

Warning against Fraternization (1945)

Abstract

This is a clip from a 1945 U.S. War Department training film for soldiers about to be deployed to Germany as part of the Allied occupation. Titled *Your Job in Germany*, the film was written by Theodore Geisel (better known as children's book author Dr. Seuss) and directed by well-known Hollywood director Frank Capra, who had previously directed a series of information films titled *Why We Fight* to boost U.S. troops' morale during World War II. The film, which includes some footage captured in Germany by the U.S. Army, explains the policy of non-fraternization to soldiers and warns against trusting any member of the German population. As other sources in this volume show, this strict policy soon gave way to a more conciliatory approach among U.S. occupation troops, especially where German children and women were concerned.

Source

/You are not being sent into Germany as educators. You are soldiers on guard. You will observe their local laws, respect their customs and religion, and you will respect their property rights. You will not ridicule them. You will not argue with them. You will not be friendly. You will be aloof, watchful, and suspicious.

/Every German is a potential source of trouble. Therefore, there must be no fraternization with any of the German people. Fraternization means making friends. The German people are not our friends. You will not associate with German men, women, or children. You will not associate with them on familiar terms, either in public or in private.

/You will not visit their homes, nor will you ever take them into your confidence. However friendly, however sorry, however sick of the Nazi party they may seem, they cannot come back into the civilized fold just by sticking out their hand and saying, "I'm sorry." Sorry? Not sorry they caused the war. They're only sorry they lost it.

/That is the hand that "heiled" Adolf Hitler. That is the hand that dropped the bombs on defenseless Rotterdam, Brussels, Belgrade. That is the hand that destroyed the cities, villages, and homes of Russia. That is the hand that held the whip over the Polish, Yugoslav, French and Norwegian slaves. That is the hand that took their food. That is the hand that starved them. That is the hand that murdered, massacred Greeks, Czechs, Jews. That is the hand that killed and crippled American soldiers, sailors, Marines. Don't clasp that hand. It's not the kind of a hand you can clasp in friendship.

/ "But there are millions of Germans. Some of those guys must be okay."

/Perhaps. But which ones? Just one mistake may cost you your life. Trust none of them. Someday the German people might be cured of their disease. The "super race" disease. The world conquest disease. But they must prove that they have been cured. Beyond the shadow of a doubt. Before they ever again are allowed to take their place among respectable nations. Until that day, we stand guard.

Source: *Your Job in Germany*, USA, 1945. NARA. NAID 4529712

Recommended Citation: Warning against Fraternization (1945), published in: German History in Documents and Images,
<<https://germanhistorydocs.org/en/occupation-and-the-emergence-of-two-states-1945-1961/ghdi:video-5053>> [July 03, 2025].