

## The Wilder Memorandum [\(1\)](#)

Written by the famous script writer/director Billy Wilder, who briefly served in the post-war military government of West Germany.

---

BW/aoc

HEADQUARTERS  
UNITED STATES FORCES, EUROPEAN THEATER  
Information Control Division [\(2\)](#)  
APO 757, U.S. ARMY

SUBJECT: Propaganda through Entertainment. 16 August 1945  
TO: Mr Davidson Taylor [\(3\)](#)

1. So now we are slowly opening up the movie houses in Germany. We are showing them our documentaries, some facts we want them to know and to remember well. We are showing them newsreels which carry along with the news a lesson, a reminder, and a warning. A good job has been done, no doubt. Germans on the whole are receptive and the overall reaction is favorable. Attendance ranges from capacity to satisfactory. And yet we all realize that once this novelty has worn off (in Berlin it has worn off already) we shall find it increasingly difficult to deliver our lessons straight. Will the Germans come in week after week to play the guilty pupil? Sure enough we will be showing them our feature films, pure entertainment along with the documentaries. They will come in alright. Only we may find them dozing apathetically through these documentaries and educational newsreels - to be bright and ready for Rita Hayworth in COVER GIRL. COVER GIRL is a fine film, mind you. It has a love story, it has music and it is in technicolor. However, it does not particularly help us in our program of re-educating the German people. Now *if* there was an entertainment film with Rita Hayworth or Ingrid Bergman or Gary Cooper, in Technicolor if you wish, and with a love story - only with a very special love story, cleverly devised to help us sell a few ideological items - such a film would provide us with a superior piece of propaganda: they would stand in long lines to buy and once they bought it, it would stick. Unfortunately, no such film exists yet. It must be made. I want to make it. [\(4\)](#)

2. In 1940 you remember - during the London blitz - people in the States had to be told that there was a real war on, that England was hanging in the ropes and that she was desperately in need of our help. Newsreels did their share and we were quite impressed by such English documentaries as TARGET FOR TONIGHT. But I think it took a Hollywood film - an 'entertainment film' based on a

fictitious story - to really tell us what was going on. And that what was happening to the Minniver family in England could easily happen to the Jones family in Iowa. As a matter of fact, President Roosevelt having seen the first print of MRS MINIVER urged Metro to put the film on the market as quickly as possible. They rushed it out. It did a job no documentary, no 50 newsreels could have done.(5)

3. Films like MRS. MINIVER or the one I am suggesting can only be made by a professional motion picture company. They must be made on the highest possible level as far as technique, writing, casting, etc., are concerned. Such a film would cost around 1½ million dollars. We have approached the group of touring motion picture executives during their stay in Bad Homburg with this idea, and they showed interest. (6) There were further discussions on this subject with the Hollywood people in Paris. Paramount's Mr. Balaban and Mr. Holan felt that Paramount should be the one to do the film since I am on a long term contract to them and only on a temporary loan to the U. S. Government . (7) They would consider it unfair if I went out and made the film for another commercial company. I myself am all for it - I have worked at Paramount for nine straight years and have written and directed a string of pictures. I know the staff and the crews and I don't think that any other Hollywood company could possibly give me more freedom of action. They will be willing to give me top stars, the best staff and a budget of 1½ million dollars to do the film.

4. As you know, it is a very simple story of an American G.I. stationed here with the occupational troops and a German Fraulein, or I should say, a German Frau, because her husband an Oberleutnant in the Luftwaffe, has been killed in action over Tunisia. I have met such a Frau in Berlin - she was working in a bucket brigade cleaning up the rubble on Kurfurstendamm. (8) I had thrown away a cigarette and she had picked up the butt. We started a conversation. Here it is: 'I am so glad you Americans have finally come because ...' 'Because what?' 'Because now you will help us repair the gas.' 'Sure we will.' 'That's all we are waiting for, my mother and I...' 'I suppose it will be nice to get a warm meal again.' 'It is not to cook...' There was a long pause. I kind of felt what she meant, and I wished she would not say it. She did. 'We will turn it on, but we won't light it. Don't you see! It is just to breathe it in, deep.' 'Why do you say that?' 'Why? Because we Germans have nothing to live for any more.' 'If you call living for Hitler a life, I guess you are right.' I held out a brand new Lucky Strike to her. She did not take it. She just picked up the bucket and went back to the rubble.(9)

Right here in this piece of dialogue is the theme of the picture, and here is the simple ending I want to arrive at: when the gas finally is turned on our German Frau strikes a match to cook her dinner, a

few measly potatoes I grant you - but now that a few facts have dawned on her she has 'something new to live for'. This is what the film should state (in Eisenhower's words): 'That we are not here to degrade the German people but to make it impossible to wage war' - and in the end 'let us give them a little hope to redeem themselves in the eyes of the world'.

As for the G.I., I shall not make him a flag waving hero or a theorizing apostle of democracy. As a matter of fact, in the beginning of the picture I want him not to be too sure of what the hell this was all about. (10) I want to touch on fraternization, on homesickness, on black market. Furthermore, (although it is a 'love story') boy does *not* get girl. He goes back home with his division while the girl he leaves behind 'sees the light'. (11) There shall be no pompous messages. Let me quote you another piece of dialogue I ran into in Berlin. I had a German driver and this is the kind of dialogue that would develop between us: 'About this British election - now that this Atlee has defeated Churchill, what is Churchill going to do?' 'I guess he will stay in politics. Or he will write a book, or paint.' 'Maybe he is going to make a Putsch nicht wahr?' 'I don't think so.' 'You mean he is not even going to shoot Atlee?' 'No. he is not.' 'Are you sure?' 'Look man, Wilkie did not make a Putsch against Roosevelt and Dewey did not shoot Truman.' 'That's funny.' 'It's hilarious, it's democratic!' I want to put such stuff into the film because I think it has just the right texture to say things without preaching. (12)

5. I have spent two weeks in Berlin (working on a report about future German film production). I found the town mad, depraved, starving, fascinating as a background for a movie. My notebooks are filled with hot research stuff. I have photographed every corner I need for atmosphere. I have talked to General Gavin, the Commanding General of the 82nd Airborne Division, now the main occupying U.S. troops in Berlin: he assured me of every cooperation. (13) I have lived with some of his G.I.s and put down their lingo. I have talked to Russian WACs and British M.P.'s. I have fraternized with Germans, from bombed out university professors to three cigarette-chippies at the Femina. (14) I have almost sold my wristwatch at the black market under the Reichstag. I have secured the copyrights to the famous song '*Berlin kommt wieder*'. (15) I think I am quite ready now to sit down with my collaborator and start writing the script.

6. The film should be made in just *one* version, the Americans speaking English and broken German. The Germans speaking German and broken English, the Russians speaking Russian. etc. If necessary, we can put in occasional titles, but I shall try making it all as natural as possible. Once the script is finished it shall be submitted to the War Department in Washington. I also want to send a copy to this Division for its approval. The film shall be shot in Hollywood, that is the interiors which will comprise about 85% of the

film. The exteriors will be shot in Berlin, they will be silent and only a skeleton crew of some 8 men and the 2 stars will be needed here. I figure we will have to spend some 3 weeks in Berlin to get these shots. If transportation in Europe cannot be obtained through the Army, I could also do the exteriors in Hollywood by using process shots.

7. Together with this memorandum, I am handing in a report on future German picture production. In my opinion, no production of German pictures is possible in the near future. It will take some time to vet prospective producers, to assemble stars, writers, directors and crews. As for the equipment, most of it has been stolen or destroyed. (16) I should think that there will be no new German films made for the next eight or ten months. As we are not here to produce films ourselves, but only to *control* the ones the Germans will be producing. (17) I am suggesting in my report that we shall find a man who will be sitting in Berlin, together with the British and Russians, and whose job it will be to read all proposed scripts, to check on policy and to watch out that no Fascist thought or Nazi propaganda gets on their celluloid. I don't think that the Division will need me for this kind of passive job. As for the distribution end, we have now with us Mr. Schwartz and Mr. Joseph, two extremely able men who can handle that sort of stuff very much better than I (having never very much bothered about anything but the actual making of films). I frankly feel that my further stay in Bad Homburg would be stealing money from the Government.

8. If I should be given a quickly go ahead signal on my film project, I think I could place the finished product sometime early next year into General McClure's hands to show it to the German people. I am conceited enough to say that you will find this 'entertainment' film the best propaganda yet. (18)

BILLY WILDER

---

## NOTES

1. The Wilder Memorandum is copied from the book *The Americanization of Germany, 1945-1949* by Ralph Willett. Pages 40-44, (1989).

2. The Information Control Division (ICD) was formerly known as The Psychological Warfare Department (PWD) but changed it's name when the war ended.

3. Davidson Taylor is the chief of the Film, Theater, and Music branch of the Information Control Division (ICD). He was recruited out of CBS radio, and within months of the time of the memorandum, Taylor will leave the military government and be promoted to vice-president of programming for CBS. His boss at

both the ICD and CBS are the same person: Colonel William Paley, the owner of CBS who headed the Radio branch of the Psychological Warfare Department during the war. Paley is Jewish. The only person above Paley in the ICD is General Robert McClure.

4. "Cleverly devised to sell a few ideological items." Brings to mind the title of a book by Marshall McLuhan called "The Medium Is The Message" (massage not message) in that when you watch a movie, it might be that a message is being massaged into your psyche, possibly in a clever underhanded way you're not aware of. It's what Wilder did in the movie *The Major and the Minor* (1942): a comedy for the American audience but that had an underlying message advocating war with Germany. The script was written pre-Pearl Harbor. In other words, Wilder advocated the USA in a war with Germany before Pearl Harbor. Wilder's *The Major and the Minor* is a comedy with a bizarre poor taste concept: a man of around 30 years old, a Major in the military, becomes obsessed with a 12 year old girl. Except the girl is really just dressed up as a girl and is actually a grown woman (played by Ginger Rogers). Even more bizarre is the pro-war message that is inserted: when the Major suddenly realizes that the person he's obsessed with is not 12 years old, but actually a full-grown woman, they then embrace, and the dialogue that then occurs is pro-war.



Wilder and Ginger Rogers on  
the set of *The Major And the Minor*

5. He's talking about how well propaganda worked on the Americans!

*Mrs. Miniver* (1942) (Wilder spells it 'Minniver') is a movie urging Americans to get involved in a war against Germany, and made by another German speaking Jew, William Wyler. In the last scene, an Anglican minister gives a stirring pro-war sermon inside a bombed out English church. The camera then pans upward to a hole in the roof where we see English fighter planes patriotically fly by.

Because Mrs. Miniver is such a seemingly English patriotic wartime movie, we can hardly imagine a German Jew with a thick German accent as the one directing it in Hollywood. One marvels at an imagined flipside scenario: An American man of Christian background makes a movie for a Jewish audience, in which he pays a Jewish or Jewish-looking actor to play the role of a rabbi, who persuades his Jewish congregation (comprised of paid Jewish or Jewish-looking actors) to do what was secretly in the American of Christian background's ethnic group's best interest but secretly detrimental to Jews. And then that movie plays in Israeli theaters to a Jewish audience. It's hard to wrap one's head around such a weird science fiction scenario. Partly because it's so sinister. But that's what William Wyler did with Mrs. Miniver, and that's what Billy Wilder did with The Major and the Minor. They helped convince Christian Iowa that it was the right thing to send their sons to die in WWII, to fight the Jews' biggest enemy.

William Wyler's uncle Carl Laemmle, who was Jewish from Germany, was a founder of Universal Studios.



Above: Two German Jewish filmmakers who made films to convince middle America to get involved in WWII. Wilder (left) and Wyler with Audrey Hepburn in the middle.

6. Bad Homburg is the location of the Information Control Department.

7. Barney Balaban was president of Paramount Pictures from 1936 to 1964. He's Jewish. Incidentally 'Balaban' is the Khazar word for

'hawk' as mentioned in the book "The History of the Jewish Khazars" by D.M. Dunlop, page 161, published in 1954, and mentioned in the book "The Invention of the Jewish People" by University of Tel Aviv Professor Shlomo Sand (Verso, 2009, page 246) Similarly Dunlop mentions qaplan (Kaplan) as the word for panther in the Khazar language, and Kagan (also as in Kaganovich) as the Khazar word for king. Shlomo Sand discusses this as part of the evidence that a big origin of European Jewry is not Israel but Eastern Europe going back to the early middle ages. Yet most Americans believe that Jews have a lineage right to the bible. Even atheists error in believing that the bible is based on fictionalized aspects of actual historic happenings. Assuming, for instance that while the Red Sea may not have parted, the Jews were slaves in Egypt. There's no evidence that Egypt ever had Jewish slaves. The only evidence is that it "says so in the bible".

Wilder mentions Mr. Holan, which is a misprint or typo for Russell Holman, a Paramount executive.

8. Kurfurstendamm: the most well-known street in Berlin, comparable to the Champs-Élysées in Paris.

9. Reading about this women in the Wilder Memorandum is an "under the table" way to hear an honest account of what it was like for Berliners after the war. When Wilder's film came out it was called "A Foreign Affair" and the honest account was gone. Ed Sikov writes:

"By the time A Foreign Affair was actually made, of course, the suicidally depressed German widow who stoically refuses the gift of a cigarette had become a supremely self-reliant ex-Nazi whore played by Marlene Dietrich--the kind of woman who would have accepted Billy's Lucky, lit it, taken a drag, and tossed the rest of it on the pavement next to Billy's shoes, all without a moment's hesitation."

(SOURCE: On Sunset Boulevard: The Life and Times of Billy Wilder. By Ed Sikov, Hyperion. 1998 pg. 249.)

The U.S. government/media steered clear of anything that could elicit sympathy for the Germans. And Information Control's promotion of the holocaust myth, (beginning in April 12, 1945, when they somehow found bags of gold teeth next to Germany's gold reserves in the Merkers mine) coincided with the worst period of German suffering, not to mention when the biggest mass rape in history by Soviet soldiers began. Psych Warfare's promotion of the holocaust myth took away any sympathy anyone might have had for Germans in the last month of the war, shifting the focus on what the Germans did to Jews.

And the woman never said anything about "living for Hitler." She's suicidally depressed because her husband has been killed, her city

destroyed, ransacked and its women raped. It's important to note that Berlin fell to the Soviets and that Americans, British and French were not even allowed to enter the city until 3 months later. Who knows what happened in those three months. Wilder's comment to her is clever and mean, but in a disarmingly subtle way. Which is Wilder's specialty. Admirably she doesn't accept his cigarette.

10. It's about German Jews like Wilder and Wyler going to Hollywood and convincing middle America to fight Hitler, the Jews' enemy. But because that doesn't go over so well, it becomes about America saving the Jews from destruction, and hence the needed holocaust myth.

11. When Wilder finally makes his film, it's called "A Foreign Affair" (1948) and the suicidal woman will be morphed into a cunning nightclub singer, who uses her good looks to dupe GI's for material goods. Wilder puts a "film within the film": the incriminating film evidence showing the woman cavorting with Gestapo members and even kissing Hitler on the cheek. She was played by Marlene Dietrich. The ending seen has her being caught by the Americans and led away to prison.

Another theme of A Foreign Affair is this: it's feel-good comedy about how tough it is for American soldiers to resist all the fun temptations of girls and black market in a destroyed Berlin.

12. It's ironic that Wilder is supposedly pitching a film to promote democracy in Germany, yet he is a German Jew who wants to control what the Germans see in their theaters. When studying American Information Control in Germany, the cast of Jewish characters is long:

**Ray Fried:** in charge of Information Control in Berlin.

**Budd Schulberg**, son of a former head of Paramount Pictures: In charge of all film footage in West Germany. In other words, control of all films and film footage the Germans shot before and during the war.

**William Paley:** owner of CBS, and head of radio for Information Control: his employee Edward Murrow gives an impassioned radio address from Buchenwald to an American audience, and then becomes, like Davidson Taylor, the other Vice President of CBS.

**Douglas Schneider:** Assistant Chief of Division for Control of German Information Services.

**Hans Habe**, a Jewish name change from Janos Bekessy, who, as wikipedia states, "In autumn 1944 he selected a group of German writers and newspaperman to prepare for the publishing of new newspapers after the war in Germany....By November 1945 he had



created 18 newspapers in the American Occupation Zone." He made himself editor of a newspaper in Munich and then married two actresses in succession.

The list goes on and on, and it becomes clear how a "holocaust myth" could have been put on the German people.

13. An indication that Wilder was high up, as can be seen by his having an audience with General Gavin who headed the main occupying troops of Berlin. Wilder was a high-up civilian in the military government, and his meeting with Gavin shows that the priority for "mind control" was high.

14. "three cigarette-chippies at the Femina." A chippie is a prostitute. The femina is the place where they met clients. Cigarettes were used for currency. That women were selling themselves for 3 cigarettes testifies to the starving bombed out, raped by Soviets, demoralized, desperate condition of German women at this time. Enter the rich customer Billy Wilder who gloats over Berlin's destruction.

Wilder is German-Jewish, raised partly in Vienna. His ancestors have perhaps been in German speaking lands for 600 years, and he himself used to live in Berlin. Yet he seems yippity excited in seeing the city where he used to live turned into ruins and depravity.

The Nazis resented and stopped Jewish control of their film industry. Much of it cryptic like it is in Hollywood today via, for one, name-changes. An example would be 1920's Berlin film director, Paul Leni. (A one-letter change from 'Levi.') The Nazis resented the kind of movies the Jews were making and the morals they taught. Wilder is no exception. Dartmouth University Professor Gerd Gemunden in describing Billy Wilder's pre-Nazi Berlin work at UFA studios, writes:

"The sexual barter as a plot device goes back to Wilder's first Ufa scripts, which often revolved around adulterous affairs, temptation, and marital disputes caused by jealousy."

(Gerd Gemunden, *A Foreign Affair*, Berghahn Books. 2008. Pg. 68.

Many Jews in response to being kicked out of the film industry turned their efforts toward Germany's destruction. Wilder went to Hollywood and joined Jews there like William Wyler in fomenting America toward war with Germany.

Now bucking moral codes in America, Wilder's gloating over Berlin's destruction and his film idea can be seen in the following New York Times excerpt where he talked to a reporter on his way back from Europe:

"Now that he is back working for Paramount, Mr. Wilder wants to get

busy right away on a story idea which came to him in Berlin. 'A true and realistic, not a prettied up, account' of life in the German capital, which he described as a modern 'Sodom and Gomorrah,' could not possibly be made under present Hays office restrictions, Mr. Wilder stated. But he is going to try and show the world how thoroughly beaten the Germans are, and at the same time he hopes to inform the Germans themselves of the life that is ahead for them, in a feature 'about a romance between a GI and a German girl.'"(END OF A JOURNEY, NYT 9/23/1945)

15. *Berlin kommt wieder* (Berlin Will Be Back). This was a popular song that was being sung by Berliners that came out of the population after the war, and somehow Wilder was able to take ownership of it, by securing the copyright. Lyrics are:

My heart hurts / when I walk through the streets / you don't need to be a Berliner / to know what I mean! / But there's no use in pondering / what happened is over. / And despite everything, deep inside / I do believe in Berlin! / Berlin is coming back / That's a song everyone sings / and which now again resounds / so beautifully all over Berlin.

(SOURCE: Gemunden. A Foreign Affair. pg. 74.)

A different account was told of the song in Life Magazine: "At weeks end, as last-minute preparations were rushed in Berlin's suburb, Potsdam, for the Stalin-Churchill-Truman meeting, Allied occupation authorities did not know what to do about a subtly defiant song. Called Berlin Kommt Wieder (Berlin Will Come Back), it was spreading quickly from lip to lip. It wasn't the words themselves that made a Russian call the song "very dangerous" it was the way the people sang them: Who would have thought it of us? / Yes it will rise again. / Certainly it won't come overnight, / But just after the dark of the night / The sun laughs again, / So will the lindens bloom along Unter den Linden. / Berlin remains forever Berlin.

(SOURCE: Life Magazine website at:  
<http://www.life.com/gallery/42032/image/ugc1042762#index/13>

16. Wilder is lying about the capabilities of German studios to bolster his angle that an American studio, not a German one, should be the recipient of the 1½ million dollars. Professor Gerd Gemunden writes:

"What the 'Memorandum' does not state is that Wilder's original role as observer and consultant for OMGUS (Office of Military Government United States) was actually in conflict with his professional interest as director and writer at Paramount. His evaluation in the memo that 'no production of German pictures is possible in the near future' clearly served his argument that Americans needed to make movies for Germans, but it neglects to

consider the feasibility of a German film industry. Thus Wilder made no mention of the fact that the film studios at Geiseltal near Munich had survived the war in good condition, or that in the Soviet sector the centralized DEFA film studios were already beginning to produce German films. (Gemunden, A Foreign Affair. Pg. 58.)

Also it should be noted that the movie's profits won't come from German theatergoers because they don't have any money, as Gerd Gemunden writes "In 1945, a ticket for the movie theaters cost one Reichsmark, while a stick of butter on the black market cost 250 Reichsmark." (p. 74. note 11) The profits would come from US government funding. When A Foreign Affair came out years later, it was unclear what the funding was and the movie wasn't released in Germany.

17. "Control films the Germans will be producing" seems totalitarian rather than democratic. The façade is the US is promoting democracy in Germany, but secret meddlings will tweak "the free exchange of ideas." Such as the later CIA influence in the German cultural scene. There are a number of books on how the CIA propped up European leftist intellectuals and leftist publications in the 1950's, so long as they were leftist AND anti-communist. See The Mighty Wurlitzer: how the CIA played America By Hugh Wilford; see The Chairman: John J. McCloy, the making of the American establishment By Kai Bird; see The Very Best Men: The Daring Early Years of the CIA by Evan Thomas.

Similarly, in my phone interview with the then 89 year old Psy War Lieutenant Albert G. Rosenberg in 2007, he told me that a man PsyWar propped up, Eugen Kogon (author of the PsyWar sponsored book "The SS-State – The System of the German Concentration Camps) could have made it all the way to Chancellor of West Germany instead of Konrad Adenauer. For other aspects talk see "My nearly 2-hour phone conversation with Albert G. Rosenberg in June 2007." at

<http://www.holocaustdenialvideos.com/nazishrunkenheads/index.html#five>

18. The film described in the memorandum will be called A Foreign Affair, (1948) and it will be released in America. It won't end up even playing in West Germany. Rather it will be "cleverly devised" to sell America, rather than Germany, "a few ideological items" about the war. A feel-good comedy gloss-over of a disaster that killed half a million American men.

It's unclear whether the government funded the movie, but in all likelihood the ideas Wilder had were just turned into a different non-government funded film, hence it's coming out much later than Wilder stated in the memorandum. Gerd Gemunden writes "As it turned out, A Foreign Affair was a commercial success, but

American critics had mixed reactions, Congress attacked it, and OMGUS considered the film inappropriate for the German public." (page 61) It didn't play in Germany until 1977.

"Into General McClure's hands to show it to the German people."

General Robert McClure was the chief of Allied Psychological Warfare during the war, and after the war, the Chief of the Information Control Division. He is Davidson Taylor's boss, who this memorandum is written to. Then in the early 1950's Robert McClure went on to Iran to help overthrow the democratically elected government of Mohammad Mosaddegh via covert means.

END