curriculum, most of them coming from the artillery and armoured forces of the army, seem to be consistent with the necessary visibility in terms of planning and the economic weight of the defence industry.

"Lobbying and economic weight

EMA's prerogatives in defence planning give it a unique position vis-à-vis a defence industry that is all the more tied to national orders as it is limited by strict export controls.

Several circles or groups of influence thus bring together military, political and industrial figures such as Ewald Heinrich von KLEIST (1922-2013), a survivor of the conspiracy of 20 July 1944, a founding member of the (GSP), which currently has 7,300 members, and the initiator of the annual Munich conference long known as the Wehrkunde, or "Davos of Security".

The Weight of the Reserves: The Bundeswehr Reserves Association [VdRBwJ

The system of recruiting military officers, and in particular officers, as contract employees before they become career soldiers, has had the effect of multiplying the number of

reservists returning to civilian life after a dozen years in uniform.

The Bundeswehr Reserves Association (Verband der Reservisten der Deutschen Bundeswehr), founded in 1960, is the Bundestag's authorised contact point for all matters relating to the reserves.

With 113,500 members (end 2018), divided into 3,000 territorial sections, including 21 military bands, it publishes the monthly magazine "Loyal", with a circulation of 128,000 copies, and is responsible, among other things, for the organization of reservist activities. In addition to the annual subscription of its members (30 €), the Reservistenverband is financed by the defence budget to the tune of 17.3 M€, intended to cover its personnel costs (225 permanent staff) and administrative costs (100 permanent offices in the territory).

Since 1960, seventeen presidents, including two general officers, have succeeded one another at the head of the Reservistenverband, and senior officers from the rank of commander to colonel. Nine of them were Members of the Bundestag, all of them since 1991.

A link for the defence community: the Bundeswehr Association (Deutscher Bundeswehrverband, DBwV)

The Bundeswehr Association is a professional association founded in 1956 and is open to serving and retired military and civilian Bundeswehr personnel and their families. It has approximately 200,000 members. Approximately 65% of serving military personnel are members of the DBwV.

The Bundestag and the Federal Government, as the representative organization of the military, request its participation as a representative organization of the military when legislating in matters affecting the interests of military personnel and their families. For its part, the association strives to influence parliamentary debates and government decisions. For example, the DBwV has been involved in all matters relating to the status of military personnel, has been behind measures such as the creation of the Technical Officer Corps, has spoken out on gender equality in the Bundeswehr, has campaigned for the establishment of the Bundeswehr Technical Officer Corps, has been active in the field of the Bundeswehr, has been involved in the development of the Bundeswehr and the Bundeswehr itself, and has been involved in the development of the Bundeswehr. It also participated in discussions on the financing of external operations and in obtaining improved benefits for the wounded and their dependants.

The DBwV publishes the monthly magazine "Die Bundeswehr" for its members, which has a circulation of 155,000 copies and has an influence far beyond its membership. A number of organizations and foundations, which are dedicated to the mutual aid of servicemen and women in need, political education, citizenship education and the further development of Innere Führung. It has also developed activities of a social, economic and

commercial nature (loans at preferential rates, central purchasing office).

In order to represent the world of defence, the DBwV opened its membership to former NVA soldiers, some 10,000 of whom joined its ranks out of the 40,000 or so who were members of the short-lived East German military trade association when it was dissolved in 1990. Its elected president is an active senior officer, although it has several active and inactive general officers among its members.

The significant amount of the monthly membership fee (12 € for active personnel, reduced rate for certain categories), which includes legal protection and compulsory civil liability insurance, gives the association the means to achieve a certain degree of independence and to expand beyond the military world.

A unique type of integration

After the trauma of the two World Wars, born in pain and more tolerated than accepted by a population more concerned with peace and comfort than with military adventures, the German forces have long been in a state of shock. For a long time, German forces have been the object of a conflict of legitimacy within a divided society, and have not been able to cope well with the separation between two antagonistic states.

Thus, the status of the Bundeswehr soldier, a citizen in uniform, is the result of a compromise between a political will to banish any return to "militarism" and the operational imperatives of discipline and unit cohesion.

The end of the Cold War, reunification and the restoration of full German sovereignty changed the situation and the Bundeswehr, initially a contingent integrated into a defensive alliance, became the regalian instrument of a state with new and progressively asserted strategic ambitions.

The situation of the German military, however, is still characterised by the political will to reduce any particularism of the soldier in relation to society, a high degree of permeability of the armed forces to external influences, strict parliamentary control and the self-control of the Innere Führung.

However, this permeability in turn allows the military to exercise an unborn influence in their functions, both in terms of defence strategy and planning and in terms of equipment. The military world in the broadest sense - active, reserve, families, pensioners, civilian employees - can count on a network of associations that contribute effectively to the defence of its concerns and the promotion of its interests.

43| Nationale Volksarmee (National People's Army), was from 1956 to 1990 the army of the German Democratic Republic.

44| European Defense Community.

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