

**Public Lecture, The Infirmary, University of Worcester,  
City Campus, Infirmary Walk, Worcester, WR1 3AS**

**Diagnosing the Nazis**

One of the lesser known aspects of the American war effort during World War II was that a variety of experts from a number of academic and clinical disciplines including, sociologists, psychoanalysts, clinicians, anthropologists, psychologists, psychiatrists, historians, geographers, educationalists, columnists/commentators, political scientists, Asianists, philosophers, theologians, economists and filmmakers took it upon themselves, or were contracted via government or military service, to diagnose the contents of a disease, sometimes called Nazism, sometimes Germanism, sometimes Hitlerism or sometimes Prussianism. They became the Doctors and the German people and nation state, the patients, in this unique attempt to solve an exceptional problem: the problem of “what to do” with Germany. As Lawrence K. Frank, Chairman, Joint Committee on Postwar Planning explained: ‘a nation is a group of persons whose feelings and conduct approximate the modal patterns, therefore what they will think and do can be forecast with a high degree of reliability once we learn the basic patterns and regularities of their cultural traditions.’<sup>1</sup> This was the premise on which the Nazis were diagnosed.

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<sup>1</sup> n.a., ‘Germany After The War: Round Table – 1945’, *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, Vol. 15, No. 3, July 1945, p. 383.