

Artifacts of Fascism: Nazi Books at the University of Cincinnati Libraries

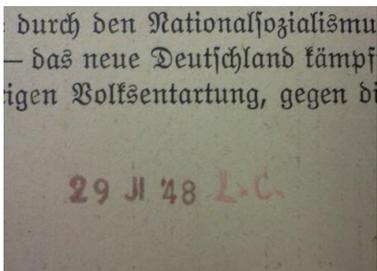
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University of Cincinnati Libraries

University of Cincinnati Libraries has been developing its collection for over a hundred years and its sources and suppliers for materials have been widely diverse. Many books did not come to the library new from the publisher but had been in other collections, coming to UC through donations and other means. These 'used' books often contain bookplates and stamps of the previous owners reflecting the books' provenance, or history of ownership. At times this history can be surprising and can reflect aspects of the time and place in which the books were used. Demonstrating this are books in UC Libraries' collection that were published in Nazi Germany during World War Two.

During the war the ability for US libraries to obtain books published in Germany and other enemy countries was curtailed. At the end of the war, recognizing the nation's libraries were all in similar situation with this dearth of materials, the Library of Congress (LOC) instituted the Cooperative Acquisitions Project. In this Project, LOC staff stationed abroad worked to purchase or obtain publications produced during the war. Sources included not only publishers themselves but also libraries and collections seized from National Socialist government and military organizations as the country underwent 'denazification'. Once the materials were evaluated for subject content, participating US libraries (113 at the start of the program) were then able to buy materials in the subject areas desired, akin to the current practice of library purchase plans. Materials of limited availability were distributed on a priority system based on criteria of a library's existent strength in a subject area and a library's geographical location; if only one copy of a publication existed, the LOC retained it. While the participating libraries specified what subject areas they desired, they were not given the option to review titles – they got what they were sent, thereby reducing the overall processing involved. Given the social environment of Germany at the time it is not surprising that the specific topics of many of the books reflect Nazi interests and ideology. Confiscated materials were cleared by Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives Section of the Office of Military Government to ensure whenever possible previously looted material were returned to rightful owners. The LOC also included for distribution materials from war-related collections found outside Germany that had come under its control as well. The Project lasted for three years and distributed approximately 2,000,000 items of which the LOC retained 485,000.

While no list of titles UC acquired through the Project is known, Project financial statements indicate approximately 2,200 books and 1,300 periodicals were sent to UC. At the time UC cataloging practice marked each book with both a date of accession and a code indicating the book's source, so it is possible to surmise any book belonging to this group by 1) being published in Germany during the war years, and 2) having a date stamp between 1947-1949 with an 'LC' or 'LCC' written next to the date. Additionally some have LOC stamps and marks as well.



An example of a UC accession date stamp with Library of Congress source designation

Most books of this group contain no stamps of previous ownership; others have stamps indicating they belonged to more mundane collections such as city or regional libraries or government offices. However others were linked to organizations that were contributing to larger and sometimes ignominious movements being undertaken during that time.

Author Grønbech, Vilhelm Peter, 1873-1948
Title **Kultur und Religion der Germanen**
Published Hamburg: Hanseatische verlagsanstalt [c1937/1939]



Accessioned in 1949, Langsam Library's copy of this book has the stamp of the *Bibliothek zur Erforschung der Judenfrage* or *Library for Research of the Jewish Question*. The *Institut zur Erforschung der Judenfrage* was opened in Frankfurt in 1939 as part of a planned university system called *Hohe Schule* (High School) to be centers of Nazi research and higher education, and, as the name suggests, to provide justification for anti-Semitic policies and propaganda. Many of the books collected for the HS and the *Institut* were looted and confiscated from Jewish libraries and collections in Germany and throughout occupied Europe. By 1943 the collection numbered over 300,000 volumes.

Translated as *Culture and Religion of the Teutons* this title was originally published in Danish 1909-12 under the title *Vor Folkeæt i Oldtiden* or *Our Racial Descent in Antiquity*.



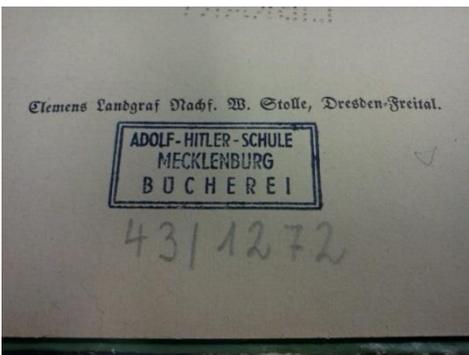
A 1943 photograph of the *Institut's* library catalog with UC's book perhaps on the shelves in the background.

Title **Dokumente der deutschen Politik**
Editor Six, F. A., Deutsches Auslandswissenschaftliches Institute
Published Berlin: Junker und Dünnhaupt [c1935]-1943

In 1947 the library acquired the eleven volume series of *Dokumente der deutschen Politik*, or *Documents of German Politics*. This set was apparently hobbled from various collections as the stamps of previous ownership are varied.



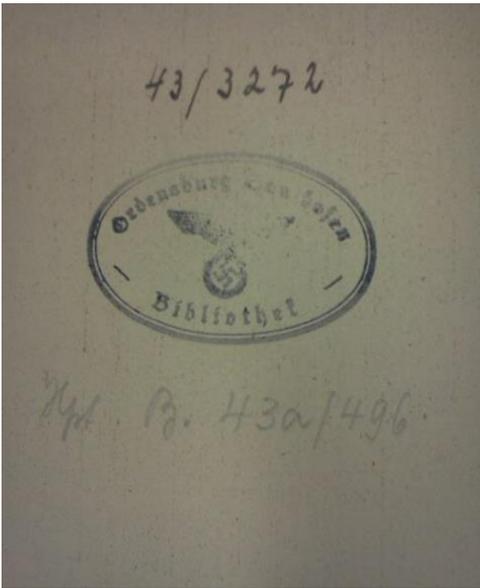
Two volumes of the set contain the stamp of the library of the *Rassenbiologisches Institut der Universität Wien*, or the *Racial Biological Institute of the University of Vienna*. Austria was annexed by Germany in 1938. This institute was one of about two dozen university and research institutions in occupied Europe devoted to Nazi interest and policies toward race and racial purity (or 'racial hygiene'), an aspect of the Holocaust. This particular institute was opened in 1942 as part of the university's medical school to support the curriculum that required courses in racial and genetic science and racial hygiene.



The numbering practice displayed here is a common feature within these books – likely the two-digit year the item was acquired and then item's number.

Three other volumes contain the stamps of libraries of *Adolf Hitler Schulen* (Adolf Hitler Schools) in the cities of Mecklenburg, Westmark, and Scheilsen. With the first established in 1937, there were eventually twelve of these militaristic boarding schools for boys ages 12 and older with the goal of developing and training future Nazi political and military leaders. Acceptance was highly selective, determined by family party affiliation, the student's physical prowess, and 'proper' racial attributes. Upon completion most students would be drafted into the armed forces; some students served as children soldiers in the final days of the war.

Author Kühn, Alfred, et al.
Title **Erbkunde, Rassenpflege, Bevölkerungspolitik: Schicksals Fragen des deutschen Volkes**
Published Leipzig: Quelle & Meyer, 1943

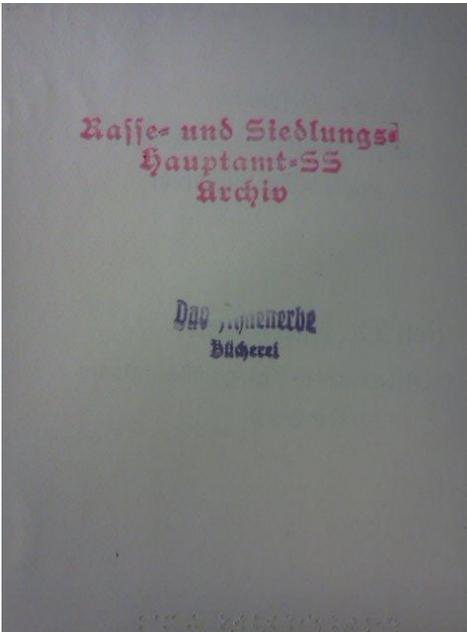


A postcard of the Ordensburg Sonthofen in 1938

Accessioned in 1948 this book (among several others in the collection) has the stamp of the library of the *Ordensburg Sonthofen*. An *ordensburg* was traditionally a medieval fortress; adopting the imagery the National Socialist government set up three *ordensburgs* to be finishing schools for future Nazi leaders and elite military training centers. Sonthofen was started in 1934 and served primarily as an Adolf Hitler School. Hitler himself visited the facility for an inauguration ceremony in 1937. The complex came under American control at the end of the war; thereafter it served a variety of military functions and is still in use today by the German military under the name *Generaloberst Beck Kaserne* (or General Beck Military Base).

The book's title translates to *Inheritance and Race Maintenance, Population Policy: the Fate of the German People*.

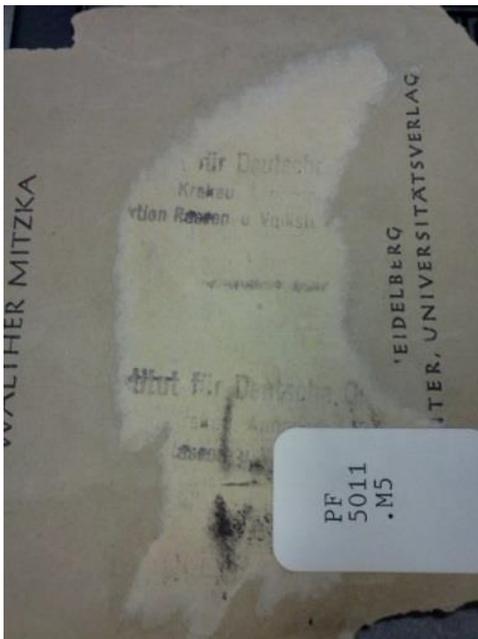
Author Bömer, Karl
Title **Das Dritte Reich im Spiegel der Weltpresse: historische Dokumente über den Kampf des National Sozialismus gegen die ausländische Lügenhetze**
Published Leipzig: Armanen-verlag, 1934



The SS (*Schutzstaffel*, or Protection Squadrons) was originally formed as a security force serving as body guard for Adolf Hitler and other party leaders. It played an important role in helping Hitler consolidate power in 1934's *Röhm Affair* during which a number of potential rivals to Hitler were assassinated. The group would expand into a major Nazi paramilitary and police force of nearly a million under leadership of Heinrich Himmler and served a variety military, police, and intelligence roles. The SS as "the embodiment of National Socialist master-race ideology" (Zentner) was most notoriously responsible for operation of the extermination camps of the Holocaust.

The title of this book translates to *The Third Reich in the Mirror of the World Press; Historical Documents about the Battle of National Socialism against Foreign Inflammatory Lies*. Published a decade earlier than some others represented here, this copy was apparently held in two collections during this longer period as it contains stamps of two SS organizations. The first is for the archive of the *Rasse-und Siedlungshauptamt* (RuSHA) or the *Race and Resettlement Main Office*. Founded in 1931, this organization's responsibilities were broad-based and included approving membership and marriages of SS men (based on genealogical and racial criteria), providing welfare services for SS families, orphans and widows, establishing rural and suburban settlements of SS families, and coordinating the resettlement of ethnic Germans into territories of recently evicted Jews, Poles and Czechs. The second stamp is for the library of the *Ahnenerbe* or *Ancestral Inheritance*. Founded in 1935 by Himmler, Herman Wirth, and Walter Darré (who also headed RuSHA just mentioned), this elite Nazi research institute "aimed to research Germanic prehistory using racial criteria; to promote the study of German folklore; and to accumulate scientific evidence for the National Socialist worldview" (Zentner). The group sponsored anthropological and archeological expeditions throughout Europe and in locations as far ranging as Bolivia, Tibet, and the Middle East. More sinister research included lethal medical experiments on concentration camp prisoners and the amassing of a Jewish skeleton collection for which 86 concentration camp prisoners were murdered.

Author Mitzka, Walther, 1888-1976
Title **Deutsche Mundarten**
Published Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1943



UC's copy of this book has the remnant of a paper label on its cover identifying it with the *Sektion Rassen- und Volkstumforschung (Racial and National Traditions Research Section)* of the *Institut für Deutsche Ostarbeit (Institute for German East Work)*. The *Institut* was set up in Krakow, Poland in 1940 to perform research on the populous of occupied Poland. "Of particular interest were communities of German descent, for the government intended to regermanize these people and, partially through them, establish the dominance of German culture in Poland" (SI). Materials seized at the end of the war included reports on gathered biographical, genealogical and physical anthropological data such as crania measurements, facial profiles, fingerprints, and hair samples.

The title of the book translates to *German Dialects* and was part of a series of scientific study guides or *Studienführer* published under direction of Dr. Gustav Adolf Scheel, a prominent figure in the SD (*Sicherheitsdienst* or Security Service), the intelligence branch the SS. As the book details the distribution of German dialects throughout the region it seems well in keeping with its group's goals.

Title **Deutsche Schulerziehung: Jahrbuch des Deutschen Zentral-instituts für Erziehung und Unterricht**
Published Berlin: E.S. Mittler & Sohn, 1940

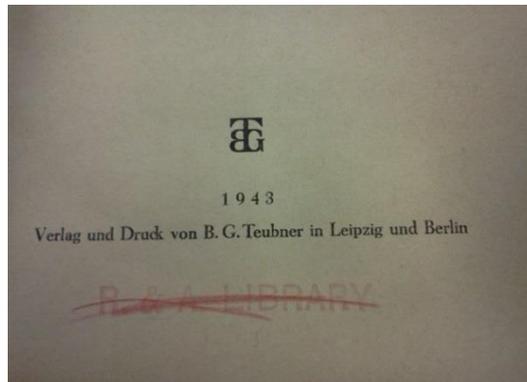
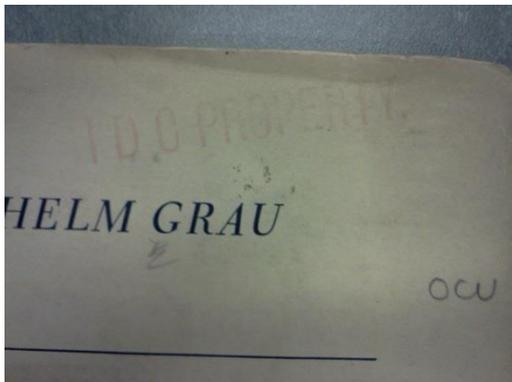


The title of this book translates to *German Education: Yearbook of the German Central Institute for Education*. Well-traveled by the time it was accessioned by UC in 1949, this book was found to have three stamps, two surprisingly in Chinese and the other indicating "Library of Congress Duplicate". The Chinese stamps indicate that the book was the donation of Nakanishi Toshinori to the East Asia Economic Investigation Bureau of the South Manchuria Railroad Company. Japan took control of the South Manchurian Railway in 1906 following the end of the Russo-Japanese War. The railway would notoriously play a part of the Manchurian Incident in 1931 that formed a pretext for the Japanese to seize control of this entire area of China. Research was a focus of the company starting from its first president, and, as Japanese interests in the area grew, the program continued to develop - at its height in 1940 the research department had over 2,300 employees. Topics of research and field work conducted by SMR in China were extensive and included economics and finance, military, law, agriculture, village society, etc., topics useful toward the efforts of colonial management.

In his book *Life along the South Manchurian Railway: the memoirs of Itō Takeo*, the author, who served as one of the Japanese wartime researchers, recounts that after the war that a bulk of the research collections were confiscated and sent to the US (other parts were taken by the Soviet Union and China/KMT). He writes, "These materials, without a doubt, are of great utility for American studies of the Far East ... Though the materials for my own drafts and publications can no longer be found in Japan, they do exist in the Library of Congress in the United States" (p.209). In this case, albeit a single small piece (and that on German education), it exists in the library at UC which acquired the book after the LOC apparently withdrew it as a duplicate copy.

[Thanks to Jade Lin for translation assistance.]

Author	Grau, Wilhelm
Title	Die Judenfrage in der deutschen Geschichte
Published	Leipzig, Berlin: B. G. Teubner, 1943



An artifact from the other side of the war is UC's copy of this book. The title originally published in 1936 translates to *The Jewish Question in German History*. Wilhelm Grau headed the *Institut zur Erforschung der Judenfrage* mentioned above from 1940 to 1942, and perhaps made use of his institute's materials to edit this sixth edition published in 1943.

The United States' Office of Strategic Services (OSS) was the precursor organization of today's Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and was set up in 1942 specifically to gather intelligence for use toward the war effort. This book is faintly stamped "IDC Property" and "R&A Library." The IDC was the Interdepartmental Committee for the Acquisition of Foreign Publications, and was set up by the OSS to obtain publications from the enemy and controlled areas for the purpose of intelligence gathering. German newspapers, books, and other publications were collected from neutral countries such as Sweden, Switzerland, and Turkey. By 1943 staff numbered 150 in both Washington and abroad. The agency would often reproduce the publications on microfilm and distribute them to other government agencies.

R&A refers to Research and Analysis, one of five departments comprising the OSS. The department was charged with reviewing the stream of publications provided by the IDC for usable intelligence. Nine hundred scholars from varying disciplines were enlisted in these efforts. The CIA's website in its pages about the agency's history notes, "Many famous names made contributions to the R&A Branch, such as Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., Sherman Kent, and Ralph Bunche. R&A veterans included seven future presidents of the American Historical Association, five of the American Economic Association, and two Nobel Laureates."

It is gratifying that this copy, if even in a small way, was being used against the ideology that produced it.



The book *Office of Strategic Services 1942-45: The World War II Origins of the CIA* features this photograph with description, "R&A branch amassed a large library of German language materials as references for the reports that it produced for the OSS. Here a civilian employee at OSS headquarters in London browses a shelf of German books on law, administration and politics. (NARA)" UC's book could well be among the collection seen here.

As UC was only one of over 100 libraries participating in the Cooperative Acquisitions Project, it is likely not unique in its holdings of books from such past collections of this period – and those presented here are just a sample of those represented by UC's books. As we move more to electronic sources of materials it is worth remembering that the physical copies of books survived their times and places and they themselves might reflect history just as the content within them. Hopefully these books will continue to serve more honorable purposes in Cincinnati than what many were published for in Germany.

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