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August 7, 1995

Mr. Brian Lamb
C-Span
400 N. Capitol St. NW
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Mr. Lamb:

In your Book Notes of August 6, it was interesting to hear author Marc Fisher bringing us up to date on Germany. However, he made a couple of incomplete replies to questions about his book *After the Wall*, in which he alternately bashes and pities Germany.

The author appeared surprised that German officials could consider A.M. Rosenthal an enemy of Germany, even though Mr. Rosenthal has boasted of his hostility at full cry. I've been surprised that no one in American journalism picked up on Mr. Rosenthal's call on a united American intelligencia to prevent the reunification of Germany in 1989. I tried very hard to get some comment on this published, but in the end only managed a short letter in *The Public Interest*. I enclose one of my efforts; you don't have to read it all, but please glance at the marked passages documenting Mr. Rosenthal's clarion call.

The author also left the impression that German state officials in Bonn insisted on his listing his religion when he moved to Berlin because he is Jewish. That is not the case.

As a foreign correspondent in West Germany from 1955 to 1975, I can attest that Bonn officials demanded a religious statement for tax purposes. The State of North-Rhine Westphalia, which includes Bonn, collects a tithe for the churches through income tax. Many correspondents of many nations evaded this by writing for religion, "none," or "agnostic," but a blank space such as the author insisted upon would not do.

When Germany's Basic Law was written in the late 1940s, American had input through the staffs of such men as General Lucius Clay, John J. McCloy, and James Bryant Conant. In effect they barred Germany from having a central government with taxing powers. I don't know about today; in West Germany, the federated states levied taxes, each with slightly different rules. The second house of parliament, the Bundesrat, existed mainly to mediate the share of taxes the states would kick in to Bonn for

federal obligations such as the armed forces, border police, foreign ministry, etc, in the German Federal Republic.

So ultimately, Americans shared the blame that the separate German states had powers of taxation impinging on church-state relations (which I thought was outrageous when it happened to me.)

So the author's implication that Jews were singled out by the requirement to state a religion is misleading at best. In the 20 years I knew West Germany, anti-Semitism was a crime, and an actively prosecuted one.

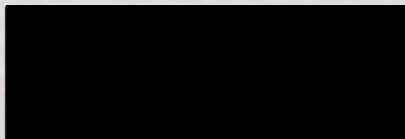
The author also appeared surprised that so few German historians specialize in the dozen years of Hitler's rule, for which one would have to be a first class masochist.

As a New Yorker, the author probably grew up reading *The New York Times*, which tolerated few Germans, and those it did, like Willie Brandt, sought cooperation with the late Soviet Union. The saintly Konrad Adenauer only once asked a foreign newspaper to relieve a foreign correspondent; he asked the *Times* to recall Meyer (Mike) Handler for hyping neo-Nazi stories (mostly about an unreconstructed Nazi school teacher named Zinn, who fled the country for asylum in Cairo).

I'm sure the Germans were relieved to hear the author say that he never would want to live his life in Germany; I'd bet the feeling is mutual.

Please keep up the great work on C-Span, the last, best hope for saving what's left.

Sincerely,

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the author.