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**SELLING THE ECONOMIC MIRACLE:  
ECONOMIC PROPAGANDA AND  
POLITICAL POWER IN WEST GERMANY, 1949-1957**

**DISSERTATION**

**Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for  
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate  
School of The Ohio State University**

**By**

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**\* \* \* \* \***

**The Ohio State University  
2000**

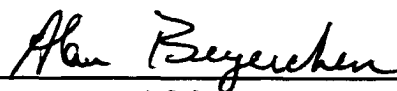
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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation analyzes the political uses of West Germany's economic reconstruction in the 1950s, termed the Economic Miracle. Through an examination of election campaign propaganda and various public relations campaigns, this dissertation explores how conservative political and economic groups constructed and sold a political meaning of the Economic Miracle and the Social Market Economy, West Germany's combination of the free market with social underpinnings. The political meaning of economics contributed to conservative electoral success, constructed a new belief in the free market economy within West German society, and provided legitimacy for the new Federal Republic of Germany.

The "selling" of the Economic Miracle involved the adoption of American political campaigning styles, commercial advertising techniques, and demographic polling by business interests and the leading conservative political party, the Christian Democratic Union (CDU). The Social Market Economy and the Economic Miracle were such effective political "products" because their meanings were easily constructed within a number of different political contexts, and thereby reached the maximum number of "consumers."

This dissertation demonstrates the emergence and evolution of the political culture for the newly formed Federal Republic. Using economics as a central issue, the CDU

succeeded in reaching out to a broad range of interests during the 1950s, including Catholics, women, some Protestants, and business interests. The Social Democratic Party, the CDU's main political competitor, was able with its Marxist ideology to attract only the working-class vote and was relegated to the opposition. The CDU became "Americanized" not only in the sense that its election campaigns copied American techniques, but also that it was able to bring varied interests under its tent—a change for the CDU that contributed significantly to the Federal Republic's political stability. This was an important contrast from political parties in the Weimar period, which tended to be based upon narrow and rigid segments of society.

This dissertation argues that political and economic associations sought to create a new West German political consciousness. This effort, especially in the area of economics, was predicated upon a conscious fear of the political problems of the 1920s and sought to overcome the social tensions that tore the Weimar Republic apart. At the same time, economic reconstruction became a basis for a new, uniquely West German national identity that helped fill the vacuum left by the discredited form of nationalism represented by the Third Reich.

**Dedicated to Susan**



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

If we are successful in changing the economic attitude of the population by psychological means, then these psychological changes will themselves become an economic reality, and so serve the same purposes as other measures of economic policy taken so far.

Ludwig Erhard, October 19, 1955<sup>1</sup>

*Die Geschichte der Bundesrepublik ist vor allem ihre Wirtschaftsgeschichte.* (The history of the Federal Republic is above all its economic history.)

Werner Abelshauser<sup>2</sup>

Following its defeat in the Second World War, Germany appeared destined to be a pauper among European nations. Its cities, factories, and transportation system had suffered extensive damage. It had lost its sovereignty and was under the rule of the four occupying powers. During the immediate postwar years many Germans scraped to get by, living in dreadful housing and relying on the black market to supplement the sustenance provided by their ration cards. But starting with the currency reform of June 1948, in which the worthless Reichsmark was scrapped and the new Deutsche Mark was introduced in the three western zones of occupation, West Germany experienced fantastic

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<sup>1</sup> Ludwig Erhard, *Prosperity through Competition* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1958), 178.

<sup>2</sup> Werner Abelshauser, *Wirtschaftsgeschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 1945-1980* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1983), 8

economic growth through the 1960s in what has been called the *Wirtschaftswunder* (Economic Miracle). With the demand for goods due to the Korean War, West Germany saw its GNP increase by 67 percent in real terms between 1948 and 1952. From 1952 to 1958 the West German GNP continued to increase at a yearly rate of 7.6 percent in real terms and at a still robust rate of about 5 percent into the 1960s, a figure in line with the average growth of other European nations.<sup>3</sup> West Germany literally rose from the ashes as its cities and factories were rebuilt, exports rose, and the West Germans' standard of living improved.

The story of West Germany's economic reconstruction is inextricably linked with its economic system, the *Soziale Marktwirtschaft* (Social Market Economy). In theory, the Social Market Economy sought to find a "middle way" between pure *laissez-faire* capitalism and collectivist planned economy. The system sought to free up economic controls, such as price or wage controls, and allow the individual pursuit of self-interest and self-determination within the competition of the free market. At the same time, the government would set up the "rules of the game" to curb monopolies and avoid the concentration of excessive economic power in the hands of a few. But this economic theory had to survive within the harsh realities of the political world. It had to be transformed into an effective political tool. Leaders of the Christian Democratic Union/Christian Socialist Union (CDU/CSU), most notably Konrad Adenauer, saw the political usefulness of such a program and pushed their party to pick up the Social Market Economy as the basis of his party's economic platform. In addition, the more academic

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<sup>3</sup> Karl Hardach, *The Political Economy of Germany in the Twentieth Century*



supporters of the Social Market Economy, such as the Federal Republic's Economics Minister in the 1950s, Ludwig Erhard, attributed West Germany's economic resurgence to the introduction of the economic system they espoused.<sup>4</sup> With this, the Social Market Economy was transformed from economic theory, or even abstract economic policy, into a basis of a political party's propaganda.

Almost immediately after being carried out, the currency reform of June 1948 took on mythical status among West Germans, with stories of food and goods appearing almost magically within shop windows when the Deutsche Mark was introduced. Many observers have likened West Germany's reconstruction in the 1950s to a "phoenix rising out of the ashes" after its practically total destruction. If the Federal Republic's Economic Miracle has taken on the dimensions of legend, its hero would be Ludwig Erhard.<sup>5</sup> Known as the father of the Economic Miracle, Erhard boldly predicted in the darkest hours of West Germany's economic despair that the nation would recover. Always pictured in newspapers and magazines with his self-assured smile and a cigar in his mouth, Erhard became a hugely popular icon within West Germany. Even today,

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(Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 161, 186, 193.

<sup>4</sup> Perhaps the most famous effort to link the Economic Miracle and the Social Market Economy was Ludwig Erhard's book, *Wohlstand für Alle* (Düsseldorf: Econ-Verlag, 1957).

<sup>5</sup> One example of the lasting impression of Erhard and the Economic Miracle on the German consciousness was illustrated to me during my research in Germany. I saw a poster in my bank advertising a new savings plan. The poster depicted the stereotypical portrait of Erhard slightly smiling with a cigar in his mouth with the slogan proclaiming, "You too can have your own Economic Miracle!" if you put your money in this savings plan. I wondered how many Americans could identify a Secretary of Treasury from the

almost fifty years after the fact, politicians from all parties invoke Erhard's legacy as the panacea for the challenges facing the Federal Republic in integrating the former Eastern Germany into the western economy.<sup>6</sup>

Some historians and social scientists have argued that economic reconstruction and the ensuing growth of consumerism offered West Germans citizens in the 1950s and 1960s an escape from their Nazi past. The task of dealing with the moral burden of Germany's past faded from people's minds as they settled into the material comfort of the Federal Republic.<sup>7</sup> Economics, in some respects, became the basis for a new West German identity. It is no wonder that in a nation forged in part out of the economic necessity to rebuild the western zones of occupation, its citizens identified with the economic benefits of the Federal Republic of Germany instead of with any political

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1950s, let alone know him well enough for an advertising campaign to be based upon him.

<sup>6</sup> The hundred year anniversary of Erhard's birth in February 1997 saw a wave of publications on Erhard. See for example "Der Talisman der Deutschen," *Der Spiegel*, 3/1997, 92-103. In addition, in the winter of 1997 a changing exhibition entitled "*Markt oder Plan*" at the Haus der Geschichte reflected a popular mythology surrounding the Economic Miracle. See the exhibition's book *Markt oder Plan: Wirtschaftsordnungen in Deutschland, 1945-1961*, Haus der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 1997). Both leaders of the CDU/CSU and the SPD evoked the Social Market Economy as a means out of West Germany's economic troubles of the late 1990s. See a pair of articles commemorating Erhard in the *Handelsblatt*, Günter Rexrodt, "Konsequent auf den Wettbewerb setzen," and Oskar Lafontaine, "Soziale Marktwirtschaft—Der Weg aus der Krise," *Handelsblatt*, 23 January 1997, 15.

<sup>7</sup> Herman Glaser, *Kulturgeschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Zwischen Grundgesetz und Großer Koalition, 1949-1967* vol. 2 (München: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1986), 59-98.

institutions or traditions.<sup>8</sup> In fact, many West Germans remembered the establishment of West Germany not as the establishment of the *Grundgesetz* (Basic Law), West Germany's constitution, but instead as the currency reform of June 1948.

What many forget in looking back at the Economic Miracle years is that the acceptance of the Social Market Economy was by no means secure. The Social Democratic Party (SPD) continually attacked Erhard and the CDU/CSU on grounds that their economic policy was not "social" enough and allowed the old powers of monopolistic capitalism back into their positions of power. In addition, there was a reluctance among many West Germans over the course of the 1950s to accept the free market, especially with the economic strain caused by the Korean Crisis.<sup>9</sup> Many parts of West German society, especially among the working class, saw the reality of the Economic Miracle as not corresponding to its image. Consumption did not reach the levels that today's public perception has thought it did in retrospect. Goods that have come to symbolize a 1990s perception of the Economic Miracle, such as the Volkswagen Beetle or the refrigerator, were available only to a limited number of people. The rise of prices continually made many West Germans struggle to make ends meet. In addition,

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<sup>8</sup> Heinz Rausch, "Politisches Bewußtsein und politische Einstellungen im Wandel," in *Die Identität der Deutschen*, ed. Werner Weidenfeld (München: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1983), 130.

<sup>9</sup> Distrust of the free market is clearly illustrated in demographic polls this point. In October 1952 only 29 percent of respondents to an Allensbach Institut survey supported the free market, down from 41 percent in March 1949. *Das Soziale Klima, Institut für Demoskopie, 1948-1951, ZSg 132/154, Bundesarchiv Koblenz*; and Elisabeth Noelle and Erich Peter Neumann, *Jahrbuch der öffentlichen Meinung 1947-1955* (Allensbach am Bodensee: Verlag für Demoskopie, 1956), 234.

pensioners and single women “standing alone” were some of the last groups to feel the impact of West Germany’s economic resurgence.

Undoubtedly, the meaning of economic reconstruction was heavily contested within the political realm. The image of West Germany as the “*Wirtschaftswunderland*” did not emerge naturally from the public’s sentiment, but instead had to be constructed and disseminated. Through an examination of election campaign propaganda and various public relations campaigns, my goal is to explore how conservative political and economic groups sought to construct and sell a political meaning of the Social Market Economy and the Economic Miracle. The creation of this political significance of economics contributed to conservative electoral success, constructed a new understanding of economics by West German society, and provided legitimacy for the new Federal Republic Germany.

Although the economic resurgence of West Germany since the Second World War has been a fundamental theme of West Germany’s history, the investigation of its social and cultural implications have been curiously absent until recently. Through the 1980s, the historiography of West Germany was dominated by political and diplomatic history.<sup>10</sup> Especially important were questions dealing with the establishment of the Federal Republic’s democratic government and its geopolitical position between the capitalist and communist superpowers. By the middle of the 1980s this path of inquiry had been exploited so that broader syntheses could be written. Perhaps most notable was the five

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volume overview of the Federal Republic, *Geschichte der Bundesrepublik*, edited by Karl Dietrich Bracher, Theodor Eschenburg, Joachim C. Fest, and Eberhard Jäckel. Although giving some lip-service to social and cultural developments, these volumes spent most of their attention on politics in the most narrow sense.<sup>11</sup>

In conjunction with a more traditional political approach to the Federal Republic's history, the course of West Germany's rapid economic reconstruction has been well documented by historians, economists, and political scientists.<sup>12</sup> Charles Maier's *In Search of Stability: Explorations in Historical Political Economy*, Volker Berghahn's *The Americanization of West German Industry*, and other works have argued that West Germany experienced a fundamental restructuring of its political economy that helped produce both political stability and economic prosperity. German works, such as Christoph Heusgen's *Ludwig Erhards Lehre von der Sozialen Marktwirtschaft, Ursprünge, Kerngehalt, Wandlungen* and Horst Wünsche's *Ludwig Erhards Gesellschafts- und Wirtschaftskonzeption*, have all examined the development of Ludwig Erhard's economic thought. Others have concentrated upon the implementation of Erhard's ideas in the political arena, including most notably Gerold Ambrosius's *Die Durchsetzung der sozialen Marktwirtschaft in Westdeutschland, 1945-1949*. With the reunification of Germany and its

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<sup>10</sup> For a good introduction to the historiography of West Germany, see Rudolf Morsey, *Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Entstehung und Entwicklung bis 1969* (München: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1995).

<sup>11</sup> The works most pertinent here are: Theodor Eschenburg, *Jahre der Besatzung, 1945-1949* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1983) and Hans-Peter Schwarz, *Die Ära Adenauer, 1949-1957* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1981).

difficulties incorporating the East German economy, scholars have devoted greater attention to the political development of Ludwig Erhard's Social Market Economy with works such as Volker Hentschel's *Ludwig Erhard, Ein Politikerleben* and Anthony Nicholls' *Freedom with Responsibility: The Social Market Economy in Germany 1918-1963*. Undoubtedly the economic history of West Germany has been well researched, both in terms of tracing the country's economic growth and discussions of its political economy.<sup>13</sup> But relatively untouched is the question of how West Germany's economic resurgence was used as a political issue by economic and political groups.

Recent scholarship, most notably Robert Moeller's edited work, *West Germany under Construction: Politics, Society, and Culture in the Adenauer Era*, has examined the cultural and social dimensions of politics in the era of Economic Miracle. The selections seek to transform the concept of political culture by tracing how political identities emerged in the newly formed state outside of both parliamentary politics and formal associational life—that is in the politics of daily life.<sup>14</sup> These budding identities, in turn, influenced

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<sup>12</sup> For one of the first works on this subject in English see Henry C. Wallich, *Mainsprings of the German Revival* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955).

<sup>13</sup> Charles S. Maier, *In Search of Stability: Explorations in Historical Political Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Volker R. Berghahn, *The Americanisation of West German Industry, 1945-1973* (New York: Berg, 1986); Christopher Heusgen, *Ludwig Erhards Lehre von der soziale Marktwirtschaft: Ursprünge, Kerngehalt, Wandlungen* (Stuttgart: Haupt, 1981); Horst Friedrich Wünsche, *Ludwig Erhards Gesellschafts- und Wirtschaftskonzeptionen: soziale Marktwirtschaft als politische Ökonomie* (Stuttgart: Bonn Aktuell, 1986); Gerold Ambrosius, *Die Durchsetzung der soziale Marktwirtschaft in Westdeutschland, 1945-1949* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1977); Volker Hentschel, *Ludwig Erhard : Ein Politikerleben* (München: Olzog, 1996); A.J. Nicholls, *Freedom with Responsibility: The Social Market Economy in Germany, 1918-1963* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994);

politics at the national level through elections. My work seeks to extend such a reconceptualization of political culture. But instead of examining exclusively those cultural contexts outside of formal politics, it will explore how political identities were molded and manipulated by the very political associations that sought to benefit from these newly formed identities.

A central issue of this dissertation is the creation of the CDU/CSU's image over the course of the 1950s. Led by the former mayor of Cologne and head of the CDU in the British zone, Konrad Adenauer, the party expanded its share of the vote in each of the successive Bundestag (parliament) elections in 1949, 1953 and 1957. Before the first Bundestag election in 1949, the CDU/CSU adopted the Social Market Economy as its economic program. Adenauer supported the policy so that the CDU/CSU, a party whose roots lay in the Catholic Center Party during the Weimar Republic, would have a wider appeal in the ballot box, thereby branching out from its core following of Catholics. The party could now appeal to other sociological groups, such as some Protestants and economic interests, which might otherwise be attracted to a liberal party. In addition, the adoption of such a policy would make impossible a coalition between the CDU/CSU and the SPD, both in federal and state governments, since the SPD was still calling for socialized planning of the economy in 1948/49. As the 1950s progressed and the West German economy expanded, the CDU/CSU learned how to sell Erhard and the party as bearers of the Economic Miracle. Economics became central to the CDU/CSU's image as

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<sup>14</sup> Robert G. Moeller, *West Germany under Construction: Politics, Society, and Culture in the Adenauer Era* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), 3. The

the party, and its Economics Minister, Ludwig Erhard, came to personify the Social Market Economy and the Economic Miracle. In part because of the CDU/CSU's electoral success, the SPD was pushed along its path of abandoning its Marxist doctrine in the Bad Godesberg Program of 1959.

Bourgeois parties other than the CDU/CSU were unable to capitalize upon the Economic Miracle in elections and garner broad support. In contrast to the CDU/CSU, the smaller splinter parties tended to be one-issue or regional parties. For example, the conservative *Deutsche Partei* (German Party, DP) was based predominately in Lower Saxony and became known for middle-class conservatism. Outside of Lower Saxony and small parts of northern Hesse, the party had no national appeal. The bourgeois *Gesamtdeutscher Block/Bund der Heimatvertriebenen und Entrechteten* (All-German Block/League of Expellees and Those Deprived of Their Rights) was limited to the single issue of defending the rights of the expellees from the lands lost by Germany to the East. The liberal Free Democratic Party (FDP) was splintered into various factions, mostly between democratic and national liberals, which kept it from developing an effective national identity. Overall, the CDU/CSU was perhaps the only bourgeois party able to create an image of itself that held broad appeal. Propaganda on economics played a crucial part in the party's success.<sup>15</sup>

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selections in this book represent some of newest and best work in the field of social and cultural history of postwar West Germany.

<sup>15</sup> For an overview of the political parties in West Germany, see Richard Stöss, ed., *Die Parteien der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 1945-1980* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1983).



Normally the word “propaganda” is used synonymously with “lies,” “deceit,” and “distortion” (or at least as the antithesis of the “truth”) produced by one side on an issue. But propaganda is a communicative process. One good working definition holds that, “Propaganda is the deliberate and systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognition, and direct behavior to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist.”<sup>16</sup> It acts as a form of persuasion. But propaganda not only helps form opinions, it reflects societal expectations and public images. The symbols represented in propaganda act as landmarks reflecting shifts in public perception of the world. In many respects, an examination of the economic propaganda during the 1950s shows the changing parameters of what was possible within political discourse on economics. Propaganda on economics illustrates a developing West German political consciousness.<sup>17</sup>

Nearly thirty years ago, Heidrun Abromeit pointed out in *Das Politische in der Werbung: Wahlwerbung und Wirtschaftswerbung in der Bundesrepublik* that election campaigns are not about programs and policy statements, but hinge upon the sale of political slogans and images as if they were goods. Abromeit argued that over the course of the 1950s and 1960s election campaigns in the Federal Republic became ever more

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<sup>16</sup> Garth S. Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion* (London: Sage Publications, 1992), 4.

<sup>17</sup> Recent works in German have examined political propaganda and its implications for politics and society. See Ute Daniel and Wolfram Siemann, eds., *Propaganda: Meinungskampf, Verführung, und politische Sinnstiftung, 1789-1989* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch, 1994) and Gerald Diesener and Rainer Gries,

based upon the projection of a party image, as opposed to any factual appeal to the electorate.<sup>18</sup> Adolf Hitler and the National Socialists was one of the first German political movements to recognize fully the vital importance of projecting a party's visual image for success in elections.<sup>19</sup> The CDU/CSU excelled in conceptualizing a party image of itself from the outset of Bundestag elections. Konrad Adenauer, the head of the CDU in the British Zone and the future Chancellor of West Germany, realized in 1948 that the party had to accept a free market economic system in order to differentiate itself from the Social Democrats and to be able to attract voters other than from the CDU/CSU's Catholic base. The CDU/CSU's electoral success relied in part on the party's ability to create a coherent vision of economic reconstruction and West German identity. This ability to manage public perception and image is a fundamental element to modern party politics.

As the 1950s progressed, the CDU/CSU showed itself especially adept at incorporating new techniques of campaigning within its electoral repertoire in order to sell itself as the party of the Economic Miracle. Especially important was the use of demographic polling not only to take the pulse of the nation, but also to help plan out its political campaigns so that public opinion could be best exploited. By the 1957 election,

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eds., *Propaganda in Deutschland: Zur Geschichte der politischen Massenbeeinflussung im 20. Jahrhundert* (Darmstadt: Primus Verlag, 1996).

<sup>18</sup> Heidrun Abromeit, *Das Politische in der Werbung: Wahlwerbung und Wirtschaftswerbung in der Bundesrepublik* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1972).

<sup>19</sup> Sabine Behrenbeck, "Der Führer: Die Einführung eines politischen Markenartikels," in *Propaganda in Deutschland: Zur Geschichte der politischen*

the CDU/CSU was beginning to use professional advertising agents to create an image of the party. My work builds upon Abromeit's view of election campaigns and shows how a mentality of selling "political goods" became more developed in the early years of the Federal Republic of Germany. In many respects, the Social Market Economy and the Economic Miracle proved to be effective political "products" because their meanings were easily constructed within a number of different political contexts, and thereby reached the maximum number of "consumers."

My goal is also to contribute to our understanding of the development of the West German party system. In 1956 a Swiss journalist proclaimed "*Bonn ist nicht Weimar*" (Bonn is not Weimar) in his analysis of the relative stability of the Federal Republic of Germany. The question of why the Federal Republic's democracy has been successful, while Germany's first attempt with democracy was not, has been a popular topic for political scientists and historians ever since.<sup>20</sup> An important element in the development of a stable West German party system has been identified as the breakdown of specific sociological subcultures supporting specific political parties, a crucial change from the Weimar Republic. Political parties in the Weimar Republic tended to be based upon narrow segments of society, making the creation of broadly based parties difficult and contributing to political instability.

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*Massenbeeinflussung im 20. Jahrhundert.* See also Ian Kershaw, *The 'Hitler Myth: Image and Reality in the Third Reich* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987).

<sup>20</sup> See Marie-Luise Recker, "'Bonn ist nicht Weimar:' Zur Struktur und Charakter des politischen Systems der Bundesrepublik Deutschland in der Ära Adenauer," *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht* 44 (1993): 287-307 and Karl Rohe, *Wahlen*

A crucial factor in the development of a stable West German party system was the creation of “catch all” parties which collected votes from varied sociological subcultures. The Nazi party was the first German political party to attract voters from all social classes and interests and was able to achieve enough electoral success in order to seize power.<sup>21</sup> The CDU/CSU was able to accomplish the same feat in the 1950s and became a prototype of the “*Volkspartei*” (people’s party) which would dominate West German politics in the future.<sup>22</sup> Undoubtedly, the creation of a more homogeneous, middle class society, what has been termed the “*nivellierte Mittelstandsgesellschaft*” (leveled middle-class society), contributed to the possibility of constructing a catch-all bourgeois party. As the 1950s continued, class conflicts seemed to be less sharp and the extreme political alternatives appeared less viable.<sup>23</sup> But the CDU/CSU had to be able to take advantage of this change in society. The issue of economics was central to the CDU/CSU’s ability to

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*und Wählertradition in Deutschland: Kulturelle Grundlagen deutscher Parteien und Parteiensysteme im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1992).

<sup>21</sup> For a discussion on this topic, see Thomas Childers, *The Nazi Voter: The Social Foundations of Fascism in Germany, 1919-1933* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983); Richard Hamilton, *Who Voted for Hitler?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983); and the *Central European History* issue on the topic “Who Voted for Hitler?” XVII/1 (March 1984).

<sup>22</sup> See Dorothee Buchhaas, *Die Volkspartei: Programmatische Entwicklung der CDU, 1950-1973* (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1983).

<sup>23</sup> See Helmut Schelsky, *Wandlungen der deutschen Familie in der Gegenwart: Darstellung und Deutung einer empirisch-soziologischen Tatbestandsaufnahme* (Dortmund: Ardey, 1953); Ralf Dahrendorf, *Society and Democracy in Germany* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1967); and Josef Mooser, “Abschied von der ‘Proletariat:’ Sozialstruktur und Lage der Arbeiterschaft in der Bundesrepublik in historischer Perspektive,” in *Sozialgeschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Beiträge zum*

branch out from its Catholic roots with the Weimar-era Center Party and attract voters from other sociological groups. It was an issue that was used in different political contexts and attracted a variety of sociological groups. The sociological metamorphosis of West Germany contributed to the significance of the “modernization” or “Americanization” of campaigning techniques. These new election techniques allowed the CDU/CSU to direct its message more effectively to specific sociological groups and capitalize on larger social, economic, and cultural changes taking place in the Federal Republic.

Although West German society became more middle class in terms of income, the working class remained distinct in terms of self-identification. The selections in Moeller’s *West Germany under Construction* question the view of earlier historians that class formation and ideology became completely unimportant in the history of the Federal Republic. The sociological transformation of the Federal Republic did not make class and ideology irrelevant. This clearly was the case for discourse on economics during the 1950s, especially before the SPD adopted the Bad Godesberg Program of 1959, which abandoned the party’s Marxist doctrine. An examination of the SPD’s response to the CDU/CSU’s support of the free market is crucial to understand the contingency of West Germany’s political path after the Second World War. Ideological conflict between the political parties decreased as the 1950s progressed. Although class and ideology may appear of little importance in hindsight of the Federal Republic’s history in the 1970s and 1980s, they were concerns clearly on the minds of political actors at the time. In many

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*Kontinuitätsproblem*, eds. Werner Conze and M. Rainer Lepsius (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta,

respects, conservative political parties and economic interests used the issue of economics to build consensus, based upon consumerism and a belief in the free market, to overcome the social tensions which tore the Weimar Republic asunder.

This work also seeks to build upon newer perspectives of culture and society in West Germany. In the last ten years, the study of gender, society, and culture in West Germany has developed significantly, particularly among English-speaking historians of Germany. With the stresses caused by the war and an accompanying demographic imbalance of women outnumbering men 55 to 45, it is also essential to examine West German politics through the lens of gender. An important piece in this regard is Elizabeth Heineman's *American Historical Review* article, "The Hour of the Woman: Memories of Germany's 'Crisis Years' and West German National Identity." She has argued that there was a "universalization" in the West German collective memory of crucial aspects of the stereotypically female experience of Germany in the immediate postwar years.<sup>24</sup> This dissertation extends Heineman's findings by investigating how the developing national identities based upon the female experience were manipulated and formed by political interests once the Federal Republic of Germany had been founded in the 1950s. Just as significant is Robert Moeller's *Protecting Motherhood: Women and the Family in the Politics of Postwar West Germany*.<sup>25</sup> Moeller has examined public

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1983), 143-186.

<sup>24</sup> Elisabeth Heineman, "The Hour of the Woman: Memories of Germany's 'Crisis Years' and West German National Identity," *American Historical Review* 101 (April 1996): 354-395 and her dissertation, "'Standing Alone': Single Women from Nazi Germany to the Federal Republic" (Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina, 1993).

policy debates in West Germany on gender equity in which a shared objective among West Germans was to restore women within the family, outside of state intervention. Both of these works gave insightful perspectives on the creation of new political identities within West Germany.

Other works have examined the creation of gender roles in West Germany during the 1950s. Erica Carter's *How German Is She? Postwar West German Reconstruction and the Consuming Woman* has examined the representations of the consuming woman and her significance in the emerging postwar Federal Republic.<sup>26</sup> In a recent edition of *Signs*, a collection of articles has examined the different ways in which there was a remasculinization of Germany in the 1950s. Particularly interesting was Robert Moeller's piece on the return of German POW's, who were presented in the West German media not as former soldiers, but instead as loving fathers and sons ready to take on their roles within their families and in a rebuilding, peaceful nation.<sup>27</sup> Together, these works suggested that there was a reconstruction of gender roles in West Germany after the upheaval of the Second World War and the immediate postwar years. Propaganda on the

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<sup>25</sup> Robert G. Moeller, *Protecting Motherhood: Women and the Family in the Politics of Postwar West Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

<sup>26</sup> Erica Carter, *How German is She? Postwar West German Reconstruction and the Consuming Woman* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997).

<sup>27</sup> Robert G. Moeller, "'The Last Soldiers of the Great War' and Tales of Family Reunions in the Federal Republic of Germany," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 24/1 (Autumn 1998): 129-145; Uta G. Poiger, "A New, 'Western' Hero? Reconstructing German Masculinity in the 1950s," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 24/1 (Autumn 1998): 147-162; Heide Fehrenbach, "Rehabilitating Fatherland: Race and German Reconstruction," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 24/1 (Autumn 1998): 107-127.

Economic Miracle exploited conceptions of ideal roles for men and women which had links to the prewar era. Yet at the same time, these economic gender roles were applied to a new political context in which men's roles as producers and women's roles as consumers in the Social Market Economy were portrayed as contributing to the legitimacy of the Federal Republic as a whole.

The increased importance of consumerism within West German society and culture was crucial in the creation of the CDU/CSU's political image and the evolution of political discourse on economics. Without the rising living standards enjoyed by many West Germans, the CDU/CSU's efforts to capitalize upon the expanding economy would have been meaningless. There have been a few important works by Germans interested in the rise of consumer culture and the "modernization" of West Germany during the 1950s. These works include Axel Schildt's *Moderne Zeiten: Freizeit, Massenmedien, und Zeitgeist in der Bundesrepublik der 50er Jahre*, an edited work *Modernisierung im Wiederaufbau: Die westdeutsche Gesellschaft der 50er Jahre*, and Michael Wildt's *Am Beginn der "Konsumgesellschaft": Mangelerfahrung, Lebenshaltung, Wohlstandshoffnung in Westdeutschland in den fünfziger Jahren*.<sup>28</sup> All three of these works have examined the ways in which a consumer society emerged in West Germany in the 1950s and how a new West German identity developed around this sense of

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<sup>28</sup> Axel Schildt, *Moderne Zeiten: Freizeit, Massenmedien und "Zeitgeist" in der Bundesrepublik der 50er Jahre* (Hamburg: Hans Christians Verlag, 1995); Axel Schildt and Arnold Sywottek, *Modernisierung im Wiederaufbau: Die westdeutsche Gesellschaft der 50er Jahre* (Bonn: J.H.W. Dietz, 1983); and Michael Wildt, *Am Beginn der "Konsumgesellschaft": Mangelerfahrung, Lebenshaltung, Wohlstandshoffnung in Westdeutschland in den fünfziger Jahren* (Hamburg: Ergebnisse Verlag, 1994).



consumerism. They are interested in the *Alltagsgeschichte* (history of the everyday) of West Germans in relation to consumerism and the development of newly found free time.

In many respects, my goal is to speak to a broad range of scholars, to those engaged with the history of politics and the history of society and culture in the Federal Republic. Politics of the everyday and formal politics do have a nexus: these two worlds meet when political parties attempt to appeal to the electorate. Chapter 2 discusses the economic thought behind the Social Market Economy, examining some of the main thinkers who contributed to the development of the intellectual basis of this economic policy. In addition, the chapter investigates how the ideas of the Social Market Economy were transferred into political practice during the immediate postwar years. Particularly important is the currency reform of June 1948, after which the economy in the western zones of occupation began to operate increasingly on a free market basis. Chapter 3 focuses more upon party politics and the adoption of the Social Market Economy by the CDU/CSU. The 1949 Bundestag election revolved around the question of “*Markt oder Plan*” (Market or Plan) which the CDU/CSU fully exploited to its advantage. It portrayed itself as able to lead responsible government, as evidenced by the end of the desperate conditions for West Germans after the currency reform. Meanwhile, it associated the SPD with life before the currency reform: scarcity, standing in lines, and ration cards.

Chapter 4 discusses the impact of the Korean Crisis upon the West German economy. It focuses upon the development of public opinion toward the free market and the Social Market Economy as result of price increases due to the Korean boom. Much of this chapter examines the results of demographic polling in which public support for the

free market dropped and West Germans' fear of their economic future grew. What was especially important was that West German political and economic leaders were reading the results of these surveys, and they also began to question whether the retention of the Social Market Economy was politically feasible. Chapter 5 examines one of the first responses to the souring of public opinion toward the Adenauer government's economic policy. After the Korean crisis, the *Gemeinschaft zur Förderung des Sozialen Ausgleichs* (Society for the Promotion of the Social Compromise), also known as *Die Waage* (The Weigh Scales), an organization funded by West German industry, instituted what has been called the first modern public relations campaign in the Federal Republic. Its purpose was to promote Erhard's Social Market Economy through an extensive advertising campaign. With a campaign costing tens of millions of Deutsche Marks, *Die Waage* was one of the first organizations in West Germany to apply demographic polling and American advertising techniques for a political goal. *Die Waage* not only helped create an understanding of the Social Market Economy that linked economic freedom to political freedom, its advertisements also acted as political propaganda for Erhard and a bit more indirectly, the CDU/CSU.

Chapter 6 examines the 1953 Bundestag election campaign. This chapter discusses how the Economic Miracle could be molded for use in a number of different political contexts. With the Soviet Union's suppression of the June 17<sup>th</sup> 1953 uprising in East Berlin, geopolitical issues and the threat of communism came to the fore in this election. Within this context, the CDU/CSU constructed both West Germany's economic reconstruction and the Social Market Economy as symbols of West Germany's ability to

defend itself from the threat from the East. In conjunction with this, the CDU/CSU re-painted the SPD as politically unreliable because of its support of the planned economy. In addition, before the 1953 election, the CDU/CSU-led government developed a wide net of institutions influencing public opinion, centered around the Federal Press and Information Agency. The result was that, with the Federal Press Agency and Die Waage, the CDU/CSU enjoyed a heavy battery of activities working on its behalf outside of direct party propaganda. It was with this election that more American style campaigning techniques were first applied in West Germany.

In contrast to other chapters based more upon a straight-forward narrative, Chapter 7 is thematic with its discussion of gender, politics, and the Economic Miracle. It examines how images of gender were used in order to create a political meaning of the Economic Miracle. I argue that conservative political propaganda and public relations campaigns helped reinforce economic gender roles in which men were to be producers and women were to be consumers within the Social Market Economy. This propaganda placed added significance upon these roles by portraying production and consumption as not only fulfilling individual desires and needs, but also as a civic duty that was directly linked to the legitimacy of the newly formed West German state. With its propaganda the CDU/CSU directed a gendered understanding of the Economic Miracle particularly toward women and was able to garner 55 percent of the female vote in the Bundestag elections.

Chapter 8 discusses the CDU/CSU's greatest electoral triumph, the 1957 Bundestag election. This was the highpoint of Adenauer's Chancellery, when the

CDU/CSU became the first and only party ever to achieve a majority of the federal vote (50.2 percent). It was at this point that the development of CDU/CSU's campaigning techniques came to full fruition. Demographic surveys and advertising agents were fully utilized in order to construct a party image for the consumption of the West German electorate. Erhard and the Economic Miracle proved to be easily molded into the main themes of the campaign: stability and prosperity, concepts summed up with one of the main slogans of the campaign, "*Wohlstand für Alle*" (Prosperity for All). In addition, in the 1957 election campaign the CDU/CSU began to connect its economic policies with the consumer goods that were beginning to become available to West Germans, such as fashionable clothing and electrical appliances. As this chapter shows, the crushing defeat in this election pushed the SPD not only toward the reform of its platform, but also toward the revamping of its propaganda techniques to be more like those of the CDU/CSU's.

The 1957 election campaign was the highpoint of Adenauer's government. With the stunning CDU/CSU victory, the retention of the Social Market Economy was ensured. The terms of debate had shifted to the point that there was no going back to the support of a planned socialist economy. But perhaps more importantly, West Germany had established a stable political party system. The splinter parties were quickly fading from the political scene as they gained all together slightly over 10 percent of the vote in the election. The West Germans emerged out of the 1950s as just that: West Germans. By this point reunification was not a plausible option in the short-run. A new West German identity had been forged. It was an identity based in large part upon economic success,

consumerism, and the Deutsche Mark. These were the symbols, not the *Grundgesetz* or a stable democracy, which lured East Germans into West Berlin when the Wall came down the fateful night of November 9, 1989.

## CHAPTER 2

### ORIGINS OF THE SOCIAL MARKET ECONOMY AND THE CURRENCY REFORM OF 1948

The narrative of West Germany's economic resurgence during the 1950s has proven to be an enduring and central aspect of the West Germans' sense of themselves. At the conclusion of the Second World War, it appeared that Germany was finished. When Allied armies defeated Nazi Germany in the spring of 1945, the once powerful German economy had come to a complete collapse. Allied bombs had smashed much of Germany's industrial base. Transportation within Germany had come to a sputtering halt due to the systematic destruction of railroads and bridges by Allied bombers from September 1944 onward. By May 1945 all the permanent bridges across the Rhine had been destroyed except one at Remagen. Only 1,000 km of the 13,000 km of railroad track in the British zone of occupation were still in working condition.<sup>1</sup> The destruction was not limited to German industry and the transportation system; Allied bombs had also destroyed large sections of the German cities. It was estimated that at the end of the war about 18 percent of the apartments in the later Anglo-American bizonal area were destroyed with

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<sup>1</sup> Werner Abelshauser, *Wirtschaft in Westdeutschland, 1945-1948: Rekonstruktion und Wachstumsbedingungen in der amerikanischen und britischen Zone* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1975), 151-153.

another 29 percent suffering some level of damage.<sup>2</sup> Unquestionably, the destruction Germany endured as a consequence of the Second World War was extensive and severe.<sup>3</sup>

Most Germans experienced great hardship following the war. After the collapse of the Third Reich, the West German economy suffered a paralysis in which production was down, few goods were transported and sold, and people resorted to barter and hoarding due to a lack of confidence in the currency. Hunger was rampant with ration levels in some areas falling to about 1,000 calories. As a result, many Germans had to resort to illegal means to obtain the calories necessary to survive. The black market blossomed during this time with cigarettes becoming an ersatz currency. Many times workers would leave work in the cities in order to forage out in the countryside, helping to contribute to the lack of production in the factories.<sup>4</sup> The *Trümmerfrauen* (rubble women), who cleared the debris that blocked the streets of the destroyed West German cities, became a deeply ingrained and lasting image for those who lived through the period. These were hard times for the West

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<sup>2</sup> Karl Hardach, *The Political Economy of Germany in the Twentieth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 99.

<sup>3</sup> Werner Abelshauser has argued that the damage to the industrial base of West Germany was not as severe as previously thought. He states that West German capital assets actually rose from 1936 to 1945 by about 20 percent and declined between 1946 and 1948 by about 3 percent due to depreciation, reparations, and dismantling. See Werner Abelshauser, *Wirtschaftsgeschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 1945-1980* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1983), 20.

<sup>4</sup> Alan Kramer, *The West German Economy, 1945-1955* (Oxford: Berg, 1991), 75-80. See also Michael Wildt, *Der Traum vom Sattwerden: Hunger und Protest, Schwarzmarkt und Selbsthilfe in Hamburg 1945-1948* (Hamburg: USA Verlag, 1986); and Rainer Gries, *Die Rationen Gesellschaft, Versorgungskampf und Vergleichsmentalität: Leipzig, München, und Köln nach dem Kriege* (Münster: Verlag Westfälisches Dampfboot, 1991).

Germans, critical times in molding the meaning they later attributed to both the immediate postwar period and the ensuing economic boom.

The year 1948 came to be remembered by the public and politicians alike as a crucial year for the resurgence of the German economy due to political-economic measures such as the reform of the German currency and the implementation of the Marshall Plan. On June 20, 1948 the United States, Great Britain, and France stabilized the German financial situation in their occupation zones by introducing the new Deutsche Mark. Overnight, shopkeepers ended hoarding and goods appeared in their windows as people had renewed faith in the currency. From the perspective of some economists, the currency reform was the catalyst for the growth of the West German economy.<sup>5</sup> With the availability of goods, the Germans had both an incentive to work for real wages and no need to venture into the countryside to forage for food. Consequently, productivity rose significantly. The influx of Marshall Plan funds intensified the new faith in the Deutsche Mark and contributed to the reconstruction of West German capital and fixed assets. Although the economy was still subject to various Allied controls and rationing, the West German people now had the confidence in the economy to conduct normal business and allow the free circulation of goods and money that is so critical for a healthy economy.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> See for example, A.J. Nicholls, *Freedom with Responsibility: The Social Market Economy in Germany, 1918-1963* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994); and Henry C. Wallach, *Mainsprings of the German Revival* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955).

<sup>6</sup> For further treatment on the effects of the currency reform, the Marshall Plan, and the Social Market Economy see Werner Abelshauser, "West German Economic Recovery, 1945-1951: A Reassessment," *Three Banks Review* 135 (1982): 34-53. See also Alan S. Milward, *The Reconstruction of Western Europe, 1945-1951* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984); Hans-Joachim Braun, *The German Economy* (New



Led by Ludwig Erhard, the chief economic administrator of the British-American Bizone, West Germany's economic thinkers introduced the doctrine of the Social Market Economy in 1948. This socially conscious free market has remained the dominant economic policy in West Germany since. The system supported the free market in direct opposition to planning and control of the economy, except in cases when governmental intervention was needed to ensure competition. The Social Market Economy was instituted with the purpose of avoiding the over-concentration of economic power in the hands of cartels and the state as had been prevalent during the Nazi regime.<sup>7</sup> The combination of the currency reform, Marshall Plan funds, and the Social Market Economy has been described as the basis on which the German economy sprung into the period frequently referred to as the *Wirtschaftswunder* (Economic Miracle).<sup>8</sup> With the industrial boom prompted by the Korean War, the West German GNP gained 67 percent in real terms and industrial output rose by 110 percent between 1948 and 1952. From 1952 to 1958 the West German GNP continued to increase at a lowered, but still very strong, annual rate of 7.6 percent in real

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York: Routledge, 1990); and Eric Owen Smith, *The West German Economy* (London: Croom Helm, 1983).

<sup>7</sup> Wallich, *Mainsprings of the German Revival*, 114-115. For further discussion of the Social Market Economy see Christian Watrin, "The Principles of the Social Market Economy-its Origins and Early History," *Zeitschrift für die gesamte Staatswissenschaft* 135 (1979): 405-425; and Alfred Müller-Armack, "The Principles of Social Market Economy," *The German Economic Review* 2 (1965): 89-103.

<sup>8</sup> This conception of the *Wirtschaftswunder* was mainly based on Henry Wallich's *Mainsprings of German Revival* and Ludwig Erhard, *Prosperity through Competition* (New York: Fredrick A. Praeger, 1958). It has been seriously challenged by Werner Abelshausen in "West German Economic Recovery, 1945-1951: A Reassessment," in which Abelshausen states that German wartime damage was not as extensive as previously thought and that the West German economic recovery had begun before 1948.

terms, while this figure lowered to a still robust 5 percent yearly growth in the GNP through the mid 1960s. After the momentous year of 1948, West Germany transformed itself seemingly overnight from an economic cripple to a giant and enjoyed prodigious levels of growth through the 1950s and into the early 1960s.<sup>9</sup>

This outline of the economic history of West Germany during the immediate postwar years has taken hold in the West German national consciousness. Even today the legend of Erhard and the Economic Miracle are evoked in discussions on the economic reconstruction of the former Eastern Germany. Undoubtedly, this narrative of destruction and reconstruction has had an important influence upon the development of West German politics, especially during the 1950s. This economic resurgence, in many respects, offered a sense of national redemption for Germans and became a source of legitimization for West Germany and conservative political interests. It is first necessary, however, to examine briefly the roots and the development of the ideas of the Social Market Economy and the evolution of economic policy in occupied Germany between 1945 and 1948. It is important to get an overview of the ideas behind the Social Market Economy in order to understand how this program was picked up and molded by politicians as a means to overcome some of the political challenges that faced the newly formed Federal Republic. Although these economic thinkers understood the political dimensions of their ideas, in many respects they could not have foreseen the manner in which their economic concepts would be

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<sup>9</sup> Hardach, *The Political Economy of Germany in the Twentieth Century*, 161, 186, 193.

transformed for public consumption. Undoubtedly, their ideas proved to be important ammunition in the battles that would rage within the West German political scene.

The Social Market Economy had its roots in “neo-liberal” or “ordo-liberal” economic thinkers of the interwar period. Unlike in the Anglo-Saxon world, a strong debate on economics and social life developed in Germany after the end of the First World War. During the difficult Weimar period when economic and political strife tore Germany apart, particularly the period of rampant inflation between 1918 and 1923 and the Great Depression, economists sought solutions to the economic problems of the day. Most notable of these economists was Alfred Müller-Armack, Walter Eucken, Franz Böhm, Wilhelm Röpke, and Alexander Rüstow. Although they differed in many respects, they all sought to reconcile 19<sup>th</sup> century liberalism with the demands of the 20<sup>th</sup> century economy, especially to ward off the threats of fascism and communism. These thinkers believed in the retention of the free market system with a minimum social existence for all in society. This demanded some form of governmental intervention in the economy in order to avoid the concentration of economic power in a few hands and to ensure freedom of the individual.<sup>10</sup>

The interest in the “social” question within economics and society had its roots in the 1872 founding of the *Verein für Sozialpolitik* (The Association for Social Policy). This group of economists was interested in the field of social reform. These economists believed

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<sup>10</sup> Christoph Heusgen, *Ludwig Erhards Lehre von der Sozialen Marktwirtschaft: Ursprünge, Kerngehalt, Wandlungen* (Stuttgart: Verlag Haupt Bern, 1981), 42-44; and Watrin, “The Principles of Social Market Economy,” 404-409.

that the *laissez-faire* system of economic organization had not alleviated the dreadful conditions of the working class. For this reason, the economists of the *Verein* turned away from pure liberalism and demanded a “purposive state policy designed to regulate economic life.” An important part of their view was the belief in large-scale government measures meant to provide some form of social security for the working class. This did not mean that the association had completely forsaken *laissez-faire* economics, but instead it argued for some responsibilities and functions of the modern state within the free market. Regardless of the limited short-term results of the *Verein’s* discussion on politics, its influence on the debates on the role and function of the modern state were significant.<sup>11</sup>

Perhaps the most important influence upon the neo-liberals in postwar Germany was the Austrian-born economist, Friedrich August von Hayek, whose thought centered around the freedom of the individual in society. He contributed to neo-liberal economic thought with his espousal of the idea that the freedom of the individual can only be maintained in a free market. From Hayek’s view, one of the greatest threats to the freedom of the individual was socialism. He felt that there was no way a planned economy could meet the needs of individuals within society. A planned economy could only be implemented with force, and the life of individuals would be regulated down to particulars. The expression of a free society in economics is competition. The danger to this competition was monopolization by capital and organized labor, for this led to either tyranny or inefficiency, or possibly both.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 407-408.

<sup>12</sup> Heusgen, *Ludwig Erhards Lehre von der Sozialen Marktwirtschaft*, 45-50. See also Hayek’s *The Road to Serfdom* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1944).

Young economists during the 1920s, such as Walter Eucken, a professor at the University of Freiburg, developed the “Freiburg School” of economic thought, which formed a nucleus of economic thinkers who built further the ideas of neo-liberal thought. During the 1920s Eucken supported a *laissez-faire* approach to the economy. With the economic crisis of 1929 he came to reject pure *laissez-faire* economics as inadequate and envisioned a more active role for the state in the economy, a view echoed by fellow economist Alexander Rüstow.

In a speech to the *Verein für Sozialpolitik* in September 1932, Rüstow argued that a strong influence of the state on the economy did not contradict liberalism. Instead, the state should intervene into the economy in order to ensure full competition and allow market forces to work. In this way, Rüstow suggested some form of a “third way” between capitalism and collectivism.<sup>13</sup> Together, Eucken and Rüstow involved themselves in the *Deutscher Bund für freie Wirtschaftspolitik* (German League for the Free Market), a group of businessmen and economists supporting the free market system, in many respects going against the tide of interventionism of the early 1930s. Yet with the mounting deflation of 1931, both Eucken and Rüstow supported some form of temporary governmental expenditures to spur growth.<sup>14</sup>

Once the Second World War had begun, Eucken was relatively successful in creating some distance between his “Freiburg School” and the Nazi regime. In many

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<sup>13</sup> Nicholls, *Freedom with Responsibility*, 46-49.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 49-55.

respects Eucken sought to rehabilitate classical economics in the face of the autarkic economy Hitler was building in the Third Reich. He attacked many of his fellow German economists who were relativizing economic truths. From his perspective, the ideas of Adam Smith applied in Europe in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century as well as in Hanoverian Britain. In addition, he called for economists to be more involved in practical affairs, that in fact economic issues had to be understood within a specific political context.<sup>15</sup>

Other economists, such as Wilhelm Röpke, expounded upon the social aspects of economic organization. When the Nazis came to power, Röpke emigrated to Turkey and then Geneva, Switzerland. With the Nazis' plans for an autarkic economic system, liberal economic ideas were clearly on the defensive. In his works over the course of the 1930s, Röpke defended the free market against the onslaughts from the both the left and the right. Röpke realized that the free market was not perfect and that it had to be protected by government intervention against monopoly or other anti-market forces. He was also aware of the problems that the proletariat presented to society. If the proletariat's situation was not improved, it was destined to turn to communism. In reaction to this problem, Röpke believed that the government should support a policy that would encourage small- and medium-sized property owners, help independent farmers, and fight against the sense of rootlessness that was widespread in modern society.<sup>16</sup>

Röpke developed his ideas further in his two books written during the Second World War: *Gesellschaftskrisis der Gegenwart (Contemporary Crisis of Society, 1942)* and

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 62-68.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 90-97.

*Civitas Humana* (1944). In *Civitas*, Röpke divided the economic systems of the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries into two categories: collective or capitalist. He accepted neither of these systems. Collectivism led to economic despotism, centralization, depersonalization, and eventually totalitarianism. Capitalism, as it was practiced, led to monopoly. Instead of these two economic systems, Röpke called for a third way which could be called “economic humanism.” He would have liked the dismantling of modern mass society, a deproletariatization of society, and the creation of a new market economy with free competition ensured.<sup>17</sup>

In sum, these economic thinkers believed that a functioning market and price system must be the basis of each action within the political economy. In order to assure competition, stability of the currency must be maintained, allowing also the free convertibility of currency. This would encourage the full interaction of the factors of production and greater efficiency within the economy. In addition, this full competition demanded open markets, preserved by the government through a liberal trade policy. Also crucial was careful government intervention to prevent monopolies and ensure competition. The social aspect of this system rested upon the idea that the free market contains within it certain social advantages over centrally administered economic systems. A market system whose competition was defended ensured the maximum expansion of the economy, whose surplus could be redistributed more equally throughout society.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Heusgen, *Ludwig Erhards Lehre von der Sozialen Marktwirtschaft*, 50-54.

<sup>18</sup> Watrin, “The Principles of the Social Market Economy,” 414-422.

Although the ideas of the Social Market Economy had a long history, two figures, Alfred Müller-Armack and Ludwig Erhard, were essential for transferring its theoretical ideas into the political realm. Ludwig Erhard was born on February 4, 1897, in the northern Bavarian town of Fürth to middle-class, shopkeeper parents. He attended a vocational secondary school where he was a very ordinary student. During the First World War he served in an artillery battalion and was severely injured. After his recovery, he attended a *Handelshochschule* (business school) in Nuremberg and received his diploma in 1922. He then went to Frankfurt to earn his doctorate in economics under the direction of Franz Oppenheimer, a professor of sociology and theoretical economics. Oppenheimer developed theories on what he called “liberal socialism” in which both *laissez-faire* capitalism and Marxism were rejected. Oppenheimer thought that social justice had to be retained within a economy of free competition protected by the state. He also believed that a way to ensure truly free competition was to redistribute land more equally, and thereby ensure the freedom of individuals. Although Erhard would reverse the adjective and support a “social liberalism,” he nevertheless carried forth some of Oppenheimer’s ideas, especially the belief in free competition and that monopoly gravely threatened this competition. In addition, Erhard took with him the view that the government should intervene in the economy in order to stimulate consumer demand and discourage the over-concentration of capital.<sup>19</sup>

In 1928 Erhard moved to an institute involved in market research at the Nuremberg Commercial College under Wilhelm Vershofen and stayed there until 1942. During his stay

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<sup>19</sup> Nicholls, *Freedom with Responsibility*, 73-78; Heusgen, *Ludwig Erhards Lehre von der Sozialen Marktwirtschaft*, 68-78; and Volkhard Laitenberger, *Ludwig Erhard, Der Nationökonom als Politiker* (Göttingen: Muster-Schmidt, 1986), 7-23.



in Nuremberg, Erhard conducted work in market research for consumer goods. Over the course of the 1930s the very modest institute expanded quickly through contracts from the federations of the finished and consumer goods industries to investigate costs and earning conditions for these industries. At this institute Erhard learned to respect the wishes and importance of the consumer in the economic process. He believed that one must take into account ethical and psychological aspects of human behavior within the scientific inquiries in economics. These were lessons that proved valuable for Erhard in his years as Economics Minister.<sup>20</sup> Meanwhile, in 1933 Hitler had seized power in Germany. Since Erhard was highly critical of the nationalist economic policies of Hjalmar Schacht, he could not hope for a promotion to a university chair.

In 1942 Erhard left the Nuremberg Institute. It was not clear whether Erhard left due to his personal conflicts with Vershofen, or whether it was a matter that he refused to join the Nazi Labor Front.<sup>21</sup> Erhard then founded the *Institut für Industrieforschung* (Institute for Industrial Research). Funded by several major industrial firms, Erhard concentrated upon the study of the transition of Germany to a peace-time economy after the war. In fact, the circulation of his 268-page memorandum "*Kriegsfinanzierung und Schuldenkonsolidierung*" (War Finance and Debt Consolidation) was potentially a dangerous move on Erhard's part. After Goebbels' declaration of "total war" in January 1942, talk of the peace after the conclusion of the war was unacceptable to the Nazi

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<sup>20</sup> Heusgen, *Ludwig Erhards Lehre von der Sozialen Marktwirtschaft*, 78-84; and Laitenberger, *Ludwig Erhard*, 18-32.

<sup>21</sup> Nicholls, *Freedom with Responsibility*, 116.

regime.<sup>22</sup> In this document distributed to such firms as I.G. Farben, Flick, Siemens, Dresdner Bank, and Deutsche Bank in the summer of 1944, Erhard's ideas of the postwar era economy began to take form. He proposed the scaling down of government control of the economy, beginning with the demobilization of labor and restructuring the economy toward peacetime production. After a transition period, market forces had to be allowed to direct the economy. Most importantly, the expansion of the money supply created by the war had to be scaled back. This inflation, argued Erhard, had been masked by price controls that Germany was presently under. After a transition period in which the economy was to be structured for peacetime, at a critical juncture, the money supply had to be reduced and the purchasing power of money decreased. In essence, Erhard treated Germany as if it were a bankrupt concern and what was needed to correct the situation was a sound money policy.<sup>23</sup>

Erhard met Müller-Armack during the war. Although Müller-Armack was not part of the "Freiburg School," Erhard was strongly impressed by him and his writing, "most of all not as a theorist, but instead as one who wanted to transfer theory into practice."<sup>24</sup> A Nazi party member, during the war, Müller-Armack occupied a chair in economics at the

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<sup>22</sup> Laitenberger, *Ludwig Erhard*, 35-37. Volker Hentschel in his biography of Erhard questioned whether this action truly was a risk by Erhard. See *Ludwig Erhard: Ein Politikerleben* (München: Olzog, 1996), 26-37.

<sup>23</sup> Nicholls, *Freedom with Responsibility*, 117-119.

<sup>24</sup> Theodor Eschenberg, *Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Jahre der Besatzung, 1945-1949* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1983), 426.

University of Münster in Westphalia.<sup>25</sup> In addition, Müller-Armack also worked within a research institute conducting market research for the textile industry. After the war concluded, Müller-Armack began to write and speak on the necessity to reintroduce market forces into the German economy. One of his most important works was the *Wirtschaftslenkung und Marktwirtschaft (Economic Control and the Free Market)*, published in 1946, in which one section was entitled “*Soziale Marktwirtschaft*,” giving birth to the term “Social Market Economy.”<sup>26</sup> In this work, he argued that the economic “rules of the game,” or what has been called *Wirtschaftsordnung* had to be reestablished after the disruption of the war, most important of which was the reintroduction of market forces in the economy. From Müller-Armack’s view, market forces would ensure the efficient allocation of resources and increased productivity.<sup>27</sup>

But the question remained of how Müller-Armack was going to influence political leaders who could implement the ideas of the Social Market Economy at a time when market economics were highly unpopular. Müller-Armack’s contact with industry, stemming from his work with the textile market research institute, proved to be a crucial factor in creating a political audience of the Social Market Economy. In June 1947 Müller-Armack came into contact with businessmen from Hamburg organized into a group called *Volkswirtschaftliche Gesellschaft* (Society of Political Economy). This organization helped

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<sup>25</sup> A.J. Nicholls, a historian clearly supportive of the neo-liberal economists, argued that Müller-Armack joined the Nazi Party out of professional considerations. *Freedom with Responsibility*, 72.

<sup>26</sup> Eschenberg, *Geschichte der Bundesrepublik*, 439.

<sup>27</sup> Watrin, “The Principles of the Social Market Economy,” 415.

publish some of Müller-Armack's pamphlets on the Social Market Economy. More importantly, this organization brought Müller-Armack into contact with the budding liberal Free Democratic Party (FDP). Through the summer of 1947, the FDP supported economic programs based upon some form of economic planning. After the establishment of the Bizone organization in 1947, the FDP began to move toward a more liberal economic program, culminating in January 1948 with the Wageroog Program. This statement put forth by the British Zone FDP laid down free market principles as essential for the development of German freedom. In many respects, the writings of Müller-Armack and Röpke provided a theoretical base for the development of the FDP's program.<sup>28</sup>

Meanwhile, with the end of the war, Erhard was named by the American occupation forces to the position of economic administrator for the area of northern Bavaria. Again with American recommendation, in September 1945 he was named by a Social Democratic (SPD) premier of Bavaria to fill the post of Economics Minister for Bavaria, in which he served until replaced in January 1947. In December 1946 the SPD government in Bavaria was replaced by the Christian Socialist Union (CSU). Erhard was attacked by some members of the CSU who accused him of administrative incompetence. It was during this time that Erhard came under the direct influence of some of the neo-liberal thinkers, especially Walter Eucken. In November 1947 Erhard took a position at the University of

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<sup>28</sup> Nicholls, *Freedom with Responsibility*, 146-149. See also H.J. Ungeheuer, *Die Wirtschaftsprogrammatische und Wirtschaftspolitik der liberalen Parteien Deutschlands unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Entwicklung in der SBZ und in der britischen Zone* (M.A. thesis, University of Bonn, 1982), 134-135; and Jörg Michael Gutscher, *Die Entwicklung der FDP von ihren Anfängen bis 1961* (Meisenheim am Glan: Verlag Anton Hain, 1967), 95-96.

Munich because of his contacts with the liberal economist, Adolf Weber, and began to propagate ideas of the free market, publishing articles in newspapers such as *Die Neue Zeitung*. In these articles Erhard stressed the idea that the government had the responsibility to step into the economy in order to preserve free competition. In addition, he argued that the free market, which enjoyed true free competition, was, in fact, a form of the economy that was social.<sup>29</sup>

In the summer of 1946 the economies of the British and American zones of occupation were fused, a very difficult job indeed with the different political organizations of the individual zones. While the American Zone was organized into the various *Länder* (states), the British Zone was directed by central zonal organizations, especially in economics. Meanwhile, the French and the Soviets refused to participate in the coordination of the zonal administrations. In September 1946, the American General Lucius Clay announced the creation of five central offices, staffed by German civil servants, to administer the economies of the two zones.

The creation of the Bizone signaled the start of disputes between the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and the SPD on economic issues. At this point, the SPD still supported a form of the socialist planned economy. Meanwhile, elements of the CDU were drifting toward support of the free market, while many of the mainstream elements of the party supported "Christian socialism." The control of the new bureaucracies would be a point of contention between the two parties. The Economic Council, the most important of

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<sup>29</sup> Nicholls, *Freedom with Responsibility*, 151-154 and Laitenberger, *Ludwig Erhard*, 44-55.

the five offices, was staffed mostly by those who were in the economic organization in Minden in the British Zone. These were the bureaucrats who had created the centrally planned economy of the British Zone. Yet the head of the new Economics Office was given not to Viktor Argatz (SPD), who had run the old Economic Office in Minden, but instead to the Hessian Economic Minister Rudolf Mueller, who had clear proclivities toward the free market. But with pressure from the head of the SPD, Kurt Schumacher, Mueller was replaced by Argatz in January 1947. In addition, the SPD had occupied all positions of Economics Minister in the *Länder* by this point.<sup>30</sup> With this the CDU was excluded in decision making on economics throughout the Bizone. This galvanized opposition against the SPD to work together and sharpened the conflict between the SPD and the CDU. With this political competition from the SPD, the CDU, especially the organization in the American Zone, began to move toward a liberal-conservative position that supported the free market.<sup>31</sup> With no national level political bodies, political parties struggled against each other within the Bizone. Within this context, the positions and identity of the West German parties began to emerge.

Meanwhile, after a number of false starts, by the middle of 1947, the Bizone Economic Administration was fully established with the combination of the American

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<sup>30</sup> Jürgen Domes and Michael Wolffsohn, "Setting the Course for the Federal Republic of Germany: Major Policy Decisions in the Bi-Zonal Economic Council and Party Images, 1947-1949," *Zeitschrift für die Gesamte Staatswissenschaft* 135/3 (1979): 333-340; and Eschenburg, *Jahre der Besatzung*, 375-384.

<sup>31</sup> Gerold Ambrosius, *Die Durchsetzung der Sozialen Marktwirtschaft in Westdeutschland, 1945-1949* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1977), 69-70.

and British Zones. In May 1947 the Military Governors of the two occupation zones announced the reorganization of the Bizonal Economic Agencies with the creation of a number of new organizations to streamline the Bizone. The *Wirtschaftsrat für das vereinigte Wirtschaftsgebiet* (normally referred to as the Bizone) was established in Frankfurt to oversee the economic reconstruction of the combined zones. Within this overarching economic administration, the *Wirtschaftsrat* (Economic Council) acted as a quasi-parliamentary control organ. Under the direction of the Bipartite Control Group of the two occupying powers, the *Wirtschaftsrat* could issue laws dealing with a number of areas crucial to the economic reconstruction of the Bizone, including transportation, production and distribution of goods, raw materials, foreign and domestic trade, and price formation and controls. The *Executivausschusses* (Executive Committee), made of representatives from the eight *Länder* (states), was to look after the interests of the *Länder* and coordinate the activities of the directors of the five *Verwaltungen* (administrations) of economics, transportation, finance, post, and food. Johannes Semler, a Bavarian leader of the CSU who supported the free market, was named the new director of the Economics Administration on July 23, 1947.<sup>32</sup> Over the course of 1947, the representatives of the CDU/CSU began to work closely in the Economics Council with other “bourgeois” parties, especially the liberal FDP, in order to form a bloc against the SPD. In many respects, the parties in the Bizone were already working in the same fashion as the coalition that would be formed in September 1949 after the first parliamentary elections.

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<sup>32</sup> Eschenburg, *Jahre der Besatzung*, 384-396.

In early January 1948 Semler had gotten himself into trouble with the American occupiers. In a meeting with leaders of the CSU, Semler was critical of the occupiers and commented on grain fodder from the USA as “chicken feed,” a comment picked up by the American press. This helped lead to accusations of Semler “sabotaging the cooperation of German offices with the Allied authorities.” On January 26, 1948, he was dismissed by the Allied military governors. With Semler’s dismissal there was the growing threat that the Germans making up the various boards and committees of the Economics Administration would be less willing to cooperate with the occupying forces.<sup>33</sup>

In the autumn of 1947, Erhard was appointed to the “*Sonderstelle Geld und Kredit*” (Special Bureau for Monetary and Currency Matters) of the *Wirtschaftsrat* (Economic Council). From this position, Erhard quickly argued for the establishment of sound money within the newly formed Bizone (American and British Zones). With a reduction of the money supply, producers would have more incentive for the supply of goods. Even after Erhard had left the Special Bureau, the organization continued to work for the introduction of new currency in the Bizone.<sup>34</sup>

In April 1948, Erhard took up the top position of the Economics Administration of the Bizone. The FDP’s acceptance of market principles proved to be crucial at this

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<sup>33</sup> Nicholls, *Freedom with Responsibility*, 187-188; and Domes and Wolffsohn, “Setting the Course for the Federal Republic of Germany,” 338-339.

<sup>34</sup> Nicholls, *Freedom with Responsibility*, 156-157; and Hans Möller, “Die westdeutsche Währungsreform von 1948,” in *Währung und Wirtschaft in Westdeutschland, 1876-1975*, ed. Deutsche Bundesbank (Frankfurt am Main: F. Knapp, 1976), 444-454.



junction. The Economic Council was divided with forty-four CDU/CSU representatives versus forty-six Social Democrats and Communists. The CDU/CSU could not agree on whom to name to the position of Economics Director, especially with the strong trade unionist wing of the CDU/CSU supporting more economic controls. The FDP, on the other hand, was pushing Erhard as head of the Economics Administration. The FDP's support was crucial to create an anti-socialist bloc. As a result, the CDU/CSU and FDP compromised by naming of the Christian Socialist Herman Pünder from Cologne to the head of the whole Bizone, while Erhard put in as the head of the Economics Administration.<sup>35</sup>

With the imminent currency reform being pushed forward by the Americans, Erhard was proposing radical liberalization of controls of the Bizone economy. In addition, he thought German trade should be freed from restrictions and called for the end of some of the rationing. Erhard also called for higher production of consumer goods. In the months prior to the currency reform, Erhard pushed through a Law Governing the Guiding Principles for Controls and Pricing Policy after Currency Reform, which allowed the director of the Economics Administrator greater powers in resource allocation and pricing. This Guiding Principles Law, approved by the Economics Administration on June 18, 1948, meant, in practice, that Erhard had a much freer hand in the liberalization of the West German economy. Although the Law still had to be passed by the *Länderrat* and the Allied powers, Erhard announced immediately following the currency reform of June 20 that price controls on mostly consumer goods would be relaxed. When the military governor of the Bizone

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<sup>35</sup> Nicholls, *Freedom with Responsibility*, 158.

demanded Erhard to explain his actions, in respect that he had no right to alter price controls, Erhard is reported to have replied, "I have not altered them. I have abolished them."<sup>36</sup>

In spite of what could be called Erhard's theatrics, the United States proved to be the decisive force in the creation of a new currency in West Germany. When the American army occupied Germany in 1945, there was no clear plan in terms of monetary policy. But by early January 1946 it was clear that the monetary situation in Germany had to be stabilized. A group of economic experts, led by Gerhard Colm and Ray Goldsmith, was sent to Germany by the American government to work out the details of a plan. In Germany they worked with General Clay's financial advisor, Joseph Dodge, and produced the Colm-Dodge-Goldsmith Plan that called for a currency reform in all four occupation zones. All through 1946 the four powers discussed plans for a currency reform, but disagreements over who would print the new currency led to the breaking off of negotiations. By September 25, 1947, the decision had been made in the Western zones to introduce a new currency. From February until April 1948 the new Deutsche Mark notes arrived in Bremenhaven from the United States. In order to make the notes appear neutral, they contained neither an issuing authority nor a place of issue or signature. On June 20, 1948, the new Deutsche Mark was introduced in the three western occupation zones. Not until four days later, when the

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 209-217.

currency reform was announced for the Soviet Zone, including East Berlin, was the western currency introduced into West Berlin.<sup>37</sup>

With the currency reform, the old worthless Reichsmark (RM) was to be exchanged for the new Deutsche Mark (DM) on a one-to-one basis. But one could only exchange up to 40 old Reichsmarks into the new currency. Two months later one could exchange another 20 Reichsmarks. In addition, each employer was able to exchange 60 RM for each employee in order to be able to pay wages. Wages, salaries, rents, and pensions continued at their old rates. In contrast, liquid assets, bank deposits, and liabilities were converted at the rate of 10 RM to 1 DM. In effect, the currency reform had drawn out of circulation about 93.5 percent of all currency.<sup>38</sup> In conjunction with the currency reform, there was a relaxation of price controls of many consumer goods. The day of the currency reform, Erhard had his press secretary announce on the radio this reduction of price controls, although articles such as essential foodstuffs, coal and iron, and clothes remained under controls.<sup>39</sup>

It appeared to the public that the currency reform had a very tonic effect on the economy. For months retailers had been hoarding goods because they did not want to accumulate the practically worthless Reichsmarks. Yet in the days before the currency reform, consumers were buying absurd amounts of anything shopkeepers would sell. There

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<sup>37</sup> Eckhard Wandel, "Historical Developments Prior to the Germany Currency Reform of 1948," *Zeitschrift für die Gesamte Staatswissenschaft* 135/3 (1979): 321-331.

<sup>38</sup> Abelshausen, *Wirtschaftsgeschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, 49-50.

<sup>39</sup> Nicholls, *Freedom with Responsibility*, 216-217; and Wallach, *Mainsprings of the German Revival*, 69-71.

were stories of people buying bulk supplies of Dr. Oetkers glaze for cakes—enough for 2,800—or others buying hundreds of Reichmarks worth of aspirin, bathing salts, or rat poison. With the currency reform, the black market, which had been a source of necessities for many West Germans, was destroyed. Overnight all kinds of goods appeared in storekeepers' windows. Newspapers reported an unbelievable availability of goods.<sup>40</sup>

Yet there were most definite drawbacks that accompanied the currency reform. With one fell swoop, and for the second time in twenty-six years, the small saver saw his savings wiped out. In many respects an important part of the currency reform mythology was the perception that the currency reform was a “great leveler” in society since all started off with 40 DM. But one must also consider that the owners of material assets or means of industrial or agricultural production had 90 percent of their debt wiped out. These were the same people who were in good position to enjoy the boom that took place in the 1950s. Meanwhile, the workers, pensioners, and small savers lost practically everything.<sup>41</sup>

People were generally supportive of the currency reform immediately following its enactment. In a survey conducted by the Allensbach Institut following the currency reform, 71 percent of those polled replied that they were happy that the currency reform had occurred. This number had climbed to 74 percent by July 1948. By October 1948 43 percent of respondents believed that their lives were easier since the currency reform, while

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<sup>40</sup> Wolfgang Benz, *Von der Besatzungsherrschaft zur Bundesrepublik: Stationen einer Staatgründung, 1946-1949* (Frankfurt: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1984), 142-143.

<sup>41</sup> Alan Kramer, *The West German Economy, 1945-1955* (Oxford: Berg, 1991), 137-138.

37 percent thought life was more difficult.<sup>42</sup> In addition, an OMGUS (Office of Military Government, United States) survey reported a remarkable shift in terms of people's concerns following the currency reform. Prior to the currency reform, the main concern for Germans in the American Zone was about food, with 54 percent. This figure had dropped to 19 percent by July 1948, and by 1949 was down to 10 percent.<sup>43</sup> In many respects, the surveys reflected that West Germans were not as anxious about obtaining necessary foodstuffs.

Yet, the optimism was surely measured. About a quarter of all West Germans thought that Germany would never recover economically. In addition, in July 1948 a full 42 percent thought that their lives were more difficult after the currency reform. Other worries centered around the rise in prices. In the months after the currency reform, financial problems superseded food as the chief concern for Germans (60 percent). Following the currency reform, 43 percent of respondents believed that prices would rise in the next few weeks, while only 25 percent thought prices would fall. This trend continued through December 1948 when 36 percent thought prices would rise. This number decreased dramatically by March 1949 when only 7 percent thought prices would rise, while 64

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<sup>42</sup> Umfrage über der Währungsreform, Institut für Demoskopie, ZSg 132/1/2, Bundesarchiv Koblenz (hereafter BA Koblenz).

<sup>43</sup> Anna J. Merritt and Richard L. Merritt, eds., *Public Opinion in Occupied Germany: The OMGUS Surveys, 1945-1949* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1970), 294-295.

percent thought they would fall.<sup>44</sup> One survey conducted in the American Zone of occupation reported that huge majorities of respondents (no exact figure given) believed that the currency reform would increase the unemployment rate. In addition, a large majority was willing to work more in order to earn more, but many believed that they would not have the chance to do so.<sup>45</sup>

In addition, many West Germans were concerned with how the currency reform was implemented. One frequent complaint among West Germans, as reported in an Institut für Demoskopie survey from June 1948, was that “one should have taken social factors in consideration” when formulating the currency reform.<sup>46</sup> In July 1948, 79 percent of West Germans believed that certain levels of society had gained special advantages from the currency reform. These groups which benefited included businessmen (62 percent of respondents), manufacturers (38 percent), and capitalists (20 percent).<sup>47</sup>

Despite an overall positive view of the currency reform held by West Germans, its impact on the West German economy has come under scrutiny. Some historians since the 1980s have questioned the basis for the “*Wirtschaftswunder*” in general, and the overall effects of the currency reform on the development of the West German economy in particular. Foremost of these historians is Werner Abelshauser. This questioning of the

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<sup>44</sup> Merritt and Merritt, *Public Opinion in Occupied Germany*, 294; Umfrage über der Währungsreform, Institut für Demoskopie, ZSg 132/1/2, BA Koblenz.

<sup>45</sup> Merritt and Merritt, *Public Opinion in Occupied Germany*, 262-263.

<sup>46</sup> Elisabeth Noelle and Erich P. Neumann, eds., *Jahrbuch der Öffentlichen Meinung, 1947-1955* (Allensbach am Bodensee: Verlag für Demoskopie, 1956), 151.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid*, 151.

foundation of the Economic Miracle included attacking the following accepted postulates: that the West German recovery began with the currency reform of June 20, 1948, that this recovery was based upon foreign aid, especially the Marshall Plan, and that the changes of the political economy associated with the Social Market Economy set off the eventual West German economic recovery.<sup>48</sup> Abelshauser's critique of the currency reform was not limited to his questioning of whether it was the jumping off point for the "Wirtschaftswunder." He also questioned some of the mythologies and legends that arose around the currency reform, which proved critical for the development of politics in the Federal Republic. Abelshauser pointed out some of the legends such as that the currency reform was the product of Germans or Ludwig Erhard in particular. In addition, Abelshauser attacked the legend that the currency reform represented an equal fresh start for all West German citizens.<sup>49</sup>

Abelshauser argued that the West German economy was plagued in the years 1945-1948 not by the destruction of the war, but instead by bottlenecks, especially the shortage of coal and the insufficient transportation system. Economic indicators showed that the West German economy was already improving by the time of the currency reform in 1948. In fact, Abelshauser pointed out that, overall, the total amount of fixed industrial assets was actually about 20 percent higher in 1945 than in 1936 because of the heavy investment in

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<sup>48</sup> Werner Abelshauser, "West German Economic Recovery," 34-53.

<sup>49</sup> Werner Abelshauser, "Die Währungsreform-Legende und Wirklichkeit," in *Der schwierige Weg zur Demokratie: Die Bundesrepublik vor 40 Jahren*, ed. Landeszentrale für politische Bildung, Nordrhein-Westfalen (Düsseldorf: Landeszentrale für politische Bildung Nordrhein-Westfalen, 1990), 220-221.

German industry during the war. Even in 1948, after the effects of depreciation, reparations, and dismantling, fixed industrial assets were about 11 percent higher than in 1936.<sup>50</sup> By late 1947 the bottlenecks preventing the West German economy from its possible growth had been overcome and real reconstruction had begun. Because of this, production was already increasing by the time the currency reform was instituted in June 1948. The perception that the currency reform helped the production of new goods was a function of the release of hoarded goods that had been building for more than year beforehand. Therefore, the currency reform did not induce a rise of production.<sup>51</sup>

In spite of the controversy surrounding Abelshauser's position, the fact remains that the currency reform of June 20, 1948, and the Social Market Economy provided conservatives with important political prestige. This prestige was to be apparent in the first federal elections of West Germany in 1949. In addition, throughout the 1950s the myth of the Economic Miracle and the Social Market Economy was to be constructed and reconstructed. Although studies of the political economy by economic historians can track the growth of the economy, they do not necessarily trace the perception of realities held by people at the time. These perceptions, perhaps more than any statistical description of the economy, can have a critical impact upon developments taking place in the political culture.

One must remember that on June 20, 1948, the currency reform was seen by all in West Germany not as a German measure, or led by Ludwig Erhard, but instead as one of the

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<sup>50</sup> Abelshauser, *Wirtschaftsgeschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, 20-21.

<sup>51</sup> Abelshauser, "West German Economic Recovery 1945-1951: A Reassessment," 38-43.



American occupier's policies. But the mythology surrounding the currency reform of 1948 and birth of the Economic Miracle had begun even by the summer of 1948. Some of the key aspects of this mythology included the view that German economic life was handicapped by Allied Military controls, an absence of a stable currency, the black market, and the dismantling of the German industrial capital.

Immediately following the currency reform, the American-Anglo newsreel *Welt im Film* (The World in Film) portrayed the currency reform to the population of the three Western zones of occupation. In an analysis of these films, Martin Loiperdinger concluded that the currency reform was reported with many of the "facts," especially in terms of the problems accompanying the currency reform such as social tensions and rising prices. But at the same time, the films lent themselves to the creation of myths and legends surrounding the currency reform. The films stressed an optimistic tone that the currency reform had ushered in a new era for German economic recovery. When they did admit the rise in prices, the films cajoled the audience that they could change prices by not frittering away their money and by participating in the mechanism of supply and demand. When the November 1948 worker strikes and rallies against price increases were portrayed, it was emphasized that this was not the way a democracy worked. The film explained that it was legitimate that they were on strike, but that the single strike cost the Bizone 200 million DM in production while Marshall Plan funds were flowing into Germany. The way the films were edited, the German workers appeared selfish, while other nations were lending

Germany a helping hand. Loiperdinger concluded that the films point to Ludwig Erhard as the person to solve the problems presented in the films.<sup>52</sup>

In fact, Erhard was responsible himself for the creation of the mythology and legend surrounding the currency reform. Erhard, since his days at the *Gesellschaft für Konsumforschung* (Society for Consumer Research) in Nuremberg, had realized the importance of the “psychological” forces behind economics. He would later write on this subject in his 1957 work, *Wohlstand für Alle* (Prosperity for All). Erhard argued that “psychology” was an instrument equal in worth to traditional economic policies. People’s actions and attitudes on economics had to be changed in order to coincide with general economic aims. With that Erhard concluded, “Above all, the people must be made to understand that to follow the voice of good common sense and of economic reason will, in the long run, result in their benefit.”<sup>53</sup> Erhard was clearly aware of the importance of public opinion within the economy. In fact, as head of the Economic Administration, Erhard had commissioned the demographic surveys mentioned above from the Institut für Demoskopie in order to keep track of the swings of public opinion.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Martin Loiperdinger, “A Note on Allied Currency Reform in West Germany (1948) as presented by “*Welt im Film*,” *Historical Journal of Film, Radio, and Television* 8/3 (1988): 299-309.

<sup>53</sup> Erhard, *Prosperity through Competition*, 180. See also Erhard’s *Fragen an die Meinungsforschung* (Allensbach: Verlag für Demoskopie, 1961) for a discussion of Erhard’s view of the use and abuse of public opinion polls.

<sup>54</sup> Gerhard Schmidtchen and Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, “Die Bedeutung Repäsentativer Völksumfragen für die Offene Gesellschaft,” *Politische Vierteljahrsschrift* 4 (1963): 168-169.

On June 21, 1948, the day after the currency reform, Erhard went to the airwaves to create faith in the new currency and to explain the necessity for the currency reform. Erhard opened the speech proclaiming that, “After several days of mental and spiritual anxiety, we have relapsed into the routine of daily life everyday life.” Erhard, wishing only to be an “expert,” explained that the German people could have confidence in the new currency and in the decision to abandon the principle of a state-controlled economy. He pleaded that, “I am not appealing to some vague, obscure faith, not to an irrational belief in miracle, when I try to strengthen the confidence of our people in our new currency.” In addition, he tried to convince the German people that prices would come down as the economy righted itself under the forces of the market. Erhard then went on to the technical aspects of the currency reform and what it would mean for the development of the West German economy, a message that probably went over the heads of most his listeners.<sup>55</sup> In terms of actually convincing the public, Erhard’s public address perhaps had questionable effectiveness. Nevertheless, this was one of the first salvos in what would prove to be a barrage of public relations efforts that Erhard would either coordinate or endorse over the course of the 1950s.

In many respects, the currency reform acted as a perceived beginning of the new West Germany. As subsequent chapters of this dissertation will show, business and political interests constructed a meaning of the currency reform and the ensuing Economic Miracle that both lent support to the free market and the conservative CDU/CSU. Werner Abelshausen has pointed out perhaps the most important legacy of the currency reform in

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<sup>55</sup> Ludwig Erhard, *The Economics of Success* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1963), 45-47.

regard to the development of West German politics. The currency reform helped set up a dichotomy between *Marktwirtschaft* (market economy) and *Planwirtschaft* (planned economy) that allowed no reconciliation, appearing particularly important in the 1949 election campaign. Abelshausen has suggested that the position between the CDU/CSU's "directed free market" (*gelenkte Marktwirtschaft*) of the Social Market Economy and the SPD's "free directed economy" (*marktwirtschaftliche Lenkungswirtschaft*) were, in fact, not far apart from each other. Yet, the policy of "planning" came to be remembered by most Germans as, "primarily the planning out of the Stone Age of the economy, as practiced in the Third Reich, as well as in the Soviet occupation Zone."<sup>56</sup> Abelshausen may be correct in his assessment that the economic gurus of the SPD and the CDU/CSU might not have been far apart in terms of their policies. But the fact remains that the CDU/CSU found a way to ensure that economics did become a divisive or "wedge" issue to create a sharp distinction between the parties. This distinction was to be further developed and exploited by the CDU/CSU in the coming elections.

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<sup>56</sup> Abelshausen, "Die Währungsreform--Legende und Wirklichkeit," 233.

CHAPTER 3  
MARKET OR PLANNED?  
THE 1949 BUNDESTAG ELECTION

In the August 1949 *Bundestagwahl* (federal parliamentary elections), the conservative Christian Democratic Party and its sister party, the Christian Socialist Union, (CDU/CSU) collected 31 percent of the vote, the largest percentage of all parties. It was enough barely to beat their main rival, the Social Democratic Party (SPD), which had garnered 29.2 percent. Together with the liberal Free Democratic Party (FDP, 11.9 percent) and the conservative German Party (DP, 4 percent), the CDU/CSU was able to build a government in the first Bundestag of the Federal Republic of Germany. In his *Regierungserklärung* (government statement) on September 20th, Chancellor Konrad Adenauer commented:

The question of Planned Economy or Social Market Economy played a decisive role in the election. The German people have spoken with a great majority against the planned economy. A [grand] coalition between the parties that oppose the planned economy and those that support the planned economy has been rejected by the will of the majority of the voters.<sup>1</sup>

Historians examining the 1949 election campaign have concurred with Adenauer that the issue of economic policy was the deciding issue in the election. In addition, during the

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<sup>1</sup> Konrad Adenauer, “*Regierungserklärung*,” in *Reden, 1917-1967: Eine Auswahl*, ed. Hans-Peter Schwarz (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags Anstalt, 1975), 153-169.

campaign the Social Market Economy and the CDU/CSU became united in public perception.<sup>2</sup> But the question remains: in what way did the choice of “Market or Planned” play a crucial role in the Federal elections of 1949? How did the CDU/CSU and other bourgeois parties represent and use the market economy as a political platform? And, perhaps more importantly, how did the election campaign of 1949 prepare the ground for further use of the Social Market Economy, and the budding concept of the Economic Miracle as a political tool?

One prominent scholar of German politics described the 1949 federal election campaign not as the beginning of the Federal Republic party system, especially in terms of the sociological characteristics of the parties. Instead, he argued that the 1949 election was the last of the type of elections similar to the *Reichstagwahlen* (Reichstag elections) of the Weimar Republic.<sup>3</sup> This is true from the perspective that there were many parties that successfully gathered at least five percent of the vote in the individual *Länder* (states), the minimum to gain a seat in the Bundestag, much like the splintered political system that plagued the Weimar Republic. All told, eleven different parties moved into the first Bundestag. On the other hand, in the 1949 election the pillars of the Federal Republic party system were already forming. The three parties that would form the stable party system of the 1960s, the CDU/CSU, the SPD, and the FDP, had already gathered 72.1 percent of the vote in the 1949 election. These parties embodied the three main

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<sup>2</sup> Theodor Eschenberg, *Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Jahre der Besatzung, 1945-1949* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1983), 533-536.

<sup>3</sup> Jürgen W. Falter, “Kontinuität und Neubeginn: Die Bundestagswahl 1949 zwischen Weimar und Bonn,” *Politische Vierteljahresschrift* 22 (1981): 236.

strains of German political history: parties of conservative, socialist, and liberal tendencies.<sup>4</sup> In addition, the sociological subcultures that characterized Weimar political behavior had begun to disintegrate by the 1949 election. Most significant was the breakdown of the Catholic subculture in regard to voting behavior. Undoubtedly, the CDU/CSU, as successor parties to the pre-war Catholic Center Party, garnered much of its support from Catholics—about two thirds of its voters. At the same time, it was able to reach out to Protestant votes that were critical to its electoral success, a pattern that was absent in the Weimar Republic.<sup>5</sup> In many respects, the use of the Social Market Economy can be seen as a fundamental means for the CDU/CSU to break out of the Catholic ghetto in which its Center Party forerunner was consigned.

I would also like to argue that although the 1949 Bundestag election represented Weimar tendencies, or perhaps the beginning of a transitional period, in terms of the sociological base of the parties, it also was very similar to Weimar elections in terms of the methods utilized in the election campaign. The message of the CDU/CSU was carried forth through the traditional means: the leaflet, the political poster, and speeches.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Karl Rohe, *Wahlen und Wählertraditionen in Deutschland: Kulturelle Grundlagen deutscher Parteien und Parteiensysteme im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1992), 165.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 170-171; and Karl Schmitt, "Religious Cleavages in the West German Party System," in *Elections, Parties, and Political Traditions. Social Foundations of German Parties and Party Systems, 1867-1987*, ed. Karl Rohe (New York: Berg, 1990), 186-201.

<sup>6</sup> For a discussion of Weimar election propaganda see Dirk Lau, "Wahlkampf der Weimar Republik: Propaganda und Programm der politischen Parteien bei dem Wahlen zum Deutschen Reichstag von 1924 bis 1930" (Ph.D. diss., University of Mainz, 1995)

There was not yet any real use of either modern advertising techniques or of public opinion polls, resources that would be fully utilized in the future Bundestag elections. In addition, the propaganda messages promulgated by the CDU/CSU could be best described as crude and direct. Although certain personalities who carried forth the CDU/CSU program rose to the forefront of the election campaign, especially Konrad Adenauer and Ludwig Erhard, the campaign was not centered upon the leaders of the CDU/CSU. In the elections to come, the CDU/CSU became very successful at creating campaigns in which party leaders personified certain images and programs of the party. But in 1949, a representation of CDU/CSU programs or accomplishments took precedence over any one person. Propaganda was based still on a party's ideological position. In many respects, the "image" of the CDU/CSU had not fully emerged as it would in the late 1950s. For the first Bundestag campaign, the CDU/CSU did not have the wide battery of parallel propaganda instruments at its disposal, but instead was limited mostly to the propaganda produced by the party itself. Yet, already by the 1949 election, the CDU/CSU had begun to construct a meaning of the Social Market Economy and West Germany's economic upswing that would benefit the party in the elections to come.

The CDU/CSU at its founding in the individual zones of occupation did not support a free market economy. In the years immediately following the war, the CDU was a patchwork of both differing ideologies and local political organizations. The three

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and Thomas Childers, "The Social Language of Politics in Germany: The Sociology of Political Discourse in the Weimar Germany," *American Historical Review* 95/2 (1990): 331-358.



main centers of the simultaneous formation of the CDU were the Rhineland (especially Cologne), Frankfurt am Main, and Berlin. Until 1950 there was no real centralized party machine running the CDU/CSU. As a result, much of the decision making of the party was left to the local organizations. Most of the three main organizations of the CDU, especially the CDU of the British Zone of occupation, supported an economic program that could be best described as “Christian Socialist.” In July 1945 the Rhineland CDU leaders, headed by the former mayor of Cologne, Konrad Adenauer, issued the *Kölner Leitsätze* (Cologne Principles), which called for an egalitarian wage policy and a redistribution of industrial resources. Other regional CDU organizations took similar positions. In its founding in June 1945, the Berlin CDU called for the nationalization of raw materials and key industries. Jakob Kaiser, a Nazi opponent and head of the Eastern Zone and the Berlin branch of the CDU starting in December 1945, had a background in Christian trade unions from before the Nazi seizure of power, and called for some form of socialism based upon “Christian responsibility.”<sup>7</sup>

Christian Socialism entailed the search for a middle way between capitalism and the planned economy of pure Marxism. The large firms, or at least basic industries, large banks, and insurance firms should be passed over to community control. But Christian Socialism was against simple nationalization. Instead, there should be a decentralization of economic power into the hands of employers, unions, consumers, and community interests in an attempt to balance the interests of capital and labor. Not only the class

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<sup>7</sup> Hans-Otto Kleinmann, *Geschichte der CDU, 1945-1982* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1993), 54-55; and Eschenburg, *Jahre der Besatzung*, 187-188.

interests of Marxism, but also the individualism of liberalism were to be forsaken in favor of the creation of a balanced, classless, Christian community. This view was clearly expressed in the CDU of the British Zone's Ahlener Program of February 1947.<sup>8</sup>

The Ahlener Program is seen by many historians as a middle station in the development of the CDU's economic policy. Christian Socialism seemed like a natural position with the British announcement of its plan to socialize the industrial heart of Germany, the Ruhr valley, in October 1946. Surely, the left wing of the CDU found fertile ground within the British Zone. This was intensified with the harsh winter of 1946/47 in which the anti-capitalist sentiments among Germans of the British Zone grew as their living conditions worsened. In order to ensure his position as the *Vorsitzender* (chairman) of the CDU British Zone and to intercept the swing of public sentiment with a vote for the Northrhine-Westphalia *Landtag* (state legislature) in April 1947, Adenauer pushed for the formation of a new economic program for the CDU in the British Zone.<sup>9</sup> The Ahlener Program espoused the ideas of Christian Socialism. It stated, "The capitalist economic system has become unjust for the state (*staatliche*) and social interests of the

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<sup>8</sup> Horst-Albert Kukuck, "Etappen im Ringen um eine Wirtschaftskonzeption der CDU 1945-1949," in *Politische Parteien auf dem Weg zur parlamentarischen Demokratie in Deutschland*, Lothar Albertin and Werner Link, eds. (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1981), 239-260. See also Gerold Ambrosius, *Die Durchsetzung der Sozialen Marktwirtschaft in Westdeutschland, 1945-1949* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1977).

<sup>9</sup> Kukuck, "Etappen im Ringen um eine Wirtschaftskonzeption der CDU 1945-1949," 247-249. See also Ambrosius, *Die Durchsetzung der Sozialen Marktwirtschaft*, 39; and Franz Focke, *Sozialismus aus christlicher Verantwortung* (Wuppertal: Hammer, 1978), 253-255.

German people.” The program went on to proclaim that “the content and goals of the social and economic new order can not be for capitalist profit and the striving for power, instead it can only be for the welfare of our nation (*Volkes*). The German people should maintain an economic and social system (*Wirtschafts- und Sozialverfassung*) through common economic organization (*gemeinwirtschaftliche Ordnung*).” Overall, the document was a mix of earlier radical ideas and vague demands.<sup>10</sup> It was radical in the sense of wanting to reduce industrial concerns to their smallest profitable size, but it also was a barrier against communal ownership of the means of production.

The Ahlener Program represented a brilliant tactical move on the part of Adenauer and the bourgeois-liberal elements of the CDU. Clearly the program was a concession to the Christian Socialist wing of the CDU, especially Jacob Kaiser and the CDU in Berlin, a move that was essential because of the predominate economic conditions of the winter 1946/47. Through this measure, Adenauer and the liberal wing of the CDU were able to integrate firmly the left wing of the CDU and at the same time hinder a further drifting of the party to the left.<sup>11</sup>

But as the head of the CDU in the British Zone, Konrad Adenauer realized the danger that such a policy presented in the political arena. He saw the need for the party to link itself to the right of the German political spectrum in order to obtain more than just the Catholic vote. Adenauer realized that for the CDU to be successful, the party had to

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<sup>10</sup> “Das Ahlener Programm,” in *Konrad Adenauer und die CDU der britischen Besatzungszone, 1946-1949. Dokumente zur Gründungsgeschichte der CDU Deutschlands*, ed. Helmuth Pütz (Bonn: Eichholz-Verlag, 1975), 280.

<sup>11</sup> Ambrosius, *Die Durchsetzung der Sozialen Marktwirtschaft*, 39-40.

be able to branch out and establish support from Protestants and the conservative bourgeoisie. In addition, if the CDU had a form of socialism as part of its program, the *Länder* (state) governments would be able to enter into coalitions with the SPD. This was something that Adenauer wanted to avoid at all costs. Therefore, the acceptance of the neo-liberal ideas of the Social Market Economy had great appeal to Adenauer. The acceptance of Erhard's free market system would make compromise between the CDU and the SPD impossible.<sup>12</sup>

Meanwhile after a number of false starts, by the middle of 1947 the Bizone Economic Administration was fully established with the combination of the American and British Zones. With the stronger organization, the Bizone created a number of new political structures to run the British and American Zones more effectively. The Bizone, officially called the *Wirtschaftsrat für das vereinigte Wirtschaftsgebiet*, was established in Frankfurt to oversee the economic reconstruction of the combined zones.

By March 1948 Ludwig Erhard had been named as Director of the Economics Administration of the Bizone. In June 1948 the currency reform was carried out in the Bizone and a series of market reforms were instituted. By this time many in the British Zone CDU, especially the members of the *Wirtschaftsausschuss* (economic committee), were ready to abandon the Ahlener Program. Adenauer invited Erhard to address the

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<sup>12</sup> A. J. Nicholls, *Freedom with Responsibility: The Social Market Economy in Germany, 1918-1963* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 234-235; Kukack, "Etappen im Ringen um eine Wirtschaftskonzeption der CDU, 1945-1949," 252-254; and Geoffrey Pridham, *Christian Democracy in Western Germany: The CDU/CSU in Government and Opposition, 1945-1976* (London: Croom Helm, 1977), 28-37.

CDU of the British Zone's party conference in Recklinghausen at the end of August 1948. In this speech entitled, "*Marktwirtschaft moderner Prägung*" (Market Economy of the Modern Stamp), Erhard placed the change of the West German economy from the *Zwangswirtschaft* (command economy) to a *Marktwirtschaft* (market economy) in a broad context by connecting the economic transformation with social change. He opened the speech with the words:

With the political-economic change to the market economy, we have done more than just initiate narrow economic measures; we have put our socio-economic life upon a new foundation and before a new beginning.<sup>13</sup>

This change in the economic order meant not the creation of "plundering" or "irresponsibility," but meant the "committed sacrifice to the whole. Not the senseless and soulless state of drones [*seelenlose Termitenstaat*] with its depersonalization of humanity [*Menschen*], but instead the organic state, based upon the freedom of the individual, striving together for an elevated whole. That is the intellectual basis upon which we want to build a new economy and a new social order."<sup>14</sup> In this way Erhard was placing the Social Market Economy within the context of a fundamental restructuring of society and the preservation of individual freedom. Undoubtedly, Erhard had to couch his economic plans in a manner that defended personal freedom, but at the same time considered the interests of the whole. A full defense of the free market and individualism surely would

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<sup>13</sup> "*Marktwirtschaft moderner Prägung*," speech by Ludwig Erhard at the Zweiter Parteitag der CDU für die Britische Zone, in *Konrad Adenauer und die CDU der britischen Besatzungszone*, ed. Pütz, 657.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 658.

have elicited a strong, negative response from some members of Erhard's audience, who still held pro-Christian Socialist sentiments.

Implicitly, he was setting up an "either/or" choice for West Germany in terms of what the economic system meant for the individual. With the planned economy, the individual is forced "under the whip of a soulless bureaucracy." Throughout his speech Erhard repeatedly referred to the "soulless collectivism" or "soulless colony of drones" as part of the planned economy. In addition, Erhard stressed that the planned economy was a middle station that inevitably led to a command economy, an economic system whose characteristics West Germans could understand by only thinking back to the Nazi years or looking to the East to the Stalinist Soviet Union.

As an alternative to this system that led to tyranny, Erhard offered the Social Market Economy. He argued that Germany had to establish an economic system "which through voluntary organization (*Einordnung*), through a conscious responsibility, struggles for the whole in a sensible, organic way."<sup>15</sup> With this Erhard highlighted the social element of the free market. But in addition, fundamental to Erhard's view was that economic freedom was essential for the creation of a free society. In this way Erhard defined the fundamentals of a free society in which, "in my eyes the most important of all democratic freedoms is the free selection of goods, along with the free selection of professions."<sup>16</sup> Erhard was establishing a view that would be repeated in political

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 657-658.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 665.

propaganda throughout the 1950s: political freedom and freedom to consume were inextricably intertwined; one could not be established without the other.

By early 1949 Adenauer had asked members of the *Wirtschaftsausschuss* (economic committee) of the CDU of the British Zone to begin to draw up a economic plan based upon Erhard's ideas. On the 25th of February Erhard addressed the zonal committee of the CDU in Königswinter. Erhard argued that the upcoming federal elections hinged upon economic policy and the social conditions of the German people. He implored the CDU politicians to accept the Social Market Economy as the party's platform in the election. All the while, he was sure to stress the social aspects of the free market, in order not to alienate the CDU politicians holding onto Christian Socialism.<sup>17</sup> After his presentation, Adenauer thanked Erhard for putting forth these "fundamental truths." The resonance of Erhard's speech was supposedly quite great among those present.<sup>18</sup> This response reaffirmed Adenauer's belief that the CDU should build its economic policies upon Erhard's principles. The key task was to express these principles in "simple and clear terms" in the upcoming election campaign.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> "Stenographische Niederschrift über die Sitzung des Zonenausschusses der CDU der britischen Zone am 24. und 25. Februar 1949 in Königswinter," in *Konrad Adenauer und die CDU der britischen Besatzungszone*, ed. Pütz, 838; and Nicholls, *Freedom with Responsibility*, 236-238.

<sup>18</sup> Rudolf Uertz, *Christentum und Sozialismus in der frühen CDU, Grundlagen und Wirkungen der christlich-sozialen Ideen in der Union 1945-1949* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1981), 196.

<sup>19</sup> Stenografische Niederschrift über die Sitzung des Zonenausschusses der CDU der britischen Zone am 24. und 25. Februar 1949, in *Konrad Adenauer und die CDU der britischen Besatzungszone*, ed. Pütz, 854-855.

Others at the meeting, including a trade-unionist from Cologne, Johannes Albers, agreed that the upcoming election campaign would rest upon the success of the Frankfurt economic policy, so called because the Bizone economic administration was centered in Frankfurt. But he also mentioned that social policy would also play a crucial role in the election. From his perspective, Erhard was too much of a liberal. The trade-unionist was leery that the acceptance of Erhard's policy would mean the abandonment of the Ahlener Program. With this, Adenauer provided what would be the central question of the upcoming election: "I would suggest, first of all, that this theme is summed up a bit in the question: Planned Economy or Market Economy (shout from Albers: social!) or do we say: Bureaucratic Planned Economy or Social Market Economy (laughter). . . Along with that, we have the Ahlener Program and the social program."<sup>20</sup> Again, the CDU was attempting to reconcile the free market with some of the "social" roots of the Weimar Catholic Center Party. With this, the CDU in the British Zone adopted the Social Market Economy as part of its program.

The immediate task of the CDU was to transfer the ideas of the Social Market Economy into an effective political campaign. One clear obstacle to this was that in 1949 there was no overarching structure of the CDU. Within the British Zone there was still a zonal organization, while in the American and French Zones there were state-level organizations. At the beginning of 1947 the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft der CDU/CSU* (Working Group of the CDU/CSU) was formed in Frankfurt under the directorship of

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 858.



Bruno Dörpinghaus, a founder of the CDU in Hesse. This acted as a “steering committee,” but in fact, had no formal power in determining policy for the regional branches of the party. In early January 1949 Dörpinghaus began to construct a central election committee with the responsibility of coordinating the election campaign propaganda throughout West Germany. The *Arbeitsgemeinschaft der CDU/CSU* provided the *Land* (state) and *Kreis* (local) level party organization with the main themes and propaganda material for the election campaign. This election campaign committee was made up of representatives from the various *Ländesverbände* (state organizations) and the British *Zonenverband* (zonal organization) of the CDU/CSU, the Frankfurt *Wirtschaftsrat* (Economic Council) and of the *Parliamentarischen Rat* (Parliamentary Council). The main task of the election committee was to “initiate the required measures which prove necessary in light of the election for the coordination of the party interests, including the inter-connected organization, propaganda, and press duties.”<sup>21</sup>

This committee planned the schedule of the nation-wide speakers and the overall strategy of the election campaign. In addition, on March 5, 1949, a press and propaganda committee was created to develop propaganda for the campaign. The committee supplied to state and regional party organizations the posters, leaflets, election brochures, and other necessities for the election campaign.<sup>22</sup> This distribution of material included the CDU’s

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<sup>21</sup> Rundschreiben Dörpinghaus an die Landesvorsitzenden und Landesgeschäftsführer der Union, 12.1.49, I-009-012/7 (NL Dörpinghaus), Archiv für Christlich-Demokratische Politik der Konrad-Adenauer Stiftung, St. Augustin (hereafter ACDP).

<sup>22</sup> Rundschreiben Dörpinghaus’ an die Landesvorsitzenden der CDU/CSU vom 7.3.1949, I-009-012/7 (NL Dörpinghaus), ACDP; Brigitte Kaff, ed., *Die Unionsparteien:*

sister organization in Bavaria, the CSU. On March 19, 1949, the propaganda committee had its first meeting, with Dörpinghaus suggesting that a working staff be formed to take care of the technical planning and proofing of the propaganda for the election campaign. Perhaps the most important information given by the central committee was the *Union im Wahlkampf*, which provided election information and speaker notes for the party organizers at the state and local level. Between 20,000 and 25,000 of these election newspapers were distributed by the central committee.<sup>23</sup> In addition, the state and local level organization supplied propaganda material for local use.<sup>24</sup> Generally, the locally-supplied propaganda concentrated upon introducing the local candidates through pamphlets or leaflets. Meanwhile, propaganda for more national issues flowed out of the central Working Group.

In many respects, the CDU of the British Zone was the crucial force behind the creation of the CDU/CSU's election campaign. Undoubtedly, the CDU of the British Zone was the best organized of all of the regional CDU organizations. As head of the CDU of the British Zone, Konrad Adenauer was named head of the election committee and participated with the press and propaganda committee. From early on, Adenauer stressed the idea that the SPD was the main opponent against which all efforts must be

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*Protokolle der Arbeitsgemeinschaft der CDU/CSU Deutschlands und der Konferenzen der Landesvorsitzenden* (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1991), 402-404.

<sup>23</sup> Am 8 Mai tagte im Adam Stegerwald-Haus zu Königswinter der Presse und Propaganda-Ausschuss der Arbeitsgemeinschaft der CDU/CSU, I-009-006/2 (NL Dörpinghaus), ACDP.

<sup>24</sup> See for example, CDU des Rheinlandes Landessekretariat Köln-Marienburg, Die Bundestagwahl vom August 1949, VII-003-001/3, ACDP.

directed.<sup>25</sup> Adenauer feared that the communist vote would always be available to the SPD in the Bundestag, so therefore the major goal of the election campaign would be to avoid a majority of the SPD and the KPD (Communist Party Germany).<sup>26</sup> With this in mind, Erhard and the Social Market Economy lent themselves well as political weapons to be used against the SPD. Adenauer made it very clear within a meeting of the press and propaganda committee that Erhard and the Frankfurt economic policy were to take center stage within the election campaign.<sup>27</sup> With this action, the main theme of the 1949 campaign revolved around the question of “*Markt oder Plan*” (Market or Planned), the economic policies of the CDU/CSU and SPD respectively.

But in most of the propaganda, the Social Market Economy was not clearly defined. Instead, the CDU/CSU’s propaganda on economics centered around two issues. One, the CDU/CSU portrayed its ability to provide material goods to a German populace that had suffered deprivations after the war, and with this, affirmed the CDU/CSU’s ability to run an effective government. Two, the CDU/CSU used the Social Market Economy as a representation of freedom in West Germany in contrast to the tyranny associated with the SPD’s planned economy. In this way, the CDU/CSU’s propaganda avoided any technical jargon regarding the intricate differences of economic policy. Instead, like any good political propaganda, it played upon the prejudices and

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<sup>25</sup> Aktennotiz Gottauts vom 18.2.1949 über eine Besprechung am 17.2.1949, I-009-008/3 (NL Dörpinghaus), ACDP.

<sup>26</sup> Kaff, *Die Unionsparteien, 1946-1950*, 397.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 624.

predispositions of the voter. To give an idea of the sentiments at the time, American surveys in January 1949 indicated that six out of ten Germans would prefer economic security and the possibility of a good income over free elections, freedom of speech, a free press, and religious freedom. In addition 31 percent of Germans in the American Zone selected commercial freedom as the most important of all liberties. Religious freedom followed with 22 percent, free elections with 19 percent, and freedom of speech with 14 percent.<sup>28</sup> The CDU/CSU played up these sentiments with propaganda centered upon the improvement of West German's conditions, especially since the currency reform of 1948. But at this point in the development of the CDU's election campaign techniques, the propaganda was not yet based upon any "scientific" examination of the West German public opinion and did not use slick advertisements developed by professionals.

In a March 5 meeting of the election committee, Dörpinghaus suggested that the proposed propaganda committee should design brochures that were "for the man on the street, simple, uncomplicated with a lot of pictures."<sup>29</sup> Adenauer underscored this principle in the meeting of the CDU's propaganda committee in May 1949. In a discussion of the formulation of propaganda material, Adenauer emphasized, "I would like to suggest that we take this as a principle of the propaganda: simple, not too much,

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<sup>28</sup> Anna J. Merritt and Richard L. Merritt, eds., *Public Opinion in Occupied Germany: The OMGUS Surveys, 1945-1949* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1970), 41.

<sup>29</sup> Kaff, *Die Unionsparteien, 1946-1950*, 402.

not too highbrow.” Especially good would be some form of pictorial representation of the CDU/CSU program. Adenauer and Erich Köhler, the head of the *Landesverband* Hesse, were particularly convinced of the effectiveness of a primitive form of propaganda. In early 1949 they had seen the a touring theater group from Caux in Geneva, which proclaimed a Christian-based ideology. They were both impressed with this group’s ability to fascinate the West German public. As a result, Adenauer commented that this fascination, “That is the best proof that one must speak simply to the public, not too much, few thoughts, large ideas simply represented.”<sup>30</sup> This simplistic representation was something into which Frankfurt economic policy could be easily molded. Walter Otto, a member of the CDU British Zone, emphasized the graphic effect must be attempted. He added that the propaganda, and posters in particular, should not appeal to the intellectuals, but rather the “primitive levels” of society. “It is decisive that the simple man remains in front of these posters.” One of his suggestions, perhaps the crudest and most successful of all of the CDU/CSU’s posters, was a poster depicting an Asiatic face hovering over Europe with a shield bearing the letters “SPD” crumbling before the Asiatic threat. This eventually appeared as a poster in the 1949 campaign.<sup>31</sup>

The ideas of the Social Market Economy were to be put together in the *Düsseldorf Leitsätze* (Düsseldorf Principles) and announced in a press conference to which the major newspapers were invited. This program statement was to replace the old Ahlener Program and kick off the CDU/CSU’s election campaign. With this policy, the

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 456-457.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 622-623.

CDU/CSU, the SPD's main rival party, accepted the Social Market Economy. It was mostly members of the British Zone CDU who drew up the Düsseldorf Principles. The chairman of the Economic subcommittee of the CDU in the British Zone, Franz Etzel, initiated the drawing up of the guidelines over the course of late 1948 and early 1949 with frequent conferences with Erhard.<sup>32</sup> On March 30, 1949, Etzel presented the rough draft to the Zone Committee. Etzel stressed the need to define the concept of "Social Market Economy." In addition, although the new program statement had nothing to do with the Ahlener Program, Adenauer desired that the old program be mentioned in the new proposal. Throughout the meeting, members of the committee bantered about what the term actually meant.

At the end of the meeting, Heinrich Luebke, a leader of the CDU in North Rhine-Westphalia, commented that, "Instead of saying planned economy, we should say administrative economy or more popularly expressed, simply command economy. We reject the command economy, everyone can understand that. Central administrative economy would be better from my opinion than planned economy."<sup>33</sup> When suggestions were made later to use the word "command economy," Adenauer reacted strongly against the hairsplitting on the economics behind the terms. He commented, "Speak simply. The public wants to be spoken to simply, and don't rack your brains so much on this

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<sup>32</sup> Udo Wengst, "Die CDU/CSU im Bundestagswahlkampf 1949," *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 34/1 (1986): 28-30.

<sup>33</sup> Stenographische Niederschrift der Sitzung des Zonenausschusses der CDU in der britischen Zone am 30.3.1949, I-009-004/I (NL Dörpinghaus) ACDP.

matter.”<sup>34</sup> Despite this disagreement over the terminology of the campaign, the term “planned economy” was utilized over “command economy,” although in particular situations “command economy” was used because of the images that it could evoke, especially the image of the Nazi economy and the Communist system in the East.

The Düsseldorf Principles were to be put forth in a press conference on July 15, 1949, which also acted as the kick-off of the CDU/CSU election campaign. Adenauer invited the major representatives of the press for the “announcement of the CDU/CSU’s program on economic, social and agricultural policies, as well as home construction and the eastern question.”<sup>35</sup> The Düsseldorf Principles proclaimed that the currency reform was an economic policy initiated by the CDU/CSU that had led to the economic upswing. It was the rejection of the “rationcard economy (*Bezugscheinwirtschaft*) that gave freedom back to the consumer.” With the currency reform, “The stores became full, courage, strength, and energy were roused and the whole nation was ripped out of its state of lethargy.”<sup>36</sup> But it was not only the currency reform that had led to the economic upturn. Instead, the market reforms that accompanied the currency reform were crucial for West Germany’s economic fortunes.

But the Düsseldorf Principles also made sure to give much attention to social policy and that the CDU/CSU would not go back “to a capitalist form and to an old

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<sup>34</sup>Stenographische Niederschrift über die 21 Sitzung des Zonenausschusses der CDU für die britische Zone am 2 und 3.6.1949, I-009-004/1 (NL Dörpinghaus) ACDP.

<sup>35</sup> VII-003-001/2, ACDP.

<sup>36</sup> Pütz, *Konrad Adenauer und die CDU der britischen Besatzungszone*, 866.

liberalism of an unsocial, monopolistic type.” The Düsseldorf Principles proclaimed, “The ‘Social Market Economy’ is the socially committed constitution of commercial industry in which the performance of free and capable men is brought into a system that provides a maximum of economic gain and social justice.” The free market, if its excesses were avoided, from the perspective of the Düsseldorf Principles, provided the most social justice for the citizens of West Germany.<sup>37</sup> In this way, a connection to Christian socialism was maintained without any of its “cultural” aspects that would link the CDU/CSU to the Weimar Catholic Center Party, and might scare off some potential Protestant voters.

In the Düsseldorf Principles the CDU/CSU propaganda created a connection between the free market and overall individual freedom. In contrast to the Social Market Economy, “The system of the planned economy robs the productive man of his economic self-determination and freedom.”<sup>38</sup> Yet, the principles were sure to stress the fact that the Social Market Economy was not the same thing as the “free economy” of a liberal ilk. In many respects, support for a pure free market system would have created much resentment from possible voters. Instead, the principles suggested that in order to avoid the relapse of the “free economy,” the independent control of monopoly was necessary for securing “competition.” In this way, the program statement with the use of the “Social

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 867-868.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 868.



Market Economy” was able to retain the resonance that both “market” and “social” might have within the electorate.<sup>39</sup>

With the Social Market Economy as the focal point of the election campaign, Erhard took on a central role in the CDU/CSU’s campaign, although he was not yet officially affiliated with the party. As the director of the Economics Administration of the Bizone, he was the perfect representative for presenting the advantages of the Social Market Economy to the West German electorate. Already by January 1949 Erhard had affirmed that he would “go into the upcoming political party clashes with particular energy for the CDU.”<sup>40</sup> In a May 19 meeting of the Press and Propaganda committee of the CDU/CSU, Adenauer affirmed that the Frankfurt economic policies should play the commanding role in the election campaign, with Professor Erhard giving the main speeches.<sup>41</sup> Erhard proved to be the most requested speaker by the *Land* and *Kreisverbände* (state and local party organizations) during the election campaign and made speeches all over West Germany, from Schleswig-Holstein to Bavaria.<sup>42</sup> Generally, Erhard’s speeches during the election campaign were much better attended than other speakers’ rallies. For example, in the lower Rhine town of Krefeld, Erhard’s rally

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<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 869.

<sup>40</sup> Wengst, “Die CDU/CSU im Bundestagwahlkampf 1949,” 25.

<sup>41</sup> Kaff, *Die Unionsparteien 1946-1950*, 624.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

attracted over 3,000 listeners. In comparison, the local party's other speaker of national stature, Anton Storch, who was the CDU's speaker on social issues, attracted only 300.<sup>43</sup>

The July 13, 1949 issue of *Union im Wahlkampf* introduced Erhard to the rank and file party organizers. It stressed the great role that Erhard had in the rebirth of Germany with the words, "Hardly another name is mentioned over the last few years with so much passion as that of this man. . . . Everyone feels that the rise or fall of the nation depends fatefully to a large extent upon this man."<sup>44</sup> It went on to define Erhard's personal characteristics. The short profile on Erhard described him: "Erhard is a man of action, as our nation needs in these times." It went on to emphasize Erhard's incredible optimism and capacity for work. But it also portrayed him as "a real person of constant amiability and humor." All the while, Erhard was portrayed as an expert on economics, who would be a guarantee for the economic reconstruction of Germany. He was a man of the people, yet one with the knowledge and understanding of economics to bring Germany forward.<sup>45</sup>

In his stump speeches, Erhard reiterated many of the ideas that he had talked about in some of his earlier speeches to members of the CDU. Economic freedom and political freedom were inextricably linked. Yet, at the same time, he was sure to hit issues that appeared more likely to find a resonance in the population as a whole. During the campaign, he addressed an assembly of voters in his home district, Ulm-Heidenheim,

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<sup>43</sup> Bericht über den Wahlkampf, 22.8.49, RW 100/17, 204, Nordrhein-Westfälisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, Düsseldorf (hereafter NWHStA).

<sup>44</sup> "Erhard," *Union im Wahlkampf: Informations- und Rednerdienst der Arbeitsgemeinschaft der CDU/CSU Deutschlands*, 13 July 1949, 1.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

where he outlined his views on the economy. He opened the speech by again making the strong dichotomy between the market and planned economies, which was one of the central themes of the election campaign. The question of the election was whether the German people wanted “to be subordinated under a soulless tyranny of a wanton bureaucracy” or whether “we are allowed to progress along the path marked by the Social Market Economy, which frees our people from the system of goods and human economic controls (*Güter und Menschenbewirtschaftung*), the modern form of state slavery.”<sup>46</sup>

But also through this speech Erhard helped create a meaning of economics that positioned the CDU/CSU’s opponent, the SPD, with images of the Nazi past and the Communist regimes to the East. In the speech, Erhard identified the SPD as the “keeper of the command economy,” something that no election campaign maneuvering could cover up. The socialist planned economy must eventually lead to the command economy Erhard argued. He then blurred the lines between the SPD’s economic program with those in place in the Soviet Zone of Germany. Erhard proclaimed that, “The socialist economy has never proved a success in practice. It has bestowed to us in the communist form the so-called free people’s republics.” The SPD sought to drive the people back to a “gloomy mood of despair and a brooding fear of life (*Lebensangst*).” But the people were not prepared “to become enslaved again by a revived bureaucracy and rule by bigwigs

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<sup>46</sup> “Männer und Frauen des Wahlkreis Ulm-Heidenheim,” B102/9085, Bundesarchiv Koblenz (hereafter BA Koblenz). This was a speech that Erhard repeated during his stump tour throughout West Germany.

(*Bonzokratie*).”<sup>47</sup> It went on to then blend the SPD with some of the images of Germany’s recent past. Erhard declared, “We want to help finally the German citizen get back civil courage, which was beaten down for 15 years, which allows the citizen to oppose the wantonness of bureaucracy and the tyranny of the state in confidence of his personality, his worth, and his rights.”<sup>48</sup> Therefore, Germans of all levels, classes, and occupations should unite against this deadly danger presented to their freedom presented by bureaucracy.

Other than through the speeches of Erhard, the ideas of the Social Market Economy were carried forward by posters. The CDU/CSU placed great emphasis upon the use of the posters in the election campaign. Early in the planning of the election campaign, Adenauer underscored the necessity of having a poster on which “not the Economic Council, not the Parliamentary Council, but instead the ideas of the CDU must be featured so that everyone can understand them and commit them to memory.”<sup>49</sup> The central committee issued most of the posters, although the state and local level party organizations also issued their own. There is no way to know exactly the amount issued, but the financial resources of local organizations were severely limited, and therefore, the number was probably relatively small. For example, the CDU/CSU leadership in Frankfurt distributed a total of about 300,000 posters to the Rhineland CDU. In contrast, the zonal and state organization distributed only 70,000 posters, not a great number

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<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>49</sup> Kaff, *Die Unionsparteien, 1946-1950*, 455.

considering that the Rhineland CDU was perhaps the best organized CDU/CSU organization in West Germany. In addition, the content of the posters distributed by party organizations other than the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft* were very different from the posters distributed by the central CDU/CSU organization. Most local level organizations distributed posters that dealt with local issues or portrayed the local candidates.<sup>50</sup>

The central propaganda committee developed the posters with the participation of the *Landesgeschäftsführer* (state organization manager), considering what they thought would be most effective within their state. The *Landesgeschäftsführer* then determined how many posters they needed from the central committee. All told the central committee produced 1.7 million posters for the 1949 election campaign.<sup>51</sup> The leadership of the CDU/CSU decided early in the election campaign that the same posters would be distributed across West Germany, because this would represent to the voters “the impression of the unity of the party from north to south.”<sup>52</sup> Most of the posters issued by the central committee dealt with economic issues. In fact, the state organization of the Rhineland complained that most of the posters published from Frankfurt did not deal with an important issue of the election campaign in the mostly Catholic Rhineland: political-

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<sup>50</sup> CDU des Rheinlands, Landessekretariat Köln-Marienburg, Die Bundestagwahl vom August 1949, VII-003-001/3, ACDP, 3.

<sup>51</sup> Kaff, *Die Unionsparteien, 1946-1950*, 625.

<sup>52</sup> Rundschreiben Dörplinghaus an die Mitglieder des Presse- und Propagandaausschusses, der Arbeitsstabes und die Landesgeschäftsführer vom 12.5.49, I-009-006/2 (NL Dörpinghaus), ACDP.

cultural themes.<sup>53</sup> In this way, the central leadership, although not having direct control of the conduct of the election campaign on the local level, could dominate the themes and issues that were core to the campaign.

These posters dealing with economics underscored two major themes. The first echoed some of the sentiments in Erhard's speeches in which a dichotomy was constructed between the planned and market economies. With the creation of this dichotomy, the posters helped spell out some of the political implications for both of those economic systems. The other major theme was the economic development over the course of the few years prior to the election. These improved economic conditions were then attributed to the policies of the CDU/CSU. Overall, the posters encouraged the creation of very crude categories in the minds of voters that clearly divided the policies of the CDU/CSU and its opponent, the SPD. Implied was that the CDU/CSU was the responsible party best able to govern West Germany. In contrast, the SPD was portrayed as the party that could not defend the newly founded Federal Republic against the ever-present Asiatic, Bolshevik threat. The imagery of the CDU/CSU as a bulwark against this threat was reminiscent of the Nazi propaganda during the Second World War.

One of the posters most distributed by the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft der CDU/CSU* entitled "At the Crossroads of the Economy" summed up this dichotomy (Figure 3.1). The poster depicted a large black and white "X" placed upon a field of blue. Upon the white axis of the "X," the words "Reconstruction" and "Work" appeared, while on the

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<sup>53</sup> CDU des Rheinlands, Landessekretariat Köln-Marienburg, Die Bundestagswahl vom August 1949, VII-003-001/3, ACDP.

other axis were the words “Command Economy” and “Bureaucracy.” Here the poster emphasized the two implications that one was presented with the vote. The poster juxtaposed the choices of “Reconstruction” or “Command Economy” and “Work” or “Bureaucracy” There was also a certain visual unity in the poster. The large “X” in the poster represented both the act of voting and the crossroads West Germany faced. The importance of the vote was emphasized by the slogan at the bottom of the poster which tied together the various meanings constructed in the poster, “Our vote leads to work and reconstruction. We are voting CDU.”

Perhaps an even more popular poster contrasted the conditions from 1946 and 1949 through the juxtaposition of short expressions from 1946 on a black field opposite a field of white with drawings of consumer products (Figure 3.2). The poster evoked memories from the days of extreme food shortages following the war by including quotes such as the following: “no coal, ersatz coffee, 50 grams fat for January, and 5 kilograms potatoes.” The poster also brought back memories of the despair that was pandemic within Germany with quotes such as “Exchange suit for something to eat.” and “Inquiries purposeless!” This was clearly contrasted to the situation of 1949 as represented by the poster. It depicted food and consumer products including clothes and shoes, goods of which there was an acute shortage following the war. The slogan at the bottom brought the poster together with the bold letters “CDU” with “This is what our economic policy provides you.” In many respects the layout of the poster helped support the message that the period of emergency had passed in West Germany, and that the CDU was responsible for this upswing and what could be construed as “normalcy.”

Yet the posters worked well together by setting up a series of dichotomies that were meant to underscore the two alternatives of the CDU and SPD. The posters helped heighten the sense that economics was a wedge issue between the two parties. With the posters the CDU defined itself as the party that brought prosperity, and with that was responsible to carry West Germany into the future. It is clear that the posters never tried to clearly define what the alternatives really entailed. Instead, they sought to elicit the sentiments of West Germans toward economic developments that were not based upon any rational assessment of the CDU's policies, but instead played upon the perceptions and predisposition of the West German populace.

Perhaps the most effective of all CDU/CSU posters portrayed an Asiatic-looking face hovering over Western Europe with the slogan: "The Savior: CDU" (Figure 3.3). It had such resonance because its meaning could be constructed within a number of contexts.<sup>54</sup> Undoubtedly it was based upon some of the Nazi propaganda on the godless, Bolshevik, Asiatic threat from the East. In terms of economics, the depiction of the SPD shield splintering in the face of an Asiatic onslaught dovetailed with the CDU's self-image as the party of responsibility. Only the CDU/CSU could protect not only West Germany, but also Western Europe from the threat to the East. In light of economics, it highlighted the contrast between the "East" with its command economy with the "West" and the Social Market Economy.

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<sup>54</sup> For a discussion of the poster in terms of its relationship to a gendered understanding of the "rape" of Germany see Elizabeth Heinemann, "The Hour of the Women: Memories of Germany's 'Crisis Years' and West German National Identity," *American Historical Review* 101 (April 1996): 370-371.



Another important form of propaganda for the CDU/CSU during the election campaign was the *Flugblätter* (political leaflets). These were distributed in copious quantities in the days leading up to the August 14 election by the central, state, and local party organizations, although those leaflets printed by the state or local organizations usually dealt with local issues or contained information about the local candidates themselves. The central committee provided three different leaflets for the campaign, with two dealing with economic issues and the other criticizing the SPD for attacks against Catholic education. About 400,000 of the two leaflets were delivered to the party organization of the Rhineland, which had about 4.4 million voters in its districts. In addition, the state party organizations complained that the leaflets arrived too late to distribute them fully and that the numbers were nowhere near the millions promised by the central committee.<sup>55</sup>

Nevertheless, the leaflets reflected the manner in which the central committee was trying to represent the ideas of Social Market Economy and construct a meaning of it in regard to the CDU/CSU. One warned West Germans to make sure that they voted in the upcoming election. It went on to remind the voters that only four years beforehand all of Germany was in ruin. The last two years had seen a dramatic upswing in the economy, which was created by the politicians with experience and responsibility in the Economic Council of the Bizone. It stressed that the CDU/CSU was responsible for this economic upswing with, "Think about it. It has been exclusively politicians of the CDU/CSU, who

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<sup>55</sup> CDU des Rheinlands, Landessekretariat Köln-Marienburg, Die Bundestagwahl vom August 1949, VII-003-001/3, ACDP.

with so much work to do, have not had the time to put forth propaganda and grand claims.” The leaflet then blended Cold War fears with conceptions of culture and the economy. “Think about it, that in the countries on the other side of the iron curtain a regime of terror rules, which disregards and ill treats religious belief, places agriculture, small trade, and business under the socialist oppression of unity, as well as forces deportation of workers into uranium mines.” The implication of this was that the alternative to the CDU/CSU in West Germany would not necessarily be able to defend against this threat, a point made most emphatically through posters. On the last page of the leaflet, it concluded that one should vote for the “Party of Responsibility—the CDU/CSU”<sup>56</sup>

Another leaflet proclaimed, “You can’t do that! Why won’t the SPD recognize the success of the CDU/CSU’s Social Market Economy?” The leaflet went on to accuse the SPD of spreading lies about the economic reality of West Germany in general and the CDU/CSU’s economic policy in particular. In many respects, the leaflet dovetailed with the one discussed above. The subtext of the leaflet was that the CDU/CSU was the party of responsibility, while in contrast, the SPD could not be trusted to form an effective government. The leaflet consisted of a series of assertions maintained by the SPD. The main thrust of the leaflet was to maintain the connection among the CDU/CSU, the Social Market Economy, and the upswing in the West German economy. It concentrated upon the achievements of the CDU/CSU, including the rise of employment over the last year. In contrast, the text commented, “To the SPD, it’s about their party program and not the

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<sup>56</sup> Sie werden ja sicher wählen, VII-003-001/3, ACDP.

improvement of the German economic situation.” Again, the CDU/CSU propaganda created a clear dichotomy between their own action and results on one side, and the inaction and rhetoric of the SPD on the other.<sup>57</sup>

What is striking about the propaganda produced at the national level CDU/CSU organization is that most of it did not deal with the Christian concerns of the party. Only one of the leaflets supplied by the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft* touched upon a concern among Catholics of the education of children. The *Land* organization of Rhineland complained that none of the posters developed by the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft* dealt with “cultural-political” issues, and posters were the main tool to develop a national image of the party. Brochures and leaflets would mention that the party stood for “Christian responsibility” and “Christian principles,” but did not really develop these ideas clearly. Just as in the Düsseldorf Principles, the Social Market Economy was not depicted purely in terms of support of the free market. Instead, the CDU/CSU propaganda portrayed the economic system as giving West Germans freedom balanced with an undefined social responsibility. In this way, the party was trying to avoid the chance that the support of a free market system might alienate voters who advocated Christian socialism. In addition, stressing the Catholic elements of the party might scare off the Protestant vote, which was essential for the CDU/CSU to attract broad support.

The SPD election campaign organization was similar to the CDU/CSU. If anything, it was more centralized than CDU/CSU. Already by late 1948 a

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<sup>57</sup> Warum will die SPD die Erfolge der sozialen Marktwirtschaft der CDU/CSU nicht anerkennen? VII-003-001/2, ACDP.

*Wahlkampfprogrammkommission* (election campaign program commission) was created, on which the leading figures of the party were represented.<sup>58</sup> The leadership of the campaign was situated in the Party headquarters in Hannover under the leadership of Fritz Heine, who had helped coordinate SPD campaigns in the Weimar period.<sup>59</sup> In addition, the SPD had a relatively large number of party members, from whose dues and contributions the party financed the election campaign. Although the local leadership of the SPD was responsible for carrying out many propaganda actions, it was generally the top leadership of the party that generated the propaganda itself.<sup>60</sup>

In contrast to the CDU/CSU, in which Erhard took a central role as the personality representing the party's economic policy, the SPD's chairman, Kurt Schumacher, assumed the task of promoting its economic policy. Schumacher, who spent ten years in concentration camps during the Nazi era, was the most powerful personality in the party until his death in 1952. His ideas acted as the decisive force in the party's theoretical positions even after his death and until the adoption of the Bad Godesberg Program in 1959. Named chairman of the party on May 9, 1946, Schumacher was a pragmatic

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<sup>58</sup> Protokoll der PV-Sitzung am 10 und 11/12/48, PV Protokolle 1948, Archiv der sozialen Demokratie, Bonn (hereafter AdsD).

<sup>59</sup> Marie-Luise Recker, "Wahlen und Wahlkämpfe in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 1949-1969," in *Wahlen und Wahlkämpfe in Deutschland: Von den Anfängen im 19 Jahrhundert bis zur Bundesrepublik*, Gerhard A. Ritter ed. (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1997), 296.

<sup>60</sup> Jürgen Niemann, *Auftakt zur Demokratie: Die Bundestagswahlkampf 1949 zwischen Improvisation und Ideologie* (Bochum: Universitätsverlag Dr. N. Brockmeyer, 1994), 54-55.

Marxist, who saw Marxist doctrine as merely a guide or method that would lead to social democracy. With this view, he emphatically rejected Communism in Eastern Germany as a degenerate form of Marxism. Nevertheless, Schumacher continued to see an economic explanation for historical development and believed in a continued class struggle. In addition, he still called for the socialization of certain key industries, such as raw material industries.<sup>61</sup>

Schumacher's view of the economy was clearly seen in the propaganda produced by the SPD in the first Bundestag election. The *Wahlaufruf* (election statement) laid out the party's positions for the upcoming election. Much of the document attacked the CDU/CSU's economic policies in terms of class conflict. It called for planning of the economy, full employment, increased living standards, and socialization among other demands. It accused the policies of the Economic Council of the Bizone as making "the poor even poorer, and the rich even richer."<sup>62</sup> Schumacher supported these positions in his speeches throughout the campaign. In one election speech given in Koblenz on July 28, 1949, Schumacher described the "Frankfurt economic policies" as "class struggle from above" (*Klassenkampf von oben*). They had merely increased the differences between the rich and poor. In addition, the bourgeois parties had nothing to do with the

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<sup>61</sup> Diane L. Parness, *The SPD and the Challenge of Mass Politics: The Dilemma of the German Volkspartei* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991), 50-59; Harold Kent Schellenger, Jr., *The SPD in the Bonn Republic: A Socialist Party Modernizes* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1968) 32-41; Kurt Klotzbach: *Der Weg zur Staatspartei: Programmatik, praktische Politik und Organisation der deutschen Sozialdemokratie, 1945-1965* (Bonn: Verlag J.H.W. Dietz, 1982).

<sup>62</sup> Für ein freies Deutschland in einem neuen Europa, SPD-LO Hamburg, Mappe 1972, AdsD.

economic upswing that West Germany enjoyed since the currency reform. The currency reform, Schumacher correctly asserted, was merely the policy of the Allied powers. In addition, Schumacher argued that any economic improvement was the result of factors such as a milder winter in 1948/49, a good potato harvest, and the influx of Marshall Plan funds.<sup>63</sup>

In respect to Schumacher's remarks, with the upswing of the economy and the new availability of consumer goods since the currency reform, the SPD was already on the defensive on economic issues. Yet, the SPD leadership clearly wanted to press the CDU/CSU on the issue. One memorandum from the *Parteivorstand* (Executive Committee) of the SPD and Fritz Heine from August 4, 1949, ten days before the election, emphasized to the local party leaders that they must make sure to criticize the Erhard/CDU/CSU economic policy. In addition, the memorandum stressed that the contributions of industry and banking to the conservative parties, especially the CDU/CSU, provided good opportunities to attack.<sup>64</sup>

Most of the leaflets distributed by the SPD concentrated upon the poor conditions within Germany, trying to convince West Germans that things were still desperate. The leaflets did not delve deeply into specific economic policy, but instead portrayed the poor living conditions, unemployment, high prices, and dislocation that beset many West Germans. In contrast to the CDU/CSU's portrayal of the economy, to the SPD conditions

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<sup>63</sup> Rede Dr. Kurt Schumacher in Koblenz am 28.7.1949, Bestand Schumacher, Mappe 48, AdsD.

<sup>64</sup> SPD-LO Hamburg, Mappe 105, AdsD.

were not improving, but quite the contrary, were becoming worse. The Social Market Economy was associated with failure and desperation, not prosperity. If left to their own devices, the CDU/CSU would leave West Germany in ruins.

In addition, the SPD emphasized the ties between large industry and the “bourgeois” parties. One leaflet, and an accompanying poster, proclaimed “Political Power through Money.” It explained that the industrial organizations had met in July 1949 so that they could gather funds for the “Erhard exploitation economy” (*Erhard’schen Ausbeuterwirtschaft*). The leaflet explained that firms were expected to contribute 2 to 4 DM per worker in their firm. With this, the SPD accused industry of buying representatives. In sum, parties that sold out to industry represented the exploitation of the masses through high prices, mass unemployment to keep wages low, continuation of the housing emergency, and the dismissal of the *Lastenausgleich* (a plan to even out war damage costs across the population).<sup>65</sup> Erhard was no more than a puppet for the special interests of industry, while the “average” person was left to struggle to make ends meet.

Yet in comparison to the CDU/CSU, the SPD’s propaganda was a bit mundane. The posters that the SPD distributed were not as visually striking as many of the CDU/CSU’s. Much of the SPD’s propaganda was based upon lengthy program statements about economic planning and socialization that were relatively taxing to read. While both the SPD and CDU/CSU propaganda exploited many of the prejudices and

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<sup>65</sup> Politische Macht durch Geld, ZSg 1-90/52, BA-Koblenz.

stereotypes held by the West German population, the SPD concentrated upon the negative developments of the economy. As indicated by some of the demographic surveys taken between the currency reform and the August 1949 election, economic concerns were in the forefront of the minds of West Germans, above any abstract political idealism. The objections that SPD put forward against the CDU/CSU were rather abstract in many respects. Appeals to the worker on grounds of social justice did not appear as tangible as the CDU/CSU's emphasis upon the real, material gains that had been made because of its policies. In fact, the general trend in opinion among West Germans was that economic conditions were improving. In a July 1948 poll from the Institut für Demoskopie, 37 percent of respondents believed that their economic conditions had improved since the currency reform, versus 42 percent who believed that conditions had worsened. By March 1949, 47 percent indicated conditions had improved against 3 percent who believed conditions were worse.<sup>66</sup> Although things were still undoubtedly difficult, the general mood was guardedly optimistic. In addition, the SPD's message could appeal to one social class: the working class. Already in the first Bundestag election the SPD was wooing its traditional base of support, but not attempting to branch out to new sources of electoral support. In this respect, the CDU/CSU and the SPD were already diverging in their sense of how to work successfully within the new political context of the Federal Republic of Germany.

The costs for the election campaign are very difficult to quantify exactly. It is clear that in the first federal election of the new Federal Republic, the financial resources

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<sup>66</sup> Das Soziale Klima, ZSg 132/154, BA Koblenz.



of the CDU/CSU were limited. Early in the campaign, Adenauer stressed the idea that the state and local organizations must begin to gather their own funds for the undertaking of the election campaign.<sup>67</sup> Adenauer strengthened this position in a May 8 meeting of the Press and Propaganda Committee when he commented that although the *Generalsekretariat* (general secretary) was helping individual state party organizations with the financing of the election campaign, “this should not, however, divert attention from the fact that the main burden of the election is to be carried by the individual state organizations and the local organizations respectively.”<sup>68</sup> Udo Wengst has suggested that the *Generalsekretariat* sought to achieve greater influence on the state party organizations with its greater financial resources. Because of the poor financial situation for the state party organizations, they were dependent upon the *Generalsekretariat* for much of the propaganda material used in the election campaign. For example, the party organization of the Rhineland reported using 42,000 of their own posters in the campaign, while they were provided with a total of 307,850 posters from the *Generalsekretariat*. With this position, Frankfurt could dominate the themes pursued in the propaganda material, especially the issue of economics.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Kaff, *Die Unionsparteien, 1946-1950*, 400.

<sup>68</sup> Rundschreiben Dörpinghaus' an die Mitglieder des Presse- und Propagandaausschusses, des Arbeitsstabes und die Landesgeschäftsführer vom 12.5.49, I-009-006/2, (NL Dörpinghaus), ACDP.

<sup>69</sup> Udo Wengst, “Die CDU/CSU im Bundestagwahlkampf 1949,” 49-50; and CDU des Rheinlands, Landessekretariat, Die Bundestagwahl vom 14 August 1949, VII-003-001/1, ACDP.

The CDU/CSU did not raise the money that was necessary to conduct fully the election campaign. In a May 19 meeting of the Press and Propaganda Committee the financial situation was described as “bad” and “a catastrophe.”<sup>70</sup> A report from the *Landssekretariat* (State Secretary) of the Rhineland CDU from June 21 to the local organizations complained that they had not been dedicating the proper efforts to raise funds sufficient to conduct the election campaign. In addition, they had not been transferring the agreed upon funds to the state party organization. Without these funds the state organization would not be able to continue its election campaign work.<sup>71</sup>

One assessment made within CDU/CSU leadership estimated that the federal election campaign cost 575,000 DM.<sup>72</sup> Presumably this figure represents the amount that the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft* spent on the election campaign and not the money spent by the zone, state, and local organizations. In comparison, the SPD’s *Parteivorstand*, its Executive Committee, doled out 250,000 DM for the 1949 campaign with over 1,000,000 DM spent by the entire SPD.<sup>73</sup> Undoubtedly the CDU/CSU spent more on its election campaign than their SPD rivals.

It is also difficult to estimate the amount that industry contributed to the CDU/CSU’s election campaign. Early in the election campaign, Adenauer urged the state

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<sup>70</sup> Brigitte Kaff, *Die Unionsparteien, 1946-1950*, 603.

<sup>71</sup> Christlich Demokratische Union des Rheinlandes, Rundschreiben 20/49, Köln 21.6.49, II-94-44 (Kreisverband Sieg-Rhein), ACDP.

<sup>72</sup> Brigitte Kaff, *Die Unionsparteien, 1946-1950*, 624.

<sup>73</sup> PV Protokoll, 6 January 1953, SPD Parteivorstand (Protokolle) 1953, AdsD.

and local party organization to raise moneys from all levels of society, including commercial and industrial interests.<sup>74</sup> A final report on the election campaign from the *Landesverband Rheinland* reported that in the spring of 1949 “a circle of industry decided for a collection of a political fund.”<sup>75</sup> But it is difficult to ascertain exactly how much industry contributed to the CDU/CSU election campaign. A collection of documents gathered together by the SPD, “*Unternehmermillionen kaufen politische Macht*” (Industrial millions buy political power) reported that industry met in May 1949 in order to facilitate “the gathering of funds from industry for the support of advertisements for the bourgeois parties.” Other meetings of industrial leaders expressed the need to lend help to “the parties supporting the economic policy of Professor Erhard.”<sup>76</sup>

But at the same time, Adenauer did not want the CDU/CSU to get too close to industrial interests. At a meeting of the press and propaganda committee on 19 May, Adenauer again emphasized the need for the state party organizations to gather their own funds. When one representative suggested local party organizations go to the respective *Industrie- und Handelskammern* (chambers of commerce), Adenauer reacted quickly. He

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<sup>74</sup> Protokolle des Presse- und Propagandaausschusses vom 8.5.49, I-009-006/2 (NL Dörpinghuas), ACDP.

<sup>75</sup> CDU des Rheinlands, Landessekretariat, Die Bundestagwahl vom 14. August 1949, VII-003-001/3, ACDP.

<sup>76</sup> Protokoll der Außerordentlichen Sitzung der Arbeitsgemeinschaft Steine und Erden on 8.6.49 and Rundeschreiben des Hauptgeschäftsführers der Wirtschaftsvereinigung der Bauindustrie vom 10.6.49, in “Unternehmermillionen kaufen politische Macht. Finanzierung und Korruption der Regierungsparteien durch die Managerschicht der “Wirtschaft” Denkschrift published by the Vorstand der SPD, 103 and 58.

commented that, "We must absolutely avoid the appearance that we are a party of business. . . . We must organize a general, large group made up of bureaucrats, employees, workers, and farmers, and along with that, we must attempt to attract large contributions."<sup>77</sup>

In the end, Adenauer and the CDU/CSU were disappointed by the amount of funds that they could raise from industry. At the May 19 meeting, Walter Strauß, leader of the legal office of the Bizone, noted that he had spoken to leaders of industry and that they were willing to give money to the election campaign. But many of the small and medium-sized companies could not give because the taxation laws hindered them from counting their contributions as a deduction on their taxes.<sup>78</sup> Adenauer commented in a June 2 meeting of the zonal committee of the CDU that all expectations that a great, central fund could be raised were dashed. In general, the central committee could only help the state party organization in a few situations, and that they had to expect to finance themselves.<sup>79</sup> Some estimates of the funds supplied by industry ranged from 2 million DM to 4 million DM, although that appears to be a bit high. In the Frankfurter Wirtschaftsrat it was agreed that the sum would be divided as follows: CDU/CSU 65 percent, FDP 25 percent, and the Deutsche Partei 10 percent.<sup>80</sup> Even though the system

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<sup>77</sup> Brigitte Kaff, *Die Unionsparteien, 1946-1950*, 604.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 603.

<sup>79</sup> Stenographische Niederschrift über die Sitzung des Zonenausschusses der CDU in der britischen Zone am 2 und 3.6.49, I-009-004/1 (NL Dörpinghaus), ACDP.

<sup>80</sup> *Unternehmermillionen kaufen politische Macht*, 57, 58.

was still in its infancy, the contribution of funds from industry to the bourgeois parties already by 1949 had begun to form. This system was to become much more effective and far reaching in the federal elections of the 1950s.

In the end, the CDU/CSU achieved a slim plurality in the election of 1949. An inspection of the election reflects that many of the patterns familiar to Weimar elections remained. The propaganda was reminiscent of that produced during Weimar campaigns. In addition, a large number of relatively small parties had gained seats in the Bundestag. But this situation was going to change in the Bundestag elections of the 1950s. The major parties of the Federal Republic party system, the CDU/CSU, SPD, and FDP, were to emerge as the dominant parties. In addition, in the future elections, the CDU/CSU would develop new, more modern methods of electioneering. In many respects, the CDU/CSU was to develop the image of the party based upon the emerging mythology surrounding the Social Market Economy and the Economic Miracle. In the 1949 election, the party successfully employed the issue of “market or planned” to act as a wedge issue against the SPD.

# AM SCHEIDEWEG DER WIRTSCHAFT



Figure 3.1: Am Scheideweg der Wirtschaft

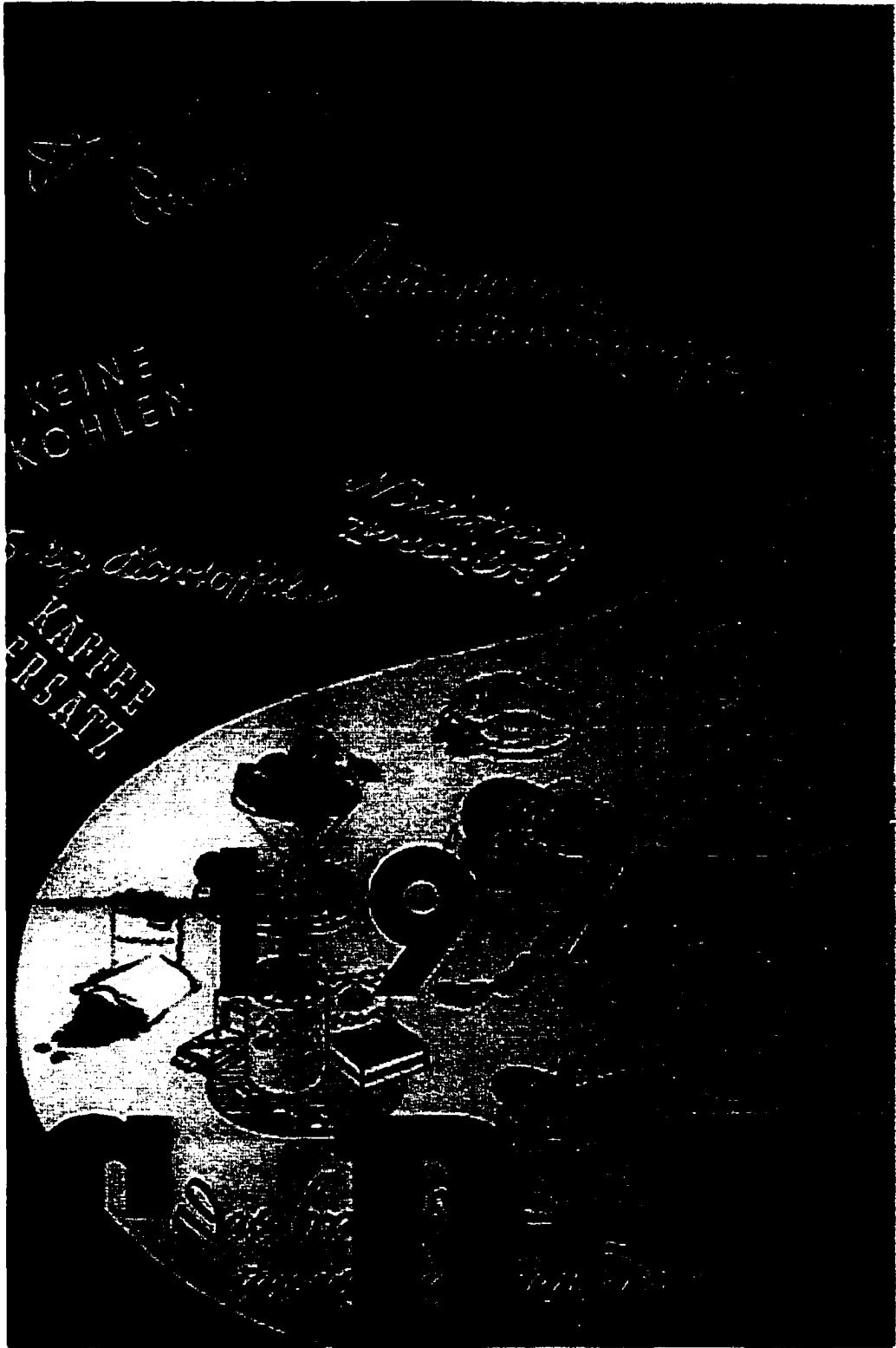


Figure 3.2: Das brachte Dir unsere Wirtschafts-Politik



Figure 3.3: Die Rettung: CDU



## CHAPTER 4

### THE KOREAN CRISIS, THE SOCIAL MARKET ECONOMY, AND PUBLIC OPINION

The CDU/CSU had based its 1949 election campaign upon the advantages that the Social Market Economy offered the West German electorate, or at least had created a connection between CDU/CSU policies and the improvement of material conditions for West Germans. Following the election and the creation of the CDU/CSU-led coalition, Ludwig Erhard went from his position as head of the Economics Administration of the Bizone to the Economics Minister of the newly formed Federal Republic. Yet, the concepts of Social Market Economy were by no means accepted by political leaders and the general public alike. In addition, as head of the Economics Administration, Erhard had a relatively free hand. He now had to work within the matrix of other ministries and under a very capable Chancellor, Konrad Adenauer. Historians have argued that Erhard lacked a *Hausmacht* (internal political base). Many of Erhard's political rivals within the government had this power base, such as the Finance Minister, Fritz Schäffer, who could always rely on his party, the Christian Socialist Union (CSU), for political support. This

problem was intensified by the fact that only 40 percent of Erhard's old Economics Administration officials transferred into the new Economics Ministry.<sup>1</sup>

Erhard faced a difficult challenge both to institute ideas of the Social Market Economy and to produce public support for these economic policies as a result of the economic challenges produced by the Korean War. The experience of the economic swings caused by the Korean War showed very clearly to Erhard and others within the government the widespread West German ignorance of the Social Market Economy. Perhaps even more significantly, the economic crisis and its accompanying rise of prices revealed the public's tendency to support a planned economy in favor of an economic policy that allowed market forces to influence prices. In many respects, the experience of a drastic dip in the public opinion polls toward Erhard and the Social Market Economy galvanized a variety of forces to intensify their efforts to "reeducate" the West German population toward a belief in the free market system. Coming out of the Korean Crisis, a machinery was devised that sought to produce a political meaning of the Economic Miracle. This meaning provided not only support for conservative political interests and business but also helped create a new, distinctly West German sense of nationality.

Late in the summer and autumn of 1949 West Germany experienced a period of comparative economic deflation and stagnation. Between January and March 1950 industrial production increased by 23 percent, but this was a relative slow down after the boom following the currency reform. By February 1950 unemployment in the Federal

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<sup>1</sup> A. J. Nicholls, *Freedom with Responsibility: The Social Market Economy in Germany, 1918-1963* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 270-273.

Republic reached two million, or about 12.2 percent. These two elements caused some concern among economic experts and the public alike, especially with the relatively fresh memories of the end of the Weimar Republic and the danger of high unemployment.<sup>2</sup> A number of different factors led to the end of the post-currency reform boom. The increase of prices outpaced wages, budget surpluses had accumulated, and there was a recession in the United States. In the second half of 1949 there was the relative appreciation of the Deutsche Mark because of the devaluation of many European currencies, therefore exports slumped.<sup>3</sup> In addition, although jobs continued to be created since the currency reform, this increase was more than offset by the flood of refugees from the Soviet Zone, thereby pushing the unemployment figures up.

There were a number of proposed solutions to the problem of the relative slowdown between the autumn of 1949 and the early spring of 1950. The more extreme case for full-employment policies, supported by the Social Democrats and even some members of Adenauer's Cabinet, sought a more liberal monetary policy by the West German central bank, the *Bank der deutscher Länder*. In addition, budget deficits could be used to increase demand, with some form of price controls to help curb possible inflation. Under political pressure, a 2 billion DM make-work program was approved by the Economics Ministry and the *Bank der deutschen Länder*. By the time that the plan was instituted three months later, the economic situation had changed completely with the

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<sup>2</sup> Henry C. Wallach, *Mainsprings of the German Revival* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955), 79-81.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

Korea boom. The economic slowdown also had an impact upon Erhard's political clout. The apparent lack of a speedy response to the downturn by Erhard and the Economics Ministry hurt Erhard's political standing within the cabinet.<sup>4</sup>

Erhard and the *Bank der deutschen Länder* believed that a more conservative fiscal approach would lead to continued growth of the West Germany economy. From their perspective, currency stability and a balance of payment equilibrium should take precedence over full employment. In addition, Erhard was continuing to fight for the liberalization of foreign trade, believing that if West Germany remained competitive, exports could contribute to its economic health. This goal was made difficult with the devaluation of the British Pound by over 30 percent in September of 1949. In order to avoid West Germany acting as a dumping ground for foreign exports, the West German government devalued the Deutsche Mark by 20 percent.<sup>5</sup>

Even Adenauer began to question the soundness of Erhard's economic policies. In early 1950 Adenauer wrote the neo-liberal economist, Wilhelm Röpke, who was a professor in Geneva, asking him to assess West Germany's economic policy. It is not really clear what Adenauer's motives were, since Erhard's resignation might have helped strengthen rumors of a grand coalition of the CDU/CSU and the SPD, a situation that was already present in North Rhine-Westphalia. In any case, it could have been expected that Röpke's response would defend the ideas of the Social Market Economy. His

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 86-87; Nicholls, *Freedom with Responsibility*, 273.

<sup>5</sup> Hans-Peter Schwarz, *Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Die Ära Adenauer: Grundjahre der Republik, 1949-1957* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1981), 61.

memorandum to Adenauer was published with an introduction by Adenauer. Röpke argued that the unemployment West Germany was experiencing was structural, not cyclical. It was the result of production bottlenecks, the inability of labor to move to available jobs because of housing shortages, and the overstaffing of industries because of the war command economy. Röpke underscored the fact that the market economy had brought about a general economic upswing since the currency reform. He stressed the need for further liberalization of foreign trade, realistic interest rates, and the eventual abandonment of foreign exchange controls.<sup>6</sup>

But the outbreak of the Korean War in June of 1950 changed West Germany's economic situation dramatically. New orders for goods to support the war effort streamed into West Germany. The industrial production index shot up from 100 in the fourth quarter of 1949 (1936=100) to 134 in the final quarter of 1950. This trend continued with production reaching 146 by the end of 1951 and 158 by the end of 1952.<sup>7</sup> With the increased international demand for goods, the West German economy now had to deal with the impact of inflation rather than deflation. The source for the inflation was not internal, but instead, external as West German industrialists hastily bought raw materials on the world market at rising prices. Prices of basic materials rose by 13 percent within five months after the outbreak of war, while they increased by another 14 percent by

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<sup>6</sup> Nicholls, *Freedom with Responsibility*, 273-274.

<sup>7</sup> Werner Abelshauser, "Probleme der Wiederaufbau der westdeutschen Wirtschaft 1945-1953," in *Politische Weichenstellungen im Nachkriegsdeutschland 1945-1953*, ed. Heinrich August Winkler (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979), 241.

March 1951.<sup>8</sup> Meanwhile, the United States prepared for war through measures that were similar to those instituted during World War II with the Defense Production Act and the declaration of a state of national emergency. All the while, Erhard, in spite of the flood of imported goods into West Germany, continued to struggle for the liberalization of trade.

This boom also saw the increase of prices. In the autumn of 1949 the cost of living index equaled 105 (1950=100). This figure increased to 119 in the second quarter of 1951 during the peak of the Korean Crisis. Gross hourly wages also increased during this period from 95 (1950=100) to 117 in the second quarter of 1951.<sup>9</sup> In fact, the index of real weekly earnings continued to go up over this period from 87 in 1949 to 115 at the end of 1952.<sup>10</sup> But what would prove crucial was the public's perception of the increase of prices, rather than the actual reality of the situation.

As he had done following the currency reform in June of 1948 and in the midst of the strikes of November of 1948, Erhard went to the airwaves to reach the West German people. On September 15, 1950, Erhard presented a speech explaining the economic situation resulting from the Korean War. He pointed out that prior to the Korean War, West Germany was on the road to economic recovery with exports increasing and unemployment dropping. Surely, the boom situation stemming from the war could

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<sup>8</sup> Wallach, *Mainsprings of the German Revival*, 87.

<sup>9</sup> Abelshauser, "Probleme des Wiederaufbaus der westdeutschen Wirtschaft, 1945-1953," 241.

<sup>10</sup> Wallach, *Mainsprings of the German Revival*, 298.

threaten these gains.<sup>11</sup> Erhard argued that in order to secure the gains from the Korean boom, West Germany had to retain a stable price index, in the face of the rising cost of raw materials.

Erhard then got to the crux of his speech. He was trying to show the danger of the trade union demand for a general wage increase of 15 to 20 percent. He argued that, “We must also must remember that we are no longer living in an age of economic isolation, but are part of a world economy and that, in consequence, our economic policy must take account of developments in other countries.” Erhard went on to explain that, “The German worker must be made to see then he risks his social security and his job if he expects social benefits from the action of the trade unions.” Here he took the position that he would take through much of the 1950s: the German worker had to give up immediate gains for the benefits that would result in the future. In addition, an increase of prices and a subsequent drop of exports could lead to an attack on the market economy by those who supported the planned economy.<sup>12</sup> In many respects, Erhard was advocating an economic program that he would support throughout his service both as Economics Minister and eventually Chancellor. But at the time of the Korean Crisis, Erhard did not have the power for public relations and propaganda to influence public opinion effectively. The challenges that the Korean War presented for the Social Market

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<sup>11</sup> Ludwig Erhard, *The Economics of Success* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1963), 72-73.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 74-76.

Economy would help spur greater efforts for a coherent public relations campaign on the behalf of Erhard and his economic principles.

In the fall of 1950 the Allied High Commission also worried that West Germany was not devoting enough of its scarce resources to production for the war effort. In spite of the Allied concerns, the West German government refused to commit itself to a policy of economic controls. The Allies became even more worried about the shortage of coal that was appearing. By early 1951 the crisis had come to a head with the *Bank der deutscher Länder* withdrawing a billion DM of credits from the bankers of the individual *Länder*, or states. In addition, the United States was dissatisfied with the contribution that West Germany was making to the war effort. On March 6, 1952, the U.S. High Commissioner John McCloy wrote Chancellor Adenauer to call for a significant modification of the free market system in West Germany. McCloy demanded that “the Federal Government must immediately work out the necessary system of administrative measures for the control of priorities and allocation and for the control of selected prices.”<sup>13</sup>

At this time it appeared that Adenauer’s support of Erhard had begun to wane. In February 1951 Adenauer declared before the central committee of the CDU/CSU that he was no principled adherent of the free market and would not advocate it unless it was successful. In fact, Adenauer in March 1951 convened a group of economic experts to

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<sup>13</sup> Nicholls, *Freedom with Responsibility*, 282-291; and Werner Abelshauser, “The First Post-Liberal Nation: Stages in the Development of Modern Corporatism in Germany,” *European History Quarterly* 14 (1984): 305-305.



advise him, particularly from a position counter to Erhard's ideas on economics.<sup>14</sup> In a letter to Erhard from Adenauer, the Chancellor attacked his Economics Minister, saying that his behavior was impossible and that he completely misunderstood the nature of the federal government. He chided the Economics Minister for Erhard's overly confident public pronouncements, especially on the coal shortage, and his public attacks of policy he had agreed to in Cabinet. In addition, Adenauer accused Erhard of being personally responsible for the economic troubles that West Germany was experiencing. He finally appointed Ludger Westrick as the new state secretary of the Economics Ministry and demanded that Erhard devote more time to the task of running the ministry.<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, Adenauer retained Erhard as his Economics Minister. Perhaps Adenauer saw Erhard as a linchpin to the CDU/FDP coalition and the risks of opening the possibility of a "grand coalition" of the CDU/SPD outweighed the benefits of getting rid of him.<sup>16</sup>

In spite of the serious confrontation between Adenauer and Erhard, the West German economy began to improve after the crisis of early 1951. With the suspension of trade liberalization, West Germany's balance of payments situation improved and by May 1951 it had repaid the European Payment Union credit in full. By early summer of 1951

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<sup>14</sup> Daniel Koerfer, *Kampf ums Kanzleramt: Erhard und Adenauer* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1987), 96-97.

<sup>15</sup> Konrad Adenauer an Ludwig Erhard, 19 März 1951 in *Die Korea-Krise als ordnungspolitische Herausforderung der deutschen Wirtschaftspolitik, Texte und Dokumente*, ed. Horst Friedrich Wünsche (Stuttgart: Gustav Fischer Verlag, 1986), 341-344.

<sup>16</sup> Nicholls, *Freedom with Responsibility*, 287.

the Korean boom had leveled off. During the boom West Germany's exports had doubled, its factory's productivity improved, and in the end there was a relatively small increase in prices and wages.<sup>17</sup>

Werner Abelshauser has argued that the Korean Crisis represents a significant juncture in the development of West Germany's political economy. A system of "societal corporatism" emerged in which the true free market was replaced by a political cartel. Key to this system was interest reconciliation in a triangular pattern among business associations, trade unions, and the state. During the Korean Crisis of 1950-52 the umbrella organization of business and trade unions won an important share in the creation of German economic policy, and in addition, regained a role in economic planning and control, both in an autonomous fashion and in conjunction with the state. With the United States' attack on Erhard's liberalization policies and demand for West Germany to apply its raw materials for the war effort, the free market was fatally undermined. The industrialist *Gemeinschaftsausschuss der deutschen gewerblichen Wirtschaft* (Working group of the German manufacturing industry) provided a means for direct controls on raw material allocation and investment planning. At the suggestion of the *Bundesverband der Deutschen Industrie* (Federation of German Industry), the main German industrial organization, the office of "Adviser to the Federal Government on Raw Materials" was

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<sup>17</sup> Wallich, *Mainsprings of the German Revival*, 91-95.

created in March 1951. This post was filled by Otto A. Friederich, head of the Phoenix Rubberworks of Hamburg.<sup>18</sup>

The effects of the Korean Crisis on the public at large were significant to say the least. A report prepared by the Institut für Demoskopie in Allensbach, "*Das Soziale Klima*" (The social climate) showed a dramatic drop-off in the public's optimism just prior to the outbreak of the Korean War. In one survey, respondents were asked, "If you compare your present situation with last year's, are you better off today than a year ago, or worse, or would you say that there is no difference?" In July 1948, following the currency reform, West German optimism was relatively high with 37 percent believing that things were better, while 42 percent thought things were worse and 11 percent seeing no difference. (10 percent responded with no answer). By March 1949 the positive figure had climbed to 47 percent, while the negative had decreased to 31 percent. Yet the economic conditions in late 1949 and during the Korean War pushed a dramatic drop off in people's optimism. In April 1951, only 12 percent of the respondents thought things were better off than a year before. In comparison, 56 percent thought that they were worse off. It was not until April 1953 when respondents believing things were better off (24 percent) outnumber those who believed things were worse (19 percent).<sup>19</sup> This drop

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<sup>18</sup> Werner Abelshauser, "The First Post-Liberal Nation," 286, 304-311; and Werner Abelshauser, "Korea, Die Ruhr und Erhards Marktwirtschaft: Die Energiekrise von 1950/51," *Rheinische Viertelsjahrsblätter* 45/3 (1981): 310-316.

<sup>19</sup> *Das Soziale Klima, Ein Bericht über Umfragen in Deutschland 1948-1951*, Institut für Demoskopie, ZSg 132/154, Bundesarchiv Koblenz (hereafter BA Koblenz); and Elisabeth Noelle and Erich Peter Neumann, *Jahrbuch der Öffentlichen Meinung, 1947-1955* (Allensbach am Bodensee: Verlag für Demoskopie, 1956), 42.

in optimism was also reflected in a survey that asked, “Do you see the new year with hope or with apprehension?” Only 27 percent in 1950 looked forward to the coming year, while 48 percent had done so in 1949. By 1953, in time for the next Bundestag election, this figure had gone up to 60 percent.<sup>20</sup>

Clearly the inflation of the Korean boom had affected the population’s perception of economic stability and prosperity. During the time of the Korean war, the fear that a new world war would break out climbed dramatically. In April 1950 only 26 percent of the respondents believed that a new world war would break out. By June of 1950 this figure had increased to 53 percent and stayed relatively high with 47 percent in January 1951. Meanwhile, the number of respondents who believed that war would not break out dipped from 74 percent in April 1950 to 47 percent in June 1951.<sup>21</sup> But the insurance of the peace was not the foremost concern of the West German populace. In October 1951 45 percent of respondents thought that the “improvement of the economic situation” as the most important concern for West Germany, while only 20 percent thought that the securing of the peace was the most important concern.<sup>22</sup>

In conjunction with the decrease in optimism among the respondents and the heightened concern of the economic situation of West Germany, there was a perceptible dip in the belief of the free market in relation to the planned economy. In a March 1949

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<sup>20</sup> Rüdiger Schulz, “Die Reaktion der Bundesbürger auf die politischen und wirtschaftlichen Herausforderungen der Korea-Krise,” in *Die Korea Krise als ordnungspolitische Herausforderung der deutschen Wirtschaftspolitik*, 72.

<sup>21</sup> Noelle and Neumann, *Jahrbuch der Öffentlichen Meinung, 1947-1955*, 53.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 392.

survey conducted by the Institut für Demoskopie, less than a year after the currency reform, 41 percent of respondents preferred the free movement of prices, while 47 percent were for controlled prices.<sup>23</sup> This result dropped significantly over the course of the economic difficulties stemming from the Korean War. In March 1951 37 percent were for the Social Market Economy, and by October 1952 this figure had dipped to 29 percent. At the same time, respondents for a form of planned economy remained stable around 47 percent.<sup>24</sup>

Meanwhile, the population of West German attributed the rise of prices during the Korean Crisis to the policies of the government. In a survey conducted in March 1951, a sample group of West Germans were asked “What do you think is the main reason for the rise in prices: increased prices on the world market or the economic policies of the government?” (multiple answers possible). Forty-six percent thought that the economic policy of the government was responsible, while 37 percent attributed the rise in prices to the world market prices. In a follow-up question in May 1951, West Germans were asked, “Could the government do something about the increase in prices if it wanted?” Seventy-five percent yes, while 9 percent answered no.<sup>25</sup> This attribution of blame had consequences for how the CDU/CSU was perceived in the eyes of the public. A January

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 155.

<sup>24</sup> Das Soziale Klima, ZSg 132/154, BA Koblenz, 10; and Noelle and Neumann, *Jahrbuch der öffentlichen Meinung 1947-1955*, 234.

<sup>25</sup> Schulz, “Die Reaktionen der Bundesbürger auf die politischen und wirtschaftlichen Herausforderungen der Korea-Krise,” 77.

1952 survey asked West Germans, “Which party has done the most for people. I mean for people in their living conditions?” Twenty percent responded with the SPD, while only 12 percent for the CDU/CSU.<sup>26</sup> However, the results of this survey improved for the CDU/CSU as the 1953 federal elections approached. A March 1953 showed that 24 percent thought that the SPD would most likely attempt to improve the economic situation for all classes of society as opposed to 22 percent for the CDU/CSU.<sup>27</sup>

In addition, there was a general ignorance of what actually the Social Market Economy was. In a demographic poll from April 1950, respondents were asked to answer the following question: “The Social Market Economy is discussed frequently in the newspapers and on the radio. According to your view, how should one understand the Social Market Economy?” Only 12 percent of the respondents correctly answered the question with responses that included “free market, the economic policy of the government and liberal economy.” Fifty-six percent of the respondents had no idea of what the Social Market Economy was, while 27 percent gave incorrect answers.<sup>28</sup> This had not changed dramatically by November 1952. In this survey, 48 percent had no idea, while 37 percent gave incorrect answers on the Social Market Economy. This time only 8 percent could correctly identify the Social Market Economy.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Noelle and Neumann, *Jahrbuch der Öffentlichkeit, 1947-1955*, 255.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 255.

<sup>28</sup> *Das Soziale Klima*, ZSg 132/154, BA Koblenz, 11.

<sup>29</sup> *Der Wirtschaftliche Aufstieg—Verdienst der Arbeiter und Unternehmer? Über die Soziale Marktwirtschaft*, Institut für Demoskopie, Rheinsich-Westfälisches Wirtschaftsarchiv zu Köln e.V. (hereafter RWWA) Abt 16, Nr 4, Fasz 1, 1.

Despite the confusion surrounding the term, “Social Market Economy,” it posed the potential for political influence. In March 1952, a sample of West Germans were asked, “What type of program must a party have, so that it works well for Germany?” Eighty-seven percent responded that it must social, while 73 percent were for democratic, 58 percent for Christian, and 25 percent authoritarian. The survey commented that the most recent surveys had demonstrated that most critics of the government’s economic policy concentrated on the idea that it was not social. As a result, there was a necessity to first associate the Social Market Economy with the government and then inculcate people with the belief that the Social Market Economy was actually social.<sup>30</sup>

The survey also showed the term “Social Market Economy” had some form of political currency, regardless of whether respondents had a clear idea of what the term meant. The Institut für Demoskopie posed a follow-up question to those who participated in the November 1952 survey asking for a definition of the Social Market Economy. The respondents who gave some form of an answer, be it correct or incorrect, were asked, “Which party would you vote for: a party for or against the Social Market Economy?” Thirty-eight percent of the respondents believed they would support a party that supported the Social Market Economy, while 6 percent would be against, 8 percent were undecided, and 48 percent did not give any answer on what the Social Market Economy was.<sup>31</sup> But at the same time opinions on the Social Market Economy were problematic

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 6-7.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 8.

for the prospects of the CDU/CSU. Although there was a tendency to support a party with such a program, regardless whether the respondent could accurately identify the Social Market Economy, there was also the problem of connecting the economic policy with the correct political party. In March 1953, 12 percent of the respondents of an Institut für Demoskopie survey thought that the SPD backed the Social Market Economy, while 5 percent believed that it was a CDU/CSU platform. More telling was that 40 percent of the respondents did not know which party supported the Social Market Economy and 41 percent did not know what the Social Market Economy actually was.<sup>32</sup>

These survey results could be interpreted as placing into doubt the crucial role that the Social Market Economy had in the 1949 election campaign. How could the issue of “*Markt oder Plan*” have been a crucial platform if there was such widespread ignorance on the subject? One could also question the validity of the survey results, especially since the demographic techniques at the time were relatively crude. The Institut für Demoskopie used the quota method of polling, instead of the more exact, and more expensive, random sampling method.<sup>33</sup> But the Institut für Demoskopie was accurate in much of its polling, especially its predictions of the Bundestag elections. One must bear in mind that the CDU/CSU couched its discussion of more abstract economic ideas in tangible, real ways. The CDU/CSU associated its economic program, without ever defining it, with the concrete examples of West Germany’s economic resurgence.

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<sup>32</sup> Rüdiger Schulz, “Reaktionen der Bundesbürger auf die politischen und wirtschaftlichen Herausforderungen der Korea-Krise,” 76.

<sup>33</sup> Hans Kellerer, “Opinion and Attitude Research in Western Germany and West-Berlin,” *International Journal of Opinion and Attitude Research* V (1951-1952): 513.



It is also important to keep in mind that these results were read and disseminated among political and business leaders alike. Those, including Ludwig Erhard, who saw the Social Market Economy as crucial to continuing West Germany's economic upswing paid particular attention to the figures. With the danger that the Korean Crisis presented the Social Market Economy, these same groups began to realized the necessity of some form of "reeducation" of the West Germany populace if the free market system was to continue. In addition, the 1953 and 1957 federal elections reflected a greater and more exact connection between the burgeoning West German "Economic Miracle" and the legitimacy of the West German state in general, and also sought to convince West Germans of the connection between the new prosperity with conservative economic policies more specifically.

It was with the role as the personification of this economic upswing that the Economics Minister, Ludwig Erhard, took center stage. In October 1948, four months after the currency reform, the Institut für Demoskopie surveyed West Germans on their opinion of Ludwig Erhard. 63 percent of the respondents knew of Erhard, as opposed to 37 percent who did not. Overall, 13 percent had a good opinion of Erhard, while 18 percent thought he was mediocre, 16 percent had a bad opinion of him, and 16 percent were undecided.<sup>34</sup> By 1951 14 percent still had a good opinion of Erhard, while the

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<sup>34</sup> Das Soziale Klima, ZSg 132/154, BA Koblenz.

percentage of those holding a poor opinion of Erhard had climbed to 49 percent. By 1954 these results were reversed.<sup>35</sup> This trend was to continue through the 1950s.

The Korean Crisis helped reveal the shaky support of the Social Market Economy held both by the government and public opinion. Clearly, over the course of the early 1950s Erhard's reputation grew tremendously. Undoubtedly, this upswing in the public opinion on Erhard had much to do with the dramatic improvement of West Germany's economic fortunes. But, also during this time, the image of Ludwig Erhard and the creation of the mythology of the "Economic Miracle" were carefully crafted by both political and economic leaders, many times with very different intended goals. Erhard over the course of the 1950s came to personify the very idea of "Economic Miracle" and the legitimacy of the Federal Republic itself.

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<sup>35</sup> Noelle and Neumann, *Jahrbuch der Öffentlichen Meinung, 1947-1955*, 185.

## CHAPTER 5

### PUBLIC RELATIONS FOR THE SOCIAL MARKET ECONOMY: DIE WAAGE

The economic stress caused by the Korean War sent shocks through the public perception of the Social Market Economy and within governmental circles, especially with Chancellor Adenauer. Demographic surveys from the period clearly indicated the public was distrustful of not only the free market economy, but also of industry's role in society itself. In addition, the crisis raised the question within the government of whether the Social Market Economy would be jettisoned in favor of a more politically palatable economic policy. The threat that a socialist government would emerge from the 1953 Bundestag election appeared imminent to supporters of the Social Market Economy. By the spring of 1951 business and economic interests began to engage in measures to bolster support for the Social Market Economy.

The most significant of these efforts was the founding of the *Gemeinschaft zur Förderung des sozialens Ausgleichs e. V.* (Society for the Promotion of Social Compromise) or as it was more widely known, *Die Waage (The Weigh Scales)*, the organization's symbol in its advertisements. This group of businessmen instituted one of the most extensive public relations campaign in West German history and what has been

called the first public relations campaign in Germany.<sup>1</sup> In a letter to possible contributors to Die Waage, the board of directors explained the organization's basic goals:

Die Waage/The Society for the Promotion of Social Compromise is a voluntary and private organization that applies commercial advertising methods for the purpose of the common welfare. Die Waage's non-partisan, public service announcements (*gemeinschaftsbildende Aufklärungsarbeit*) pursue the goal of convincing the entire population of the lasting (*bleibenden*) validity (*Gültigkeit*) of our economic system.<sup>2</sup>

This organization conducted extensive advertisement campaigns, appearing in leading daily newspapers and weekly newspapers, such as the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* and *Der Spiegel*, a series of poster campaigns, and a series of movies shown in movie theaters across West Germany. In all, a total of 30 advertising series appeared between 1952 and 1965, but the group's most intense activity was concentrated between 1953 and 1957, which were election years and crucial times in the formation of public opinion on economics.

The efforts of Die Waage represented an important juncture in the propaganda efforts behind Erhard, the Social Market Economy, and the "Economic Miracle." It was the first truly massive public relations effort that had been conducted within West Germany. This public relations campaign involved careful demographic surveys that helped construct advertisements that sought to mold very precisely the conceptions that West Germans held toward the economy. In addition, Die Waage's techniques had an

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<sup>1</sup> H.J. Kropff, "Die erste Public Relations Campagne in Deutschland. Erfolgreiches Beispiel der Anwendung von Prinzipien, Methoden, und Mitteln Wirtschaftswerbung zur Ausbreitung nationaler, sozialer, und kultureller Ideen," ZSg 1 36/2, Bundesarchiv Koblenz, (hereafter BA Koblenz).

<sup>2</sup> Die Waage, Zugang 121, Ludwig Erhard Stiftung, Bonn (hereafter LES).

impact that transcended the task of drumming up support for the Social Market Economy. As Die Waage conducted its efforts over the course of the 1950s, other political groups, including parties such as the SPD and the FDP, took notice of the modern advertising techniques that Die Waage used, and began to incorporate these techniques into their own campaigns. In this way, Die Waage's influence rippled through the developing West German political culture and helped mold it into a more "Americanized" form.

Furthermore, Die Waage put forth propaganda that did more than help create support for the Social Market Economy and industrialists. During years of Bundestag elections, Die Waage was effective in creating veiled political propaganda for Erhard, and with that effort, the CDU/CSU also. In addition, this propaganda connected the increased consumerism depicted in the advertisements with the legitimization of the Federal Republic. The advertisements exalted the new West German prosperity as the rebirth of the nation and its people. Furthermore, the advertising campaign contributed to a new understanding of West Germany that centered a West German identity upon economic success. In the world of Die Waage's advertisements, the free market system acted as the basis for a new, free West Germany. In this way, the propaganda not only sought to rehabilitate the image of industry, but also to build the legitimacy of the Federal Republic versus the eastern Democratic Republic.

Die Waage was founded on September 23, 1952 in Cologne by several businessmen mainly from the industrial Rhineland region of West Germany. The chairman of Die Waage was Franz Greiß, who was also president of the *Industrie und Handelskammer Köln* (Chamber of Commerce, Cologne). The vice-chairman was Dr. Fritz Jacobi, an executive with Bayer AG, while the treasurer was Alphons Horten of Glashütte J. Weck. Other founders were mainly from consumer industries, including Philipp F. Reemtsma of the Reemtsma Cigarette Company. Although Die Waage was officially registered as a non-profit organization on November 25, 1952, its founding had begun over a year beforehand when Greiß and Horten began to recruit possible contributors to the organization. Many of the key founders of Die Waage were also members of the *Bund Katholischer Unternehmer* (BKU, Organization of Catholic Entrepreneurs), an association founded in March 1949 with Franz Greiß as its chairman.

As stated in the organization's guiding principles, the BKU sought the "creation of a healthy social and living order, based upon Christian principles." The organization believed in "competition of the market economy and with that the connected necessity for a free, but socially-conscious business community." An eventual goal of the organization was "social satisfaction (*Befriedung*) through the overcoming of the proletariat." The ultimate goal of organization was that with "confidence and the truth of Christian thought, one fights the supposedly victorious and unstoppable collectivism."<sup>3</sup> In many

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<sup>3</sup> Klaus-Dieter Schmidt, *Soziale Gerechtigkeit durch unternehmerische Initiative: Der Bund der Katholischer Unternehmer, 1949-1990* (München: Ferdinand Schöning, 1994), 32-35.

respects, the leadership of Die Waage borrowed ideas from the BKU and transferred them to the newly founded organization.

The three goals of Die Waage were: “1. A factual clarification for the public of the Social Market Economy and a demonstration of the economic advantages, which the Social Market Economy already offers all levels of society. 2. Promotion of the social compromise and with that the security of the social peace, which is the basis for a lasting, healthy atmosphere between employers and employees. 3. General improvement of the business community’s image and the reduction of resentments against the concept of free enterprise (*freien Unternehmertums*).”<sup>4</sup> The organization stressed that this was a public relations campaign meant to bring an understanding of the Social Market Economy not only for “Lieschen Müller” (John Doe) but also “Dr. Lieschen Müller”(Dr. John Doe)--that is to the widest segment of society. Franz Greiß reasoned that industry should conduct a public relations campaign as if the Social Market Economy were its own product, because this economic system ensured the industrialist’s ability to function fully.<sup>5</sup>

This group of industrialists looked toward American business for a model of their public relations and good-will actions. Most particularly, the American Advertising

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<sup>4</sup> Die Waage, Zugang 127, LES.

<sup>5</sup> Franz Greiß, “Erhards Soziale Marktwirtschaft und Die Waage,” in *Ludwig Erhard: Beiträge zu seiner Politischen Biographie, Festschrift zum Fünfundsiebzigsten Geburtstag*, ed. G. Schroeder, Alfred Müller-Armack, Karl Hohmann, Johannes Gross, Rüdiger Altmann (Frankfurt: Propyläen Verlag, 1972), 96-97.

Council in the United States acted as an inspiration.<sup>6</sup> The Ad Council was formed in 1942 and sought to propagate advertisements for the national or public good. The Ad Council had the creation of the character “Rosie the Riveter” to its credit during the war and later developed the character of “Smokey the Bear.” It was funded mostly by voluntary contributions on the part of industry. Hans W. Brose, Die Waage’s advertising agent, had made several trips to the United States and gained knowledge of American advertising techniques. He always held these techniques as the model for his own advertisements.<sup>7</sup> In fact, the Austrian advertising expert H.J. Kropff saw the Ad Council as a crucial step in the rehabilitation of advertising in the United States. In addition, the success of the “Advertising Council” had demonstrated “that the principles, methods, and means of commercial advertising could be applied as effectively for propaganda of general, useful ideas or ideals as for sale of goods.”<sup>8</sup> One article in the *Franfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* suggested that not only did America provide a good example of a strong and stable democracy, but it also furnished methods of increasing the trust in democracy. The methods of the Ad Council were an important way that this trust could

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 96-97; and Simone Schüfer “Die deutsche Medienkampagne für die Soziale Marktwirtschaft. Dokumentation der Waage/Gemeinschaft zur Förderung des sozialens\_Ausgleichs e.V.” (M.A. Thesis, University of Mainz, 1992), 31-32.

<sup>7</sup> Broschüre Brose, 3, Die Waage, Zugang 136, LES. See also H.J. Kropff, “Werbung im Zeichen der Waage, Die Deutsche Werbung tritt in ein neue Phase,” *Die Anzeige* 3/29 (1953): 316-318.

<sup>8</sup> Kropff, “Werbung im Zeichen der Waage,” 318.



be built. The article then went on to explain that Die Waage was perhaps the best example of these American methods in West Germany at that time.<sup>9</sup>

Early in its formation, Die Waage employed an advertising agency, the *Gesellschaft für Gemeinschaftswerbung* (GfG). Hans W. Brose had founded the GfG in May 1929 in Berlin. After the war, he transferred the headquarters of the firm to Frankfurt am Main in the American Zone of occupation. Perhaps one reason GfG was so attractive to Die Waage was because Brose had previous experience with “*Gemeinschaftswerbung*” (cooperative advertising). During the Second World War Brose had spearheaded the “*Glückauf-Aktion*” in which business interests had donated funds to support a public relations campaign. The goal of the campaign was to attract apprentices to enter into coal mining work and to invigorate an occupational self-consciousness among miners. As part of this action Brose helped prepare twelve different advertisements that were to appear once the war had ended. In many respects, with their pictorial header and long texts, the advertisements reflected many of the principles that Brose would apply with Die Waage action.<sup>10</sup>

Early in its formation, Die Waage drew heavily upon demographic research both to get a sense of opinion in West Germany and to form its advertisements. Especially crucial was the demographic research produced by the Institut für Demoskopie,

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 316-318. See also “Werbung für alle,” *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 20 January, 1953.

<sup>10</sup> Hans W. Brose, *Die Entdeckung des Verbrauchers: Ein Leben für die Werbung* (Düsseldorf: Econ-Verlag, 1958), 77-88.

Allensbach. The Institut für Demoskopie was formed in 1948 by Elisabeth Noelle. Noelle had studied journalism and the emerging field of public opinion polling at the University of Missouri in the United States between 1937 and 1939. Her role within the Nazi state has recently come under great scrutiny. During the war she was a Nazi Party member and wrote for *Das Reich*, a weekly journal for German intellectuals founded by Josef Goebbels. In her articles she provided an analysis that was typical of the *völkisch* (nationalist or racist) propaganda produced by Goebbels. After the war she worked with the French military intelligence. In 1948 she established the Institut für Demoskopie in Allensbach on Bodensee. Much of the Institut's work involved research for advertising. In addition, during the 1950s she became a key advisor and pollster at the service of the conservative CDU.<sup>11</sup>

Particularly important for Die Waage was a summary of surveys conducted by the Institut für Demoskopie between 1948 and 1951. These surveys were compiled for the GfG in one report called "*Das Soziale Klima*" (The social climate). This survey investigated four basic questions. What did the populace know about the Social Market Economy? How were the opposition and the government viewed by the public? What was the relationship between the various social partners? Finally, what were the views of the trade unions and codetermination in plants and factories? In addition, the Institut für Demoskopie included as part of the survey a report on "Public Relations and opinion

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<sup>11</sup> Christopher Simpson, "Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann's 'Spiral of Silence' and the Historical Context of Communication Theory," *Journal of Communication* 46/3 (Summer 1996): 148-171; and Leo Bogart, "The Pollster and the Nazis," *Commentary* (January 1992): 47-49.

research in the United States of American and Great Britain.” This short report underscored the need for business and large industry, as shown by experience in the United States and England, to involve itself in public relations.<sup>12</sup>

*Das Soziale Klima* reflected a general ignorance of the Social Market Economy among the West German populace with only 12 percent of respondents able to correctly identify the economic system (See also the figures from Chapter 3). It also showed a general distrust of the industrialists. A June 1950 survey asked whether most manufacturers think “only of their profit, or are also socially-minded.” Sixty percent believed that industrialists only thought of profits against 16 percent who believed they were socially-minded. In addition, 59 percent thought that manufacturers would have to be forced to watch out for their workers’ interests.<sup>13</sup> Despite a negative view of industrialists, the workers also appeared to be open for a system of industrial relations more advantageous to management. More than 73 percent of workers could not correctly identify the demands of the trade unions on the issue of *Mitbestimmung* (codetermination), the proposal for worker representatives to sit on the *Aufsichtsrat* (supervisory board) of firms. One had to consider that one third of workers thought that only consultation with management, not codetermination should take place. In addition,

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<sup>12</sup> Public Relations und Meinungsforschung in den USA und in England, Institut für Demoskopie, ZSg 132/154 II, BA Koblenz.

<sup>13</sup> *Das Soziale Klima, Ein Bericht über Umfragen in Deutschland, 1948-1951*, Institut für Demoskopie, ZSg 132/154 I, BA Koblenz.

another third argued that workers should only have input upon matters of shopfloor management.<sup>14</sup>

Perhaps more significantly, the report stated that currency reform was a “*Nullpunkt*” (starting point) since all views held by the German populace were distorted by the catastrophe of the war and defeat.<sup>15</sup> After examining various factors affecting social conditions in West Germany, the report concluded, “The themes discussed here give the final answer to the question of whether there is a chance in Germany to improve the relationship of the masses to the current economic system. The answer is, with a number of qualifications, affirmative.”<sup>16</sup> But crucial for the improvement of public opinion on the Social Market Economy, was a “continual analysis of the mentality of the masses.” The report stressed that public opinion is not easily moved, therefore a systematic approach must be adopted. In addition, this public relations action must be taken, even though it was a dramatic departure from past action by business, since a government averse to the market economy would lead to economic and political “displeasure” (*Unwillens*).<sup>17</sup>

In fact, *Das Soziale Klima* was used by the central committee of Die Waage as a method to recruit new sources of funding, as can be seen in a early plan of action for Die

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 37-39.

<sup>15</sup> *Das Soziale Klima, Ein Bericht über Umfragen in Deutschland, 1948-1951*, Institut für Demoskopie, ZSg 132/154 I, BA Koblenz.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 51.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 53.

Waage meant to attract potential donors. The proposal summed up *Das Soziale Klima* and provided data depicting the rising discontent among the West German populace on economic developments of the last two years in a “scientific” fashion. This early proposal from GfG was meant to encourage business interests to contribute to Die Waage’s efforts, so the political aspects of a public relations campaign were emphasized. It opened with, “In the German business community, the understanding is growing that something must be done, that something must be done soon in order to ensure an anti-Marxist majority in the 1953 Bundestag.” The report went on to point out that the Adenauer government was seen increasingly in a negative light, and with that the economic system and its representatives, the industrialists, were viewed negatively. If the head of the SPD, Kurt Shumacher, came to power, the proposal underscored, it would mean the socialization of key industries, including coal and steel, with banking, transportation, insurance, energy, and large chemical industries following. These were exactly the industries upon which Die Waage concentrated its fund raising efforts. In addition, those industries not threatened by socialization, the report warned, should be wary of the effects that codetermination could have on their firm. Therefore, it was imperative that a anti-Marxist majority of at least 10 to 20 representatives in the Bundestag be won in the 1953 federal election. This could be done by the winning over of the vacillating or undecided mass of people. But it left open the question for which party Die Waage’s campaign should attempt to win support. Although the report stressed

that Die Waage was anti-Marxist, it was not tied to any political party or religious community.<sup>18</sup> The report then jumped into a summary of the *Das Soziale Klima*

It is striking how this proposal stressed that Die Waage's goals and the methods were based upon empirical and scientific research conducted by the Institut für Demoskopie. Within the context of fund raising, the Institut für Demoskopie's surveys were crucial tools to demonstrate the legitimacy of Die Waage itself and the need to organize such an undertaking. The description of Die Waage's initial advertising plan stressed that, "Die Waage's plan does not start with any subjective opinions, unclear conceptions, or unrealistic ideas—it starts with the facts and exact knowledge." After examining the results of the survey, the proposal reported that, "The dissatisfaction of the broad masses with the economic conditions is, according to the Institute [Institut für Demoskopie], the result of a lack of information."<sup>19</sup> But now Die Waage had the exact knowledge of the information that the "broad masses" lacked.

In order to demonstrate the empirical necessity for the creation of a public relations campaign, the report provided a summary of some of the survey results compiled in *Das Soziale Klima*. For example, the proposal stressed that in April 1951, 56 percent of the West German population reported that things were worse than the year before, while in November 1950 only 27 percent had maintained this. In addition, most workers were dissatisfied with the businessman, with 69 percent seeing them as "unsocial." Overall, it reported the public's general ignorance of Economics Minister

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<sup>18</sup> Eine Werbung zur Förderung des sozialen Ausgleichs, 4/12/51, Die Waage, Zugang 60, LES.

Erhard's policies and basic economic issues. In addition, the proposal reported that almost a third of the population was politically indecisive, thereby showing the need for a public relations campaign to take up before the next federal election in order to win this group over to the bourgeois parties. A large percentage of West Germans were dissatisfied with the Adenauer regime and did not expect better conditions without a change in government. In addition, *Das Soziale Klima* stressed the idea that the working class was not interested in class struggle. The message of the summary was that people were to a certain extent dissatisfied and ignorant of many economic and political issues, but formed in a sense, a "tabula rasa" for some form of public relations on the behalf of industry.<sup>20</sup> The summary of *Das Soziale Klima* concluded that "the government and business community, so says the Institut [Institut für Demoskopie], need the support of public relations, which gives not only a view upon the disadvantages of system, but also show the advantages which are not brought into the consciousness of the masses. The opposition is developing more daring and vision than the government and business community. Now all the parameters have been given so that this can be reversed."<sup>21</sup>

But in many respects, by 1952 the overtly political overtones of Die Waage's appeal to businessmen were softened, while using Erhard's position as Economics Minister to lend legitimacy to Die Waage's efforts. Already by early May 1952, Die Waage had prepared letters to be sent out by Ludwig Erhard to "financially strong"

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

leaders of industry such as August Oetker, Continental Gummiwerke, Merck, and Otto Friederich, head of Phoenix Gummiwerke. Jacobi explained to Erhard that the advertisements would not be polemical and aggressively political, that was for an election year. Instead, he argued that, "The long neglected, true clarification of the ideas, nature, and goals of the Social Market Economy had to be rectified in a positive form seeking the approval of the entire nation."<sup>22</sup> In these solicitations, Erhard warned that ignoring public opinion in the new democratic state could not be allowed. He appealed to businessmen that the stakes were too high for them to ignore the efforts of Die Waage:

Even a contribution which appears difficult to afford considering the financial situation of your firm will appear acceptable when you consider what is at stake. It is about the understanding of the nation for the great service that independent businesses achieve through competition for the consumer and for people rising in income and position.

This, in many respects, was an appeal for the industrialists to become more overtly political, a role that was unfamiliar to many of them. But at the same time, the letter emphasized that this action would be "independent of all party election slogans and independent of group interests." This position was taken undoubtedly because the prospective contributors supported not only the CDU/CSU, but also the FDP and the DP. But a public relations campaign also meant a certain sense of responsibility on the part of the industrialists for all bourgeois parties, or at least this was what the central committee of Die Waage wanted to stress to prospective contributors.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Die Waage, Zugang 124, LES.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.,



The Institut für Demoskopie had a more direct role in helping Die Waage's fundraising. On April 14, 1953, Erich Peter Neumann, a political consultant to the CDU and the future husband of Dr. Elisabeth Noelle, the head of the Institut für Demoskopie, presented a talk in Cologne on "The responsibility of the business community for public relations."<sup>24</sup> In all, over 200 different politicians, journalists, and businessmen were invited to hear him speak.<sup>25</sup> Neumann outlined the stakes of the business community's role in public relations. In his talk, Neumann opened with the idea that businessmen were in a fight to protect certain principles, without regard to whether these principles were correct or valid. They were in a combative position and had to ensure that their interests remained in harmony with the world's as a whole. In order to accomplish this task, Neumann proclaimed that he was putting forth this "impartial, objective finding."<sup>26</sup>

Neumann took up the task of demonstrating the need and the power of demographic research. He underscored that the rules of the society and its workings remained hazy at best. This problem was compounded with the fact that the masses had more and more influence on politics over the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. One had no way to measure, other than in a general way, the attitudes of society as a whole. But since the 1920s new and more exact methods of empirical social research had been developed. In fact, Neumann argued that, "The representative polling method allows us to measure the

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<sup>24</sup> Protokoll über die Sitzung von Vorstand und Beirat der Waage, 9 März 1953, Die Waage, Zugang 127, LES.

<sup>25</sup> Die Waage, Zugang 128, LES.

<sup>26</sup> "Die Verantwortung des Unternehmers für die öffentliche Meinung," Vortrag von Erich Peter Neumann, Frühjahr 1953, Institut für Demoskopie, ZSg 132/278, BA.

circumstances of society, whose results, and that is the decisive moment, allow us to generalize as a laboratory analysis from some material.” Clearly, the tools of demographic research could not be ignored. As Neumann pointed out, “We are occupying ourselves not with the investigation of opinions, but instead with discovering the patterns of behavior stemming from knowledge and ignorance.”<sup>27</sup>

Neumann pointed not only to the possibilities of demographic research, but also to the dangers that business interests were facing. The SPD had such a wide party membership that it could afford its own propaganda. Of course, he did not mention the fact that the contributions to the CDU/CSU by business interests far outweighed the funds raised by the SPD through party membership dues. In addition, the trade unions “were constantly effective in the sense of opinion shaping, therefore in influencing public opinion.” He argued that, “No matter what good will the industrialist may have developed with the workers, it is dissipated the moment that the union members decide to strike, because they do so out of discipline. The unions have several million in their hands and the ability to quickly influence the opinion of these men. Somehow the industrialists must have a way to respond.”<sup>28</sup>

Neumann showed through a series of surveys that a more informed population tended to be less radical. One survey he pointed to asked West Germans, “What do you think: should people demonstrate and make a commotion in Bonn more often than they

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

do now, or don't you think about it?" Forty-six percent of the uninformed population thought more often would be good. In contrast, only 30 percent of the well informed thought these disturbances were good, while 64 percent thought they were damaging. There are two revealing assumptions linked to this survey. Neumann set up a parallel scenario with the support of radical behavior in relation to information that would be provided in Die Waage's proposed action. More information supplied would produce an output of less radical behavior. Neumann assumed that if people are informed, they will agree with industry's views. Or at least they would be mollified, if business and industry were the gatekeepers of that information.<sup>29</sup> In addition, these variables could be effectively monitored and manipulated through empirical surveys. The creation of a public relations campaign would be useless without a proper, systematic means to test the effectiveness of such a campaign. In this way, surveys were not so much about "taking the pulse" of the people, as a means to manipulate public opinion.

In spite of Neumann's call for a business-led public relations campaign, there were surely dissenting views of what industry's role should be in drumming up support for the ideas of political leaders. Undoubtedly, by 1952 industry had contributed funds to political parties for their election campaigns, especially to the CDU/CSU and FDP in the 1949 Bundestag campaign. But as one RAND Corporation report concluded in 1954, "While the support among businessmen for the West German Republic is strong, German business still lacks a tradition of democratic conviction and of civic responsibility. The political attitudes of German businessmen may be best described as cautious, and as

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid.,

distrustful of all forms of political enthusiasm.”<sup>30</sup> The industrial leaders of the early 1950s had seen a number of governments come and go over the course of their lifetime and were wary of binding themselves too closely with any political group. Their own experience had taught them to be skeptical toward any idealism or enthusiasm about politics. In general, they held a fundamental cynicism toward politics and favored concentrating upon narrow business interests. The report also concluded that business leaders avoided any real discussion of politics and thought that politics was generally bad for one’s character.<sup>31</sup> Die Waage was asking business and industry to make an open appeal to back a political figure. As seen by Neumann’s solicitations on the behalf of Die Waage, discussed above, businessmen had to be carefully goaded into participation.

Clearly, business was willing to contribute money to political parties anonymously, although the CDU/CSU was disappointed by the total contributions in the 1949 campaign.<sup>32</sup> By the autumn of 1952 the national industrial association, the *Bundeseverband der Deutschen Industrie* (BDI, Federation of German Industry), and its accompanying *Bundesvereinigung der deutschen Arbeitgeberverbände* (BDA, the Federation of German Employers), had decided to create so-called *Fördergesellschaften*, or promotional associations. In contrast to the centralized power of the BDI and the

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<sup>30</sup> Gabriel Almond, *The Politics of German Business* (Santa Monica CA: Rand Corporation, 1955), iii, 29-35.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 52-58.

<sup>32</sup> German industry had a tradition of giving money to political parties. See for example, Henry Ashby Turner *German Industry and the Rise of Hitler* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985).

BDA, these *Fördergesellschaften* were organized on the *Land* (state) level for more effective fund raising. A typical *Fördergesellschaft*, this one in North-Rhine Westphalia, was called the *Verein zur Förderung der sozialen Marktwirtschaft in Nordrhein-Westphalen* (Association for the Support of the Social Market Economy in North-Rhine-Westphalia). The purpose of these associations was to better coordinate political finance from economic groups in anticipation of the 1953 Bundestag election. They would have contacts with local business and industry and then funnel money to state level party organization for state elections and to the national level political parties for the federal elections.<sup>33</sup>

One problematic issue was the relationship between Die Waage and the *Fördergesellschaften*, especially in terms of how these two organizations would coordinate fund raising. A meeting between Die Waage and the *Fördergesellschaften* took place early in the development of Die Waage in December 1952. The meeting was called to decide whether Die Waage and the *Fördergesellschaften* would work together in the future in their tasks. It appeared that the *Fördergesellschaften* worried that contributions to Die Waage would divert funds that went through the *Verbände* (BDI and BDA) to political parties. It was suggested, apparently by Die Waage, that about 100,000 to 150,000 DM per month could be allocated from the *Fördergesellschaften* to Die Waage. The representatives from the *Fördergesellschaften* replied that this idea would

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<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 34; and Arnold J. Heidenheimer and Frank C. Langdon, *Business Associations and the Financing of Political Parties, A Comparative Study of the Evolution of Practices in Germany, Norway, and Japan* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1968), 44-45.

have to be approved by the various associations.<sup>34</sup> This proposal was never put into effect, presumably because the associations saw no reason to divert their own funds to Die Waage.

It appears that, in fact, the relationship between Die Waage and the *Fördergesellschaften* had somewhat soured over the course of 1952/53. At a meeting of Die Waage's *Vorstand* (board of directors) and *Beirat* (advisory council) in March 1953, Die Waage decided that it should be made clear to firms that a contribution to Die Waage should not replace one to a *Fördergesellschaft*.<sup>35</sup> At a meeting of supporters of Die Waage held in December 1953, Economics Minister Ludwig Erhard suggested that Die Waage not get involved with *Fördergesellschaften* because the group leading Die Waage was concentrated and unified. Involvement with the *Fördergesellschaften* might undermine that. Of course, Erhard's position must be understood within a larger context. At this point Erhard was having trouble with the BDI over the anti-monopoly legislation going through the Bundestag. Otto Friederich of Phoniex Gummiwerke, an active member of the BDI, supported Erhard's view. In proving his point he mentioned his dealings with the *Industrie-Institut*, the PR branch of the BDI, and commented that it would like to snuff out (*abzuwürgen*) Die Waage. Erhard agreed that the

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<sup>34</sup> Besprechen zwischen Vertreten der Fördergesellschaft und der Gemeinschaft "Die Waage" am 10 Dezember 1952, Die Waage, Zugang 124, LES.

<sup>35</sup> Protokoll über die Sitzung von Vorstand und Beirat der Waage, 9 März 1953 Die Waage, Zugang 127, LES.

*Fördergesellschaften* had to be left for their own activities, but Die Waage had to continue with its task of public education on the Social Market Economy.<sup>36</sup>

In February 1954 a meeting took place in Cologne between leaders of the Die Waage, including Greiß, Jacobi, and Horten, and representatives of the BDI. The leaders of Die Waage tried to convince Gustav Stein, president of the BDI, that Die Waage would not detract from the contributions to the *Fördergesellschaften*. In addition, the question arose whether some of the *Fördergesellschaften* had appealed to individual firms and potential contributors under the guise of soliciting contributions for Die Waage. As a result, in the future the *Fördergesellschaften* needed to check with Die Waage in such cases to avoid this from reoccurring. In addition, it was agreed that Stein would attend the *Beirat* (advisory board) meetings of Die Waage and Horten would attend the meetings of the central *Fördergesellschaft* organization. Although Die Waage and the *Fördergesellschaften* had learned to coexist, it appears that the two organizations never truly saw each other eye to eye in respect to the goals of fund-raising and the actions that were to be taken by industrial interests.<sup>37</sup>

In spite of the tensions with West Germany's main industrial organizations, Die Waage was relatively successful in its fund-raising efforts. Brose estimated in a letter to Greiß in the spring of 1952 that Die Waage would need about 12.5 million DM to run the

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<sup>36</sup> Bericht über die Besprechung des Waage-Förderer-Kreises am Dienstag, 15.12.53, Die Waage, Zugang 129, LES.

<sup>37</sup> Notiz am BDI Besprechung am 2.2.1954, Die Waage, Zugang 129, LES.

advertising campaign through the late summer of 1953 Bundestag election.<sup>38</sup> Clearly, the heads of Die Waage had to scale back the grandiose plans of their advertising agent. Die Waage received about 3.8 million DM over the course of 1952/53 with the total costs of the publications totaling 3.78 million DM.<sup>39</sup> One is struck that a large portion of the main funds came from the firms created out of the former I.G. Farben firms, consisting of BASF, Hoechst, and Bayer, with their contributions totaling a grand sum of 425,000 DM. Other large contributors included Robert Bosch GmbH with 100,000, Brinkmann GmbH with 200,000, Chemie Werke Huels, Continental Gummi with 100,000, Daimler Benz with 100,000, Esso AG with 151,000, Karstadt AG with 150,000, Kaufhof with 150,000, Opel AG with 200,000, and Reemstma with 250,000 DM. Overall, the auto, chemical, retail goods, and consumer goods firms were well represented. In addition, the absence of any coal, iron and steel, and other heavy industrial firms is apparent. One can surmise that this was perhaps a function of the cleft that had developed between Die Waage and the BDI, with the BDI serving as a power base especially for heavy industry.<sup>40</sup>

After “selling” the idea of a public relations campaign to certain sectors of the West German economy, another question that was crucial to the *Vorstand* (board of directors) was how to portray an abstract idea of the Social Market Economy for a wide audience. Die Waage’s *Beirat* (advisory board) would discuss the general guidelines of

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<sup>38</sup> Letter from Brose to Greiß, 24.4.52, Die Waage, Zugang 61, LES.

<sup>39</sup> Brief an Dr. Haberland, Generaldirektor Bayer, 18.2.1954, Die Waage, Zugang 124, LES.

<sup>40</sup> Die Waage, Zugang 129, LES.



the advertisements, while the *Vorstand* made the final decisions on the advertisement. Brose and the GfG took care of the technical planning of the advertisements.<sup>41</sup> This problem of transferring economic ideas into a form suitable for the public's consumption had to be accomplished within very clear constraints. The advertisements had to be constructed in such a way that they would not appear too "political" or favor a certain political figure, at least in the eyes of the contributors. But at the same time, the advertisements had to ensure that the anti-socialist message was clear.

From early on, the leadership of Die Waage decided to avoid any substantive or exact discussion of the Social Market Economy in the advertisements. At a meeting in November 1952, members of the board of directors objected to a possible advertisement with the title, "*Das ist Soziale Marktwirtschaft*" (That is the Social Market Economy) because the term was "treated purely theoretically," and decided to postpone its publication. Dr. Illau, an economist associated with neo-liberal economic theory, maintained that the advertisements should have clear definition of the term "Social Market Economy." But the members of the board of directors concluded that, "We will avoid dry definitions and point to the readers with practical examples to their own advantages from the Social Market Economy."<sup>42</sup> The leaders of Die Waage decided to emphasize image over any substance.

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<sup>41</sup> Die Waage--Ein Bericht über die Tätigkeit in den Jahren 1952-1960, Abt 16, Nr 1 Fasz 2, Nordrheinisch-Westfälisches Wirtschaftsarchiv zu Köln e.V (hereafter RWWA).

<sup>42</sup> Sitzung, 3 November 1952, Die Waage, Zugang, 127, LES.

In fact, the question arose during this time whether the phrase, “Social Market Economy” should be included in the advertisements at all, since the term “social” could unduly confuse the intended audience. A demographic survey conducted in November 1952 for GfG, *Über die soziale Marktwirtschaft* (On the Social Market Economy), underscored the problem that the vast majority of the West German population did not have a good idea of the phrase’s meaning. But in a December 1952 meeting of the *Vorstand*, Horten reported a conversation with Economics Minister Erhard in which Erhard insisted that the term “Social Market Economy” be retained in the advertisements. Hans Brose warned against “changing horses in mid-gallop” and giving opponents of the Social Market Economy the opportunity to say that the “social” aspect of the free market system was in bad condition. Greiß decided to maintain the term “Social Market Economy” unless the coalition parties formulated a new expression.<sup>43</sup>

The first campaign by Die Waage ran between October 9, and December 31, 1952, in which a series of 10 advertisements appeared in 445 daily and weekly newspaper with a total circulation of around 12 million newspapers.<sup>44</sup> Of these 10 advertisements there were 5 different slogans with 2 illustration and text variations of each slogan-type.

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<sup>43</sup> Bericht über die Sitzung von Vorstand und Beirat der Waage am 1 Dezember 1952, Die Waage, Zugang 127, LES.

<sup>44</sup> Die Waage—Ein Bericht über die Tätigkeit in den Jahren 1952-1960, Abt 16, Nr 1 Fasz 2, RWWA.

According to the Institut für Demoskopie, about 36 percent of the population saw and recognized these advertisements between December 5 and 15, 1952.<sup>45</sup>

The advertisements included basic elements of commercial advertising: the slogan, illustration, and seal. The titles of the advertisements were “*Wie schnell der Mensch vergisst*” (How quickly people forget), “*Das deutsche Wunder*” (The German Wonder), “*Wir ziehen alle am gleichen Strang*” (We are all in the same boat), “*Der deutsche Arbeiter wägt sein Schicksal*” (The German worker weighs his own fate), and “*Fragt die Frauen*” (Ask the women). The top half of the advertisement was occupied by a picture of what could be considered a scene from everyday West German life and the title. The bottom half contained the text, the symbol of Die Waage, the scales, and the slogan for the campaign, “*Zum Wohlstand aller durch geeinte Kraft--führt die soziale Marktwirtschaft*” (The Social Market Economy leads to prosperity for all through unified strength). The publicist H.F.J. Kropff noted that the strength of the advertisements was their clear division of the space in a presentable overall impression. In addition, he thought the unity of the series and the constant appearance of the advertisements lent themselves to changing public opinion effectively. But, Kropff did point out that the similarity of the advertisements’ layout might cause some to overlook the individual advertisements. In addition, the quiet manner of the advertisements might not be completely suitable for those the industrialists were trying to convince. In this way, Kropff suggested that the layout of the advertisements might have been constructed for

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<sup>45</sup> Die Waage, Die Betrachtung einer Anzeigen-Serie, Januar 1952, Institut für Demoskopie, ZSg 132/218, BA Koblenz.

the aesthetic sensibilities of the industrialist and not for those who were the target of the advertisements.<sup>46</sup>

Kropff went on to note that Die Waage's task was particularly difficult; it was not enough for the advertisements to be noticed, but they also had to have a deep influence on people's opinions and overcome many prejudices—that is appeal to readers on a rational level. But it would be a mistake to give up on the effectiveness of reaching the broadest masses on the issue of “social compromise” without emotion. The key was effectively to combine the rational and emotional appeal of the advertisements. One could see that the illustrations were meant to appeal emotionally, while the long text was to convince rationally. All the same, the rational advantages of the Social Market Economy had to be put into a “popular (*volkstümlicher*) form.” A strong slogan and interesting illustration combined with a logically built text could achieve this. By carefully combining the emotional and rational elements, the advertisements, from Kropff's view, achieved a psychological and aesthetic unity which appealed to the sensibilities of a certain readership.<sup>47</sup>

The advertisements created a narrative of the economic and social history of the newly formed Federal Republic. The legend of the currency reform proved to be an important element in the creation of Die Waage's advertisements, just as it had been in the CDU's 1949 election campaign. A survey done by the Institut für Demoskopie asked West Germans in April 1952 whether West Germany had experienced an economic

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<sup>46</sup> H.F.J. Kropff, “Werbung im Zeichen der Waage,” 310.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 310.

upswing since the currency reform. Eighty-eight percent of the respondents answered yes, while 4 percent thought no, and 8 percent were undecided. The survey commented that, “From a mass-psychological perspective, there should be a resonance within the population of the economic ascent since the currency reform, or is the memory of the developments since 1948 superimposed by newer, fresh impressions? And to whom, should the occasion arise, could the credit for this upturn be attributed? These two questions are of principle importance in respect to Die Waage’s advertisements.”<sup>48</sup>

The advertisement “*Wie Schnell der Mensch vergisst,*” (Figure 5.1) which was the most widely published of this series of advertisements,<sup>49</sup> opened with images that evoked the fresh images of everyday life immediately following the conclusion of the war: “Trade molasses for shoes—it was scarcely a few years ago. There were 1050 calories daily on the ration card and 100 grams of textiles on the script. In the “Bizonie” in 1947 there was a pair of shoes for every 30 people.” The text went on to paint a picture of despair. But there was a dramatic change in 1948: “and then in the summer of 1948 came the currency reform. . . . We had a hard currency again.” Without ever mentioning him by name, Die Waage portrayed Economics Minister Erhard as the savior for the West German economy. It was his ideas of the Social Market Economy that brought about

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<sup>48</sup> Die Wirtschaftliche Aufstieg—Verdienst der Arbeiter oder Unternehmer? Über die Soziale Marktwirtschaft, Institut für Demoskopie, November 1952, 12, RWWA.

<sup>49</sup> An Allensbach survey estimated that the two forms of “*Wie Schnell der Mensch vergisst,*” reached 13.5 million people. Die Waage, Die Beachtung einer Anzeigen-Serie, Januar 1953, Institut für Demoskopie, ZSg 132/218, BA Koblenz.

West Germany's economic recovery and with that "the Social Market Economy unshackled the entire energy of our nation for the reconstruction."

Throughout the text, the idea of "free" was emphasized and defined. With the coming of the currency reform, the advertisement affirmed that with solid money, "What we needed was work. We wanted to produce again and earn money. Our desire for work wanted the go ahead (*freie Bahn*)."

The introduction of the Social Market Economy provided the opportunity to work and earn money. The same advertisement commented that money is not rationed, but earned and, "For that reason, every person, be it worker or industrialist (*Unternehmer*) should earn on the free 'market' what ability and desire to work brings him." The other advertisement text of "*Wie schnell der Mensch vergisst*" (Figure 5.2) stressed the acquisition of new freedoms tied to the Social Market Economy:

Who saved us from our misery? There is only one level-headed answer: our workers and industrialists (*Unternehmer*), through their cooperation in the freedom of the Social Market Economy. This democratic action first freed the energy for the reconstruction: *One Man* ended the rationing economy (*Bezugsscheinwirtschaft*), the rationing, and standing in lines. . . . He said: Money is the only script (*Bezugsschein*) of free people!

In this way, the free market and the gaining of some form of German self-control were inextricably linked. To have economic freedom was equated with the founding of West Germany itself.

The advertisement's illustration strengthened the message in the text. It portrayed images with which many West Germans could identify. The illustrations gave a hint to what the concept of "freedom" meant. One illustration depicted a scene in the "*Alltagsleben*" (everyday life) of Germans in the years before the currency reform. In the foreground a sullen old man walks with what appears to be a CARE package under his

arm. A forlorn looking woman with sunken cheeks and a recently released prisoner of war examine notes posted on a tree, perhaps looking for family or loved ones. In the background a relatively well dressed man smoking a cigarette, which were the basic form of exchange in pre-currency reform Germany, speaks to a young woman, suggesting perhaps a more salacious relationship. The other version of "*Wie schnell der Mensch vergisst*" portrayed haggard old men and women dressed in rags with small, emaciated children around them waiting in a food line. While they wait they are under the watchful eye of what appears to be an occupation soldier. From the perspective of the illustrations and the creation of a narrative that recounts the rebirth of the German economy, the emphasis of the concept of "free" could be linked to a freedom from the misery and despair. In this way the advertisement is linking the "freedom" of the Social Market Economy with not only some form of sovereignty, but also a freedom from the burdens that were inflicted upon Germans by the Allies during the war, and by their occupying forces in the immediate postwar years.

Other advertisements elucidated further the idea of "freedom" and the Social Market Economy. Two of the ten advertisements of the first action of *Die Waage* were still targeted specifically toward the male worker, although women's roles in the economy were depicted with the slogan, "*Fragt die Frauen*" (Ask the women, Figure 5.3). Appearing in magazines just before Christmas of 1952, the advertisements meant to portray the tangible results of the economic ideas explained in the previous advertisements. The illustrations lured readers into the message the advertisements were trying to spread. The illustrations showed women, laden with bags and packages,

window shopping along a crowded street. The store windows were filled with new goods available for purchase. In the background there were what appeared to be prosperous, rebuilt stores and buildings. Meanwhile, a Mercedes-Benz drives down the street crowded with pedestrians. In the center of the illustration, a woman who draws our attention glances to one of the store windows, as if some good within had caught her eye.

The text of the advertisement developed the idea of freedom that Die Waage was constructing. It first explained that women occupy a crucial role in the economy. It was for women that men make houses, churches, motors and soap. As the illustration clearly showed, the text defined women's role in the economy as that of the consumer. And as consumers women held an important responsibility in the new economic system of West Germany, especially since they were the majority of voters. Therefore, "it depends upon them, whether freedom is preserved for our nation." As consumers, women, along with workers and industrialists, had become the "third power" in the economy and perhaps decisively determined the economic form that West Germany would follow. They were privy to a certain knowledge of the meaning of the 'free' market. The advertisement explained that they experienced first hand how the Social Market Economy achieved the liberation from the rationcard economy. The word "free" is repeated through out the advertisement. It was free competition allowed for the free selection of goods, at ever increasing quality and better prices. The advertisement supplemented the definition of "freedom" established in earlier advertisement. Freedom was not only freedom from the misery of immediate postwar years, but also the freedom to consume, a domain in which



women held particular sway. From the perspective of the advertisement, workers should “ask the women” to know what this freedom meant.

In January 1953, the Institut für Demoskopie conducted a series of surveys to ascertain the effectiveness of Die Waage’s first campaign. The advertisements had a different goal than a commercial advertisement. Their goal was to popularize a political concept and create good will over an extended period of time. As a result, the survey sought to establish a baseline of people’s knowledge and attitudes toward the Social Market Economy in relation to whether they had seen the advertisement or not. The results of the survey showed that of the men who had seen the advertisements, 55 percent were for the Social Market Economy as opposed to 43 percent who had not seen the advertisements. For women the figure was 44 percent for the Social Market Economy who had seen the advertisements, while only 32 percent of those who had not seen the advertisements were for the Social Market Economy. Of course, these figures do not reflect too much. One must consider whether the difference of opinion was a function of who had seen the advertisements. Perhaps they were more educated, and more likely to support the Social Market Economy. The survey concluded that a more exact study of the structure of the groups reading Die Waage’s advertisements was needed.<sup>50</sup>

But the publicist H.F.J Kropff wondered whether the advertisements really appealed to the social level that Die Waage wanted to reach. Part of the problem with the first series of advertisements was that they appeared to be like “speeches which managers

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<sup>50</sup> Die Waage, Die Beachtung einer Anzeigen-Serie, Januar 1953, Institut für Demoskopie, ZSg 132/118, BA Koblenz.

delivered to the workers—as a somewhat one-sided conversation between direct superiors and workers in the factory.” In addition, the logic and length of the text assumed a certain interest and patience on the part of the reader on the subject of social tensions, an element that hurt the advertisements from reaching the widest segment of society. In this way, Kropff suggested that the advertisements were a bit indirect, since they were more likely to reach opinion makers and not the widest segments of society.<sup>51</sup>

By early 1953 the heads of Die Waage had decided to develop a series of advertisements in the form of a dialogue between two stereotypical West German men. In order to explore the effects of such a form of advertisement, Die Waage employed the Institut für Demoskopie to run a series of test surveys, which were reported in March 1953.<sup>52</sup> Part of the goal of this survey was to determine how the characters in the advertisement should be represented—especially in terms of their physical attributes and clothing. In the test advertisements, (Figure 5.4) the characters were given the names “Querkopf” and “Klarkopf,” roughly translated as “wrong-headed fellow” and “clear-headed fellow.” Perhaps most importantly the survey was to test the effectiveness of a dialogue type of advertisement.

In the advertisement the two characters talked about what the Social Market Economy was or what economic progress the West German had made. Querkopf was represented as a worker, an attribute that most of those surveyed picked up on, (83

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<sup>51</sup> Kropff, “Werbung im Zeichen der Waage,” 310-312

<sup>52</sup> Eine Untersuchung über die voraussichtliche Wirkung eines Aufklärungsfeldzuges, März 1953, Institut für Demoskopie, Abt 16, Nr.4, Fasz 11, RWVA.

percent), while the social background of Klarkopf was not as clear. (60 percent white collar worker, bureaucrat; 16 percent self-employed; and 13 percent worker). Generally, most readers sensed the fact that Klarkopf was from a higher social class, but 52 percent of respondents thought that two such characters could be friends. The survey revealed that most people saw the worker Querkopf as more a likable, decent, and convincing character. In addition, with Querkopf's rounded face, people saw him as more friendly, good-natured, open, and not so conceited. In contrast, although many people saw Klarkopf as intelligent, at the same time a large percentage saw him as "conceited." In spite of the fact that Querkopf was more believable, both 56 percent of respondents with an income under 250 DM a month and 55 percent of those with incomes over 250 DM thought Klarkopf's position was most convincing. In addition, 48 percent of respondents concluded that Querkopf left the conversation convinced, as opposed to 33 percent for no one and 8 percent for Klarkopf.<sup>53</sup>

The survey concluded that the portraits of the characters were reversed in terms of which character was the more sympathetic from the perspective of the readers. The higher social class of one of the figures created some resentment of the readers. The survey argued that the artwork must be redone so that the two characters appeared to be from the same social class. The hat of Querkopf tended to bring about a "proletariatization" of Querkopf, while the more managerial hat of Klarkopf tended to imply a more middle class status. In future advertisements the figure of Querkopf, who was renamed "Otto," wore a hat that implied the same status of Klarkopf, who was

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

renamed “Fritz.” In addition, some of the sharper features of Klarkopf were softened and he was made older, so as not to appear as a younger man, lecturing the older, working-man Querkopf.<sup>54</sup> The first “Fritz and Otto” series that appeared beginning in May 1953 retained a “Klarkopf” who appeared from a slightly higher social class than “Querkopf.”<sup>55</sup>

The Allensbach Institut also concluded that the picture format of the advertisement was effective. About half of the respondents reacted in a manner which the initiators of the advertising wanted, including the 55 percent of the respondents thinking that Klarkopf was correct. Fifty-nine percent of all respondents could correctly answer that the advertisement was for the Social Market Economy, and 48 percent could say that the advertisement supported cooperation between workers and industrialists. At the same time though, 19 percent answered that the advertisement was for a planned economy and 16 percent thought it was for socialization. In conclusion, the survey commented that 36 percent of the respondents found the advertisements interesting, which may not seem a lot the survey commented. But one had to remember that in a survey conducted in June of 1952, only 27 percent of respondents said that they were interested in politics. Therefore, the advertisements had a resonance within the public.<sup>56</sup>

With the development of Fritz and Otto as the main characters of its advertisements, Die Waage was primed for the upcoming 1953 federal election. It was at this point that Die Waage’s activities went into high gear to support Erhard and his Social

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

Market Economy. But Die Waage represents a change in the formation of public opinion that had occurred between the 1949 and 1953 elections. No longer was propaganda to be produced that merely appealed to the “primitive levels” of society as Adenauer had sought in the 1949 election. Now, Die Waage could lend support to the CDU/CSU cause through a battery of very carefully tested advertisements that sought to achieve a resonance within the West German population. In addition, Die Waage had already begun the task of garnering support for the free market from the West German public. The advertisements helped define a political meaning of the Social Market Economy. This economic system was equated with the establishment of political freedom in West Germany. In the future the Social Market Economy would be tied not only to West German freedoms, but also to the legitimacy of the West German state itself.

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid.



## WIE SCHNELL DER MENSCH VERGISST

„Tausche Sirup gegen Schuhe.“ – Kaum ein paar Jahre ist es her. Da gab's auf Lebensmittelkarten 1050 Kalorien täglich und auf Bezugsschein 100 Gramm Textilien jährlich. In der „Bi-Zone“ gab's um 1947 auch ein Paar Schuhe auf 30 Menschen. Es gab „schwarzes Brot“ für 30 Mark und Butter das Pfund für 300. Kartoffelzäuge gab's, an denen verbitterte Menschen wie Trauben hingen, und Kohlenzüge, die leergestohlen in zertrümmerte Bahnhöfe entliefen. In den Läden gab's Speckaroma und bemalte Kacheln, für 5 Mark gab's eine Zigarette, und es gab Menschen, die im Bett erfroren. Es gab das Speisekammergesetz: Verzweifelte Bürokraten wollten in den Wohnungen das „Überflüssige“ beschlagnehmen. Es gab den „Zusammenbruch der Versorgungslage“ – und dann, im Sommer 1948, kam die Währungsreform. Vorsichtig strichen wir über die neuen Scheine . . .

Wir hatten wieder gesundes Geld. Was wir brauchten war Arbeit. Schaffen wollten wir wieder und Geld verdienen. Unsere Arbeitslust wollte freie Bahn!

Wir hatten Glück in jenem Jahr 1948. Ein Mann machte Schluß mit der Bezugsscheinwirtschaft, mit Zuteilungen und Schlangestehen. Mutig zerruß er die „Behördlichen Vorschriften zur Bewirtschaftung gewerblicher Erzeugnisse“. Anstelle der Kommandowirtschaft setzte er die **SOZIALE MARKTWIRTSCHAFT**. Er sagte: „Von jetzt ab ist Geld der einzige Bezugsschein.“ Geld aber wird nicht zugeteilt, es

wird durch harte Kopf- und Handarbeit verdient. Darum soll jeder, sei er Arbeiter oder Unternehmer, am freien „Markt“ der Wirtschaft verdienen, was Können und Arbeitslust ihm einbringen. Nur das ist nicht soziale Gerechtigkeit! Überall soll sie herrschen, darum möge auch der Staat von unserem Verdienst nehmen und mit diesem Geld den Arbeitslosen und Armen das Leben erleichtern, nach bestem Vermögen des ganzen Volkes.

So entfesselte im Jahre 1948 die Soziale Marktwirtschaft die ganze Kraft unseres Volkes für den Wiederaufbau: Maschinen wurden aus brandigen Trümmern gegraben, aus wüstem Gewirr von verbogenem Stahl wuchsen saubere Werkhallen. Rohstoffe wurden beschafft und die zeretzten Fäden des Welthandels neu geknüpft. Köpfe rauchten und Arme schmerzten – und kaum drei Jahre später lief die deutsche Wirtschaft wieder volle Kraft voraus!

*Wie schnell der Mensch vergißt!*

Niemals aber dürfen wir vergessen, was Arbeiter und Unternehmer seit jenen Tagen in einmütiger Zusammenarbeit geschaffen haben. Niemand soll die gemeinsame Leistung leugnen, keiner soll den sozialen Frieden stören! Allein der freibleibliche Wettbewerb der **SOZIALEN MARKTWIRTSCHAFT** brachte uns wieder ein besseres Leben. Diese Erkenntnis muß uns Allen, Tag für Tag, zu jeder Stunde gegenwärtig sein!



*Zum Wohlstand Aller durch geeinte Kraft / führt die Soziale Marktwirtschaft*

Figure 5.1: Wie schnell der Mensch vergisst (a)



## WIE SCHNELL DER MENSCH VERGISST

Schäbig gekleidete Frauen und Männer, mit ausgemergelten Gesichtern, reihen sich an zum Schlangestehen. „Nicht drängeln!“ Sie sind verbittert und rücksichtslos, sie hungern. Die zugestellten Kalorien reichen zur Bettelsuppe. Verzweifelt klopfen sie draußen beim Bauern an. Sie jammern auf den Ämtern um einen Bezugschein. Ausweglos scheint die Zukunft. Das Krachen der Bomben ist längst verhallt, aber noch kommen haufenweise Menschen um, Opfer von Diktatur und Krieg. Wer noch kann, tauscht Krimskrams am Schwarzmarkt und „schiebt“. Zigaretten werden zum Geld einer Kultur-nation... Ist es wirklich nur kaum fünf Jahre her?!

Wir wollen nicht mehr an das Elend denken, an den beispiellosen Zusammenbruch. Das ist menschlich. Aber wir fragen: Soll auch die Schicksalswende schon vergessen sein? Beispiellos war auch unsere wirtschaftliche Auferstehung! Aus brandgeschwärzten Trümmern und wirt verbogenem Stahl entstehen Werkstätten und Fabriken. Menschen schufteten bis in die Nacht, sie schafften sich den ersehnten Arbeitsplatz. Die Währungsreform 1948 bringt endlich das langverehrte gesunde Geld – jetzt kommt die ungeheure Maschine der Versorgung unseres Volkes mit Lebensbedarf wieder in Gang – und drei Jahre später läuft die deutsche Wirtschaft wieder volle Kraft voraus!

Wer rettete uns aus dem Elend? Es gibt nur

eine nüchterne Antwort: unsere Arbeiterschaft und unsere Unternehmer, durch ihre Zusammenarbeit in der Freiheit der SOZIALEN MARKTWIRTSCHAFT!

Denn erst diese demokratische Tat befreite die Kräfte für den Wiederaufbau: Ein Mann machte Schluß mit der Bezugscheinwirtschaft, mit Zuteilungen und Schlangestehen. Mutig zerriß er die „Behördlichen Vorschriften zur Bewirtschaftung gewerblicher Erzeugnisse“. Er sagte:

„Geld ist der einzige Bezugschein freier Menschen!“ Geld aber wird nicht zugeteilt, es wird durch harte Kopf- und Handarbeit verdient. Jeder, ob Arbeiter oder Unternehmer, soll darum am freien „Markt“ der Wirtschaft verdienen, was Arbeitslust und Können ihm einbringen. Nur das ist echte soziale Gerechtigkeit! Überall soll sie herrschen, darum möge auch der Staat von unserem Verdienst nehmen und mit diesem Geld den Arbeitslosen und Armen das Leben erleichtern, nach bestem Vermögen des ganzen Volkes.

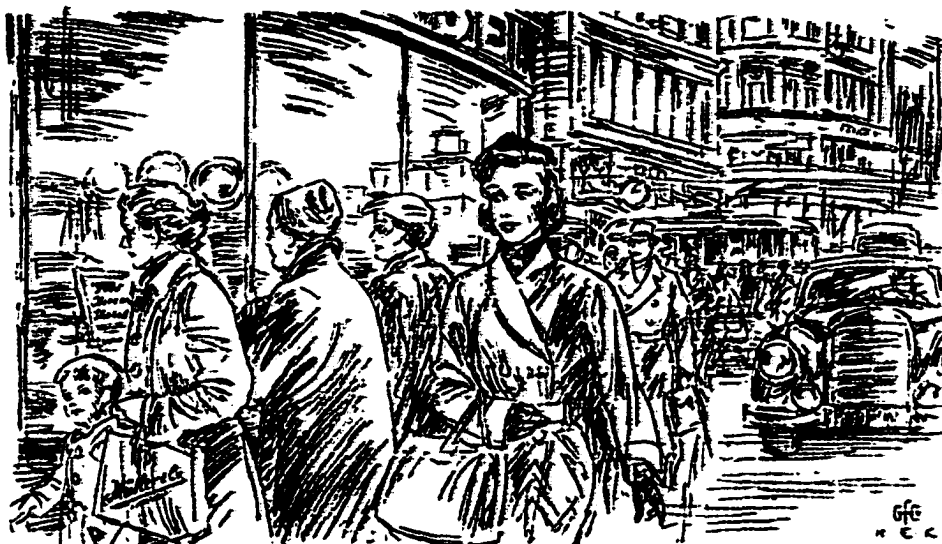
Wir wissen es heute: Nur durch Soziale Marktwirtschaft, nur als freie Schaffende kamen wir wieder auf einen grünen

Zweig. „Mehr, besser und billiger produzieren, gemeinsam und in voller Freiheit und Unabhängigkeit – nur das bringt wirtschaftlichen Fortschritt und soziale Wohlfahrt!“ Niemals darf uns diese Lehre aus bitter-schweren Zeiten vergessen sein.



*Zum Wohlstand Aller durch geübte Kraft / führt die Soziale Marktwirtschaft*

Figure 5.2: Wie schnell der Mensch vergisst (b)



## FRAGT DIE FRAUEN

„Für sich würden die Männer weder Häuser noch Kirchen bauen, noch Motore konstruieren oder auch nur Seife fabrizieren - sie tun es für und wegen der Frauen!“ So schrieb ein kluger Mann. Das ist vielleicht etwas übertrieben, aber die Frauen veranlassen die wesentlichen Leistungen der Männer. Die deutschen Frauen tragen heute eine große Verantwortung. Nicht nur, daß sie starken Einfluß auf die Erziehung der Kinder nehmen, sie haben als Wähler jetzt auch die absolute Mehrheit im Land, ja, von ihnen hängt ab, ob unserem Volk die FREIHEIT bewahrt bleibt!

Es gibt drei Millionen mehr Frauen als Männer in Westdeutschland. Jeder dritte „Arbeitnehmer“ im Bundesgebiet ist eine Frau, jeder vierte Handwerksbetrieb wird von einer Frau geführt, jedes fünfte Einzelhandelsgeschäft leitet eine Frau. Die deutschen Hausfrauen geben 85 Pfennig von jeder Mark aus, die zum Erwerb von Verbrauchsgütern bestimmt ist. Und auch über die Verwendung der restlichen 15 Pfennig haben sie einiges zu sagen. Wer wird da noch zu behaupten wagen, die Frauen „verstünden nichts“ von der Wirtschaft? Neben den Unternehmern und der Arbeiterschaft sind sie jetzt als Verbraucher

zur „dritten Macht“ geworden und bestimmen vielleicht entscheidend die Form unserer ganzen Wirtschaftsordnung!

Die SOZIALE MARKTWIRTSCHAFT brachte unseren Frauen im Jahr 1948 die Betreuung von der elenden Kartenswirtschaft, von Bezugscheinen, Zuteilungen und Schlange stehen. Die seitdem vollbrachte Gemeinschaftsleistung der deutschen Arbeiter und Unternehmer, der Wiederaufbau unserer Wirtschaft wird von unseren Frauen anerkannt. Haben sie doch selbst in vollem Maß dazu beigetragen und tun es noch.

Unsere Frauen wissen, was freie Auswahl beim Einkauf, was reichliches Angebot und gute Qualität bedeuten. Ihr sicheres Gefühl sagt ihnen: Die freie Konkurrenz zwingt die Wirtschaft dazu, immer mehr, immer besser und immer billiger zu produzieren, und bringt uns Allen darum ein besseres Leben. Fragt die Frauen! Sie wollen Sicherheit. Aber sie

sind auch für den „freien Wettbewerb“, sie lieben die bunte Vielfalt des Lebens. Das graue Einerlei einer staatlichen Befehlswirtschaft lehnen sie ab - sie leben glücklicher in der Freiheit unserer SOZIALEN MARKTWIRTSCHAFT, und sie wissen, warum!



*Zum Wohlstand Aller durch geeinte Kraft / führt die Soziale Marktwirtschaft*

Figure 5.3: Fragt die Frauen



# HAUPTSACHE:

## Wir sprechen miteinander!

Was nehmen Sie, lieber Leut? - Ein kleines Stückerl? - Frau Wirtin, mach ein kleines Hühnerl Dingsens, wenn Name ist QUERKOPF. Ja, wohl, einer von der bekanntesten Familien Querkopf, aus Swachau überall in der Welt. Und das hier ist mein alter Kriegskamerad und Köllige KLARKOPF. Mit dem laßt sich trinken, und wir treffen uns so alle vierzehn Tage und bringen die Welt in Ordnung.

Querkopf: Ach, hör doch auf! Bei uns werden die Reichen immer reicher - und die Armen immer ärmer!

Klarkopf: Hm - das sieht man ja an Dir. . . .

Querkopf: Wieso?

Klarkopf: Na ja: prima Kleid - neue Schuhe!

Querkopf: Ist ja mein Geld! - Lisa! Noch zwei Helle! - Aber frag mal meine Frau, was die zu den Lebensmittelpreisen sagt!

Klarkopf: Zugegeben. Aber immerhin - 'n neues Radio hat sie sich gekauft und Du 'n Motorrad!

Querkopf: Allen auf Abzahlung!

Klarkopf: Das ist aber 'n Klunker, wo Du doch immer ärmer wirst. . .

Querkopf: Bei mir nicht! Jeden ersten wird bezahlt: man verdient ja schließlich wieder!

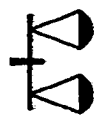
Klarkopf: Na also - und seit wann verdienst Du wieder?

Querkopf: NA - er - seit 49, wo wir unseren Betrieb wieder hin- sauberten! Und jetzt geht's nur noch auf vollen Tausen!



Klarkopf: Und dabei wirst Du immer ärmer. . . .  
 Querkopf: Na ja, klar geht's uns jetzt besser - aber daß das an dem Ding da, 4 - - an der SOZIALEN MARKT- WIRTSCHAFT liegen soll. . . ach, Mensch! Da werb den die Reichen doch immer. . .  
 Klarkopf: Ich weiß schon - und Du immer ärmer.  
 Querkopf: Ich bin eben 'ne Ausnahme!  
 Klarkopf: Aber Millionen Anderen geht's genauso wie Dir: nämlich besser als damals!  
 Querkopf: Dawas! Ach - das ist doch lange her - Prost!

Klarkopf: Und siehst Du, seit damals, seit es besser wurde, halber wir ja Erhard's SOZIALE MARKTWIRTSCHAFT



### DIE WAAGE

Gemeinschaft zur Förderung des Sozialen Ausgleichs e.V.  
 Köln am Rhein - Unter Sachsenhausen 11-20  
 Vorherr: Ernst Grottel

Figure 5.4: Hauptsache: Wir sprechen miteinander!

## CHAPTER 6

### CREATING A GOVERNMENTAL MACHINERY OF PUBLIC OPINION: THE 1953 BUNDESTAG ELECTION

Some historians of the West German political system have identified the 1953 Bundestag election as a “critical election” in the development of the West German political system. This is undoubtedly true from the perspective of how the major parties fared at the polls. These historians note that with the 1953 election the Federal Republic’s party system was fully established with the major parties of the CDU/CSU, SPD, and the FDP coming to the fore. When West Germans went to the polls on September 6, 1953, these three parties collected 83.5 percent of the vote compared to 72.1 percent just four years earlier. The CDU/CSU and the SPD alone captured 74 percent of the vote. In addition, only 6 different parties gained seats in the 1953 Bundestag, compared to 11 in 1949. From this perspective, the 1949 election was similar to Weimar Republic elections, while the 1953 election ushered in a party system developed further in the 1960s.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Karl Rohe, *Wahlen und Wählertradition in Deutschland: Kulturelle Grundlagen deutscher Parteien und Parteiensysteme im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1992), 164; and J. W. Falter, “Kontinuität und Neubeginn: Die Bundestagwahl 1949 zwischen Weimar und Bonn,” *Politische Vierteljahresschrift* 22 (1981): 236-263.

The 1953 Bundestag election was part of a transition in West German political culture. With the 1953 election much of the ideological strife based upon a rigid party program, prevalent in the 1949 election, was beginning to fade. Yet at the same time, the tone of the election sometimes echoed Weimar elections, especially with the defamation of opposing political parties that occurred in the 1953 election. Bundestag elections were becoming more of a referendum on the personalities for Chancellor, marking a change in West German politics from campaigns based upon party program to those based upon personalities.<sup>2</sup> In this way, the CDU/CSU had begun to develop a party image based in large part on the Chancellor Konrad Adenauer.

In addition, the methods of reaching the voting public were evolving. The medium of Weimar elections—the speech, the leaflet, and the poster—were being supplemented and updated with the infusion of new demographic techniques that ushered in what could be called the “consumerization” of political propaganda. With the threat of a SPD victory looming, the CDU/CSU developed a whole network of institutions at its disposal, or working in favor of the government, to influence public opinion. Ironically, it was the 77-year-old Adenauer who encouraged the innovation in a conservative party’s campaign style. Meanwhile the SPD remained stagnant in its approach to campaigns. At the same time, these characteristics of the election campaigns did not reach the level of sophistication or to the extent that they would in the 1957 Bundestag election. From this

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<sup>2</sup> Werner Kaltefleiter, “Die Entwicklung des deutschen Parteiensystems in der Ära Adenauer,” in *Konrad Adenauer und seine Zeit: Politik und Persönlichkeit des erstens Bundeskanzler, Band II: Beiträge der Wissenschaft*, ed. Dieter Blumenwitz, Klaus Gotto,

perspective, the 1953 Bundestag election was a transitional one. The technical aspects and the tone of the campaign were similar to the 1949 campaign, but clearly show the beginnings of an evolution of politics based increasingly upon image instead of ideological positions.

The 1953 Bundestag election did not necessarily hinge upon the issue of economics, as did the 1949 election with the theme of *Markt oder Plan*. Geopolitical issues came to the fore with the June 17, 1953 uprising in East Germany, Adenauer's foreign policy of aligning the Federal Republic to the West, and the threat of communism and the Soviet Union. At the same time, the 1953 election demonstrated the adaptability of the issue of economic reconstruction as a political tool. The CDU/CSU molded the meaning of the Social Market Economy and the burgeoning "Economic Miracle" to demonstrate the party's achievements. Meanwhile, the union parties depicted the command economy in Eastern Germany as the natural outcome of Marxist ideology. In this way, the CDU/CSU portrayed the SPD as a danger to West German security. Its campaign centered around its achievements, as opposed to any ideological program. For this reason, the 1953 election reflected the ability of the CDU/CSU to transcend inflexible programmatic politics and create an image of itself that crossed sociological and economic divisions in West German society.

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Hans Maier, Konrad Repgen, Hans-Peter Schwartz (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1976), 285-287.

After the 1949 election, and with the 1953 election approaching, the government began to construct its own system of influencing public opinion. Throughout the Korean War and the accompanying rise in prices, the CDU/CSU found itself lagging behind the SPD in the opinion polls. From late 1950 through early 1953, the SPD continually held an advantage over the CDU/CSU of between 15 and 3 percentage points, with an average lead of about 9 points.<sup>3</sup> In addition, the SPD performed well in the elections on the *Land* (state) level. In each of the Landtag elections held between the 1949 and 1953 Bundestag elections, the CDU/CSU lost ground in its overall percentage of the vote. Meanwhile, the SPD vote increased in all of the states except Schleswig-Holstein. Clearly, the SPD was threatening the CDU/CSU's position as the leading parties of the government.<sup>4</sup>

It is within this context that a network of institutions was erected to influence public opinion. Undoubtedly, most important among the government's efforts to influence public opinion was the establishment of the *Bundespresse- und Informationsamt* (Federal Press and Information Agency). The founding of the Federal Press Agency began in October 1949 when Adenauer's personal advisor and the General Secretary of the CDU in the British Zone, Herbert Blankenhorn, wrote the Federal

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<sup>3</sup> Gerhard Schmidtchen, *Die befragte Nation: Über den Einfluss der Meinungsforschung auf die Politik* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Verlag Rombach, 1959), 160. These figures represent the percentage of respondents who named a party preference, which was on average about 65 percent of all questioned.

<sup>4</sup> See election results in Gerhard A. Ritter, ed., *Wahlen und Wahlkämpfe in Deutschland: Von den Anfängen im 19. Jahrhundert bis zur Bundesrepublik* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1997), 266; and Gerhard A. Ritter and Merith Niehuss, *Wahlen in Deutschland, 1946-1991* (München: Verlag C.H. Beck, 1991), 158-181.

Financial Minister Schäffer that a Federal Press Agency should be set up.<sup>5</sup> Adenauer commented that the organization would be necessary “to develop a good relationship with newspapers and journalists.”<sup>6</sup> The organization of the Federal Press Agency was soon established, although it consisted at first of only one man, Heinrich Böx, who acted as the *Bundespressechef* (federal press officer). The Federal Press Agency was organized, until 1958, as a part of the Chancellery, and for this reason it acted directly in the Chancellor’s interests.<sup>7</sup>

The Federal Press Agency performed what has been described as “*Hörrohr- und Sprachrohrfunktion*” (ear trumpet and megaphone functions) for the government. An important task of the Federal Press Agency was to gather information from leading international newspapers and magazines, along with almost all of the German-speaking media. This information was available to the Chancellor, Ministers, State Secretaries, and higher officials within the government in short reports called “*Nachrichtenspiegel*” (mirror of news reports). In many respects, the “*Sprachrohr*” function was, in fact, a secondary role of the Federal Press Agency, especially in the first years of the Agency.

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<sup>5</sup> Horst O. Walker, *Das Presse und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung: Eine Untersuchung zu Fragen der Organisation, Koordination, und Kontrolle der Presse und Öffentlichkeitsarbeit der Bundesregierung*, (Frankfurt am Main: Haag und Herchen Verlag, 1982), 80.

<sup>6</sup> Werner G. Krueger, “Das Bundespresseamt: Es begann in der Jugendstilvilla Drachenfelsstraße 8,” in *Kinderjahre der Bundesrepublik*, ed. Rudolf Pörtner (Düsseldorf: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1989), 167.

<sup>7</sup> Frank Andreas Buchwald, “Adenauers Informationspolitik und das Bundespresseamt” (Ph.D. diss., University of Mainz., 1991), 47-48.

The most important on-going function was the government's official information sheet, "*Bulletin*," which was distributed to journalists.<sup>8</sup>

Despite starting as a one man organization, the Federal Press Agency grew quickly in the early 1950s, and its reach lengthened especially as the 1953 Bundestag elections neared. In the first years of the 1950s the Federal Press Agency went through a quick succession of leadership as Adenauer searched for what he termed "a democratic Goebbels."<sup>9</sup> It was not until January 1952 that a permanent head of the Federal Press Agency was named: Felix von Eckardt, a relatively unknown figure among journalists in Bonn. The organization's funding grew quickly through the 1950s. In the fiscal year of 1949/50, the agency had a planned budget of 450,000 DM. This expanded to about 12.5 million DM by the fiscal year of 1956/57.<sup>10</sup> In addition, the size of the Federal Press Agency grew quickly over the 1950s. In October 1951 the Federal Press Agency had a staff of 22. By February 1957 this figure had grown to 419.<sup>11</sup> Clearly the role and impact of the Federal Press Agency grew as the 1950s continued.

One of the challenges of the "*Sprachrohr*" function of the Federal Press Agency was to produce public relations for the government that would be believed by the public. Very seldom would the Federal Press Agency put forth propaganda directly for the

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<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 49-51.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 30

<sup>10</sup> Walker, *Presse und Informationsamt*, 107-109.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 48.

government. Instead, a number of “camouflaged” organizations were constructed so that the propaganda produced by these organizations, be it brochures, leaflets, information bulletins, or posters, would not be obviously linked to the government. The Federal Press Agency became involved with a wide variety of organizations, including groups producing propaganda for issues such as European integration, NATO, and rearmament. The most important of these organizations in terms of West German politics was the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft demokratischen Kreise* (Working Group of Democratic Circles).<sup>12</sup> Overall, apart from groups financed by industry, such as Die Waage, the government created a wide variety of organizations at its disposal to support its activities.

A key figure in the creation of a web of propaganda activities for the government was Adenauer’s State Secretary in the Chancellery, Otto Lenz, named to the post on March 29, 1951. As one of Adenauer’s closest advisors, Lenz acted as a key figure who coordinated the propaganda activities of the Federal Press Agency and the CDU/CSU. In addition, he held close contacts with Erich Peter Neumann of the Institut für Demoskopie and was crucial in promoting the use of demographic surveys within the government and the CDU/CSU. In many respects, he became the public relations manager of Adenauer’s government.<sup>13</sup> In addition, he was important for the transformation of the government and CDU/CSU’s propaganda. Already in August 1952, he was urging Adenauer that a

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<sup>12</sup> Buchwald, *Adenauers Informationspolitik*, 58.

<sup>13</sup> Klaus Gotto, Hans-Otto Kleinmann, Reinhard Schreiner, eds., *In Zentrum der Macht: Das Tagebuch von Staatssekretär Lenz, 1951-1953*, (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1989), VII-XXVIII.



reconceptualization of the CDU/CSU's propaganda was needed for the 1953 Bundestag election.<sup>14</sup> It seems the model for Lenz was public relations along the American model.<sup>15</sup>

In addition, by the 1953 election, demographic surveys were becoming an increasingly important tool for political parties. Various groups had employed demographic polling already by 1948. Ludwig Erhard, as head of the Economics Administration of the Bizone, had commissioned surveys from the Allensbach Institut in order to get a sense of the public's reaction to the currency reform.<sup>16</sup> The FDP was the first political party to commission demographic surveys, in preparation of the 1950 Landestag election in North-Rhine Westphalia.<sup>17</sup> But it was the CDU/CSU that best utilized these demographic surveys in the ensuing years.

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<sup>14</sup> Lenz an Adenauer, 4 August 1952, I-172-58/2 (NL Lenz), Archiv für Christlich-Demokratische Politik, St. Augustin (hereafter ACDP).

<sup>15</sup> In a letter to the head of the Gesellschaft für Auslandskunde, Frau Dr. Heilmann, Lenz commented that he would like a detailed letter from her on how Americans conduct public relations and that, "Ich möchte ja ähnliches auch in Deutschland aufziehen." Heilmann had made a trip to the United States in the Summer of 1951 where she came into contact with American PR experts. Lenz on Frau Heilmann, 6 November 1951, I-172-59, ACDP. See also Han Edgar Jahn *An Adenauers Seite: Sein Berater erinnert sich* (München: Georg Müller Verlag, 1987), 93.

<sup>16</sup> Gerhard Schmidtchen and Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, "Die Bedeutung Repräsentativer Bevölkerungsumfragen für die Offene Gesellschaft," *Politische Vierteljahrsschrift* 4 (1963): 168-169.

<sup>17</sup> Gerald Schmidtchen, *Die befragte Nation: Über den Einfluss der Meinungsforschung auf die Politik* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Verlag Rombach, 1959), 108-109.

Political polling and market research were significant imports from the United States. Modern political polling began in the 1930s when pioneers such as George Gallup, Elmo Roper, and Archibald Crossley began to conduct “scientific” polls concerning presidential elections. Acceptance of polling was taken up quickly by American political parties, interest groups, and candidates in the late 1930s and 1940s. But faith in the pollsters took a step back in the 1948 election when Thomas Dewey was predicted to defeat Harry Truman. The problem lay in their use of the “survey” method which polled a cross section of the larger population, but each individual interviewer was left to decide whom to poll. The result was that those who were easily accessible were more likely to be interviewed, thereby skewing the sample. The random polling method also interviewed a cross section of the population, but ensured that this group was randomly selected, thereby increasing its reliability. Nevertheless, quota polling was transferred into West Germany with the American occupying army. In addition, home grown demographic organizations began to pop up in West Germany in the late 1940s.<sup>18</sup>

The government, and with that the CDU/CSU, began to use demographic surveys in early 1951 in order to take the pulse of West German public opinion. Erich Peter Neumann of the *Institut für Demoskopie* had approached Chancellor Adenauer in September 1949, indicating that the Institute could “provide political information with the help of modern, reliable psychological methods, which could not be obtained in any other

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<sup>18</sup> Mervin D. Field, “Political Opinion Polling in the United States of America,” in *Political Opinion Polling: An International Review*, ed. Robert M. Worcester (London: Macmillan Press, 1983), 198- 206; and Herbert F. Weisberg, et al., *An Introduction to*

way.” In fact, Neumann asked whether he could make a presentation explaining the usefulness of demographic surveys.<sup>19</sup> Although Adenauer did not accept the offer of the presentation, a reply to Neumann indicated that the Chancellor “hoped to have the opportunity for such a presentation at a later time.”<sup>20</sup>

Through the spring of 1950, Neumann continued to approach Adenauer about the possibility of the Institut für Demoskopie working for the government of the Federal Republic of Germany. He suggested that the Institut für Demoskopie could deliver two information reports every month on the development of public opinion in the Federal Republic for 2,000 DM per month.<sup>21</sup> By July 1950, the Federal Press Agency had already commissioned from the Institut für Demoskopie a survey costing 5,000 DM, although there was not yet a formal contract for an on-going relationship. In November 1950 notes for Dr. Heinrich Brand, an official within the Chancellery, indicated that Chancellor Adenauer was interested in testing public opinion on the issue of an eventual West German contingent within an European army. Brand suggested that both the Institut für Demoskopie and the EMNID Institut, a larger and at that time a more established polling group based in Bielefeld, be put under contract for a testing period which lasted from

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*Survey Research and Data Analysis* (Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1989), 34-35.

<sup>19</sup> E.P. Neumann to Chancellor Adenauer, 26 September 1949, B145/1566, Bundesarchiv Koblenz (hereafter BA Koblenz).

<sup>20</sup> Letter to E.P. Neumann, 20 Oktober 1949, B145/1566, BA Koblenz.

<sup>21</sup> Letter from E.P. Neumann to Chancellor Adenauer, 8 May 1950, BA Koblenz, B 145/1566.

November 1, 1950 and February 28, 1951.<sup>22</sup> The relationship with the Institut für Demoskopie and EMNID continued through the 1950s with the amount spent for surveys from both institutes continually increasing. One report from March 1957 indicated that a yearly budget of 150,000 DM was available for demographic surveys, with 49, 000 DM going to EMNID and 90,000 DM to the Institut für Demoskopie.<sup>23</sup>

In contrast to the CDU/CSU, the SPD did not fully utilize demographic surveys in the early 1950s. In June 1948 Karl von Stackelberg of the EMNID Institut in Bielefeld wrote the head of the SPD, Kurt Schumacher, explaining the importance of the growing field of demographic research. Von Stackelberg stressed that EMNID could tailor surveys for the SPD's use, although he did not specify exactly how. Yet it does not appear that Schumacher responded to the letter.<sup>24</sup> It was not until after the defeat in the 1953 Bundestag election that the SPD began to retain polling institutes to supply demographic surveys used especially in preparation for its election campaigns.<sup>25</sup> In October 1955, Fritz Heine, who headed the SPD election campaigns, approached Stackelberg of EMNID, asking for a demographic analysis of Baden-Württemberg in

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<sup>22</sup> Aktennotiz für Herrn Min. Dir. Dr. Brand, 6 November 1950, B145/1566, BA Koblenz; and Johannes J. Hoffmann, *Adenauer: "Vorsicht und keine Indiskretion!" Zur Informationspolitik und Öffentlichkeitsarbeit der Bundesregierung, 1949-1955* (Aachen: Verlag Shaker, 1995), 141.

<sup>23</sup> Aufzeichnung, 6.3.57, BA 145/1566, BA Koblenz.

<sup>24</sup> von Stackelberg to Kurt Schumacher, 30 June 1948, 2/PVAJ0000024, Archiv der sozialen Demokratie, (hereafter AdSD).

<sup>25</sup> Schmidtchen, *Die befragte Nation*, 108-109

preparation of the 1956 Landestag election.<sup>26</sup> Stackelberg regretted to inform Heine that EMNID was already under contract to conduct two surveys before the election.<sup>27</sup> It appears that at this point the SPD went to the demographic research group DIVO to conduct its surveys for the 1957 Bundestag election campaign, in addition to subscribing the general surveys from EMNID.

Demographic surveys indicated very early on that one of the main challenges facing the government was the public's dissatisfaction over the rise of prices resulting from the Korean Crisis. This dissatisfaction manifested itself in a certain resentment toward the government. During the Korean Crisis, the Institut für Demoskopie surveys indicated that many West Germans believed that the government was responsible for the rise of prices (46 percent), while 37 percent thought that the world market prices were responsible. In addition, 75 percent responded that the government could do something about the rise in prices if it wanted.<sup>28</sup> This criticism against the government remained, although its intensity declined as the election neared. In July 1953, 25 percent of respondents thought that economic problems, wages, prices, and currency were the most important questions which faced West Germans, down from 45 percent in October 1951. Meanwhile the issue of reunification grew from 18 percent to 38 percent over the same

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<sup>26</sup> Fritz Heine to Stackelberg, 5 November 1955, PV 2/PVAJ000024, AdsD.

<sup>27</sup> Stackelberg to Fritz Heine, 18 November 1955, PV 2/PVAJ000024, AdsD.

<sup>28</sup> Horst Friedrich Wünsche, ed., *Die Korea-Krise als ordnungspolitische Herausforderung der deutschen Wirtschaftspolitik: Texte und Dokumente* (Stuttgart: Gustav Fischer Verlag, 1986), 77.

time period.<sup>29</sup> By September 1953, 36 percent of the population believed that the government should occupy itself with the solution of economic problems, compared to 32 percent believing the reunification of Germany was the pressing problem.<sup>30</sup>

With the creation of the Federal Press Agency, the government now had an instrument to influence public opinion on an on-going basis. As noted earlier, part of the Federal Press Agency's strategy was to publish leaflets or brochures that did not have the Agency's name on them, and then supply this material to various organizations for their own distribution. One such example during the Korean Crisis was the brochure, *Preisfibel* (Price Primer), which was meant to teach West Germans, especially women, about the mechanisms of the free market. In 1952, the Federal Press Agency printed over 100,000 of these brochures with funds from the German Chamber of Commerce. The brochure was quite popular. In fact, the *Deutscher Hausfrauenverband* (League of German Housewives) requested 100,000, although it only received 50,000, with the rest going to various political and economic organizations, universities, and libraries.<sup>31</sup>

The brochure outlined how supply and demand worked within the free market. It began with "Ten short stories on prices! Unbelievable, but true!" which tried to get into the irrationality of the "buyers' psychoses." The stories included examples of consumers

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<sup>29</sup> Elisabeth Noelle and Erich Peter Neumann, eds., *The Germans: Public Opinion Polls, 1947-1966* (Westport: CT, Greenwood Press, 1967), 214.

<sup>30</sup> *Die Stimmung im Bundesgebiet, Was an Adenauer kritisiert wird*, Institut für Demoskopie, September 1953, I-172-35/2, ACDP.

<sup>31</sup> Vermerk für Staatssekretär Lenz, 1 Dezember, 1951, B145/878 BA-Koblenz.

buying more expensive products because they were marked as “special,” along with illustrations how a planned economy disrupted the natural flow of supply and demand. The brochure stressed how consumers’ actions influenced the workings of the market. The *Preisfibel’s* influence was relatively limited since its distribution was not great, and it was probably only read within certain circles. Nevertheless, it was one of a number of brochures published and distributed by the Federal Press Agency in the years following the Korean Crisis. All of them had a common theme: the rise in prices and the economic challenges presented by the Korean Crisis were not really that severe and a planned economy would worsen economic conditions. The brochures had titles such as “*Aufstieg oder Katastrophe*” (Ascent or Catastrophe), “*Verdienen wir zu wenig*” (Do We Earn Too Little?), “*Acht Jahre danach . . . Soziale Sicherheit für alle*” (Eight Years Afterward. . . Social Security for All), “*Anderen haben auch Sorgen*” (Others Also Have Concerns), and “*Haben die Anderen es besser?*” (Are Others Better Off?).

The aforementioned *Arbeitsgemeinschaft demokratischen Kreise* (ADK) acted as an important organization distributing the material produced by the Federal Press Agency. The organization was founded in December of 1951 with the stated goal of developing the West Germans’ belief and trust in democracy. This could be done through the “Establishment of a ‘Institute of Publicity’ with the task of distributing of democratic information and educational works with an emphasis on the representation of domestic and foreign policies of the government and opposition according to an understanding of

Anglo-Saxon PR techniques”<sup>32</sup> The head of the ADK, Edgar Jahn, has explained that one challenge facing West German politics was overcoming the “*ohne mich*” (without me) attitude among West Germans. This was meant not just in terms of “*ohne mich*” in regard to rearmament, but also in relation to the state, political parties, and politics in general. “The government must make its policies transparent with the most modern methods from technology and publicity. Good policies with advantages for the population must also be sold well.”<sup>33</sup> In actuality the ADK acted as one of the most important organizations promoting the policies of the Adenauer-led government, although it was not obviously linked to the government.

Jahn has said that he provided Lenz, at Lenz’s request, with a report on American public relations techniques sometime during 1952. In addition, Jahn contended that his influence upon Lenz was the key development for the introduction of American public relations techniques into the government and the CDU/CSU.<sup>34</sup> These techniques included speaking to people as individuals, the use of illustrations to make publications more attractive to the reader, and the use of demographic polling to achieve a “discussion” with the public. The techniques, Jahn reported, were originally developed by economic interests, but also could be applied to the world of politics. Jahn argued

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<sup>32</sup> Jahn, *An Adenauers Seite*, 70.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 72, 100-102.

<sup>34</sup> For Jahn’s view on American public relations see, Hans Edgar Jahn, *Lebendige Demokratie: Die Praxis der politischen Meinungspflege in Deutschland* (Frankfurt a.M.: Verlag Gerd Ammelburg, 1956).



that, "It is therefore the goal of public relations to come to a common identity of common political action in accordance with the will and desire of the population. That assumes that politics is driven not according to a doctrinaire program, but instead that one shapes politics from the rich vitality of social existence."<sup>35</sup> In many respects this reflected the move by the CDU/CSU away from "doctrinaire program" to more modern public relations techniques.

The ADK's organization was built up over the course of 1952/53. Already by the middle of 1952, the ADK had hundreds of workers throughout the Federal Republic. The ADK would hold meetings and presentations discussing issues such as rearmament, the European Coal and Steel Community, and the reunification of Germany. It also had a number of experts at its disposal to give speeches and lead discussions. At these meetings, the ADK would distribute its political information bulletin and brochures supplied by the Federal Press Agency or other organizations. In fact, by 1953 the ADK reported to have held over 2,200 "announcement assemblies and discussions" with an attendance of almost 200,000, a figure that would grow in the next few years. In addition, the ADK distributed 1.1 million brochures, pamphlets, and books in 1953.<sup>36</sup> Although the themes of its public discussions mostly did not deal with economics, through the

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<sup>35</sup> Jahn, *An Adenauers Seite*, 93-95.

<sup>36</sup> Bericht über die ADK für die Zeit von der Gründung bis 31.8.1956, I-172-51 (NL Lenz), ACDP.

distribution of these materials the ADK helped support the government's economic policy.<sup>37</sup>

The Federal Press Agency was also active in support of the government as the 1953 Bundestag election neared. In August of 1952 Felix von Eckhardt, the head of the Federal Press Agency, sent a letter to Adenauer outlining the Agency's strategy in the upcoming election. Eckhardt commented that the key for the upcoming election was "to convince the man on that street that the economic upswing, unquestionably caused by the politics of the government, has benefited not only certain groups, but instead all levels of society." Part effort of this was to show the benefits of the government's economic policy to those who had especially suffered during the war. Eckhardt argued that this display of the economic upswing was not to be made through any logical argumentation. But instead, these people wanted to see the government take actual measures that would guarantee a higher living standard. One of the measures von Eckhardt suggested was the lowering of taxes on important groceries, such as milk, bread, meat, butter, and sugar, a policy that, in fact, was instituted prior to the election.<sup>38</sup>

In preparation for the election, the Federal Press Agency geared up its public relations efforts. In July 1953, the Federal Press Agency reported to Adenauer on its activities. One of its main duties was to provide material to journalists recounting the

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<sup>37</sup> Eventually the Industrie-Institut, the public relations arm of the BDI, provided the ADK with literature to be distributed at meetings. Jahn to Lenz, 17.2.54, I-172-051 (NL Lenz), ACDP.

work and successes of the Adenauer's government. Eckhardt reported that between January and July 1953 the Federal Press Agency spent around 2.2 million DM and put out over 100 new publications. Many of these dealt with economic issues, including brochures supporting the Social Market Economy.<sup>39</sup>

Undoubtedly though, the personality of Chancellor Adenauer played an important part in the election campaign. In the years prior to the election, Adenauer's popularity had grown rapidly. Adenauer had climbed in the polls as the "most capable German politician" from 5 percent in September 1948 to 33 percent in August 1952.<sup>40</sup> By June 1953 this figure had grown to 51 percent, in comparison to only 6 percent for Ollenhauer, the main candidate for the SPD.<sup>41</sup> The popularity of the party grew in conjunction with Chancellor Adenauer. The CDU/CSU identified the turning point of the campaign as Adenauer's trip to the United States in April 1953.<sup>42</sup> This trip crystallized the public's perception of Adenauer as a statesmanlike figure. In many respects, demographic surveys attested to this assessment of a turning point in the campaign. The Allensbach Institut had a running poll with the question of "Which party do you support?" The CDU/CSU's

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<sup>38</sup> Von Eckhardt an Adenauer, 27 August 1952, I-010-019/4 (NL von Eckhardt), ACDP.

<sup>39</sup> Von Eckhardt an Adenauer, 3 Juli 1953, and the included report *Aktionen des Bundespresseamtes zur Vorbereitung der Bundestagswahlen 1953*, BA Koblenz 145/0853.

<sup>40</sup> *Vor den Wahlen: Ein Querschnitt durch die öffentliche Meinung*, Institut für Demoskopie, ZSg 132/594, BA Koblenz.

<sup>41</sup> Schmidtchen, *Die befragte Nation*, 197.

popularity climbed from 37 percent at the time of Adenauer's trip to the United States, to 39 percent with the 17 June uprising, and up to 45 percent by the time of the election.<sup>43</sup> With Adenauer, the CDU/CSU had a candidate who represented the establishment of West Germany as a respected nation abroad and a source of stability at home.<sup>44</sup>

Not only was Adenauer a focal point of the election, but as in the 1949 election, he had an important part in plotting the CDU/CSU's campaign strategy. Adenauer was adamant in his belief that the defeat of the union parties and a subsequent coalition led by the SPD would be a calamity for West Germany. As seen by many of the polls taken in the early 1950s, the prospect of a SPD victory was a distinct possibility. From Adenauer's point of view, the stakes were high. In a January 1952 meeting of the central committee of the CDU, Adenauer explained that, "The debate in the Bundestag has shown that the CDU alone carries the responsibility for democratic politics. . . . if the SPD becomes the strongest party [in the Bundestag election] that would mean a catastrophe for democratic politics."<sup>45</sup> On other occasions he underscored the CDU/CSU's focus in the election. "The 1953 Bundestag election should be the decisive election. It requires, therefore, careful preparation. If we do not win this election, then

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<sup>42</sup> Die Bundestagwahlen vom 6 September 1953, December 1953, VII-003-002/1, ACDP.

<sup>43</sup> Schmidtchen, *Die befragte Nation*, 160.

<sup>44</sup> For a discussion of the film documenting Adenauer's trip, made by the Federal Press Agency, see Buchwald, *Adenauer's Informationspolitik*, 144-148.

without a doubt, socialism and materialism will take over”<sup>46</sup> As in the 1949 election, the SPD was to bear the brunt of the CDU/CSU’s attacks. The fear of a SPD victory propelled the CDU/CSU to develop a network of institutions to influence public opinion.

Conditions improved for the CDU/CSU in the months leading up to the election. As a report from the CDU/CSU’s central office indicated, “Then in the spring 1953 the general trends in the areas of foreign and economic policies had progressed so that the growing weight of their positive effects for the entire population appeared, and only such a crystallization point was needed to cause a decisive swing in the public opinion.”<sup>47</sup>

Undoubtedly the shocks from the Korean Crisis, especially the rise in prices, had undermined support both for government and its economic policy of the Social Market Economy. In early 1953, public opinion in regard to the rise in prices improved. A survey asked, “Do you have the impression that the prices in the last quarter year have for the most part remained the same, risen, or fallen?” The percent of respondents thinking prices had risen dropped from 50 percent in late to 1952 to 24 percent in September 1953, the month of the election. Meanwhile, those believing prices had remained the same rose from 35 percent to 52 percent over the same time period. Even those believing that prices

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<sup>45</sup> Günter Buchstab, ed. *Adenauer: “Es mußte alles neu gemacht werden.” Die Protokolle des CDU-Bundesvorstandes, 1950-1953* (Stuttgart: Ernst Klett Verlag, 1986), 97.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 117.

<sup>47</sup> Die Bundestagwahlen vom 6 September 1953, Dezember 1953, VII-003-002/1, ACDP.

had declined went up to 12 percent by the time of the election.<sup>48</sup> In addition, in July 1953 85 percent of respondents indicated that their economic condition had gotten better or remained the same in the last year. This figure was up from only 43 percent in May 1951.<sup>49</sup>

This change in public opinion was the result of the fact that price indexes had fallen to levels not too much higher than at the start of the Korean Crisis. For example, the cost of living index dropped to 108 in the summer of 1953 from a high of 119 in the first half of 1951 (1950=100).<sup>50</sup> In addition, the government tactically lowered taxes on consumer products such as coffee, tea, and tobacco, giving consumers the impression that prices were falling in the months before the election. The unemployment figure also fell below 5.5 percent with the total unemployment under 1 million by the time of the election. With these developments, the CDU/CSU's claims that times were improving rang true within the public.<sup>51</sup>

In addition to the demographic surveys available through the Federal Press Agency, the CDU/CSU began to commission specific surveys to test propaganda in the 1953 Bundestag election. One such survey investigated the effectiveness of political

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<sup>48</sup> Elisabeth Noelle and Erich Peter Neuman, *Jahrbuch der öffentlichen Meinung, 1947-1955* (Allensbach am Bodensee: Verlag für Demoskopie, 1956), 233.

<sup>49</sup> Schmidtchen, *Die befragte Nation*, 163.

<sup>50</sup> Alan Kramer, *The West German Economy, 1945-1955* (Oxford: Berg, 1991), 164-165.

leaflets. The survey concluded that the effectiveness of leaflets was not dependent on the contents of the leaflet. Instead, the propensity for a leaflet to be noticed by the public was the most important factor in convincing the public of its ideas.<sup>52</sup> This reflects the more “scientific” efforts on the part of the CDU/CSU to craft its image, rather than base its political campaigns upon a rigid political program. Clearly the CDU/CSU was innovative in terms of shaping its message for public consumption.

The CDU/CSU’s innovation both in terms of the technical and conceptual aspects of their campaigns was modeled after developments in the United States. Bruno Heck, the CDU/CSU’s campaign manager, had made a trip to the United States to observe the 1952 presidential campaign. There he would have seen the Republican party craft an image of itself based upon its candidate, Dwight D. Eisenhower. This was done through extensive television spots that portrayed Eisenhower answering scripted questions. In addition, by this point, both American political parties were utilizing professional advertising agencies to shape their campaigns.<sup>53</sup> Already some of these changes had permeated to West Germany, especially in the concentration upon Adenauer as a personality. This influence, along with Lenz’s predilection to copy American public

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<sup>51</sup> Die Bundestagwahlen vom 6 September 1953, Dezember 1953, VII-003-002/1, ACDP.

<sup>52</sup> Wähler und Parteien: Die Wirksamkeit von Flügblättern, 1952, Institut für Demoskopie, ZSg 132/181, BA Koblenz.

<sup>53</sup> Kathleen Hall Jamieson, *Packaging the Presidency: A History and Criticism of Presidential Advertising* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 39-89.

relations techniques, meant an important break in German political culture. Less and less did it revolve already party program, and more and more was it based upon image.

An important requirement for this development of an “image” of the CDU/CSU was the construction of a more centralized party structure to direct and organize the election campaign. In October 1950 the CDU/CSU formed a centralized national organization at the Goslar Congress. Part of the creation of a national party organization was the formation of the *Bundesgeschäftsstelle* (party central headquarters). The *Bundesgeschäftsstelle* took over the administrative duties of the party, including coordinating election campaigns. In many respects, much of the actual political power, like with the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft der CDU/CSU*, remained with the *Land* (state) organizations. The CDU/CSU did not develop a highly organized party bureaucracy until the 1960s. Instead, it remained an association of regional organizations, since many of the party members associated party bureaucracy with totalitarianism. It was only with elections, however, that the national bodies came alive and exerted their power. Despite the political importance of regional politicians, it was the leadership in Bonn, especially with the attraction of Adenauer as a focal point for campaigns, that established the party’s public positions and propaganda for the election campaigns.<sup>54</sup>

The *Bundesgeschäftsstelle* asserted itself prior to the 1953 election. For example, it had ensured that in every voting district there was an election manager overseeing the

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<sup>54</sup> Geoffrey Pridham, *Christian Democracy in Western Germany: The CDU/CSU in Government and Opposition, 1945-1976* (London: Croom Helm, 1977), 59-69, 241-267.



upcoming elections. In addition, the *Bundesgeschäftsstelle* reorganized itself to better run an election campaign through the establishment of a press section. More importantly, before the election, a registration of the sociological structure and the political development of the individual districts was conducted.<sup>55</sup> In fact, during the campaign, the manager of the *Bundesgeschäftsstelle*, Bruno Heck, sent updates from demographic surveys to party leaders at the state level in order to inform them of the developing political situation.<sup>56</sup> The *Bundesgeschäftsstelle* also had at its disposal a wide variety of demographic polls from the Institut für Demoskopie which analyzed the followers of parties according to their sociological background.<sup>57</sup>

In addition, the party developed a clarification of its propaganda possibilities, based upon an understanding of mass-psychology and results of demographics surveys. The CDU *Bundesgeschäftsstelle* put together a report on the academic views of mass psychology and social theory. It concentrated upon two sociologists: Gustave Le Bon and Ferninand Tönnies. The report commented that Le Bon, who had written on the social psychology of crowds, believed that the masses are fundamentally irrational. He “sees the masses as actually unable to have opinions other than those planted in their minds with the help of experiences and impressions.” In contrast, Tönnies believed that society,

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<sup>55</sup> Die Bundestagwahlen vom 6 September 1953, December 1953, VII-003-002/1, ACDP.

<sup>56</sup> Heck an die Mitglieder des Bundesparteivorstandes, an die Herren Votsitzenden und Landesgeschäftsführer, 1 April 1953, III-002-256/2 (LV Westfalen-Lippe), ACDP.

which was made up of a community of interests, was the fundamental bearer of “public opinion.” The cultivation (*Pflege*) of public opinion in party politics depended upon showing that the goals of this community of interests were identical with the goals of a political party.<sup>58</sup>

The report concluded that, “It was our opinion that Le Bon characterized the problem of public opinion as one-sidedly irrational, while Tönnies as one-sidedly rational. Public Opinion is not only a matter of society and society, again, is not only a bearer of interests. Public opinion also is a matter of society, or as the case may be, communities.”<sup>59</sup> Religious, familiar, class, and regional factors all determine the shape of public opinion. The report concluded that since one could get lost in the “intellectual speculations,” it was important that the leaders of the party attempt to establish the crucial issues of the election campaign through demographic surveys. What this report really shows is that the CDU/CSU was thinking carefully before the 1953 Bundestag election about how public opinion was formed.

This report continued that the demographic surveys made very clear a number of key points for the election campaign. The CDU had to win the trust of the electorate from the trust that was given to the party’s leading personalities. The party’s propaganda must not offer promises that would not be believable. Instead, the party propaganda had

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<sup>57</sup> See for example, the ongoing report from the Institut für Demoskopie, *Die Meinung über Bonn, 1951-1954* in 1-172-35/1 (NL Lenz), ACDP.

<sup>58</sup> *Die Bundestagwahlen vom 6 September 1953, December 1953*, VII-003-002/1, ACDP.

to show the electorate the party's great successes in the last four years. The clashes with political opponents, it appears meaning the SPD, had to show that the SPD's ideological approach to political problems was the source of their sterility. In addition, the electorate had to be made to realize that the SPD had singularly followed a policy of negation in regard to government's successful policies.<sup>60</sup> Already the CDU/CSU was thinking not in terms of ideological conflict against its main political opponent, but instead thinking about how to demonstrate the party's concrete achievements.

Dr. Robert Tillmanns, chairman of the Berlin CDU, commented at a meeting of the CDU/CSU's central committee that a very limited class of people could be reached through clumsy political slogans. People no longer wanted to hear merely party squabbling. Instead he suggested that, "We must take into consideration totally different social strata and different attitudes. . . . For the Bundestag election we need no extensive, vague program for the entire economic and social policies, but instead we need clearly worked out and impressive goals and points for the present situation of our nation."<sup>61</sup> One of the points that was to be made very clear to the public was that the SPD presented a danger to the future security of West Germany.

Generally, the CDU/CSU's propaganda underscored the party's achievement since the 1949 election. This political propaganda utilized some of the party's approaches used in the 1949 Bundestag election. During the 1949 election the CDU/CSU emphasized the

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

issue of economics as a “wedge” issue between itself and the SPD. This was sustained in the 1953 election. But, instead of relating the economic policy to pulling West Germany out of total despair, the CDU/CSU utilized developments in East Germany, especially the brutal use of force by the Soviets to suppress the June 17<sup>th</sup> uprising. Through its propaganda, the CDU/CSU blurred the distinctions between the SPD in West Germany and Marxism in East Germany. In this way, the issue of economics was combined with the Cold War threat of communism.

This sentiment was expressed quite clearly with the most famous poster from the campaign, “All roads lead to Moscow” (Figure 6.1). In many respects this poster exemplified the tone of the CDU/CSU campaign as a whole. The June 17<sup>th</sup> uprising in East Berlin, which was crushed by Soviet force, gave special potency to the poster. Even though it was probably designed before the uprising, West Germans, especially refugees from the East, could read the poster as an affirmation of Adenauer’s policy of West German security tied to the West. Like some of the posters from the 1949 election, this poster offered multiple readings to the electorate. From the perspective of economics, the poster illustrated the CDU/CSU’s charge against the SPD that a policy of socialization led to the command economy of communist states.

The majority of the propaganda put forth by the CDU/CSU was of the traditional sort: the leaflet, poster, and speech. One of the most important pieces of propaganda distributed by the *Bundesgeschäftsstelle* was an illustrated magazine, *Die Entscheidung*,

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<sup>61</sup> Buchstab, *Adenauer*: “*Es mußte alles neu gemacht werden.*” 225.

which had a circulation of 5 million copies.<sup>62</sup> Much of the election magazine dealt with the division of Germany and the June 17<sup>th</sup> uprising. Chancellor Adenauer was featured prominently in the magazine, be it in depictions of meetings with foreign leaders, including a picture of Adenauer on the steps of the United States Capitol, addressing a crowd in Berlin after the June 17<sup>th</sup> uprising, or portraits of his personal life.

Intermingled among the pictures of Adenauer and his achievements, the magazine depicted West Germany's economic achievements since the currency reform, and more importantly illustrated how these achievements improved the conditions of individuals. One example of this was a West German woman's fictitious diary dating from the summer of 1945 to the summer of 1953 (Figure 6.2 and Figure 6.3). The text and photos depicted experiences common for many Germans at the end of the war: flight from the Russians, squalid living conditions, hunger, and the black market. All of this changed in the summer of 1948 with the introduction of the currency reform. The narrator, who appears to be a single, working woman, commented that, "I promise myself, I will never be disheartened and never forget this dreadful time." By the spring of 1953 the narrator recounted the new material goods that she was enjoying. She had gotten a new typewriter at work, a bicycle to travel around the city, and a pair of stylish (*todschicke*) shoes. In the last entry dated June 7, 1953, the narrator is even planning a long vacation. The point of the whole article was clear: living conditions of West Germans had improved incredibly

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<sup>62</sup> Heck an allen Landesverbände, 29.7.53, III-002-259/2 (LV-Westfalen-Lippe), ACDP.

in the last few years. To continue this upward trajectory West Germans had to vote CDU/CSU.

But the “German miracle,” as the CDU/CSU termed it, had overtones that placed West German economic reconstruction within a larger context. Even before the June 17<sup>th</sup> uprising in East Berlin, it was clear that the threat of communism would play an important role in the campaign. The CDU/CSU wanted to blur the distinctions between the SPD of West Germany and the communist SED of East Germany. This was done by a variety of means. On a number of occasions, the CDU/CSU accused the SPD of receiving funds from the Soviet Zone.<sup>63</sup> One article from *Union in Deutschland*, the CDU/CSU’s information bulletin, proclaimed in April 1953 “They remain Marxists.” The article painted a picture of the SPD internal reform of economic policy as a veiled attempt to gain votes.

In respects to the election, an avowal to Marxism is not very easy. They [the SPD leaders] want to fish widely for votes in the “bourgeois” waters, however, in order to pursue, with help of the help of these votes, a socialist economic policy. These policies are not as crassly Marxist as on the other side of the Elbe, but are along the same lines—especially in regard to the state seizure of the workings of the economy and party manpower policies.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Wolfgang Hirsch-Weber and Klaus Schütz, *Wähler und Gewählte: Eine Untersuchung der Bundestagswahl 1953* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Franz Vahlen, 1957), 114–117.

<sup>64</sup> “Sie bleiben Marxists,” *Union in Deutschland* 27 (April 10, 1953): 5

Articles in the *Union in Deutschland* published closer to the election were not so subtle. One simply announced the conclusion of a refugee from Soviet Zone, “Socialism leads to communism.”<sup>65</sup>

The CDU/CSU’s propaganda from the election campaign sent the same message. The CDU/CSU’s leaflets, aimed at the most impressionable and least educated part of the electorate, made strong attacks upon the SPD. In many respects the CDU/CSU’s leaflets followed the lesson from the Institut für Demoskopie survey which indicated that the most important task of a political leaflet was to be noticed. Most of their leaflets had eye-catching illustrations on the front and back pages, while the middle two contained more factual arguments.

One leaflet opened with the words, “Attention, Swindler!” interspersed with a drawing of grotesque figures whispering into the ears of the unsuspecting voter. It tainted the political reliability of the SPD with, “The population is urgently warned of red agents who are up to no good and are attempting to abuse the people’s faith. The red agents whisper: The poorer have gotten poorer. The rich have gotten richer! Protect yourselves from these wolves in sheep’s clothing.” The rest of the leaflet gave statistics of the government’s increased social spending, showing how the CDU/CSU was a “social” party. The final page depicted an apple labeled “SPD” hanging from the tree of “Rising wages—falling prices,” “Lowering of taxes,” and “40-hour week.” All the while, a snake labeled inflation smiles at a disconcerted-looking voter. The message was clear: the SPD

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could not be trusted. But even more, it portrayed the SPD as something sinister with accusations of “swindlers” and “red agents.” They represented the infiltration of dangerous elements in West German society.

Perhaps the leaflet which made the clearest link between the SPD of West Germany and the communists in East German was one which blasted the *Deutsche Gewerkschaftsbund* (DGB), the West German trade union, for putting forth political propaganda prior to the election, a move that went against the legal requirement for unions to remain politically neutral in election campaigns (Figure 6.4). The leaflet played off of the DGB’s slogan of “We are all voting for a better Bundestag.” with a list of accusations against the DGB and the SPD. Underneath the text, a picture depicted Ollenhauer and a DGB representative blowing a trumpet labeled SPD. Meanwhile, a Soviet officer claps in approval in the background. Again, the boundaries between the SPD, the DGB, and communism in East Germany are blurred. This leaflet was even more effective with the accusations which were flying around before the election. In fact, at a political rally in August, Adenauer stated that the DGB’s board of directors was infiltrated with communists.<sup>66</sup>

The CDU/CSU leaflet concentrating on economics built upon this motif with the slogan “Whoops Comrade!” and gave examples of the SPD’s “false prophecies,” such as predictions of Germany not becoming “viable” because of its economic policy. Again,

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<sup>65</sup> “Sozialismus führt zum Kommunismus,” *Union in Deutschland* 68 (September 2, 1953): 3.

<sup>66</sup> Hirsch-Weber and Schütz, *Wähler und Gewählte*, 107-112.



the middle pages of the leaflet gave statistics showing the rise of production in West Germany and the increased buying power of workers' wages. The back page of the leaflet depicted Erich Ollenhauer and Carlo Schmidt as bloated SPD "functionaries" sitting at a table gorging themselves (Figure 6.5). The text below, written as satirical poem, showed the two SPD leaders as indifferent to the real conditions of West Germans. Instead, they were willing to attack Erhard's economic policy for their own political gain, although they enjoyed the benefits of the policy. The CDU/CSU's attacks on the SPD were effective. This leaflet, along with the poster "All Roads lead to Moscow," were reported by local level CDU/CSU organizations as extremely effective and having great resonance within the population.<sup>67</sup>

Taken together, the CDU/CSU's propaganda captured the spirit of the times. The summer of 1953 brought to the fore the perceived threat from the Soviet Union. In July 1952 an Institut für Demoskopie survey indicated that 66 percent of West Germans felt threatened by Russia. Although there are no surveys that continue this question into the summer of 1953, undoubtedly this sentiment remained, especially after the June 17<sup>th</sup> uprising. In September 1955 56 percent of West Germans believed that the Russians still wanted to make Germany communist.<sup>68</sup> But perhaps more importantly, the CDU/CSU created a coherent theme to their campaign. Economic reconstruction, the unreliability of

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<sup>67</sup> The Kreisverband Aachen reported that the combination of "sachlichen Text, Karikatur und satirischen Versen für richtig." Fragebogen zum Bundestagswahlkampf. Bericht der Kreispartei Aachen-Stadt, 20.10.53, RWV 48/194, Nordrhein-Westfälisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, Düsseldorf (hereafter HStAD).

the SPD, and the threat of communism were fused together to show West Germans the need to stay the course.

Unlike in the 1949 campaign, in the 1953 election the CDU/CSU enjoyed the luxury of having propaganda campaigns parallel to its own. Perhaps having a wider reach than the propaganda put forth by organizations affiliated with the Federal Press Agency, Die Waage, a business-funded organization advertising for the Social Market Economy, geared up its efforts for the upcoming Bundestag election.<sup>69</sup> While much of the CDU/CSU's propaganda concentrated upon issues of foreign policy, Die Waage exploited the growth of the West German economy to lend support to the "bourgeois" parties. The Economic Minister Ludwig Erhard took on a special role in the campaign. Early in 1953 Die Waage's board of directors decided to emphasize in its advertisements "Erhard's Social Market Economy" instead of merely the "Social Market Economy," because surveys from the Institut für Demoskopie had indicated that there was a danger that some readers would associate the "Social Market Economy" with the SPD due to the inclusion of the word "social." For that reason, Die Waage decided to personify the Social Market Economy with Erhard in its advertisements prior to the Bundestag election.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Noelle and Neumann, *The Germans*, 553.

<sup>69</sup> For a discussion of Die Waage's advertisements in the 1953 election campaign, see Dirk Schindelbeck and Volker Ilgen, "*Haste Was, Biste Was!*" *Werbung für die Soziale Marktwirtschaft* (Darmstadt: Primus Verlag, 1999), 109-129.

<sup>70</sup> Protokoll von Vorstand und Beirat, 19.1.53, Die Waage, Zugang 127, Ludwig Erhard Stiftung, Bonn (hereafter LES).

But this created more problems. Most of Die Waage's advertisement had stressed more abstract economic ideas or promoted peaceful industrial relations through a depiction of the rising prosperity enjoyed by West Germans. Some contributors were concerned that an emphasis upon Erhard would naturally lend support to the CDU/CSU, at the expense of smaller parties. The advertising agent for Die Waage, Hans Brose, suggested that one of its posters appear before the election proclaim, "We're casting our votes with one of the parties that stand for Ludwig Erhard's policy of the Social Market Economy: CDU/CSU, DP, FDP."<sup>71</sup> This was rejected by the Die Waage's board of directors in favor of focusing upon Erhard and not mentioning any particular political party. This illustrated a fundamental problem facing Die Waage. Its contributors were a varied group of industrialists and entrepreneurs who wanted to promote the Social Market Economy and avoid the election of a SPD-led coalition, but did not necessarily want to support the CDU/CSU. At the same time the organization was closely aligned with Economics Minister Erhard who was a prominent political figure within the CDU/CSU. In non-election years this conflict could be avoided because Erhard's party allegiance was of secondary importance to his ideas. But it came to the fore in 1953.

Leading up to the election, Die Waage geared up its fund raising efforts in order to support the efforts for the election. In March 1953, the Die Waage's board of directors planned to send out 30,000 letters across the Federal Republic asking for donations. Also planned was that Erhard would send letters directly to the leadership of larger firms, such

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<sup>71</sup> Sitzung des Vorstands, 19.6.53, Die Waage, Zugang 127, LES.

as Volkswagen and Siemens.<sup>72</sup> The letters sent out to prospective contributors explained that 2.5 million DM was needed for Die Waage's upcoming action.<sup>73</sup> Overall, about 3.6 million DM were spent in the 1952/1953 campaigns, including about 3 million DM for advertisements placed in magazines and newspapers, a considerable sum considering the entire SPD, including local, regional and national level organizations, spent about 3.5 million DM for its 1953 campaign.<sup>74</sup>

On September 5, 1953, the day before the election, Die Waage published its final advertisement of the campaign. The advertisement portrayed a stereotypical view of Erhard, with a slight smile and his trademark cigar in his mouth (Figure 6.6). The slogan proclaimed "*Wohlstand Aus Eigener Kraft*" (Prosperity from one's own strength). Erhard featured prominently in the text with, "Professor Dr. Ludwig Erhard, responsible for the German economy, stands before us. He has achieved something decisive for us." The text recounted the dramatic rise of the West German economy, comparing living conditions in 1948 and 1953. It was Erhard on the day of the currency reform who did away with ration cards of the command economy. The end of the text proclaimed, "It is a matter of securing our peaceful reconstruction and tomorrow we'll give our vote to a party which stands by ERHARD'S SOCIAL MARKET ECONOMY."

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<sup>72</sup> Vorstand Protokolle, 9 März 1953, Die Waage, Zugang 127, LES.

<sup>73</sup> Erhard to Dr. Ulrich Haberland, 16 June 1953, Die Waage, Zugang 124, LES.

<sup>74</sup> Letter to Dr. Haberland, 18.2.1954, Die Waage, Zugang 124, LES; and Hirsch-Weber and Schütz, *Wähler und Gewählte*, 16.

The advertisement built upon earlier campaigns in which Erhard was identified as the lynchpin in West Germany's economic success. In many respects Die Waage was at the forefront of combining the "Economic Miracle" with the personality of Ludwig Erhard, despite some contributors' objections against supporting a political figure. Die Waage presented Erhard as the main force behind the economic upswing since the currency reform. His appearance on the cover of *Der Spiegel* appearing just prior to the election exemplified Erhard's growing popularity.

The article really typified the image that was built around Erhard. The cover depicted Erhard, like Die Waage's advertisement, smoking his trademark cigar with the caption "There is no German miracle." Economic prosperity derived from good ideas, proper policies, and hard work. The article portrayed Erhard with the characteristic with which many West Germans came to associate him: optimism, decisiveness, a belief in his policies, and a connectedness with the common man. The article recounted many of Erhard's actions that had become almost legend in West Germany. Erhard, the article explained, had an uncanny ability to predict the future course of the economy, such as when he stated that the prices of consumer goods would fall after the initial wave of inflation after the currency reform. The text explained, "That was the first in a series of predictions, whose most mysteriously exact fulfillment gave to the economist Erhard an odor (*Odeur*) of which every African medicine man would be envious." But most of all, Erhard was portrayed as the main protector of the consumer, which was illustrated by the story of Erhard as always inquiring from his secretary about the availability and price of

goods for normal consumers.<sup>75</sup> This rising popularity was reflected in the polls. In May 1951, in the midst of the Korean Crisis, only 14 percent of respondents had a good opinion of Erhard against 49 percent who had a poor opinion of him. By May 1953, 37 percent had a good opinion of him. This figure had grown to 50 percent by May 1956.<sup>76</sup>

In addition, although they were planned independently from the CDU/CSU, Die Waage's advertisements dovetailed well with the party's blurring the boundaries of socialist planning of East Germany with the SPD in West Germany. One advertisement appearing before the election asked, "Would we earn more if . . ." (Figure 6.7). The advertisement depicted Fritz and Otto, the two working class characters who had been developed in early 1953, lounging on a hill smoking cigarettes with one of their motorbikes, a symbol of West Germany's rising prosperity, standing in the background. They discussed the advantages of the free market versus the planned economy. When the puzzled Otto, representing the undecided voter, suggested to the "wise" Fritz that workers and employees would be better off in planned economy, Fritz reacted strongly. "You think so?" Fritz asked, "What then does the individual worker have in countries where the socialist planned economy has 'planned' everything?" Everything would be planned from above and the availability of goods would be limited. One would only get "a uniform German suit, for your wife, a uniform suit, color gray." There needed to be no explanation of which country he meant. From a Cold War perspective, the advertisement

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<sup>75</sup> "Die Flucht nach vorn," *Der Spiegel* 37 (September 9, 1953): 11-17.

clearly blended the boundary between the policies of the SPD in West Germany and the KPD in communist East Germany. The two were equated as seeking the same policies, and the advertisement implied that the West German worker would get the same results. Only weeks after the June 17<sup>th</sup> worker protest calling for more consumer goods was crushed by Soviet tanks, this advertisement provided a strong message. The advertisement concluded with: “Decide yourself: either the dangerous experiment of the planned economy—or continued progress and the increase of our standard of living through Erhard’s Social Market Economy.”

In one of Die Waage’s last advertisements before the election, Die Waage declared “The People have the last word” with another dialogue between Fritz and Otto (Figure 6.8). The advertisement depicted Fritz and Otto in a bar listening to Erhard on the radio. All eyes in the bar looked intently to the radio, as if hanging on his every word. Clearly the context of the advertisement was set as if they were listening to one of his campaign broadcasts. The beginning of the text included Erhard proclaiming that one of his tasks was to give the German people courage and confidence. But there were elements that wanted to push the German people into doubt and worry, referring to the SPD without naming the party. “They want these hard-working people never to become satisfied in their lives. . . .” At this point Erhard’s speech trailed off to Fritz and Otto’s dialogue.

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<sup>76</sup> Elisabeth Noelle and Erich Peter Neumann, *Jahrbuch der Öffentlichen Meinung, 1957* (Allensbach am Bodensee: Verlag für Demoskopie, 1957), 193.

In this context, Otto, who throughout the advertisement series represented the undecided voter, now agreed with Erhard. Both Otto and Fritz are convinced that much has been accomplished since the war, both by workers and industrialists. Despite this, Otto explained, "But we are not over the hump, and the troublemakers are stirring things up." It was easy for these "troublemakers" to talk, since they did not have to bear any responsibility, and as Fritz added, they can promise "everything under the sun" (*Blaue von Himmel*). The text led the reader to two choices: "State command economy of the functionaries—or progress in freedom and further improvement of our living standards through our economic system, tested in the most difficult times, through Erhard's Social Market Economy." Again, the message was the same: the SPD was made up of "functionaries" who were more interested in ideology than the welfare of Germans. The bourgeois interests were sending a clear message: they were beyond ideology and only concerned with concrete results.

The actual preparations for the SPD election campaign began in early 1952. In fact, the SPD year book reported that "the plan for the direct election propaganda was drafted in the summer of 1952, decided in the autumn of 1952, and carried out from the beginning of 1953 on."<sup>77</sup> In the autumn of 1952 the Press and Propaganda Committee under the leadership of *Partei Vorstand* (executive committee) member, Fritz Heine, began to put together drafts of posters and leaflets in preparation of the election. During late 1952 and early 1953 the *Partei Vorstand* and the various *Arbeitsgemeinschaften*

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(working groups) began to review the work of the Press and Propaganda Committee. Also during this time, the 240 party secretaries and local party representatives discussed the propaganda material, in order to familiarize the party organization with the conceptualization of the party leadership. All through this process the Press and Propaganda Committee gained suggestions for further refinement of the material.<sup>78</sup>

With the death of Kurt Schumacher in August 1952, the SPD's economic policy was beginning to evolve. At the SPD *Parteitag* (party conference) in Dortmund in September 1952 an *Aktionsprogramm* (action program) was issued that supported socialization only for basic industries, increased living standards for all in society, and a more just distribution of the economy's wealth. Most importantly, the program called for economic planning of the political economy, but competition within individual industries. After the Dortmund program, Karl Schiller, a leading economics expert within the SPD, summed up the party's position with the phrase: "Competition as much as possible, planning as much as necessary."<sup>79</sup> Undoubtedly, the SPD was not yet supporting the free market, but already in 1952 the party had begun the long and painful road to the 1959 Bad Godesberg Program in which it gave up its Marxist ideology.

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<sup>77</sup> Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands, *Jahrbuch der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands 1952/53* (Bonn: Gesamtherstellung Presse-Druck, 1954), 233.

<sup>78</sup> Hirsch-Weber and Schütz, *Wähler und Gewählte*, 15-18.

<sup>79</sup> Kurt Klotzbach, *Der Weg zur Staatspartei: Programmatik praktische Politik und Organisation der deutschen Sozialdemokratie, 1945-1965* (Berlin: Verlag J.H.W. Dietz, 1982), 243-264.

These positions were reiterated in a May 1953 *Wahlkongreß* (election congress) held in Berlin, which officially opened the election campaign. During this meeting, the SPD's leading candidate and chairman of the *Parteivorstand*, Erich Ollenhauer, held a series of speeches which presented the major themes of the campaign. Ollenhauer explained that since the SPD had been in opposition for the last four years, it could not base its propaganda upon its performance in government. Instead, it concentrated its efforts on pointing out the deficiencies of the government and at the same time highlighted the party's goals in the next years. Much of Ollenhauer's speech concerned itself with criticizing the government's foreign policy, including its support of the European Defense Community and its inability to achieve unification. In terms of economics, Ollenhauer accused the government's policies of being "the policies of the retention and strengthening of the political and economic position of power for large property (*Großbesitz*). It is a policy of the restoration."<sup>80</sup>

In contrast to the CDU/CSU, the SPD concentrated its economic propaganda upon the negative developments of the economy, especially the rise in prices. The SPD subscribed to the regular surveys that the EMNID Institut conducted, but it did not yet receive specialized surveys like those obtained by the CDU/CSU from the Institut für Demoskopie. Although leery of the validity of these surveys because they were not representative enough and the questions were rather limited, the SPD party leadership saw the surveys as somewhat useful. What especially struck them was that the surveys

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<sup>80</sup> See *1953—Jahr der Entscheidung* and *Das Wahlprogramm der SPD*.

indicated that in April 33 percent of the population was still undecided.<sup>81</sup> In addition, the EMNID surveys did show that West Germans were concerned about issues such as prices and the construction of new homes.<sup>82</sup> It was the issue of prices that the SPD would use to go on the attack.

Although the SPD reported that it sought to “to test and apply new advertising and propaganda methods,” the majority of election campaign materials was of the traditional sort. The greatest emphasis was placed upon posters, leaflets, and election newspapers, which had a circulation of 6.6 million, 8.2 million, and 8.5 million copies respectively.<sup>83</sup> The election newspapers were especially important for the election campaign with four different examples appearing. One of them, *Das deutsche Wunder* (The German Miracle) dealt especially with economics.

The newspaper was typical of the SPD’s attacks against the CDU/CSU: depictions of the stress caused by the rise in prices, questioning of the social security of West Germans, and the portrayal of Adenauer’s leading economics experts, especially Erhard, as only following the interests of large industry. *Das deutsche Wunder* supplemented other attacks that the SPD made against the CDU/CSU in terms of contributions from industry. One example of this was a rather long pamphlet published by the SPD for the 1953 campaign, entitled *Unternehmermillionen kaufen politische Macht* (Industrial

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<sup>81</sup> Sekretärkonferenz im Juni 1953, SPD PV-02559, AdsD.

<sup>82</sup> Die Wünsche der Öffentlichkeit an die Bundesregierung in Wirtschafts und Sozialpolitischer Beziehung, EMNID, B 145/4261, BA Koblenz.

Millions buy Political Power), which gave documentary evidence, including memos, letters, and meeting notes, of industry's contributions to the bourgeois parties. Other pieces of propaganda made the same point, although in a more accessible form for the public.

A prominent part of the *Das deutsche Wunder* took direct aim at Die Waage's advertisements. The text contained a satire of Die Waage's Fritz and Otto.<sup>84</sup> The tone was very much the same as Die Waage's advertisements when a questioning Otto asked Fritz what was the source of the production increase in West Germany. Otto was meant to represent the average West German who believed Erhard was responsible for the German economic recovery. Fritz informed Otto that the effort of West Germany's workers, not Erhard's policies was the cause for economic reconstruction. The myth of the currency reform is bunk, Fritz claimed, because the subsequent rise in prices had just hurt consumers. Finally, Fritz asked Otto, "Do you think it's right that a small group of Germans live better today compared to before the war, while millions live much worse?" In the end, Otto went away convinced and agreed with Fritz that a new economic policy had to be found. This dialogue, and much of the SPD's propaganda as whole, attempted to show the negative side of the "Economic Miracle" in which economic inequality grew.

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<sup>83</sup> *Jahrbuch der Sozialdemokraten, 1952/1953, 244-245..*

<sup>84</sup> If imitation is the best compliment, the West German trade union *Deutsche Gewerkschaftsbund* surely gave Die Waage a large compliment. Leading up to the 1953 Bundestag election, the DGB instituted a propaganda campaign through the distribution of pamphlets and advertisements in newspapers. One of these advertisements satirized Die Waage's advertisement with a depiction of two working class characters talking the Social Market Economy with the title, "Ich lass' mich nicht für dumm verkaufen . . ."

If this article represented anything, it showed how the SPD was so aware of Die Waage's campaigns that the party believed that it had to provide some sort of response. The party felt that the characters of Fritz and Otto were so well known that they used their actual names to satirize them. Clearly, the SPD was on the defensive in terms of the issue of economics. The ongoing economic reconstruction of West Germany could not be denied, but the SPD tried to show how it was benefiting only a few, a message that most likely would appeal to the working class, and not the middle class. It appeared that the SPD was still trying to appeal only to the core of its traditional support. The figures who were depicted *Das deutsche Wunder* tended to be working-class types. These were the people who on the fringes of the economy might be attracted to the SPD's message.

But it was doubtful whether this message had much resonance among the West German populace. Income increased at an average rate of 9.7 percent between 1950-1959. Between 1950 and 1954, gross income of employees grew 40 percent. The Federal Statistics Office conducted an on-going study in the 1950s of a "average consumer group." This group was made up of a sample of 250 families from a middle-level income bracket with two parents and two children. The study found that "fixed expenses," consisting of food, housing, heat, and lighting continued to decrease through the 1950s from 62.3 percent of expenses in 1950 to 49.8 percent in 1957. This meant that these families had more money to spent for consumer and luxury goods. Critics of these surveys, mostly from the trade-union research institute, doubted whether these groups were truly representative. But the trends in the figures did reflect a growing living

standard for a substantial group of West Germans.<sup>85</sup> Although it was true that a few in West Germany were becoming richer from economic reconstruction, the overall improvement of people's conditions was hard to deny. Undoubtedly though, pensioners and women "standing alone," groups left out of the Federal Statistics Office's study, continued to struggle.

In other ways, the SPD played into the hands of the CDU with the emphasis upon personalities. Very early on in the campaign Fritz Heine stressed the necessity of underscoring the SPD's leadership with slogans such as "No to Adenauer—Yes to Ollenhauer" and "Away with Adenauer—We vote Ollenhauer."<sup>86</sup> Eventually the slogan "Ollenhauer instead of Adenauer" was featured on one of the SPD's main posters.<sup>87</sup> As seen by the popularity of Adenauer in light of public opinion polls, this strategy was doomed to failure. Undoubtedly there was some dissatisfaction among the SPD, especially among the reformers of the party, about how the campaign was run.

At a combined sitting of the *Parteivorstand*, *Parteiausschuß*, *Kontrollkommission*, *Bezirkssekretäre*, *Bundestagfraktion*, and *Länderminister* after the

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<sup>85</sup> Michael Wildt, *Am Beginn der "Konsumgesellschaft": Mangelersahrung, Lebenshaltung, Wohlstandshoffnung in Westdeutschland in den fünfziger Jahren* (Hamburg: Ergebnisse, 1994), 60, 378.

<sup>86</sup> PV Protokoll, 6 January 1953, SPD-Parteivorstand (Protokolle) 1953, AdsD.

<sup>87</sup> The SPD's three main posters were "Das wollen wir Sozialdemokraten" (1.8 million distributed), "Deutschland Zukunft SPD" (1.2 million distributed), and "Ollenhauer statt Adenauer" (1 million distributed). *Werbung und Propaganda der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands im Bundestagwahlkampf 1953*, SPD-PV 03011, AdsD.

election, the mistakes and lessons learned from the 1953 election campaign were discussed. Some of the reformers of the party, such as Willy Brandt, complained that, "Our slogans did not always draw any enthusiasm. We must become a people's party (*Volkspartei*) without giving up being a workers' party." Other reformers voiced their dissatisfaction with how the campaign was run. Karl Schiller, one of the main reformers in the area of economics, commented that, "Socialization has been discredited by its misuse in the Eastern Zone. The slogan of social security was a flop with the people. It must be appended with the demand for social improvement." At the end of the meeting Ollenhauer defended the SPD's propaganda methods. He commented that he was proud that the SPD had led a fair election campaign and added that a campaign of the variety led by Adenauer was out of the question.<sup>88</sup> Clearly the party was not ready to revamp its propaganda. Nevertheless, in other quarters of the SPD, party members began to criticize the orientation of the party's "vocabulary of agitation." The Social Minister of lower Saxony, Heinrich Albertz, commented in *Neue Vorwärts* that the language of the SPD's propaganda was directed entirely toward the proletariat. The party had to develop new methods to attract the broad masses which would allow the SPD to jump the 30 percent hurdle.<sup>89</sup> Clearly, the road to the reform of the SPD's propaganda was underway, but this reform was still not going to be strongly felt in the 1957 election.

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<sup>88</sup> Petra Weber, ed., *Die SPD-Fraktion im Deutschen Bundestag: Sitzungsprotokolle, 1949-1957* (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1993), 3-12.

<sup>89</sup> Klotzbach, *Der Weg zur Staatspartei*, 292-294.

The CDU/CSU made huge gains in the 1953 election. The Bundestag election on September 6, 1953, saw the CDU/CSU's share of the vote rise from 31 percent in 1949 to 45.2 percent. Perhaps the most important issue of the campaign was international questions such as the reunification of Germany and the rearmament of West Germany. Nevertheless, some surveys after the election did reflect a certain importance of economics and the development of the West German political system.<sup>90</sup> One question asked CDU/CSU voters their reason for casting their ballot for the CDU/CSU. The answers were varied. The leading reply was Adenauer's personality and his prestige in the world with 30 percent. The second was religious reasons with 21 percent. Economic progress was third with 19 percent, while satisfaction with the successes of the CDU, which could include economic development, sat in the fourth position with 17 percent. In contrast, the same question posed to SPD voters garnered a response that 69 percent believed the SPD represented the interests of the worker.<sup>91</sup> What is striking is the difference in the diversity of responses. While there were a number of reasons why people voted for the CDU/CSU, the SPD voter was attracted to the party predominately for one reason: it defended the interests of the worker. This reflected the fact that the SPD was a party limited to a singular issue to attract voters. In many respects, the SPD propaganda reaffirmed the narrow basis upon which the party appealed to voters.

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<sup>90</sup> For a study of the public opinion polls dealing with the 1953 election, see Richard L. Merrit, "The 1953 Bundestag Election: Evidence from West German Public Opinion," *Historical Social Research/Historische Sozialforschung* 16 (October 1980): 3-38.



This greater diversity in reasons for voting for the CDU/CSU was also reflected in the sociological support of the party. With the Catholic background of the CDU/CSU, Catholics made up a large part of the party's vote. There was a clear continuity in Catholic voting behavior between Weimar elections and the 1953 election. In the 1924 Reichstag election, 55 percent of all Catholic votes were cast for the Center Party, while in 1953 the figure was about 52 percent of all Catholics voting for the CDU/CSU. But it was significant that the CDU/CSU could branch out to new groups without losing support from its core group of Catholics. In the 1953 election 35 percent of the CDU/CSU's vote came from Protestants, by no means an insignificant figure.<sup>92</sup> In fact, most of the party's propaganda ignored any religious or cultural issues.

The ability to reach out to groups outside its core was also true for the relationship of the CDU/CSU's electoral support and social class. Although the SPD was clearly the worker's party, surveys indicated that the CDU/CSU was able to garner 24 percent of the worker's vote. This was still below the 36 percent enjoyed by the SPD, but nevertheless it was significant for the CDU/CSU's victory.<sup>93</sup> This meant that 26 percent of the CDU/CSU's ballots came from the working class, forming the largest single group

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<sup>91</sup> Hirsch-Weber and Schütz, *Wähler und Gewählte*, 340-343.

<sup>92</sup> Karl Schmitt, "Religious Cleavages in the West German Party System: Persistence and Change, 1949-1987," in Karl Rohe, ed., *Elections, Parties and Political Traditions*, 191-201.

<sup>93</sup> This is drawn from a Emnid survey from late August 1953. The survey also indicated that 19 percent of workers were undecided or would not provide information on their vote. In addition, 21 percent of workers had decided to vote for the FDP, BHE or other parties. Hirsch-Weber and Schütz, *Wähler und Gewählte*, 247.

supporting the CDU/CSU. The next largest groups were pensioners (19 percent), farmers (17 percent), and white collar workers (15 percent).<sup>94</sup> One interpretation of this was that the religious loyalty toward the CDU/CSU by the Catholic working class was greater than class loyalty toward the SPD. In addition, the CDU/CSU did well among the civil servants, white collar workers, and agricultural workers. By 1953, the CDU/CSU was becoming a “*Volkspartei*” in a way that the SPD could not.

Although economics does not appear to be the crucial factor for voting for the CDU/CSU as compared with the personality of Adenauer, economics was a factor that was in the minds of many voters. For example, 46 of 100 CDU/CSU voters cited economic prosperity as either the first, second, or third most important reason for voting for the CDU/CSU.<sup>95</sup> Seen from this perspective, the strategy of mixing the issue of economics with geo-political issues was an effective means of selling the party. The CDU/CSU molded the issue of economics to accentuate the issue of the threat of communism. The planned and command economy, whose distinctions were regularly blurred by the CDU/CSU, offered an example of what a socialist alternative would mean. The issue of economics not only directly lent support for the CDU/CSU, but it also could be blended with other issues that were important for voters’ support of the party. The CDU/CSU successfully employed economics as a multidimensional issue.

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<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 249.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 341.

Although the CDU/CSU directed most of its attacks against the SPD, it appears that most of the gains made by the CDU/CSU did not come from a loss in SPD votes. In fact, although the SPD vote dropped slightly between 1949 and 1953 in percentage of the votes from 29.2 percent to 28.8 percent, the party collected a greater total number of votes (6.9 million to 7.9 million).<sup>96</sup> The West German electorate was growing, both because the population was growing and because of the flow of refugees from East Germany, and the CDU/CSU was capturing more of the new votes. The overall number of votes increased between 1949 and 1953 from 24.5 to 28.5 million. A study of the 1953 election revealed that voters might drift within the Marxist or bourgeois camps, but not between them. In other words, the CDU/CSU's gain in votes came not necessarily from former SPD voters, but instead from voters who had previously voted for bourgeois splinter parties.<sup>97</sup> From this perspective, the CDU/CSU's propaganda against the SPD did not win over former SPD voters. Instead, the propaganda won the splinter party vote over by portraying the CDU/CSU as a party strong enough to protect West Germany abroad and at home against a Marxist threat. In addition, although the SPD had begun its process of reform, its propaganda on economics had not yet created an image of itself that appealed to a wider segment of the population. As a consequence, the SPD was able to only attract the working-class vote.

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<sup>96</sup> Gerhard A. Ritter and Merith Niehuss, *Wahlen in Deutschland: Ein Handbuch* (München: Verlag C.H. Beck, 1991), 100.

<sup>97</sup> Hirsch-Weber and Schütz, *Wähler und Gewählte*, 163-182.

The 1953 election campaign reflected also that the CDU/CSU electoral techniques were in transition. With the threat of a socialist victory imminent in the 1953 election, the CDU/CSU began to construct a network of propaganda organizations which allowed the party to create a self-image more effectively. In conjunction with this, the 1953 election saw the first use of demographic polling in election campaigns, again allowing the construction of a party image resonating within the West German population. The election was a transitional step in the modernization of the West German political culture that would continue through the rest of the 1950s.

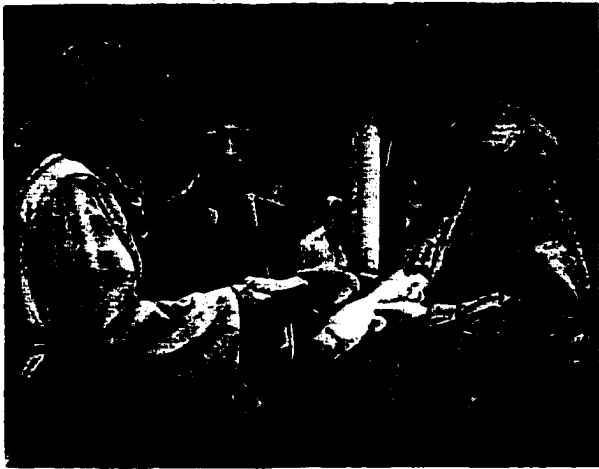


Figure 6.1: Alle Wege des Marxismus führen nach Moskau!

# BILDER AUS

3. August 1945

Jetzt sind wir genau acht Tage hier am Meis. Ein Wunder, daß wir überhaupt noch leben ... Nichts ist uns erspart geblieben. Erst der Treck, die endlose Flucht vor den Russen, dann in Prag der Aufstand der Tschechen am 5. Mai, wieder Flucht zu den Amerikanern — und dann zwei Monate Internierungslager, Hunger, Demoralisation, Angst — vor den Tschechen, vor der Roten Armee, die nur sechs Kilometer entfernt lag. Pflötzlich setzte man uns auf LKWs und hat uns nach zwei Tagen in Schwabfurt aus. Wir hatten nichts mehr. Oma erinnerte sich an Verwandte, die hier wohnen. Also machten wir uns auf den Weg. Jetzt bin ich todmüde, Oma drin: nahe ganz tot. Ohne den kleinen Max, den ich im Treck aufgefressen habe, Mitten wir es nicht geschafft. Da essen gibt es hier ganz offenbar überhaupt nichts ... Die Stadt liegt in Trümmern — ein Teilraum voll Ruinen. Das ist selbst für uns nach all der Vernichtung, dem Tod und der Not ein grausenvoller Anblick. In der Hitze verbirgt der kleinste Wind den Staub hoch auf, zum Ersticken. Es ist ein rotgelber, fetter Staub, der noch nach Brand riecht. Ich irrdung manchmal davon. Dann wache ich auf und schreie ...



21. Januar 1946

Ich spole Dienstmädchen, bin gemeldet und habe Lebensmittelkarten. „Wir haben wenig, aber das haben wir sicher ...“ Gestern ließ der OB eine „Dienstkarte“ für Schuttrückung verteilen. Wer sich drückt, beim Ehrendienst!!!, der bekommt keine Lebensmittelkarten. Puh! Wir haben im Monat pro Frau 150 Gramm Fett. Ein Pfund Butter kostet im Schwarzhandel 250 bis 300 Mark, eine Dose Olivenöl 75 Mark. Manchmal verhöhere ich ein Schmuckstück — schädige Ringe — und haufe was für Oma. Sonst steht die alte Frau da: nicht durch.

15. November 1946

Dieser Winter ist furchtbar. Wir werden alle so rasch dünner, daß man direkt zwischen kann. Kohlen sind überhaupt nicht aufzutreiben, und zu essen gibt es fast nichts. Von Mutti und meinen Brüdern kein Laut. Meine Chefin hat mir eine Eau-de-Cologne-Flasche voll Tren verährt. Die Duftmischung ist sagenhaft — aber es ist doch wenigstens Fett. Hin und wieder fahre ich jetzt auch kontern — einfach weil ich muß. Jedesmal ein lebensgefährliches Unternehmen. So was von vollen Zügen hat er noch nicht gegeben. Und dann ist man noch glücklich, ein paar Pfund Kartoffeln, Eier oder. Gott behüt, sogar ein Stück Speck zu erstachen. Ich zittere vor jedesmal vor einer Kontrolle. Gar nicht auszumalen, wenn mir die Ams oder die deutsche Polizei wieder alles abnehmen würden.



So haben wir aus — alle alt, alle trocken, alle ge-  
langt, alle gehetzt, hungrig und verzweifelt. Es  
gab nichts als China. Erst acht Jahre sind seit jenen  
Mittagen 1945 vergangen. In der Erinnerung so  
dunkel sollten wir heute dankbar sein für die nahe-  
zu unglückliche Änderung unseres Lebens. Sie  
wird Recht, das wir wieder essen, für die Freunde,  
die wir unseren Kindern wieder geben, für die  
abwärtige Arbeit, die wir wieder leisten können...  
und dafür, daß junge Mädchen wie Greta wieder  
leben!



Figure 6.2: Bilder aus einem deutschen Tagebuch (a)

# EINEM DEUTSCHEN TAGEBUCH



23. August 1948

Ich kann es gar nicht glauben, endlich ist unser Geld wieder etwas wert. Den Tag der Währungsreform wurde ich wie verrückt davon geredet, wurde ja schon eingewarnt — aber es kam nicht. Wir standen weiter bei jedem Wetter und stundenlang Schlange für 100 Gramm Weißbrot oder ähnliche Kostbarkeiten. Und dann war es endlich doch soweit! Die Schwarzbrüder, wie die rumtranteten mit den dicken Briefstücken voller R-Mark. Die wurden sie doch so rasch nicht los, und einzahlen auf eine Bank, das ging auch nicht. Mir kamen sie vor wie Ratten, die ein sinkendes Schiff verlassen wollen. Aber das rettende Land war weit... Und dann haben wir unsere zwanzig Mark pro Kilo abgeholt, die andere Hälfte von den vierzig gab es noch nicht sofort. Das waren für Oma, Max und mich sechzig Mark.

Wie herrlich! Jetzt habe ich neuen Mut. Mutti schrieb aus der französischen Zone, alle sind gesund. Die Sonne scheint. Meiner Arbeit bringt wieder richtiges Geld, für das man auch was kaufen kann. Ich verspreche mir selber, ich werde nie wieder weglassen sein und diese gruselige Zeit nie vergessen. Und auch nie vergessen, wenn ich selber mit bin, wie wohl Hunger tut. Dieser Tage habe ich mir sogar einen kleinen Hut gekauft. Ist das nicht ein tolles Bild, wie die anderen vorm Schaufenster stehen und die Auslagen bewundern? Ja, wir können es eben alle noch nicht richtig glauben — das Bild soll wirklich zu Ende sein.



11. September 1948

Jetzt sind die Läden bei uns wieder voll, gefüllt wie im Frieden. So richtig haben wir alle nicht daran geglaubt, das der Marktschwandel und der Schwarzmarkt und die Hungersnot ausbleiben werden. Aber als ich gestern bei Frau Müller — das ist unsere Metzgerei-Frau gegenüber — einkaufen war, da hat sie mich angesprochen und gefragt: „Ach darf es nicht von der Jagdwurst für 'ne Zehner mehr sein?“ Ich habe gedacht, ich solle um. Für das Stückchen Wurst brauche ich noch vor ein paar Monaten ohne auszuhalten zehn Kilometer weit gehen und habe wenigstens meine letzte Wurstportion gegeben. Und dieselbe Frau Müller hat darauf so gut geantwortet, daß sie selbst mit der kleinsten Zehner immer auf ein Müllgramm fertig wurde. Jetzt glaube ich es wirklich, wenn wir wieder unter zwanzig oder noch mehr Wurstsorten wählen können und so viel kaufen, wie wir wollen — denn wird alles gut. Ob ich jemals ganz vergessen kann, daß wir Essen das Wichtigste auf der Welt war!

24. Mai 1953

Meine Güte, da habe ich doch mein altes Tagebuch wieder vergessen. Merkwürdig, wenn man wieder liest, was damals los war und was für jeden von uns lebenswichtig schien. Die gemeinsame Not macht doch alle wirklich gleich. Heute hat sich das reichlich geändert. Da sind meine Kollegen anders, weil unser Chef sich einen neuen Wagen kauft. Ich finde das unverständlich — daß es Leute gibt, die sich das leisten können — und daß man einfach erwischen und auch gleich kaufen kann. Das war ein richtiger Spaß, all die Prospekte anzusehen von den verschiedenen Firmen. Und ein paar mal hat mich Frau Weissmann auch auf eine Probefahrt mitgenommen. Warum soll ich da weidlich sein? Dafür haben wir auch im Büro alle neue Schreibmaschinen bekommen, laufend. So ist ein Spaß, darauf zu arbeiten. Und oben, Daheim gibt es auch, und wenn es nicht ganz geschmeichelt ist, dank sollen wir nächsten Jahr sogar ein eigenes Schwimmbad für den Betrieb bekommen. Schon jetzt möchte ich mich ärgern, daß die Rita Heyworth einen Preisempfehlung hat. Da habe dafür mein Fahrrad und bin damit richtig glücklich. Wie lange ich mir das schon wünsche! Und wie herrlich, als ich dann die ganze Stadt nach meinem Fahrrad abgesehen habe. Ein Paar technische Schritte habe ich mir vorige Woche auch gekauft. Die Auswahl war so groß, daß ich mich überhaupt nicht entscheiden konnte. Werner hat mich dabei geholfen, das Bild! Aber das Bild ist eigentlich recht nett geworden.



Figure 6.3: Bilder aus einem deutschen Tagebuch (b)

# Die CDU sagt seit Jahren:

Wir wollen einen  
besseren Bundestag!

- **Einen Bundestag ohne die ewige SPD-Nein-Sperre!**
- **Einen Bundestag ohne KPD-Klamauk!**
- **Einen Bundestag ohne Rechtsradikalismus!**
- **Einen Bundestag ohne SPD-Fraktionsterror!**
- **Einen Bundestag ohne Interessenklüngel!**
- **Einen Bundestag ohne persönliche Diffamierung!**
- **Einen Bundestag mit aufbauender Opposition!**
- **Einen Bundestag mit sachlichen Debatten!**
- **Einen Bundestag mit wirklichen Arbeitervertretern!**
- **Einen Bundestag mit Gewerkschaftlern,**

die gewerkschaftliche Anliegen von parteipolitischer Hetze freihalten  
und

Wahlmanöver der SPD  
im DGB ablehnen



Figure 6.4: Die CDU sagt seit Jahren:



# Linke Gespräche



**Zu Carlo Schmid sagt Ollenbauer:  
„Wir machen Erhard's Politik  
mit vieler Mühe mies und sauer.  
Doch Du, mein Freund, Du wirst so dick!**

**Es darf nur Planwirtschaft verlangen,  
wer mager ist und hungern kann!“  
Da wippte Carlo mit den Wangen  
und sagte schlicht: „Sieh Dich mal an!**

**Du, und so mancher rote Dicke  
erschwer'n die SPD-Kritik!  
Ihr seid Beweis- und Musterstücke  
für richt'ge Wirtschaftspolitik!“**

**Sie lachten, daß sie sich verschluckten,  
und tranken Wein zum Lendenstück  
und schimpften, wenn die Kellner guckten,  
auf Erhard's Wirtschaftspolitik!**

Figure 6.5: Linke Gespräche



## WOHLSTAND AUS EIGENER KRAFT

Seit fünf Jahren wächst und erstarkt die deutsche Wirtschaft so rasch, daß die Welt erstaunt. Am eigenen Leib, an Kleid und Nahrung, hat's jeder von uns erfahren. Verantwortlich für die deutsche Wirtschaft steht vor uns Professor Dr. Ludwig Erhard. Er hat für uns Entscheidendes geleistet.

**1948** Ein zerstörtes Land, ein durch Hunger geschwächtes Volk, eine terrorisierte Währung. Ehrsche Arbeit hatte ihren Sinn verloren. Mit schnellem Entschluß ernennt Ludwig Erhard am Tage der Währungsreform die Karten und Bezugscheine der Zwangswirtschaft. Seine Ideen feuern die Wirtschaft an: Zeige jeder, was er kann! Sicherheit des Daseins soll jeder aus sich selbst, aus seiner schöpferischen Arbeit gewinnen. Professor Erhard verhindert: Nur ein freier Wettbewerb steigert die Produktion und die Qualität unserer Erzeugnisse. Nur harte Konkurrenz, nicht Polizei und Schnellgerichte, drücken die Preise und erhöhen die Kaufkraft des Geldes. Wir schaffen Arbeit, nicht durch Inflation, sondern durch Aufbau. Nur wenn soziale Gesinnung und persönliches Leistungsstreben sich vereinigen, können wir das ersehnte Wohlstand entgegengehen.

**1953** Fünf Jahre harter Arbeit liegen hinter uns, aber so waren nicht vergeblich. Das große Gespenst der Arbeitslosigkeit wurde gebannt. Fast drei Millionen neue Arbeitsplätze wurden geschaffen. Wohnungen für über 5 Millionen Menschen wurden gebaut. Unerbittlich weicht Erhard über den festen Wert des Geldes. Die D-Mark ist heute so kerngesund wie der Dollar und der Schweizer Franken. Der deutsche Export, ohne den wir hungern müßten, ist in vier Jahren um das Siebenfache gestiegen. Wir verfügen über 6 Milliarden D-Mark an Gold und Devisen. In Deutschland ist der Mensch nicht verstaatlicht, sondern stark und Wirtschaft sind dem Menschen dienstbar gemacht worden! Das ist der »betrügerische Bankrott«, der Ludwig Erhard von seinen Gegnern vorausgesagt wurde. Aber er weiß, daß erilogt die überwältigende Mehrheit des Volkes hinter sich hat.

Auch heute sind noch nicht alle Wunden geheilt, die der Krieg geschlagen hat, nicht alle Gefahren gebannt, die unsere wirtschaftliche Gesundheit bedrohen. Deshalb gilt es, unseren friedlichen Wiederaufbau zu sichern und morgen unsere Stimme einer der Parteien zu geben, die sich bekennen zu

## ERHARDS SOZIALER MARKTWIRTSCHAFT

Figure 6.6: Wohlstand aus eigener Kraft



## Würden wir mehr verdienen, wenn ...

Mein Name ist OTTO,  und das ist FRITZ  - der ist ein klarer Kopf, mit  dem läßt sich reden.  Wir treffen uns hin und wieder und bringen die Welt in Ordnung.

Fritz: Na, Otto — schöner Sonntag heute — und auch wieder ganz nett verdient, diese Woche, was?

Otto: Na ja, ganz ordentlich. Aber, Fritz, wenn ich daran denke, was wir erst verdienen würden, wenn die Betriebe in Gemeineigentum übergeführt wären und alles von oben geplant wird.

Fritz: So — Du meinst, wir würden dann mehr verdienen?

Otto: Klar! Kannst Du denn nicht weiter denken? Stell Dir mal vor, dann gibt's keine privaten Unternehmer mehr, die den Gewinn einfach so einstecken.

Fritz: Dafür steckt dann Vater Staat als Unternehmer die Gewinne ein.

Otto: Warum denn nicht, Fritz, dann kommen sie doch wenigstens uns Arbeitern und Angestellten zugute.

Fritz: Denkste! Was hat denn der einzelne Arbeiter in den Ländern davon, wo die sozialistische Planwirtschaft alles »verplant« hat?

Otto: Aber in der Planwirtschaft ist jedenfalls der Staat der Chef.

Fritz: Der Staat der Chef . . . also würde zunächst mal unser Chef verschwinden. Dafür käme ein Staatsdirektor. Dein Lohn würde von oben festgesetzt und die Preise würden von oben befohlen . . .

Otto: Na, warum nicht?

Fritz: . . . aber natürlich auch die Auswahl und die Art und Qualität der angebotenen Ware: deutscher Einheitsanzug, für Deine Frau ein Einheitskleid, Farbe grau. Schluß! Mehr braucht man ja auch nicht zum Leben, wie? Alles wird zugeteilt, und Du mußt nehmen, was gerade da ist.

Otto: Nun hör' aber auf, Fritz, das wäre ja die reinste Kasernenwirtschaft! Und Du wirst nun natürlich wieder sagen, daß ERHARDS SOZIALE MARKTWIRTSCHAFT für uns das einzig richtige ist.

Fritz: Genau das, mein Lieber. Aber Du kannst ja selbst entscheiden, ob die heutige Form unserer Wirtschaft erhalten und von Jahr zu Jahr verbessert wird, oder ob das kommen soll, was Du selbst »Kasernenwirtschaft« nennst.

Entscheide selbst: entweder das gefährliche Experiment der Planwirtschaft — oder weiterhin Fortschritt und Erhöhung unseres Lebensstandards durch ERHARDS SOZIALE MARKTWIRTSCHAFT.



DIE WAAGE

Gemeinschaft zur Förderung des Sozialen Ausgleichs e.V.  
Vorsitzer: Franz Greiss - Köln am Rhein - Unter Sachsenhausen 14-26

Figure: 6.7: Würden wir mehr verdienen, wenn . . .



## Das Volk hat das letzte Wort

« ... Eine meiner Aufgaben ist, dem deutschen Volk Mut und Zuversicht zu geben. Denn es sind zu viele am Werk, das deutsche Volk wieder in Verzweiflung und Lebensangst zu treiben! Sie wollen, daß dieses arbeitsame Volk nur ja keinen Tag seines Lebens froh werde ... »

Otto: Da ist viel Wahres dran. Ich weiß auch, wen der Wirtschaftsminister Erhard meint. Unsereins möchte in Frieden schaffen und vorwärtskommen. Aber dazu gehört Verständigung und Zusammenarbeit.

Fritz: Otto, jetzt hast Du den Nagel auf den Kopf getroffen. Aber ich sage Dir: Wer die einmalige Leistung unseres wirtschaftlichen Wiederaufbaus nach dem Krieg — diese Gemeinschaftsleistung der deutschen Arbeiter und Unternehmer — heute zu verkleinern sucht, der meint's nicht gut mit unserem Volk!

Otto: Hast recht. Aber wir sind eben noch nicht ganz über den Berg, und da haken die Unruhestifter ein.

Fritz: Und das nenne ich von Grund aus unehrlich!

Otto: Wer nicht selbst Verantwortung trägt, hat eben leicht reden —

Fritz: — und verspricht das Blaue vom Himmel. Aber nach dem Krieg ging es ums Zupacken: Entrümmern, Arbeitsplätze und Wohnungen schaffen, dem Geld wieder Wert geben — immer mehr, besser und billiger produzieren.

Otto: Wir haben ja dann auch das Menschenmögliche getan —

Fritz: — und haben es in vier Jahren dahin gebracht, daß die deutsche Lebenshaltung wieder zu den höchsten in Europa gehört! So viel haben wir durch Erhard's Politik der **SOZIALEN MARKTWIRTSCHAFT** erreicht — und zum Dank soll sein Werk wieder zertrümmert werden?

Otto: Nein, Fritz. Dazu haben nicht ein paar Unruhestifter, sondern wir, das Volk, das letzte Wort zu sagen.

Vor uns liegt die Entscheidung: Staatliche Zwangswirtschaft der Funktionäre — oder Fortschritt in Freiheit und weitere Hebung unseres Lebensstandards durch unsere in schwerster Zeit erprobte Wirtschaftsordnung, durch **ERHARDS SOZIALE MARKTWIRTSCHAFT!**



**DIE WAAGE**

Gemeinschaft zur Förderung des Sozialen Ausgleichs e.V.

Vorsitz: Franz Greiss - Kfz am Rhein - Unter Sachsenhausen 14-26

Figure 6.8: Das Volk hat das letzte Wort

## CHAPTER 7

### GENDER, POLITICAL IMAGERY, AND THE CDU/CSU VISION OF THE ECONOMIC MIRACLE

The conclusion of the Second World War and the immediate postwar years have been termed in Germany the “hour of the women” because of the demands placed upon women as the German state, economy, and society collapsed. Since many German men were either soldiers, wounded, or prisoners of war, it was women who began to clear and rebuild the cities, who took care of the children and the sick, and who initiated the reconstruction of Germany.<sup>1</sup> In many respects, the “crisis years,” framed by the 1942 Battle of Stalingrad and the 1948 currency reform in West Germany, were characterized by hunger, dislocation, death, and despair.

Elizabeth Heineman has argued that there was a universalization of the West German collective memory, based upon stereotypically female experiences during the period of 1942-1948, which acted as a major factor in the construction of a new West German national identity. Heineman identifies three images from this period that helped

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<sup>1</sup> For a personal view of a woman’s struggles at the end of the war, see Christian von Krockow, *Hour of the Women: A Young Mother’s Fight to Survive at the Close of World War II* (New York: Harper Collins, 1991). See also Martin Broszat, Klaus-Dietmar Henke and Hans Woller, eds., *Von Stalingrad zur Währungsreform: Zur Sozialgeschichte des Umbruchs in Deutschland* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1988).

build this West German national identity. These included the “victimization” of Germany at the end of the war through bombing raids and the rape of German women by Soviet soldiers, the “rebirth” of West Germany through the efforts of the *Trümmerfrauen* (rubble women) who cleared the destroyed German cities, and the “moral decay” of Germany as represented by the fraternization of German women with the occupying soldiers.<sup>2</sup>

Heineman is persuasive about the female experience becoming symbolic of the experience of Germans as a whole during this period, but the experience of West Germans was also transformed during the 1950s into something very different from the immediate postwar years. During this period, new images of gender superseded those of the postwar woman as an important element in a uniquely West German national identity. Perhaps the most powerful factor helping to create these identities was the notion of the *Wirtschaftswunder* (Economic Miracle), the period in the 1950s when the newly founded Federal Republic of Germany experienced fantastic economic growth after the utter destruction of the Second World War.

With this economic upswing came a reconstruction of ideal gender roles. In *How German is She?*, Erica Carter has examined the creation of the image of woman as “consumer” and the importance that this role had within the newly developing free market system of West Germany. She has concentrated her discussion on both the

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<sup>2</sup> Elisabeth Heineman, “The Hour of the Woman: Memories of Germany’s ‘Crisis Years’ and West German National Identity,” *American Historical Review* 101 (April 1996): 354-395.

political economy of female consumption and the depiction of this female consumption in popular culture in postwar West Germany.<sup>3</sup> With these images, the “ideal” woman’s role within West Germany society was transformed from that of the *Trümmerfrau* to that of consumer, homemaker, and mother during the “*Wirtschaftswunder*.” It was not just women’s roles that were being redefined. As some historians have recently found, there was a “remasculinization” of West Germany during the 1950s in various realms.<sup>4</sup>

I would suggest that discourse on economics and consumerism was central to the development of the public image of gender roles for both men and women in the new West German society, but that a gendered view of economics was not without its direct political implications as well. This chapter will argue that the meaning of reconstruction as a gendered experience was shaped and manipulated by conservative political and economic interests during the 1950s in order to create new political identities that contributed to those groups’ power. Propaganda campaigns situated gender roles within a political debate on economics and created a lasting political meaning of West Germany’s economic rebirth.

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<sup>3</sup> Erica Carter, *How German is She? Postwar West German Reconstruction and the Consuming Woman* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997).

<sup>4</sup> Robert G. Moeller, “‘The Last Soldiers of the Great War’ and Tales of Family Reunions in the Federal Republic of Germany,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 24/1 (1998): 129-145; Uta G. Poiger, “A New, ‘Western’ Hero? Reconstructing German Masculinity in the 1950’s,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 24/1 (1998): 147-162; Heide Fehrenbach, “Rehabilitating the Fatherland: Race and German Reconstruction,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 24/1 (1998): 107-127.

Between the bookends of the 1949 and 1957 federal elections, conservative political and business interests created through their propaganda three overlapping and mutually reinforcing images of economic gender roles. First, a reaffirmation of what was presented as “traditional” economic gender roles was used as a political metaphor for the rescue of the nation. In the 1949 federal election, the conservative CDU/CSU underscored West Germans’ supposed return to the roles of female housewife/male breadwinner as a signal that the nation had emerged out of complete distress because of its policies. Second, after the economic shocks of the Korean War, its accompanying rise in prices of consumer goods, and with redoubled demands for socialization of the economy by the Social Democrats (SPD), West German industry led propaganda campaigns that situated men and women as “students” of the free market. In these campaigns, West Germans were taught their proper roles within the free market in precisely gendered terms as consumers and producers. Third, by the middle of the 1950s, the economic upswing and the rising consumerism that West Germans enjoyed was used as a means to define and offer the regeneration of the “true” German state, the Federal Republic of Germany. In this way, political and economic interests portrayed increased production and consumerism not only as a means of fulfilling individual desires and needs, but also as a civic duty that was directly linked to the newly formed West German state. But again, these economic duties were clearly defined in gendered terms. Together, these images not only supplied excellent political weapons to be wielded against the conservatives’ main competitor, the SPD, but also were important means to “reeducate” the West German population toward a positive view of the free market



economy after its experience with the command economy of Nazi Germany and the rubble economy of the immediate postwar years.

The analytical category of gender is an especially effective tool for the examination of political and cultural developments in postwar West Germany, perhaps because the impact of war and defeat and the demographic imbalances present in West Germany highlighted the instability of gender roles. As a result of the loss of men from the First and Second World Wars, West Germany experienced what was tellingly called a *Frauenüberschuss* (surplus of women). One survey from October 1946 reported that for every 100 males, there were 126 females. This difference was even greater for West Germans of marriageable age. With many prisoners of war having not yet returned to Germany, a 1946 census estimated that for every 1,000 marriageable males, there were 2,242 potential mates.<sup>5</sup> Even in the middle of the 1950s, the imbalance between male and female remained. In 1950 women made up over 53 percent of the population in West Germany and Berlin.<sup>6</sup> The difference between female and male was even greater within the electorate, with women making up about 55 percent of eligible voters.

This difference between the number of females and males in West Germany had a crucial impact upon the development of politics in the newly formed Federal Republic.

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<sup>5</sup> Helga Grebing, Peter Pozorski, and Rainer Schulze, *Die Nachkriegsentwicklung in Westdeutschland: 1945-1949, A: Die Wirtschaftlichen Grundlagen* (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 1980), 19 and Robert G. Moeller, *Protecting Motherhood: Women and the Family in the Politics of Postwar West Germany* (Berkeley: University of California, 1993), 27-28.

<sup>6</sup> Statistisches Bundesamt, *Bevölkerung und Kultur. Volks- und Berufszählung vom 6 Juni 1961* (Stuttgart: Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 1962), 24.

In the 1953 federal election, for example, there were about 3.3 million more possible female voters out of the 33.1 million registered voters in all. This meant that women placed about 54 percent of all valid ballots. In an analysis of the role of women in politics published in 1956, Gabriele Bremme argued that the determining factor affecting the electoral behavior of women was their connection with the Catholic Church. Prior to the Second World War, Germany was 62.7 percent Protestant, 32.4 percent Catholic, less than 1 percent Jewish, and about 4 percent other.<sup>7</sup> Because many of the dominantly Protestant regions of Germany had been lost to East Germany, the Federal Republic in 1950 was a bit less than 46 percent Catholic.<sup>8</sup> With the significant Catholic influence on West German society, Bremme contended that women voted predominantly for the conservative CDU/CSU since the party had its origins in the Weimar Republic as the Catholic Center Party.

Undoubtedly, women had a critical impact on the CDU/CSU's electoral success in the 1950s. In the 1957 federal election, the CDU/CSU garnered 50.2 percent of all the second ballots, that is votes for political parties rather than an individual candidate. In this election, about 54 percent of women voted for the CDU/CSU, in contrast to about 45 percent of men voting for the party. The result of the 1957 election was the only instance when a political party achieved an absolute majority in the Federal Republic of Germany,

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<sup>7</sup> Klaus Gotto and Konrad Repgen, *Kirche, Katholiken und Nationalsozialismus* (Mainz: Matthias Grünwald, 1980), 121.

<sup>8</sup> Statistisches Bundesamt, *Bevölkerung und Kultur, Volks und Berufszählung vom 6 Juni 1961*, 27.

creating the highpoint of the power of Adenauer's government. The Catholic influence on women's voting behavior cannot be precisely quantified. Unquestionably it was significant. But the CDU/CSU also made gains in the Protestant female vote, which was quite a surprise to most political commentators. The fact remains that the conservative CDU/CSU stressed West Germany's rising economic fortunes as part of its attempt to garner support from the female voter, while appeals on Christian or cultural grounds were curiously muted. The propaganda of its election campaigns clearly shows that the leadership of the CDU/CSU felt that economics was an issue that could be used to mobilize the female vote.<sup>9</sup> In many respects this was no haphazard attempt on the part of the CDU/CSU. Through the course of the 1950s the CDU/CSU's ability to "reach" an intended audience with political propaganda became much more effective through the development of new "scientific" demographic survey techniques and the application of new methods in political advertising.

At the conclusion of the Second World War, the destruction of German cities was tremendous. It was estimated that about 18 percent of all apartments in the Anglo-American zones of occupation were destroyed, with another 29 percent suffering some

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<sup>9</sup> Gabriele Bremme, *Die Politische Rolle der Frau in Deutschland: Eine Untersuchung über den Einfluß der Frauen bei Wahlen und ihre Teilnahme in Partei und Parlament* (Göttingen: Vadenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1956), 78-79; U.W. Kitzinger, *German Electoral Politics: A Study of the 1957 Campaign* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960), 6-7, 289-290; Statistisches Bundesamt *Die Wahl zum 2. Deutschen Bundestag am 6. September 1953* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer-Verlag, 1955), 17.

form of damage.<sup>10</sup> Some cities were particularly affected. In Hamburg, about 80 percent of housing was at least damaged, with 50 percent completely destroyed. Large cities with a population of more than 100,000 in 1939 generally suffered the destruction of 50 percent of their built up areas. In cities in the industrial Ruhr, the figure hovered around 70 percent to 80 percent. The rubble left in the cities was measured in the millions of cubic meters, and many experts estimated the time to clear out the cities not in months or years, but in decades.<sup>11</sup>

Emerging out of the destruction was a powerful symbol of postwar Germany: the *Trümmerfrauen* (rubble women), who helped clear the mountains of ruins that made up the German cities. With the shortage of labor at the end of the war, many women took on the unusual work. At first, city authorities tried to employ former Nazis to clear the debris, but this labor supply proved insufficient. All over Germany, men and women volunteered to help with the work, called *Ehrendienst* (honorary service). They cleared out the German cities and initiated the first steps of reconstruction.<sup>12</sup> But it was the women who captured the imagination of the nation, perhaps because they were depicted as selflessly performing tasks outside of women's usual duties. It was these women who symbolized a new national identity for West Germany: hard work, economic reconstruction, and a literal clearing away of the visible remnants of the recent past.

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<sup>10</sup> Karl Hardach, *The Political Economy of Germany in the Twentieth Century* (Berkeley: University of California, 1976), 99

<sup>11</sup> Jeffrey M. Dieffendorf, *In the Wake of War: The Reconstruction of German Cities after World War II* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 11.

With defeat and the collapse of the economy, Germans experienced a time of hunger and deprivation during the initial postwar years. The ration of food provided by the occupying powers almost never was enough. For example, in July 1947 a ration averaging only 996 calories was distributed within the British Zone, although the official ration was 1,550 calories. One official report from 1947 noted that the average weight for women was 93.5 pounds and for men 92.3, lower because of many men's recent experiences as POWs.<sup>13</sup> During the immediate postwar years of 1945-1948, many Germans had to resort to the black market or forays into the countryside to forage for food in order to provide enough sustenance for survival.<sup>14</sup> In addition, since the old Reichsmark had become almost worthless, a system of barter had taken over most transactions, with the American cigarette acting as an ersatz currency. Without going to the black market, most consumer goods were almost impossible to obtain. One report from December 1946 estimated that with the current levels of production, a consumer in the Rhineland would have had to wait 200 years to obtain a man's winter coat.<sup>15</sup> These were difficult years for Germans. In many respects the experiences of this time were crucial for political and cultural meaning that West Germans would ascribe to the economic reconstruction of the 1950s.

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 21-24.

<sup>13</sup> Heinemann, "The Hour of the Woman," 374.

<sup>14</sup> Alan Kramer, *The West German Economy, 1945-1955* (New York: Berg, 1991), 75-76.

In conjunction with the introduction of a new currency in June 1948, the German-run economic administration of the Bizone lifted many of the controls of the economy, such as forms of economic planning and price and wage controls. Many West Germans saw this as the beginning of what has been termed the *Soziale Marktwirtschaft* (Social Market Economy). The economic thinkers behind the Social Market Economy sought a third way between pure laissez-faire liberalism and the collectivism of socialism. This economic system followed the free market, but retained a strong state that could intervene in the economy by breaking up monopolies in order to protect free competition. In addition, a strong social welfare system was to be maintained within the free market, although in the late 1940s and early 1950s this social safety net was by no means defined. The CDU/CSU made the Social Market Economy a central part of its official electoral platform with the announcement of the Düsseldorf Principles, released at a July 10, 1949 press conference that acted as the kickoff of its election campaign.<sup>16</sup>

The first election to the West German Bundestag in August 1949 reflected a reemergence of voting and sociological patterns that were present during the Weimar Republic.<sup>17</sup> Claudia Koonz and Renate Bridenthal have argued that the Weimar period,

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<sup>15</sup> A.J. Nicholls, *Freedom with Responsibility: The Social Market Economy in Germany, 1918-1963* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 170.

<sup>16</sup> Theodor Eschenburg, *Jahre der Besatzung, 1945-1949*, Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1983, 424-429; for the Düsseldorf Principles see Helmuth Pütz, ed., *Konrad Adenauer und die CDU der britischen Besatzungszone, 1946-1949* (Bonn: Eichholz-Verlag, 1975), 866-880.

<sup>17</sup> For more on Weimar Reichstag elections, see Thomas Childers, "The Social Language of Politics in Germany: The Sociology of Political Discourse in the Weimar

usually noted for the emancipation of women with the granting of the right to vote in 1918, retained a certain conservatism in terms of women's political and economic roles. Political parties sought the female vote, but they did not encourage the incorporation of women within the party structures. The right to vote for women generally benefited the parties that had traditionally fought against women's rights, such as the Catholic Center Party, the Weimar forerunner of the CDU, and the Nationalist Party. Although women made gains in employment during the 1920s, most jobs open to women were unskilled and offered poor wages. Koonz and Bridenthal concluded, "Without an appealing alternative, women persisted in their loyalty to the familiar *Kinder, Küche, Kirche* [children, kitchen, church] ethos and saw emancipation more often as a threat than a blessing."<sup>18</sup> In many respects, this attitude was reaffirmed during the Nazi period. Nazi ideology underscored the separation of spheres where women would remain within the household and provide the regeneration of the race through their role as mothers. But Nazi ideology and reality did not coincide with one another. Because of the demands of rearmament, women's employment continued to rise through the 1930s.<sup>19</sup>

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Republic," *The American Historical Review* 95?2 (1990): 331-358 and Julia Elaine Sneeringer, "The Political Mobilization of Women in Weimar Germany, 1918-1932," (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1995).

<sup>18</sup> Renate Bridenthal and Claudia Koonz, "Beyond *Kinder, Küche, Kirche*: Weimar Women in Politics and Work," in *When Biology Became Destiny: Women in Weimar and Nazi Germany*, ed. Renate Bridenthal, Atina Grossman, and Marion Kaplan (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1984)

<sup>19</sup> Ute Frevert, *Women in German History: From Bourgeois Emancipation to Sexual Liberation* (Oxford: New York, 1988), 217-239. For an examination of Nazi

With the founding of the Federal Republic, patterns of women's employment emerged that had links to the conditions prior to the upheaval of war. After the war, women continued to work in traditionally male jobs, such as construction or skilled factory work, but the expectation was that they would leave these positions once German POWs and soldiers returned home. In the years following the war, women were increasingly pushed out of their jobs as men returned to their prewar positions.<sup>20</sup> In fact, by 1950 the percentage of working women was the lowest it had been since the beginning of the 20th century, with about 31.3 percent of women working. This was down from 36.1 percent in 1939 as Germany was mobilizing for war.<sup>21</sup> In the years immediately following the currency reform, women found it difficult to find wage work, especially in fields that were considered "men's jobs." Nevertheless, as the 1950s advanced and the West German economy expanded, the percentage of women working increased, as female employment patterns fell back into the larger trend of the 20th century, although the percentage never reached the level of prewar Germany. The number of women working increased during the 1950s, as the population of West Germany expanded with the flood of refugees from East Germany, but women were relegated to jobs that were the lowest on the pay scale. In addition, public policy discourse on issues such as family

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propaganda in regard to women see Leila J. Rupp, *Mobilizing Women for War: German and American Propaganda* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978).

<sup>20</sup> Doris Schubert, *Frauen in der deutschen Nachkriegszeit, Vol. 2. Frauenarbeit, 1945-1949: Quellen und Materialen* (Düsseldorf: Schwann, 1984), 76.



allowances, protective legislation and women's participation in the work force in the 1950s, and family-law reform attempted to create the idealized "normal family" of a husband and wife which was supported by the male's income, a family situation that existed relatively rarely before the Second World War.<sup>22</sup>

In many respects the conservatism toward traditional gender roles remained in the postwar period, reflecting that although the *Trümmerfrauen* represented the regeneration of the German nation, they did not mean that there was a fundamental change in public expectations for women and men in society. These attitudes can be seen clearly in the political campaigns in West Germany during the late 1940s and early 1950s. In the first election to the West German *Bundestag* (parliament) in 1949, economics was the key issue of the campaign. The main question was "*Markt oder Plan*" (market or planned economies). The conservative Christian Democratic Union and its sister party in Bavaria, the Christian Socialist Union (CDU/CSU), tried to create an image of themselves as the parties responsible for the economic upswing that had taken hold of West Germany since the currency reform. The CDU/CSU stressed that its leadership was capable of leading West Germany's reconstruction. Most notable among this leadership was Ludwig Erhard, who had been directing the Economics Administration of the Bizone (the American and British zones of occupation) for the last two years and was the most prominent champion of the Social Market Economy. The question of whether West

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<sup>21</sup> Angelika Willms, "Grundzüge der Entwicklung der Frauenarbeit, 1880-1980," in *Strukturwandel der Frauenarbeit, 1880-1980*, ed. Walter Müller, Angelika Willms, and Johann Handl (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 1983), 35.

Germany should follow a free market or some form of a planned economy, which included nationalization and socialization of certain industries, created a “wedge” issue between the CDU/CSU and its main competitor, the Social Democratic Party (SPD).

Undoubtedly, the CDU/CSU leadership understood the importance the female vote was to have for the 1949 election. In a March 1949 meeting of the CDU press and propaganda committee one member of the committee commented that,

I would like to suggest that the attitudes of women in politics and in respect to publicity be taken in greater consideration in the coming months. That we listen exactly to what the Christian housewife says, so that we do not have to appeal to the Christian housewife in the last 14 days [before the election], and indeed not just to housewives, but rather predominately to the Christian housewife . . . The election of the CDU will be decided through the vote of the Christian housewife.<sup>23</sup>

Unquestionably the CDU/CSU pushed to appeal to the “Christian woman.” This attempt was done not just by stressing the CDU/CSU’s support of Catholic interests, but paradoxically through the selling of the Social Market Economy. This was quite a departure for the CDU/CSU since Catholic political movements had traditionally supported a form of “Christian Socialism” over free market capitalism. With the adoption of the Düsseldorf Principles, Adenauer and the CDU/CSU had decided to support the free market to separate itself from its main opponent, the SPD. Now the party had to package the Social Market Economy to its Catholic constituents.

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<sup>22</sup> Moeller, *Protecting Motherhood*, 1-7, 211-228

<sup>23</sup> Brigitte Kaff, ed., *Die Unionsparteien, 1946-1950. Protokolle der Arbeitsgemeinschaft der CDU/CSU Deutschlands und der Konferenzen der Landesvorsitzenden* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1991), 433.

As a whole, propaganda on economics appealed to the electorate in gendered terms. The CDU/CSU's propaganda created a connection between a depicted return to domestic roles for women as a signal that the "crisis years" had ended, thanks to the CDU/CSU's leadership in the running of the Western Zones' economy. In this respect, the CDU/CSU was erecting upon the imagery created around the "rubble women" the idea that reconstruction was already underway. While the "rubble women" had responded to emergency by helping clear the streets and initiate economic reconstruction, the CDU/CSU's propaganda hinted that men and women could now help the nation by taking up "normal" roles after the abnormal period of the immediate postwar years. With this, the CDU/CSU propaganda suggested the creation of "reconstructed" gender roles in the new West German state. The CDU/CSU was putting the "rubble woman" of the immediate postwar years to rest. Instead, it offered the return of women to the family and home--to the reconstruction of home life. In conjunction with these images of women, men in the party's propaganda were portrayed as "whole" men. The men in the CDU/CSU's posters were not shattered ex-soldiers or POWs, but instead were men who were working to rebuild West Germany in the public sphere. The CDU/CSU was implying that the extraordinary times were over and offered a return to what could be considered a certain level of stability after the chaos of the postwar years. As a whole, one could look at the propaganda not as how the West Germans really were, but perhaps instead as reflecting what they wanted to be. At the very least, the propaganda shows how conservative leadership perceived what the people wanted to be.

Perhaps the most powerful form of communication that the party possessed was the political poster. This was the most uniform sort of propaganda that the party utilized, with the central committee of the party distributing the same posters across West Germany.<sup>24</sup> If anything, it was the poster that was to create a unified image of the party that superseded local interests. One of the CDU/CSU's most widely distributed posters was a series with the same layout and slogan. "1947: Hunger, Need, Misery" was placed on the top of the posters, over a scene depicting the hardships of the immediate postwar years. Beneath the banner "1949: Forward, Upwards, the Success of the CDU" were placed photographs showing the reconstruction of Germany. Each type of the poster depicted various themes. For example, one might portray a bomb-shattered house set against a photo of a brand new dwelling, or others might depict a stream of expellees from the East with a picture of new housing as its counterpart.

Other posters of this series depicted the transformation of the fortunes of men and women since the currency reform (Figure 7.1). A woman in rags with a child by her side was portrayed as a refugee or perhaps as one of the millions who had their homes destroyed by the bombing. The second photo showed a woman standing over two children eating at a food-laden table. This set of photographs was used within a brochure distributed by the CDU/CSU with text added. "It cannot go on like this. The suffering and burdens of the mother were immeasurable. Our girls and women have particularly suffered and been sacrificed." With the next photo, the text proclaimed, "Christian

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 455.

principles free and protect women in jobs and in the family. The demands of the CDU/CSU: New and suitable professions and jobs for women.” With this schema, women were now spared the hardship of the immediate postwar years. But the work women were to do should be “suitable,” indicating that it should fit into the more primary task of caring and raising children, so depicted in the poster’s illustration.

While the woman was portrayed as performing domestic duties, there was an absence of any men in the two pictures, a situation that was typical for many West German women at the time. Meanwhile, the woman was looking at her watch, indicating she needed to be somewhere. Perhaps this was meant to be a woman “standing alone,” who needed to feed her children before working at her “suitable” job.

Another popular poster proclaimed, “And again the CDU, Then: It shall get even better” (Figure 7.2). The poster portrayed the transformation of a gaunt woman holding an empty shopping basket, whose hand is filled with ration cards. As the years progress, she became more full figured and younger looking. In some respects she became more sexually appealing as she changed. The work and hunger of the immediate postwar years had robbed the woman of her sexual attractiveness. The woman of 1945, who had to fend for herself, had been transformed into a more attractive woman in 1949, as her shopping basket filled. Together, the posters indicate that there was a sense that women were becoming more “womanly” with the rising living standards. Again, the CDU/CSU poster conveyed that the emergency period was over and women could revert back to “normal” roles, or at least what was depicted as normal roles, of women taking up more domestic duties.

The question remains, however, whether this poster was meant for female or male consumption, or both. That is, did the poster mean to appeal to the male voter, who might see women returning to recognizable, and in many respects, non-threatening roles? Perhaps a female voter would see a relief from the taxing times immediately after the war. It is impossible to say because there exists no explicit discussion of the distributed poster's persuasive techniques. As any good propaganda, it offered multiple readings. Yet all of them pointed in one direction: the CDU had brought "normalcy" to Germans' lives, which in many respects was a normalcy defined by the propaganda itself.

Other posters depicted shattered factories and buildings, spaces devoid of any human beings. The photos of the transformed spaces were now inhabited by men working in the public sphere. One example portrayed men working in a factory, manufacturing automobiles. Another was of men working to reconstruct a building (Figure 7.3 and Figure 7.4). Like posters portraying women as somehow becoming more "womanly," these posters indicated that these figures were becoming more "manly" with their return to the public sphere as producers. Brochures portrayed men, who at the end of the war lay on the street in despair, as becoming active parts of the reconstruction of Germany. This transformation of men from their shattered existence after the war, as portrayed in CDU/CSU posters and brochures, was a theme to be developed further in conservative propaganda.

In addition, although the Social Market Economy was a part of the official party platform of the CDU/CSU, it was never clearly defined in the party propaganda. An article from the CDU-aligned newspaper, *Die Rheinische Volksblätter*, included a

fictitious letter from a woman who sent a package of food and goods to a family member living in the Soviet-controlled Eastern Zone. The letter explained how living conditions in the West had improved dramatically since the currency reform, especially in terms of the availability of consumer goods. It went on that Erhard's promise of a drop in prices had come true. Therefore, the policy of the Social Market Economy had to be continued through the election of the CDU/CSU. There was a crucial connection between the Christian family and the free market. From the perspective of the CDU/CSU propaganda, the Social Market Economy provided the economic basis for the reconstruction of familiar life. In many respects the "social" aspect of the Social Market Economy, albeit at this point still very undefined, was used to link the Christian elements of the electorate with those of a more liberal ilk supporting the free market. The letter concluded, "Yes, we are voting CDU, so that a Christian, German rump state can speak for you in the east German zone." In this way the Social Market Economy was not defined by its support of the free market and the pursuit of individualistic competition, which would have been anathema to many Catholics, but instead as in some way reaffirming a Christian, socially-conscious society.<sup>25</sup>

The attempt to reach the woman voter reaffirmed what was depicted as "normal" traditional gender roles. Other than a few posters containing men working in construction, there was relatively little discussion or depiction of male economic roles in the newly formed West Germany. After the immediate postwar years, which had forced

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new duties and responsibilities upon women, there was the reaffirmation of “traditional” roles defined mostly through domestic duties in the early Federal Republic. Most of the CDU/CSU’s propaganda dealing with economics was either gender neutral, or if it was gender specific, dealt with women. Undoubtedly an important factor for this was the *Frauenüberschuss* and the weight of the female vote. But at the same time, the CDU/CSU election propaganda reflected the approach ascribed to Weimar Period conservative parties by Koonz and Bridenthal. They contended that, “Women voters were regarded much as American politicians might view the ‘ethnic vote.’ Their ballots were sought, but too large a participation in party leadership was not encouraged.”<sup>26</sup> For the most part, this was the case in the CDU/CSU in the early postwar years.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> “Liebe Lore” *Die Rheinische Volksblätter*, VII-003-001/2, Archiv für Christlich-Demokratische Politik, Sankt Augustin, (hereafter ACDP).

<sup>26</sup> Bridenthal and Koonz, “Beyond *Kinder, Küche, Kirche*,” 54.

<sup>27</sup> Generally women did not hold leading positions within the party. A letter from the central committee of the CDU/CSU to state level party organizations announcing the first meeting of the election committee commented that, “Es wäre wünschenswert, wenn einige Landesverbände für diese Delegation eine Frau benennen würden.” “Teilnahme an der Tagung des Wahlrechts-Ausschusses am 19. März 1949” März 7, 1949, VII-003-001/1 ACDP. Minutes from the Press and Propaganda meeting indicated that candidates for the elections should be selected by the following qualifications: “1. Politiker und Parlamentarier mit Erfahrung 2. Fachleute für Gesetzarbeitungen 3. Experten für Wirtschaft, Finanzpolitik, Agrar und Kulturpolitik 4. Frauen, Flüchtlinge, Junge Union, Fliegergeschädigte,” indicating a certain “tokenism” that was present in the party. “Am 8 Mai tagte im Adam Stiegerwald-Haus zu Königswinter der Presse und Propaganda Ausschuss der Arbeitsgemeinschaft der CDU/CSU,” I-009-006/2 (NL Dörpinghaus), ACDP. Gabriele Bremme reported that in the 1950s only 8.8 percent of the members of the CDU’s *Bundesparteivorstand* (Federal Central Committee) was female. Bremme, *Die Politische Rolle der Frau*, 164.



On August 14, 1949, West Germans went to the polls to vote in the first Bundestag election. According to accounts at the time, it was a hard-fought campaign by all of the parties. The CDU/CSU garnered 31 percent of the vote, allowing it to build a coalition by a slim margin with the liberal Free Democratic Party (12 percent) and the conservative/nationalist German Party (4 percent). The 73-year-old head of the CDU in the British Zone, Konrad Adenauer, was named the first Chancellor of West Germany. Undoubtedly the issue of economics was a crucial element in the 1949 election campaign. It was the decisive wedge between the two main parties of the CDU/CSU and the SPD. But the belief that the West German people had in the free market system was by no means secure.

The economic shock of the Korean War caused reverberations throughout West German public opinion in regard to the CDU/CSU-led government and its economic policies. With the outbreak of the Korean War in June of 1950, the West German economy expanded quickly with new orders to fill for the war effort. But with this expansion came inflation and the rise of prices. The impact of the Korean crisis on the public's view of the economy was clearly reflected in public opinion polls. A series of polls taken by the Institut für Demoskopie, the West German equivalent of the Gallup Poll, indicated a marked drop in the confidence of the West German public as the result of economic problems caused by the Korean War. In July 1948, a month after the currency reform, 37 percent of West Germans thought conditions were better than the year before, as opposed to 42 percent who thought conditions were worse. The number of optimistic respondents had climbed to 47 percent by March 1949 but dropped

precipitously after the start of the Korean War, with only 12 percent thinking conditions were better off in April 1951 than the year before.<sup>28</sup> In addition, support for the free market fell dramatically after the outbreak of the Korean War. In March 1949, 41 percent of West Germans supported the free movement of prices (free market), while 47 percent were for controlled prices (planned economy). With the outbreak of the Korean War and the rise in prices, only 29 percent of respondents in an October 1952 survey endorsed the free market.<sup>29</sup> Clearly, both West German optimism and belief in the free market began to wane as a result of the economic problems associated with the Korean War.

In response, private industrial interests combined to create what has been termed the first modern public relations campaign in West Germany. In the fall of 1951, a group of Catholic businessmen from Cologne formed the *Gemeinschaft zur Förderung des sozialen Ausgleichs e. V.* (Society for the Promotion of Social Compromise), or more often called by its symbol, *Die Waage* (The Weigh Scales).<sup>30</sup> The organization sought to inform the West German public of the advantages of the Social Market Economy, to ameliorate labor/management relations, and to improve the image of the industrialist. *Die Waage* ran extensive advertising campaigns that appeared in daily newspapers and

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<sup>28</sup> Das Soziale Klima: Ein Bericht über Umfragen in Deutschland, 1948-1951, Institut für Demoskopie, ZSg 132/154, Bundesarchiv Koblenz (hereafter BA Koblenz); and Elisabeth Noelle and Erich Peter Neumann, *Jahrbuch der Öffentlichen Meinung, 1947-1955* (Allensbach am Bodensee: Verlag für Demoskopie, 1956), 42.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 155, 234; *Das Soziale Klima*, 10.

weekly magazines such as the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* and *Der Spiegel*, conducted a series of poster campaigns, and produced and distributed films shown in movie theaters across West Germany.<sup>31</sup> While Die Waage's advertisements were meant to "reeducate" West Germans toward support of the free market, at the same time they helped define "ideal" gender roles within the Social Market Economy of West Germany. All the while, the advertisements would kick into high gear anytime a federal election neared, acting as surreptitious propaganda for the CDU/CSU.

Die Waage drew upon the latest advertising and demographic techniques from America in order to develop its public relations campaign. It looked to the American Advertising Council in the United States, the creators of "Rosie the Riveter" and "Smokey the Bear," as its model. Early in its formation, Die Waage contacted an advertising agent, Hans Brose, and his agency, *Gesellschaft für Gemeinschaftswerbung* (GfG), in order to create its advertisements. Brose drew upon exact demographic research compiled by the Institut für Demoskopie to act as the guidelines in the formulation of Die Waage's advertising campaign.<sup>32</sup> The organization was supported through contributions from industry, mostly from firms producing consumer goods. It

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<sup>30</sup> For a discussion of Die Waage see Dirk Schndelbeck and Volker Ilgen, "*Haste Was, Biste Was!*" *Werbung für die Soziale Marktwirtschaft* (Darmstadt: Primus Verlag, 1999).

<sup>31</sup> Die Waage: Ein Bericht über die Tätigkeit in den Jahren 1952-1957, Abt. 16, Nr. 1, Fasz. 2, Rheinisch-Westfälisches Wirtschaftsarchiv zu Köln e. V. (hereafter RWWA)

<sup>32</sup> H.J. Kopf, "Werbung im Zeichen der Waage: Die Deutsche Werbung tritt in eine neue Phase," *Die Anzeige* 3/29 (1953): 316-317.

was so well funded, in fact, that its budget for 1952/1953 was greater than what the SPD had at its disposal for its entire election campaign of 1949.<sup>33</sup>

In the autumn of 1952, Die Waage's first advertisements appeared in 445 daily and weekly newspapers with a total circulation of 12 million.<sup>34</sup> The advertisements were so widely circulated that one survey reported that 36 percent of the West German public had seen and recognized the advertisements between December 5 and 15, 1952.<sup>35</sup> The advertisements portrayed what could be described as snapshots from everyday life. This included depictions of the postwar misery, reconstruction, and scenes of rebuilt city streets with store windows filled with consumer goods. Through both the illustrations and text the advertisements were trying to "sell" the Social Market Economy. The advertisements emphasized the upswing of the West German economy since the currency reform as the result of introduction of the Social Market Economy. All of the advertisements, although varied in text and illustrations, depicted scales, the symbol of Die Waage, and the slogan "Through unified strength, the Social Market Economy leads to prosperity for all."

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<sup>33</sup> Die Waage had 3.78 million DM at its disposal for 1952/1953. See letter to Dr. Haberland, Generaldirektor Bayer, 18.2.1954, Die Waage, Zugang 124, LES. In contrast, all levels of the SPD spent 1 million DM for the 1949 Bundestag election campaign. See PV Protokoll, 6 January 1953, SPD Parteivorstand (Protokolle) 1953, Archiv der sozial Demokratie, Bonn.

<sup>34</sup> Die Waage: Ein Bericht über die Tätigkeit in den Jahren 1952-1960, Abt. 16, Nr. 1, Fasz. 2, RWWA.

<sup>35</sup> Die Waage: Die Betrachtung einer Anzeigen-Serie, Januar 1952, Institut für Demoskopie, ZSg 132/218, BA Koblenz.

This first set of advertisements also underscored the need for cooperation between management and labor, all the while giving an idea of gender roles in postwar West Germany. One advertisement picturing men rebuilding a building with factories in the background proclaimed, “*Das Deutsche ‘Wunder’*” (The German ‘Miracle,’ Figure 7.5). The advertisement explained that both the hard work and ability of management and labor had created this “miracle.” The advertisement continued that, “Several brave men summoned worker and entrepreneur, bearers of the German economic energy, to free competition based on performance. They answered the call. In true solidarity, from the youngest apprentice to the leader of the largest factory, together they built up their work shops.” This was to be recurring theme throughout Die Waage’s advertisement: workers, in this case defined as male workers, contributing their strength and energy to the reconstruction of the West German economy. The process was described almost as soldiers being called to arms, reflecting a shift in “duty” for men in postwar West Germany from soldiers to producers. The advertisement gave a certain agency to the West German worker. It was he who rebuilt the economy, while the American instituted currency reform and the influx of American capital through the Marshall Plan were ignored in the advertisement.

By the spring of 1953, with the second federal election coming in the summer, Die Waage sought to develop a more effective advertising technique to reach an important element of its intended audience, the working class.<sup>36</sup> Its first series appearing

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<sup>36</sup> Kopf, “Werbung im Zeichen der Waage,” 319.

in the autumn and winter of 1952/53 struck some in the advertising business as if Die Waage was lecturing to the working class. As a result, in early 1953 the leaders of Die Waage decided to develop a series of advertisements in a dialogue form with the creation of two characters: Fritz and Otto. The purpose of the advertisements was to create two “average Joes” with whom the public could identify. Using exact demographic research to track the public’s reaction to the characters, the creators of Fritz and Otto drew them to appear as if they came from the same social class.<sup>37</sup> But Die Waage’s executive committee decided to change the characters slightly in their final form. In the actual advertisements that appeared, a slightly more managerial-appearing, middle-class Fritz explained the advantages of the Social Market Economy to a questioning, slightly more proletarian-appearing Otto.

In its attempt to educate the West German public on the workings of the free market, Die Waage’s advertisements portrayed ideal gender roles for men with the characters Fritz and Otto taking centerstage. In general, Fritz and Otto highlight some characteristics of the new, ideal West German male: two war veterans who had been prisoners of war depicted in masculine places--fishing, in bars, on the job, or getting their paycheck. While women’s roles were portrayed as homemakers and consumers, Otto and Fritz, created as two stereotypical characters, were defined by their roles as producers within the economy. The advertisements sought to elucidate the role that the worker had

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<sup>37</sup> Eine Untersuchung über die voraussichtliche Wirkung eines Aufklärungsfeldzuges, März 1953, Institut für Demoskopie, Abt. 16, Nr. 4, Fasz. 11, RWWA.

within the free market economy, much of the time discussing management/labor relations.

The currency reform of 1948 and the introduction of the Social Market Economy were identified as crucial turning points for the destinies of both these two characters and West Germany itself. These two developments allowed Fritz and Otto to become “real” men again by giving them back their ability to earn a wage. In fact one advertisement “celebrated” the five year “birthday” of the Deutsche Mark (Figure 7.6). When Otto claimed that the whole currency reform was only a “fraud,” Fritz responded, “Would you rather return to the time when we only received calories, pride in resettling in the West (*Siedlerstolz*), and broken goods for our wages at the time under the command and planned economy.” Those bad times had been put behind Fritz and Otto because of the introduction of the Social Market Economy. It was Erhard who “brought production and buying power back into balance and helped us all to work again, to buy, and to consume.” It was the establishment of a stable currency that gave significance to the foremost task of these men: to work. Generally, Die Waage’s advertisements sought to show how working-class characters such as Otto and Fritz had concretely benefited through the introduction of the free market. All the while, the advertisements made clear how their work was benefiting the whole society and not particular interests.

But it was clear from the initial test surveys of the Fritz and Otto advertisements that they were not as effective with female readers as with male. For example, women were more likely to believe either that the doubting Otto was correct or that both the characters were correct in their views, a perception Die Waage did not want to create. In

addition, women were less likely to come away with a clear conception of the position that the advertisement was supporting.<sup>38</sup> As a result, Die Waage began to develop new advertisements especially for a female audience.

One such early example appeared in the fall of 1953 (Figure 7.7), leading up to the Federal election of the second Bundestag. The advertisement's slogan proclaimed, "We women have forgotten nothing, and furthermore have learned a thing or two." The text addressed its reader in the first person plural "we," perhaps in hopes of getting some sort of identification with a common female experience. The text opened with, "Really, is it already five years ago that we began to lead an existence worthy of humanity?" It went on with recollections from the immediate postwar years, most notably women's experience as "continually overtired, undernourished, perpetually standing in lines," along with the shortage of food and the necessity to venture out into the countryside to obtain food to feed the family.

The advertisement identified the currency reform of 1948 as the turning point for the experience of women. With the currency reform women could now become "normal housewives." Suddenly they had been transformed from the "ration card holder" into a valued customer. The shelves suddenly were filled with goods.

Can a man at all feel for us, what this change immediately meant for us women, who suffered most bitterly under conditions that not only broke the remainder of our self confidence, but also brought us to the brink of total despair in view of the begging eyes of our children.

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid.



Here the advertisement connected economic development with what was portrayed as a fundamental source of identity for a woman: her role as a housewife, mother, and a bit differently from the CDU/CSU's propaganda, as a consumer. The economic dislocations of the postwar years had put these roles into doubt, or at least had undermined women's ability to perform these functions fully. The advertisement, like some of the posters from the 1949 election campaign, implied that with the regaining of domestic duties, women had become more "womanly" again. But here the connection with the change in conditions was made most strongly with West Germany's political economy. The underlying message of the advertisement was that difficult times were identified with the "planned economy" when ration cards were used, while the economic rebirth was connected with the introduction of the Social Market Economy. With this, the advertisement was lending indirect support for the CDU/CSU versus the SPD. Especially at the end when the advertisement proclaimed, "We women have decided—for ERHARD'S SOCIAL MARKET ECONOMY." It was indirect support in the sense that it identified Erhard, but did not identify his party, which was a move to quell any objections from Die Waage contributors who were not supporters of the CDU/CSU.

But in many respects, Die Waage's advertisements used different strategies to appeal to women and men. As members of Die Waage's executive board had explained, "We will avoid any dry definition and demonstrate to the readers the practical examples of their advantages of the Social Market Economy."<sup>39</sup> While the Fritz and Otto

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<sup>39</sup> Sitzung, 3 November 1952, Die Waage, Zugang 127, LES

advertisements did not contain many abstract ideas on the economy, they did try to impart some sort of basic knowledge of how the economy works. This included discussions on what determines the value of currency, why exports were important to West Germany, and how prices are determined. While using more slang, the Fritz and Otto advertisements also were more preachy. In contrast, those advertisements intended for female consumption tended to go directly to personal experiences, particular to individual women, as opposed to more general and abstract ideas of economics. Die Waage, and the CDU/CSU in the 1953 and 1957 campaigns for that matter, was very effective in portraying the rising levels of consumption in West Germany and utilizing this change for a specific political goal. Their advertisements always depicted a level of consumerism slightly above the experience of the average West German, thereby creating promises that were to be soon fulfilled.<sup>40</sup> Although Die Waage constructed concrete examples of the economic upswing in all of its advertisements, the way this upswing was represented for men and women was very different, in many respects trying to create different meanings of the Social Market Economy and the Economic Miracle.

This was perhaps best illustrated by a set of brochures readers of the advertisements could receive through the mail. The one most offered in the advertisements, called "*Steigende Produktivität, wachsender Wohlstand*" (Increasing Productivity, Growing Prosperity), gave a short lesson on free market economics. It

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<sup>40</sup> For more on consumerism in West Germany, see Michael Wildt, *Am Beginn der "Konsumgesellschaft": Mangelersahrung, Lebenshaltung, Wohlstandhoffnung in Westdeutschland in den funfziger Jahren* (Hamburg: Ergebnisse Verlag, 1994).

talked about the importance of raising production so that the prosperity for all could be improved. This increased production, the brochure proclaimed, meant “the end of class struggle,” and in addition would “make life worth living.” The brochure for women, entitled *Lieber Leserin . . .* (Dear [female] Reader . . . ), took a different tack. It explained that “In the Social Market Economy, women have a special mission. Since 80 percent of the pay is managed by women, it can be said: All of economic development is determined in a large part by women.” Again, women’s importance in the economy was not defined by their functioning in the economy through work, but instead through their role as consumers in what was considered natural roles of domestic duties, child rearing and purchasing consumer goods for the family.

Together these depictions of gender roles dovetail with conceptions of class within West German society. In many respects the efforts of *Die Waage* were predicated upon conservative industrialists’ and politicians’ fears of the social fissures that had torn apart the ill-fated Weimar Republic. The leaders of *Die Waage* had grown up under the Kaiser, came of age during the tumultuous Weimar Republic, and become mature adults during the Nazi period. They had seen governments come and go and had felt the impact that the masses had upon the course of German history. Part of the underlying assumptions of *Die Waage*’s advertisement was that social peace had to be established, not only for industry to enjoy a profitable business environment, but also for a stable West German democracy to be established. The consumerism and belief in the free market depicted in the advertisements tried to transcend any differences in class, religion, or region. The belief in the Social Market Economy and its benefits for everyone, not just

the industrialist, was from Die Waage's view, fundamental for overcoming the class tensions that had spelled the destruction of Weimar Germany. In fact, any differences in religion or geography were completely ignored in the advertisements. In addition, Fritz and Otto were working class, but in many respects reflected what could be considered middle-class attitudes with their discussions on saving money or buying a house.

In addition, the advertisements of Die Waage were trying to appeal to sociological developments that had been taking place in West Germany during the 1950s. Helmut Schelsky, a prominent sociologist in the 1950s, argued in *Wandlungen der deutschen Familie in der Gegenwart* (The Transformation of the German Family at the Present Time) that although the war and immediate postwar years were extremely dangerous to the family, the 1950s saw the regeneration and strengthening of the family. Both men and women retreated to the family as a source of stability and security after the upheaval of the 1930s and 1940s.<sup>41</sup> In addition, Schelsky detected a growing trend of women wanting to take up roles within the household and as mothers, while men were to provide financial support for the family.<sup>42</sup> Other studies supported Schelsky's view. One sociological study conducted in West Berlin in 1956 investigated the attitudes of working mothers. The majority of interviewees living in "complete" families, which was defined as a family with a husband, wife, and children, wanted higher wages and job security for

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<sup>41</sup> Helmut Schelsky, *Wandlungen der deutschen Familie in der Gegenwart* (Stuttgart: Ferdinand Enke Verlag, 1960), 63-87.

<sup>42</sup> Kuhn and Schubert, *Frauen in der Nachkriegszeit*, 39.

men so that “mothers won’t be forced to take up employment.”<sup>43</sup> Undoubtedly, the Depression of the 1930s, the war years of the first half of the 1940s, and the hunger years of second half of the 1940s had a critical impact upon West German’s search for familiar security in the 1950s.<sup>44</sup>

As the 1950s progressed, economic propaganda concentrated not only upon a form of “reeducation” of West German men and women on the workings of the free market, but also upon the idea that economics was a source of national identity and central to the legitimacy of the newly formed Federal Republic of Germany. The functioning of individual men and women within the free market was represented not just as a means to satisfy individual needs or wants, but also as essential for the creation of the new West German state. In many respects, the Economics Minister, Ludwig Erhard, took center stage in the marketing of this ideology to West Germans. It was during this time that Erhard became popularly known as the father of the West German Economic Miracle.

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<sup>43</sup> Edith Hinze, *Lage und Leistung erwerbstätiger Mütter: Ergebnisse einer Untersuchung in Westberlin* (Berlin: Carl Heymanns, 1980), 44, 95-96, 224, 228, 234, 236, 239, 242, quoted from Moeller, *Protecting Motherhood*, 176-177.

<sup>44</sup> A survey of young men in March 1952 reported that during the war 58 percent of respondents had anxiety about members of the family, 57 percent suffered hunger during the postwar years, and 51 percent had persons dear to them who were killed or reported missing. Elisabeth Noelle and Erich Peter Neumann, eds., *The Germans: Public Opinion Polls, 1947-1966* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1981), 156. Also a survey conducted by the Americans in the American Zone of Occupation in June 1949 reported that six out of ten Germans would support a government offering economic security over one guaranteeing civil liberties. Anna J. Merritt and Richard L. Merritt, eds., *Public*

In a speech opening the exhibition of “Die Wirtschaft im Dienst der Hausfrau” (The Economy in Service of the Housewife) on June 28, 1952, in Frankfurt, Erhard put the importance of economics in a free society in very clear terms. As he addressed the crowd of mostly women, Erhard proclaimed, “The mass of consumers is the judge of the economy, as well as the economic system. . . . This economic system has given back to you the first, the most basic, but also the most important right of a democratic system, that is the free choice of consumption.”<sup>45</sup> From Erhard’s perspective, women controlled a crucial element in the creation of a Federal Republic based upon the freedom to consume, and with that were positioned as the key upholders of the newly formed West German democracy. For Erhard the freedom to consume was something that set West Germany apart from both its eastern counterpoint and the Nazi past. Since Erhard was the politician who spoke for the consumer, he always played a crucial role in his party’s propaganda directed at women.

The use of economics as a source of legitimacy for the West German state helped lend support for the CDU/CSU, the main party in West Germany’s coalition government. The CDU/CSU constructed an image of itself as the party responsible for the reconstruction of West Germany. In the 1949 election this was accomplished by the party portraying itself as guiding West Germany out of the extremely uncertain conditions of the postwar years. As the 1950s progressed, the CDU/CSU not only took

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*Opinion in Occupied Germany: The OMGUS Surveys, 1945-1949* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1970) 294

<sup>45</sup> Die Wirtschaft im Dienst der Hausfrau, 28 June 1952, B102/9086, BA Koblenz.

credit for the economic upswing, but also created an image that the success of the party's economic policies and the legitimacy of West Germany as whole were inextricably linked. Prior to the 1953 election, a letter from Erhard addressed to housewives was sent to households all over West Germany.<sup>46</sup> The letter opened with: "You know what it means to be an economics minister. No one else is so entrusted with the troubles and anxiety of keeping house. As the Economics Minister of your family it is not much different for you as for me, the Federal Economics Minister." It continued to explain the problems that the Economics Minister has, including deciding how to spend the money he has available, rather as what housewives have to do.

Finally, the letter got to the political implications of women's roles as the "Economics Ministers of the household." It went on listing the great material improvements in the five years since the currency reform. Erhard then alerted women to the danger of losing these gains by not voting correctly in the upcoming election. The letter concluded with the words, "Help me to remove this danger, before it is too late. In the din of the election, do not follow a voice [*Stimme*, also can mean "vote"] other than your conscience as the Economics Minister of your family."<sup>47</sup> In many respects, this letter helped create a gendered sense of the government and civic duty. Erhard spoke in

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<sup>46</sup> A total of 5,280,000 copies were printed and inserted within newspapers in the week before the election. *Abrechnung über Erhard-Briefe*, I-083-213/2 (Fritz Hellwig) ACDP.

<sup>47</sup> "Liebe Hausfrau!" Professor Dr. Ludwig Erhard, September 1, 1953, RWV 48 (CDU Kreisverband Dinslaken) Nordrhein-Westfälisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, Düsseldorf (hereafter HStAD).

the letter not as a representative of the CDU/CSU, but rather as a member of the cabinet of the Federal Republic. From Erhard's view women possessed a special knowledge of political and economic developments. They also had a role within the private sphere that was parallel to that of Erhard within the federal government. Women's knowledge of the private sphere privileged them with insights into political developments in the public sphere. At the same time, this knowledge demanded that they exert what was defined as their civic duty of voting for the CDU/CSU. But in no way did the letter from Erhard ask women to extend their political influence beyond their very clearly delineated realm within the home and with the ballot, although he continually referred to the development of "our economy" throughout the letter.<sup>48</sup>

This sense of economics as source of legitimacy for West Germany was also important vis-à-vis West Germany's relationship to East Germany. In many respects, economic production and prosperity was a means by which West Germany and East Germany competed with one another as the legitimate German state. Again, this was done in specifically gendered terms. In Erhard's letter to housewives, a means of legitimizing the Federal Republic of Germany was to compare its economic development with that of East Germany's. Those who doubted the Social Market Economy in 1948/1949 and supported the planned economy only had to remember the "sparrow portions" of food available at the time and look to the "perfectly terrible conditions of our

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<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*



sisters and brothers in the East” to know that West German had pursued the correct path.<sup>49</sup>

Prior to the 1957 election, 15 million copies of a piece of CDU propaganda named “*Wir Alle*” (All of Us) was distributed to all households in West Germany. Most of “*Wir Alle*,” whose layout was designed to appear as a women’s magazine, dealt with “women’s concerns” such as child rearing, beauty products, and clothing. But interspersed within the brochure was political propaganda in support of the CDU/CSU. One such example portrayed children sitting by the Elbe river, generally considered the East/West divide of Germany, with a shattered bridge in the background (Figure 7.8). The banner under the photo proclaimed “This bridge over the Elbe will also be reconstructed.” Under the photo, the text explained,

Our successful economic policy has built secure fundamentals, which we can offer, along with our living conditions in democratic freedom, to the middle and eastern Germans. The late-returning POWs [*Spätheimkehrer*] and the Germans in the Soviet Zone, who know the “achievement” of eastern socialism, can attest: Adenauer and Erhard’s policies will achieve reunification—and with that a life of peace, freedom, and prosperity for all Germans.<sup>50</sup>

With the combination of the photos this propaganda was attempting to appeal to women in terms that the propagandist thought would be effective. One reading of the photo could imply that these children sitting on the banks of the Elbe were part of some broken family, in which brothers and sisters were separated. Economics, implemented by the CDU-led Federal Republic, was a means to bring together this splintered German family.

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

Again, political-economic issues were “packaged” for women in terms that were thought to be closer to female concerns.

There was also the creation of a masculine meaning of politics and economics as a source of the legitimacy of West Germany. One of Die Waage’s advertisements appearing prior to the 1957 Bundestag election proclaimed, “Real Men want to provide” (Figure 7.9). By this time in the advertisements, especially those appearing before elections, both Otto and Fritz agreed on the issues they discussed. While most of the advertisements from 1953 concentrated solely upon Otto and Fritz’s role as producers, this advertisement tied their own condition with that of West Germany as whole. They could now save money and feel secure because, “the Deutsche Mark is today just as good as the Dollar or the Swiss Frank.” The fact that “in about ten years the Federal Republic has gone from nothing point zero, to the fourth largest industrial state in world, and stands in third place in world trade” meant a certain stability and security for both the West German state and individual German men. Real men thought about the future, about providing for “Bertha and the kids.” The advancement of West Germany allowed men to do this. As with all of Die Waage’s advertisements in election years, the text concluded with a political plug for the CDU/CSU with “therefore we will stick with Erhard’s Social Market Economy in the future.”

Again, there was a very different meaning for the “civic” value of economic reconstruction. For men the strong West German economy reaffirmed their role as producers, and with that the ability to provide for their families. The fate of their nation

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<sup>50</sup> Wir Alle, ZSg 132/581, BA Koblenz.

and their own fate were interlinked. For women economic growth meant the possible reconstruction of a shattered family, be it their own or the whole German family. In addition, the creation of this specific understanding of economics had important political implications. Since the conservative CDU/CSU was the party in power, this economic upswing legitimized their role in the government at the expense of the CDU/CSU's main rival, the SPD. One common theme in the election campaigns from 1949 through 1957 was the CDU/CSU's claim as the party of responsibility. Part of this creation of a sense of security in many respects tied into the search for stability centered around the family that was prevalent in West German society at the time.

In the 1957 election one sees for the first time the influence of exact demographic research and advertising professionals upon Bundestag election campaigns. Particularly important was the emphasis of the CDU/CSU on its leading personalities as "brand names" of the party representing the party image. This was a break from older German electoral traditions of emphasizing a party's program. The CDU/CSU borrowed American political techniques in order to construct a new, West German political identity. The party was very much influenced by the Republican "We like Ike" campaigns of the 1950's.<sup>51</sup> In fact, the chairman of the CDU/CSU political campaigns traveled to the

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<sup>51</sup> The CDU/CSU campaign manager commented after his observation of the 1956 presidential campaign that "der Wahlkampf zu einem großen Teil vor den Fernsehschirmen und bei den Rundfunksendungen abspielt. Aber je näher die Wahlen herankommen, desto mehr treten die persönliche Vorstellung und der Kontakt des Kandidaten mit den Wählern in den Vordergrund," Günter Buchstab, ed., *Adenauer: "Wir haben wirklich etwas geschaffen."* *Die Protokolle des CDU-Bundesvorstands 1953-1957* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1990), 1221. For more on American Presidential campaigns,

United States to observe the presidential elections of 1952 and 1956. In this way the CDU/CSU observed the shift that was taking place in West Germany in the 1950s from ideological politics, a change the SPD had not yet recognized. Its campaigns were still based upon narrow ideological positions that failed to attract a broad range of interests. As part of the 1957 campaign, the CDU/CSU concentrated upon the West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer and his cabinet with one of the main slogans for the campaign, "*Adenauer und seine Mannschaft*" (Adenauer and his team).<sup>52</sup>

In some respects this personification of the CDU/CSU was done in gendered terms. The very term "*Mannschaft*" indicates the masculine nature of Adenauer's cabinet. The CDU/CSU played off the resonance that Chancellor Adenauer had with the West German people.<sup>53</sup> Adenauer represented an authoritative, patriarchal figure, someone who brought legitimacy to the West German state. In contrast, the most well-known member of his cabinet, the Economic Minister Ludwig Erhard, was often portrayed as a more approachable representative of the average West German who brought the Federal Republic Economic Miracle. Clearly, the leaders of the CDU/CSU campaign wanted to take advantage of Erhard's image as a minister of the people who

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see Kathleen Hall Jamieson, *Packaging the Presidency: A History and Criticism of Presidential Campaign Advertising* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

<sup>52</sup> For a full discussion of the 1957 election campaign, see Kitzinger, *German Electoral Politics*.

<sup>53</sup> One survey from December 1956 asked West Germans, "Which of the following characteristics, in your opinion, is descriptive of Adenauer?" The most frequent responses were "clever," "diplomatic," and "persistent, tough." They received a response

represented the interests of consumers, and not merely business.<sup>54</sup> One report from Die Waage explained that Erhard “counts as the most popular member of the federal cabinet, and indeed not only because his ministerial work has brought visible fruit for everyone, but also because of the originality of his temperament, his occasional inclination toward impulsiveness and not least because of his Bonhomie.”<sup>55</sup> The exploitation of this image was perhaps most effectively done through an advertising campaign, much of it put together by professional advertising firms, conducted by the CDU/CSU in leading magazines and newspapers in the months leading up to the election.<sup>56</sup> Prior to the publication of some of the advertisements, the CDU/CSU conducted a series of demographic tests of the advertisements. One series of the campaign, entitled “*Männer neben Adenauer*” (Men with Adenauer), highlighted the leadership of Adenauer and the support of his capable cabinet.

Erhard was the second most important character in this campaign with more advertisements concentrating upon him than any other member of the cabinet. In many of the advertisements, Erhard’s image was clearly constructed in a manner so that he would be appealing to women, the main electoral support for the CDU/CSU. The

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of 55 percent, 54 percent, and 51 percent respectively. Respondents could select more than one characteristic. Noelle and Neumann, eds., *The Germans*, 242.

<sup>54</sup> Leitlinien für den Bundestagwahlkampf, Argumenten und Tendenzen, VII-003-003/3 (ACDP).

<sup>55</sup> Die Prinzipien der Erhard-Columne, 20.5.57, NE 1159, LES.

CDU/CSU's advertising agent suggested that Erhard should be portrayed "as the defender of the consumer, optimally in a scene with housewives," as one advertisement depicted Erhard at an outdoor market, among women doing their shopping (Figure 7.10).<sup>57</sup> The text, like other CDU/CSU advertisements, identified the currency reform as the crucial point when the West German economy began to rebound. The advertisement connected Erhard with Adenauer and the legitimacy of the CDU/CSU-led government by pointing out that, "Adenauer named the bold (*mutigen*) professor in 1949 as the Economics Minister in the first, freely-elected government of the Federal Republic." Erhard is referred to with all of his titles: "Professor" and "Federal Economics Minister," giving him an air of authority which contributed to the legitimacy of his policies. The text also took special pains to create a connection between Erhard and housewives. It commented that, "Eighty percent of the wages and income go through the hands of the housewives. Therefore the Economics Ministers especially likes to speak to them. For them he personally concerns himself with prices. Housewives are his most important partner." He was portrayed as one of them, but at the same time a figure who can move within the halls of power defending women's interests.

The final advertisement was run almost exactly like the one tested, although in the final version Erhard was without his trademark cigar. This was because the demographic

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<sup>56</sup> For an overview of the campaign, see the SPD after report of the 1957 campaign, "Gegnerische Kräfte und Einflüsse im Bundestagwahlkampf 1957" located in the Friederich Ebert Stiftung library, Bonn.

<sup>57</sup> Leitsätze Für die Besprechung über Wahlpropaganda der CDU 1957, VII-003-003/3, ACDP.

survey indicated that “the thing that most disturbed people in the Erhard advertisement is that he is speaking with housewives with a cigar in his mouth.” Forty percent of the respondents remembered from the advertisements Erhard’s connection with the housewife and the consumer, the main image that the CDU/CSU leadership wanted people to hold.<sup>58</sup>

An alternative advertisement of Erhard appeared that portrayed Erhard in a more “masculine” light. It portrayed Erhard with a stronger looking profile while the text explained Erhard’s accomplishments of bringing Germany back into the world economy. The advertisement overall possessed more resonance than the first Erhard advertisement, especially with men.<sup>59</sup> Yet, the CDU/CSU published the advertisement depicting the “softer,” more approachable Erhard with housewives more widely than the “harder,” more distant Erhard advertisement set in a masculine setting. Erhard with housewives appeared in all of the leading women’s magazines in the weeks before the election.

Together, these images created a sense of stability within the CDU/CSU family, or as expressed in its slogan, the “team.” While Adenauer looked out for West Germany’s standing in the world, Erhard concentrated upon the domestic issue of economics and increasing West Germans’ living standards. By 1957 they were a proven commodity being sold to the West German populace. This idea underscored the message

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<sup>58</sup> Männer neben Adenauer: Eine Serie von Anzeigen Tests (II), Institut für Demoskopie, ZSg 132/556/III, BA Koblenz.

<sup>59</sup> Männer neben Adenauer: Eine Serie von Anzeigen Tests (V), Institut für Demoskopie, ZSg 132/556/VI, BA Koblenz.

that West Germans should pursue "*Keine Experimente*" (No Experiments), another main slogan of the CDU/CSU, which was used to undermine the SPD, who were portrayed at best as incapable of forming an effective government, or at worst as having direct ties with the communist regime to the East. From this perspective the CDU/CSU was creating an image of itself similar to what the sociologist Schelsky described as vital to West Germans: wholeness, completeness, stability, and security. The CDU/CSU promised these attributes through the Social Market Economy and the Economic Miracle.

It is striking that in the CDU/CSU's propaganda on economics in the 1957 campaign any mention of religious considerations is completely absent, unlike the propaganda from the 1949 campaign. This was a result of the CDU/CSU's careful analysis of the key demographic developments leading up to the 1957 election. In March 1957 the CDU/CSU commissioned from the Institut für Demoskopie a survey to examine the sociological support of the parties. The report concluded that the strongest CDU/CSU followers, those unlikely to change their vote, came from Catholic women living in the countryside. In addition, the more often someone attended church, the more likely she/he would be a firm CDU/CSU supporter. The SPD's stronghold was in the industrial cities with Protestant, working-class males. About 29 percent of the population identified itself as supporters of either the SPD or the CDU/CSU respectively. The survey also indicated that about 21 percent of the population was still undecided about the election, yet planning to vote. This group was generally heterogeneous, but a few characteristics of this group emerged in the survey. It showed that a high percentage of this group was women (56 percent), Protestant (68 percent), and did not attend church often. From such



a profile of the crucial undecided vote, it is obvious what the CDU/CSU was trying to do through its propaganda.<sup>60</sup> The party did not have to tailor its propaganda to the Catholic woman for she was likely a strong supporter of the party. Instead, propaganda on economics was directed toward a crucial segment of the population that would act as the “swing vote.” In many respects the party was borrowing from advertising the technique of targeting a product for a certain sociological group.

Throughout the 1950s, the CDU/CSU enjoyed steadily increasing success in the Bundestag elections. After capturing 45 percent of the vote in the 1953 election, the CDU/CSU increased its vote in 1957 to 50.2 percent, the largest percentage of the vote any party has ever collected in the Federal Republic. In many respects this was the highpoint of the Adenauer government. The Social Democratic Party, crushed in defeat, went through a painful reform period in which its top party leaders, many of whom were holdovers from the Weimar Republic days, were jettisoned in favor of a new, more vibrant leadership. The crucial outcome of this reform came in 1959 when the party officially renounced its Marxist underpinnings and accepted the free market in the Bad Godesberg Program.<sup>61</sup> The free market, although with a clear social element, was

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<sup>60</sup> Parteien unter der Lupe, Eine Analyse der Wähler, Frühjahr 1957, Institut für Demoskopie, ZSg 132/555, BA Koblenz.

<sup>61</sup> For more on the Bad Godesberg Program see Harold Kent Schellenger Jr., *The SPD in the Bonn Republic: A Socialist Party Modernizes* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1968).

accepted in West German politics. In addition, by 1961 surveys indicated that 64 percent of the West German population was in support of the free market economy.<sup>62</sup>

Undoubtedly the rising economic fortunes of West Germans had a crucial impact upon the development of West German politics. During the 1950s there was a conscious and concerted effort to construct a political meaning of this “Economic Miracle.” Looking at this development through the lens of gender is particularly productive, in part because the war and demographic imbalances had put gender roles into question. Conceptions of gender were essential to the project of selling the free market and the CDU/CSU. Overall, the ideal images produced by conservative political and economic interests during the 1950s underscored the reconstruction of what could be termed “traditional” gender roles. The attitudes used by the CDU/CSU to mobilize electorate had their roots in pre-Nazi Germany, but were adapted to the new political and social conditions of West Germany. From this perspective, the so-called “*Stunde Null*” (hour zero) of 1945 seems questionable in its validity. Instead, the early years of the Federal Republic were a transitional period, during which the traditions of the Weimar Republic were refashioned and transformed to help construct consensus and a stable democracy.

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<sup>62</sup> Hans Wellman, “Die Soziale Marktwirtschaft im Spiegel von Meinungsumfragen” (Ph.D. diss., University of Cologne, 1962), 110.

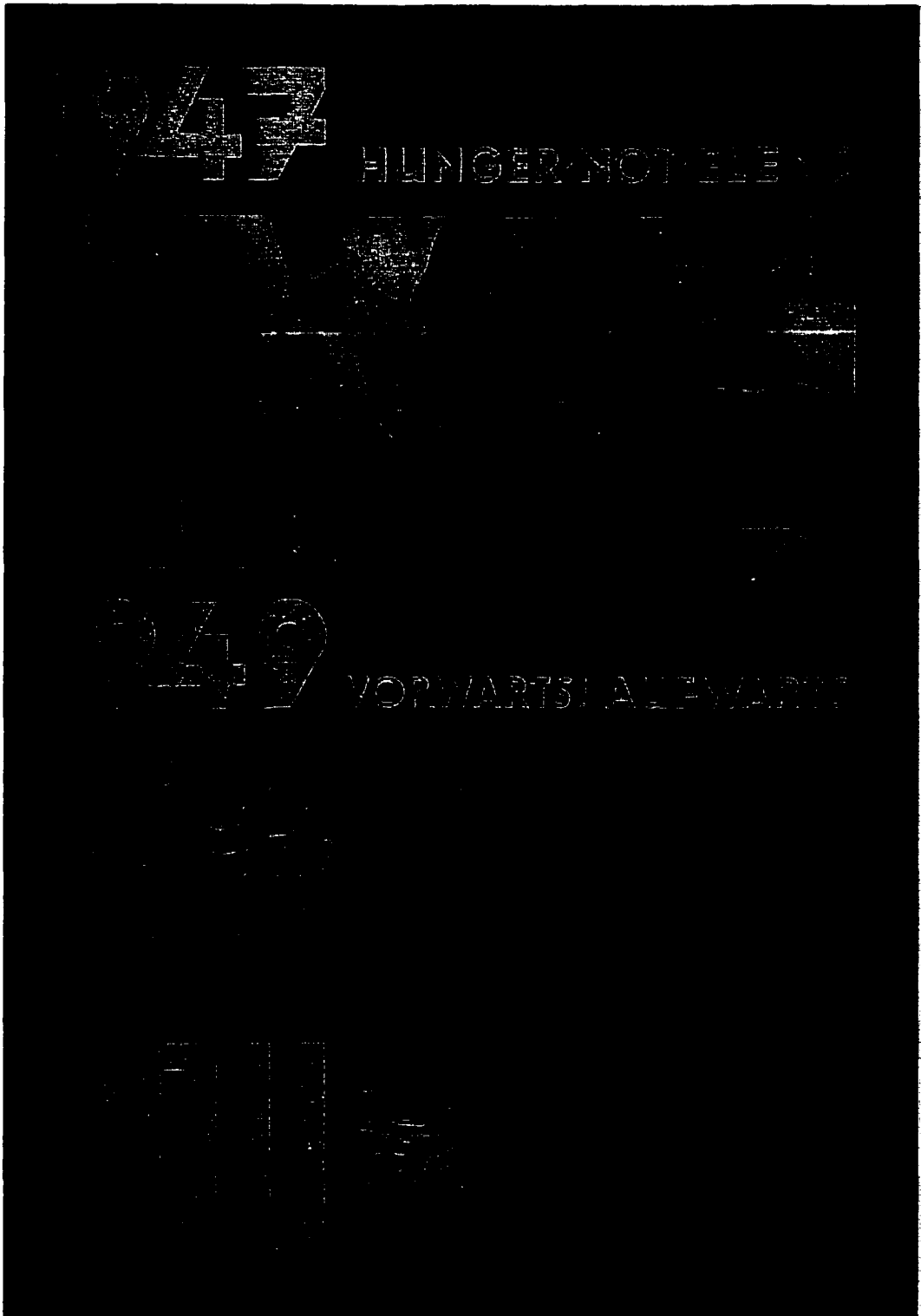
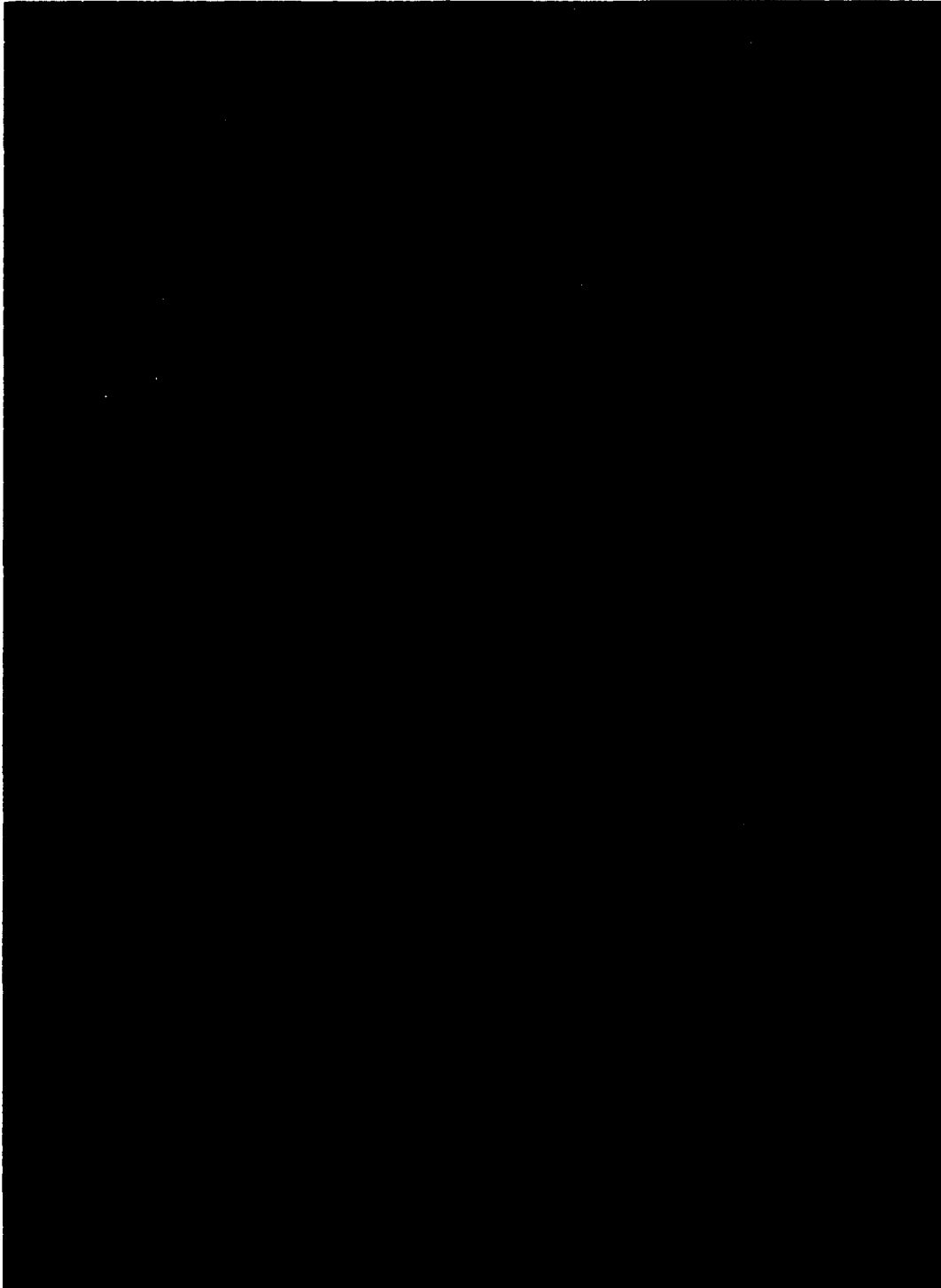


Figure 7.1: Der Erfolg der CDU



**Figure 7.2: Es soll noch besser werden!**

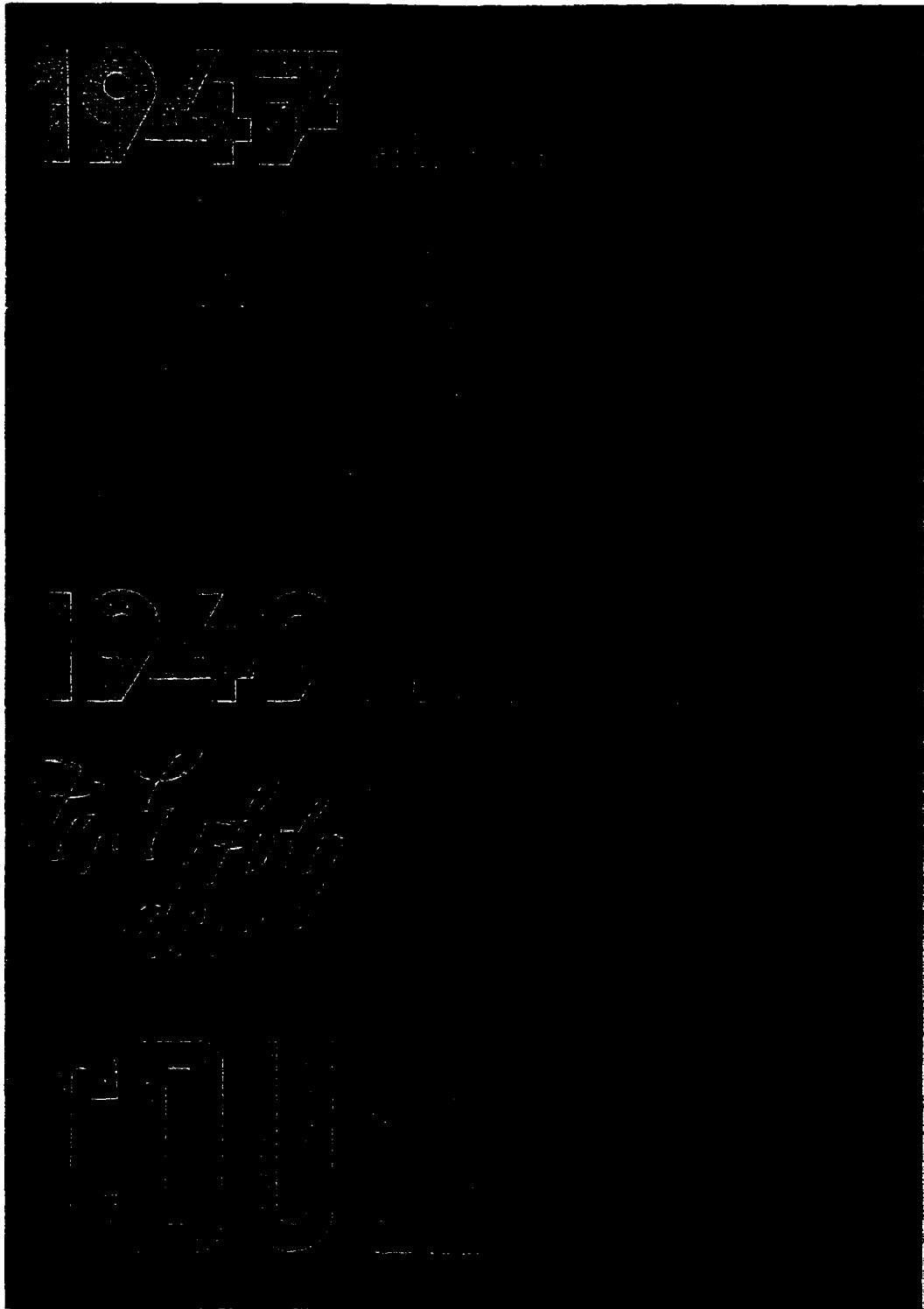


Figure 7.3: Der Erfolg der CDU

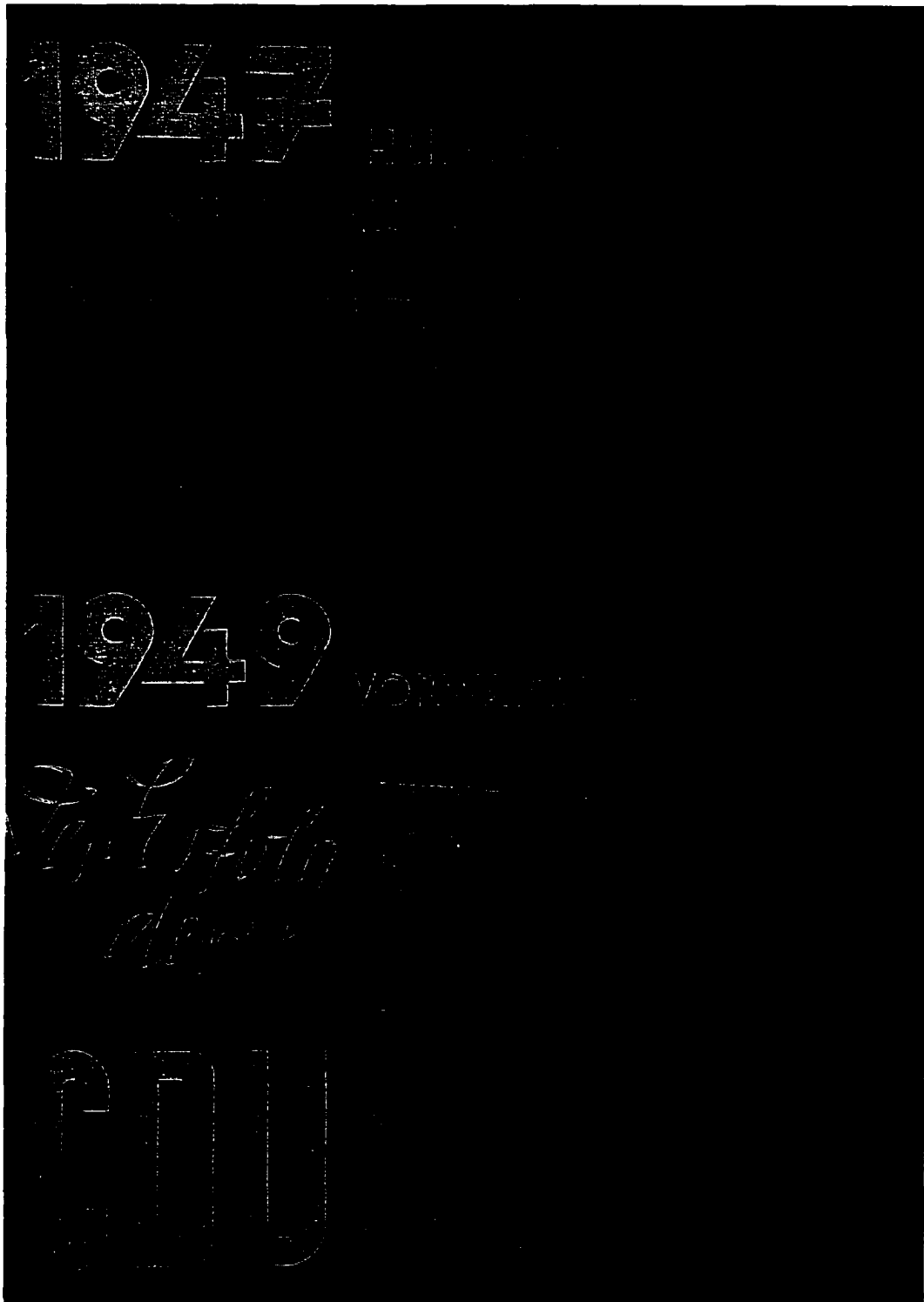


Figure 7.4: Der Erfolg der CDU



## DAS DEUTSCHE »WUNDER«

Nicht wir nennen es so, sondern fremde Reisende, die Westdeutschland seit 1948 besuchen. Sie meinen die Wiedergeburt unserer Wirtschaft: aus Schutt und Trümmern vollzog sie sich in einem besetzten, zweigeteilten Land mit zehn Millionen Flüchtlingen und einer zum großen Teil zerstörten oder demontierten Industrie.

Tatsachen veranschaulichen, was hier seit 1948 geleistet wurde: Westdeutschland erzeugte 1951 insgesamt mehr Güter aller Art als 1938, im Jahr des Höchststandes unserer Vorkriegswirtschaft. Die industrielle Produktion war 1951 um 36% höher als 1936. Sie erreichte bei lang entbehrten Massenverbrauchsgegenständen wie z. B. Möbeln, Hausrat, Bekleidung, Rundfunkgeräten und Motorrädern nie dagewesene Höchststufen. Zugleich stieg die deutsche Ausfuhr um das Siebenfache.

Wir selbst nennen es kein Wunder, was hier seit 1948 vollbracht wurde. Vielmehr waren es der Lebenswille unseres Volkes, Fleiß und Können unserer Arbeiter und Unternehmer, welche die Schicksalswende erarbeiteten.

Die SOZIALE MARKTWIRTSCHAFT brach 1948 die Diktatur des Bezugscheines und gab den Auftakt für den Wiederaufbau. Sie lehrt uns: Nicht die Verteilung des Mangels, sondern nur die ständige Steigerung der Produktion vermag die Lebenshaltung des Volkes zu verbessern.

Einige mutige Männer riefen Arbeiter und Unternehmer, die Träger der deutschen Wirtschaftsenergie, zum freien Wettbewerb der Leistung auf. Sie folgten dem Ruf. In echter Solidarität bauten sie - von den jüngsten Hilfsarbeitern bis zu den Leitern der Großbetriebe - ihre Arbeitsstätten gemeinsam wieder auf. In einmütiger Zusammenarbeit - im Zeichen der SOZIALEN MARKTWIRTSCHAFT - produzieren Unternehmer und Arbeiterschaft gemeinsam immer mehr, immer bessere und immer billigere Güter, zum Wohle der Gesamtheit. Nur so kommen wir Alle wieder auf einen grünen Zweig.

Sorgen wir dafür, daß die Grundlage unseres gemeinschaftlichen Schaffens, daß der SOZIALE FRIEDE erhalten bleibt!

Zum Wohltand Aller durch gerechte Kraft



führt die SOZIALE MARKTWIRTSCHAFT

Figure 7.5: Das deutsche "Wunder"



## Geld macht nicht glücklich, aber...

»... es beruhigt außerordentlich«, sagt FRITZ zu seinem Freund OTTO.  In-  
halt seiner Lohntüte in die  Brieftasche steckt.

Fritz: Gerade heute muß ich daran denken: wenn ich als Junge Geburtstag hatte, bekam ich vom Vater immer einen Briefumschlag, da stand drauf »Bar-  
geld lacht« —

Otto: Und was war drin?

Fritz: Mal 5 Mark, mal 10 Mark. Kauf damit, was Dir gefällt, sagte der Vater; kannst's auch sparen, sagte er, Geld macht frei.

Otto: Und wie kommst Du gerade heute darauf?

Fritz: Weil die D-Mark Geburtstag hat. Fünf Jahre ist sie heute alt.

Otto: Schon fünf Jahre seit der Währungsreform! - wie schnell man sowas vergißt. Aber war ja schließlich auch nur ein Schwindel.

Fritz: Was Du nicht sagst! Dir war wohl die Zeit lieber, als wir für unseren Lohn nur Kalorien, Siedlerstolz und Bruchware bekamen, damals, unter der Zwangs- und Kartenwirtschaft? Oder hattest Du genug Hunderter, um auf dem schwarzen Markt einzukaufen?

Otto: Natürlich nicht. Ach, alles Geld ist ja nur bedrucktes Papier —

Fritz: Das aber zu Gold wird, wenn eine gesunde Wirtschaft dahintersteht. Du weißt doch, daß heute unsere D-Mark in der ganzen Welt zu den gesündesten Währungen zählt und überall zum vollen Wert eingewechselt wird.

Otto: Keine Ahnung, wieso denn das?

Fritz: Weil Erhard vor fünf Jahren mit der Bezugscheinwirtschaft Schluß machte und zugleich mit der Währungsreform seine SOZIALE MARKTWIRTSCHAFT einführte. Er brachte Produktion und Kaufkraft wieder ins Gleichgewicht und verhalf uns allen dazu, wieder zu arbeiten, zu kaufen und zu verbrauchen. So machte Ludwig Erhard unsere D-Mark so kerngesund wie den Dollar und den Schweizer Franken.

Otto: So, hat er das getan? Na, dann Hut ab vor dem Mann!

ERHARDS SOZIALE MARKTWIRTSCHAFT hat seit 1948 unser Geld wertbeständig gemacht. — Sorgen wir dafür, daß uns Erhards Soziale Marktwirtschaft erhalten bleibt. Sie sichert uns Aufstieg und sozialen Frieden.



### DIE WAAGE

Gemeinschaft zur Förderung des Sozialen Ausgleichs e.V.  
Vorsitz: Franz Greiss - Köln am Rhein · Unter Sachsenhausen 14-26

Figure 7.6: Geld macht nicht glücklich, aber...



# WIR FRAUEN *haben nichts vergessen* und immerhin einiges dazugelernt



Wirklich, sind es erst fünf Jahre her, daß wir anfangen, ein menschenwürdiges Dasein zu führen? Daß wir von traurigen, ständig übermüdeten, unterernährten, ewig hinter etwas herjagenden Schlangensteherrinnen zu normalen Hausfrauen wurden, die wieder planen, rechnen und ganz nach Belieben einkaufen können? Das heißt, normal waren wir damals auch. Das wurde uns sogar, behördlich abgestempelt, bescheinigt. Außerordentlich arbeitsame, planmäßig gelenkte „Normal“-verbraucher. Ein herrlicher Zustand war das!

Erinnern Sie sich noch? Das war die Zeit, in der die Kalocden auf 800 angekommen waren und unser Lebensmut auf dem Nullpunkt. Wir jonglierten mit 7 g Fett, 10 g Zucker und 20 g Fleisch wie ein Seiltänzer über dem Abgrund des Hungers und der Kälte. Zwei



Pfund Brot in der Woche! Damit sollten wir heranwachsende Kinder, einen Mann, der zur Arbeit ging, ernähren.

O, es war alles großartig organisiert und „bewirtschaftet“. Das waren die Jahre, in denen unser Leben nur noch aus „Ansehenbestand“. Und dann gab es noch die nächtlichen Fahrten quer durch Deutschland in überfüllten Waggons ohne Fenster, auf dem Trittbrett oder der Plattform der Züge, um einen Rucksack voll Kartoffeln, ein paar Pfund Obst heimzubringen – wenn man Glück hatte und am Bahnhof nicht erwischt wurde.

Dann kam die Währungsreform, und es kam die **SOZIALE MARKTWIRTSCHAFT**. Beinahe nicht zu fassen für uns körperlich und seelisch zermürbte Hausfrauen! Über Nacht sozusagen wurden wir plötzlich von demütigen „Bezugsberechtigten“ zu geschätzten Kundinnen. Sehr geschätzten, umworbe-



nen und zuvorkommend bedienten Kundinnen. Es war wie ein Wunder! Die Regale füllten sich mit Dingen, die unsere Kinder kaum dem Namen nach kannten. Unser Geld hatte wieder Wert. Wir konnten wieder kaufen, wo wir wollten und was wir wollten. Und wenn wir auch manchmal knapp bei Kasse waren, na ja, wir hatten doch selbst für den geringsten Betrag wieder die Möglichkeit zu wählen, selbst zu entscheiden und abzulehnen, was uns nicht gefiel. Es war, als ob ein Tor in die Freiheit sich aufgetan hätte. Die Welt wurde heller, das Leben wieder lebenswert.

Kann ein Mann uns überhaupt nachfühlen, was dieser Wandel gerade für uns Frauen bedeutete, die wir am bittersten unter einem Zustand gelitten hatten, der nicht nur die letzten Reste unseres Selbstbewußtseins zer-



brochen, sondern der uns auch angesichts der bittenden Augen unserer Kinder an den Rand der Verzweiflung gebracht hatte? Das noch einmal erleben? Der Himmel bewahre uns davor. Wer einmal mitgemacht hat, was „Planwirtschaft“ bedeutet, ist für immer kurier. Wir wollen uns nicht mehr die Errungenschaften der **SOZIALEN MARKTWIRTSCHAFT** wegnehmen lassen. Wir wissen heute, welch unwahrscheinlichen Aufschwung wir ihr in den wenigen Jahren verdanken. Wir wissen, daß nur im freien Spiel der Kräfte, im Wechsel zwischen Angebot und Nachfrage, die Hausfrau ein Faktor ist, mit dem man rechnen muß.

Und man soll mit uns rechnen. Man kann es auch. Wir Frauen sind uns klar darüber, daß diese oft kritisierte, von gewisser Seite oft angefeindete **SOZIALE MARKTWIRTSCHAFT** der einzige Weg ist, der uns Schritt für Schritt einer besseren Zukunft entgegenführt.

Man verschone uns daher mit Phrasen. Wir haben beides am eigenen Leibe erlebt - Planwirtschaft und Soziale Marktwirtschaft. Wir Frauen haben uns entschieden - für

ERHARDS  
SOZIALE MARKTWIRTSCHAFT

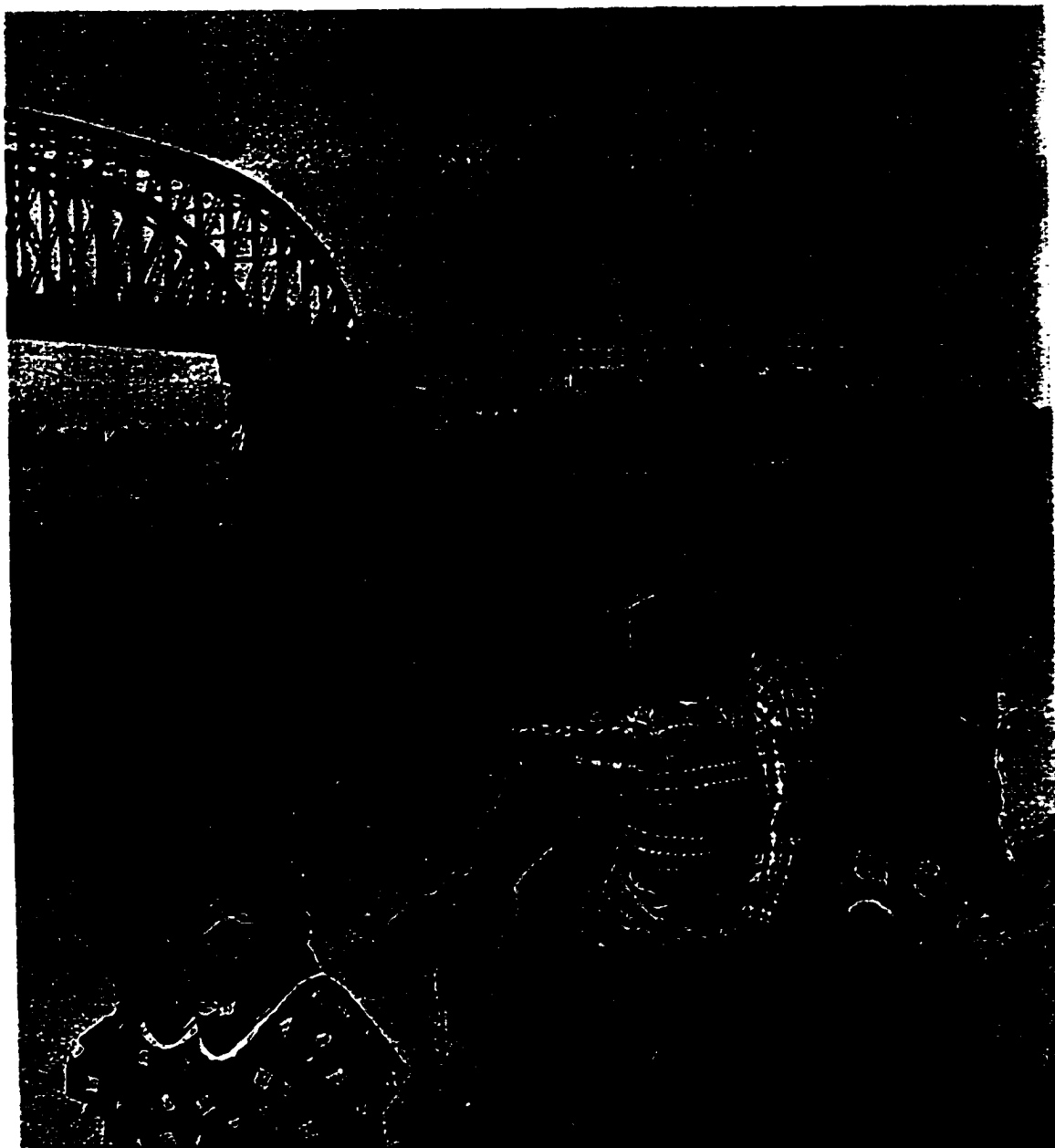
DIE WAAGE



Gemeinschaft zur Förderung  
des Sozialen Ausgleichs e.V.

Vorsitz: Franz Greiss  
Köln am Rhein - Unter Sachsenhausen 14-26

Figure 7.7: Wir frauen haben nichts vergessen und immerhin einiges dazugelernt!



## Auch diese Brücke über die Elbe wird wiederaufgebaut werden

Auch die beiden auseinandergerissenen Teile Deutschlands werden wieder verbunden werden: wenn die Politik, die sich und folgerichtig den Wiederaufbau bisher vollzogen hat, fortgesetzt wird. Dazu ist es notwendig, diese Politik friedlichen Fortschritts am 15. September neu zu bestätigen. Eine solche Wahl würde allen in Frage stellen. Unsere erfolgreiche Wirtschaftspolitik hat das sichere Fundament ge-

legt, auf dem wir auch den Mittel- und Ostdeutschen unsere Lebensbedingungen in demokratischer Freiheit bieten können. Die Spätkommunisten und die Deutschen in der Sowjetzone, die die „Errungenschaften“ des Sozialismus kennen, können bezeugen: Die Politik Adenauers und Erhard's wird auch die Wiedervereinigung schaffen — und damit für alle Deutschen ein Leben in Frieden, Freiheit und Wohlstand.

Verlag Deutsche Wirtschaft G. m. b. H., Berlin/West · Adressen: Walter Schmitt — Postfach 1000 · Druck: Carlomagno Druckerei, Berlin

Figure 7.8: Auch diese Brücke über die Elbe wird wiederaufgebaut werden



## Richtige Männer wollen vorsorgen

- Das ist schon was, jeder bei uns hat einen sicheren Arbeitsplatz und muß keine Angst haben, morgen stempeln zu gehen!•
- Die Arbeit schmeckt doch besser, Fritz, wenn man nicht für den nächsten Tag schuftet — wenn man Geld verdient, auf das man sich verlassen kann, weil die D-Mark heute ebenso gut ist wie der Dollar oder der Schweizer Franken.•
- Ja, und es ist doch unheimlich schnell gegangen! In rund zehn Jahren ist die Bundesrepublik von null Komma nichts zum viergrößten Industriestaat geworden und steht im Weltmarkt schon an dritter Stelle. Das sind Tatsachen!•
- Es hat sich viel geändert. Man denkt auch anders. Die Gedanken gehen weiter in die Zukunft, nachdem alles wieder im Lot ist. •
- Sage ruhig: nachdem man wieder was im Rücken hat, wenn es auch noch nicht viel ist. Ein richtiger Mann will eben für die Zukunft vorsorgen und nicht nur von der Hand in den Mund leben. Schließlich muß ich ja auch an Bertha und die Kinder denken. •
- Selbstverständlich, mir geht es genauso. Darum spare ich fürs Eigenheim. Eigener Herd ist Goldes wert!•
- Vorsorgen und zu Eigentum kommen kann man auf manche Weise. Hauptsache, man tut es überhaupt. Denn das gibt einen freien Kopf —•
- ... und die nötige Sicherheit. Es ist zum mal ein beruhigendes und schönes Gefühl, aus eigener Kraft seine Familie vorzubringen und zu sichern. Und dafür haben wir in unserer Wirtschaftsform eine gute Grundlage.



Deshalb bleiben wir auch in Zukunft  
bei Erhards Sozialer Marktwirtschaft

Die Waage - Gemeinschaft zur Förderung des Sozialen Ausgleichs e. V. - Vorstand: Franz Gröning - Köln am Rhein - Schölergasse 22/24

Figure 7.9: Richtige Männer wollen vorsorgen

MÄNNER UM ADENAUER:

# Professor Ludwig Erhard



Als die Menschen im Juni 1948 an die Schalter der Banken und Sparkassen drängten, um das schreckliche Geld in neue Scheine umzutauschen, ertönte über die Rundfunksender der „drei Westzonen“ die Stimme eines Mannes, die der Bevölkerung bis auf den heutigen Tag im Ohr hieselben sollte. Es war die Stimme Ludwig Erhards. Er ist, was er seither immer wieder gesagt hat; er mahnte mit sicheren, überzeugenden Worten zur Vernunft. Als Leiter der obersten Wirtschaftsbehörde jener Zeit unternahm er zugleich ein Werk von geschichtlicher Bedeutung. Engagen den Weisungen und Ratsheligen der Anhänger einer zentralen Kommandowirtschaft schaffte er die Lebensmittellisten und Bezugscheine, ab. Damit verließ er der D-Mark echte Kaufkraft.

Adenauer holte den mutigen Professor 1949 als Wirtschaftsminister in die erste, frei gewählte Regierung der Bundesrepublik. Erhard ist seiner Politik, Anwalt der Verbraucher zu sein, bis auf den heutigen Tag treu geblieben. Er gilt als unverwundlicher Optimist. Aber seine Kraftquellen liegen tiefer. Er glaubt aus wissenschaftlich begründeter Erkenntnis an die Idee der Freiheit. Mit der Überzeugung seiner

Persönlichkeit sagt der geborene Franke den Unternehmern und den Gewerkschaften oft unbehagliche Wahrheiten. Er will, daß freies Angebot und freie Nachfrage den Markt regeln. Die gute und ausreichende Versorgung des Verbrauchers ist seiner Meinung nach die Grundlage einer gesunden Volkswirtschaft.

80 Prozent der Löhne und Gehälter geben durch die Hand der Hausfrauen. Deshalb spricht der Wirtschaftsminister mit Vorliebe zu ihnen, deshalb küssert er sich persönlich um die Preise. Die Hausfrauen sind seine wichtigsten Partner, Ludwig Erhard gehört zur CDU/CSU, der Partei, die unbeeinträchtigt ihre Ziele verfolgt:

WOHLSTAND FÜR ALLE · EINHEIT FÜR DEUTSCHLAND · FRIEDEN IN DER WELT

Figure 7.10: Männer um Adenauer: Professor Ludwig Erhard

## CHAPTER 8

### THE TRIUMPH OF THE ECONOMIC MIRACLE: THE CDU/CSU AND THE 1957 BUNDESTAG ELECTION

The 1957 Bundestag election was the highpoint of the CDU/CSU's electoral success during Adenauer's government.<sup>1</sup> For the first and only time in the Federal Republic of Germany, a political party gained a majority of the vote with the CDU/CSU's 50.2 percent. In many respects, the trend of transferring votes from splinter parties to the main parties of the CDU/CSU, SPD, and FDP continued in the 1957 election. In 1949, splinter parties captured almost 28 percent of the vote. In the 1957 election this figure had dropped to slightly over 10 percent. The CDU/CSU picked up most of these votes, giving the party its greatest electoral victory.<sup>2</sup>

In addition, the election was a crucial factor in pushing the SPD along its painful road of reform that led to the Bad Godesberg Program in 1959. The SPD had gained in terms of overall votes (6.9 million to 9.4 million) and the percentage of the vote (29.2 percent to 31.8 percent) since the 1949 election. Nevertheless, the party fell further

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<sup>1</sup> For a good treatment of the 1957 Bundestag election see U. W. Kitzinger, *German Electoral Politics: A Study of the 1957 Campaign* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960).

<sup>2</sup> Richard D. Partch, "The Transformation of the West German Party System: Patterns of Electoral Change and Consistency," *German Studies Review* 3 (1980): 85-90.

behind its main competitor. The party could not break out its “thirty percent ghetto” made up primarily of the working class vote. Without a doubt, the 1957 election was the apex of what has been termed the “Adenauer Chancellery.”

The 1957 election was also significant in terms of the development of West Germany’s political culture. In the course of the campaign, the CDU/CSU fully applied the use of demographic surveys and advertising principles that had been developed in the transitional 1953 campaign. The CDU/CSU had used demographic surveys to shape their campaign in 1953 that gave the broad opinion of the West German public. In the 1957 election demographic surveys could measure public opinion more precisely. The CDU/CSU researched more exactly the sociological structure of the supporters of the various parties. In addition, the CDU/CSU began to research particular pieces of propaganda to ascertain the exact resonance of the propaganda through the West German population. The difference this made for the CDU/CSU was that the party could tailor its propaganda to speak to specific sociological groups, thereby maximizing the effectiveness of its campaign. In this way, the CDU/CSU was borrowing techniques from commercial advertising of carefully investigating the “target” audience of its product, in this case a party image. In this election the “modernization” or “Americanization” of West German election campaigns came to be developed more fully.

The CDU/CSU’s planning for the 1957 election began immediately following the victory in the 1953 election. The CDU/CSU wanted to coordinate the campaign more effectively with lower levels of the party, and especially the representatives within the

Bundestag. In late 1956, Bruno Heck, the head of the *Bundesgeschäftsstelle* (central party headquarters), sent out to the state and local organizations a number of demographic surveys to help them with the campaign. The *Bundesgeschäftsstelle* also generated a sociological analysis of the West German population in terms of gender, religion education, class, and size of home town/city. In addition, a statistical analysis of the previous Bundestag and Landestag elections was provided to CDU/CSU organizations. Finally, each Bundestag representative or candidate received sociological and political analysis of each election district. With this information, the CDU/CSU candidates possessed a wealth of data to campaign effectively at the local level.<sup>3</sup>

In the spring of 1957 the Institut für Demoskopie researched the support of the major political parties in the report, "*Parteien unter der Lupe*" (Parties under the microscope). The report broke down the supporters of the various parties into three groups of "hard," "middle," and "weak" supporters according to age, sex, education, income, religion, and occupation among other categories. The survey found a few tendencies in the sociological make up of CDU/CSU supporters. It reported that Protestant followers of the CDU/CSU were more likely to be in the "middle" or "weak" category. Catholics were more likely to be part of the "hard" category. The more often a person attended church, the more likely she/he would be a strong supporter of the CDU/CSU. Interestingly, this survey did not categorize supporters of the parties

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<sup>3</sup> Heck to Staatssekretär Lenz, 13.9.1956, I-172-32/4 (NL Lenz), Archiv für Christlich-Demokratische Politik, Sankt Augustin, (hereafter ACDP).

according to their possible background as refugees from East Germany or other areas in central or eastern Europe.<sup>4</sup>

In addition, the survey identified the voters who appeared to be solidly in the SPD's camp. The typical "hard" supporter tended to be male (57 percent), not highly educated (91 percent *Volkschule* only), and from the working class (78 percent). This group of "hard" SPD voters constituted, by the Institut für Demoskopie's estimates, about 11 percent of the West German population. Along with these "hard" voters, the "middle" and "weak," SPD supporters were probably not going to drift into the bourgeois parties' camp.<sup>5</sup>

The survey also reported the sociological make up of undecided voters. It indicated that both the CDU/CSU and the SPD had support from about 28 percent of the population, respectively. In addition, 21 percent of respondents did not identify with any specific party. Undoubtedly, this group was a heterogeneous group. Nevertheless, a few characteristics of this group emerged. Overall, the survey showed that the CDU/CSU had strong support from the Catholic vote. But this was not enough to get elected. The weakest supporters of the CDU/CSU and those who were undecided were heavily weighted toward women, Protestants, and the better educated. It was to this segment of

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<sup>4</sup> Parteien unter der Lupe, Eine Analyse der Wähler, Frühjahr 1957, Institut für Demoskopie, ZSg 132/555, Bundesarchiv Koblenz (hereafter BA Koblenz).

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.; Wolfgang Hirsch-Weber and Klaus Schütz found that voters floated within either the socialist or bourgeois camps, but rarely between them. That is, an undecided voter within the bourgeois would not vote socialist, but instead chose among the



the population that the CDU/CSU had to gear its message. It constituted the key “swing vote” that was crucial for success or failure in the election. The Catholic vote was almost guaranteed to the party. Besides, the Catholic churches in West Germany left no doubt for which party they wanted their flocks to vote. From this perspective, it is clear why the union parties did not emphasize its Catholic roots in their propaganda produced at the national level. Instead, an image of the party was constructed to attract the all important “undecided” voters.<sup>6</sup>

This more exact, conscious construction of the CDU/CSU’s image was achieved with the help of professional advertising agencies, a first in West German elections. Nevertheless, the impact of agencies appeared to be relatively limited in the 1957 election campaign in comparison to their impact in following elections. A report on the 1961 Bundestag election published by Konrad Kraske, the head of the CDU/CSU campaign in 1961, in January 1962 pointed out that, “The *Bundesgeschäftsstelle* drew upon two advertising agents for the 1961 election campaign, who were gathered together in a discussion circle under the leadership of *Bundesgeschäftsführer*, but had them work besides each other in competition.”<sup>7</sup> In the 1957 election campaign two advertising agents, Dr. Hegemann of Düsseldorf and Die Werbe of Essen, performed the function of

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bourgeois parties. *Wähler und Gewählte: Eine Untersuchung der Bundestagwahlen 1953* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Franz Vahlen, 1957), 163-182.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 163-182.

<sup>7</sup> Dr. Konrad Kraske, *Die Bundestagwahl 1961: Vorbereitung-Ergebnis-Folgerungen. Eine Analyse im Auftrag der Bundesvorstandes der CDU* (Bonn: January 1962). Report located in the library of the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Sankt Augustin.

designing two specific pieces of the CDU/CSU's propaganda: posters and profiles of CDU/CSU leaders appearing in illustrated magazines.<sup>8</sup> But in 1957 these advertising agents were not called upon to help provide the basic conceptualization of the campaign as they would in the 1961 campaign.

In addition, although political parties, governmental organizations, and various interest groups had utilized demographic surveys since 1948, the 1957 election was the first election in which the use of the surveys really blossomed. The CDU/CSU had been following the general trend of public opinion since the Federal Press Agency had contracted the Institut für Demoskopie and the EMNID Institut in 1951 to conduct regular surveys for the government. But in the 1957 election demographic surveys were used much more precisely to test even particular pieces of propaganda. In addition, the CDU/CSU researched its main slogans of the campaign through demographic surveys conducted by the Institut für Demoskopie, including the slogans of "*Keine Experimente*" and "*Wohlstand für Alle.*"<sup>9</sup> In her defense of the use of demographic research as part of the political process, Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann likened surveys to plebiscites, a most basic form of democracy. But in many respects, the CDU used demographic surveys not only as "taking the pulse of the nation," but instead as a means of pre-testing the party's

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<sup>8</sup> For an overview of the CDU/CSU's newspaper and advertising campaigns, see the SPD report, "Gegnerische Kräfte und Einflüsse im Bundestagswahlkampf 1957 (Bonn: SPD Vorstand, 1958), 48-52.

<sup>9</sup> Gerhard Schmidtchen, *Die befragte Nation: Über den Einfluss der Meinungsforschung auf die Politik* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Verlag Rombach, 1959), 155-156.

propaganda to find its resonance throughout the public. The surveys were used not so much to know public opinion so that the party could enter into a dialogue with it, but rather in order to manipulate it and exploit it.

The CDU/CSU concentrated its propaganda campaign upon the personality of the Chancellor. This was a lesson learned from the American-style of election campaigns, such as the “We like Ike” slogans of the 1952 and 1956 presidential campaigns.<sup>10</sup> In fact, the head of the CDU’s campaign, Bruno Heck, traveled to the United States to observe the 1952 and 1956 presidential campaigns.<sup>11</sup> There he would have seen the emphasis in the campaigns upon the creation of a presidential candidate’s image, a characteristic of American campaigns since the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. In addition, by the 1952 campaign, both political parties in the United States were utilizing professional advertising agents to shape their campaigns, a technique that the CDU/CSU picked up on for the 1957 campaign. Particularly effective in the United States was the use of television spots to project Eisenhower into the consciousness of the American public.<sup>12</sup> It was clear that one thing that Heck had brought from America was the emphasis placed upon personalities in political campaigns.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> For a discussion of Eisenhower’s campaigns see Robert J. Dinkin, *Campaigning in America: A History of Election Practices* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1989).

<sup>11</sup> See Walter Henkels, *99 Bonner Köpfe* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Bucherei, 1965), 126.

<sup>12</sup> Kathleen Hall Jamieson, *Packaging the Presidency: A History and Criticism of Presidential Campaign Advertising* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 3-121.

But it appeared that by 1957 Adenauer's popularity had waned since the 1953 election. For example, April 1953 and January/February 1957 surveys asked whether it would be it good if Adenauer remained as Chancellor, or would it be better if someone else took up the position. In April 1953, 48 percent thought Adenauer should stay, against 26 percent thought someone else would be better. In contrast, in January/February 1957 only 36 percent of respondents believed that Adenauer should remain Chancellor, while 41 percent thought it would be better to find someone else. It seemed that most of the respondents who wanted a new Chancellor believed that Adenauer's age was a liability.<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, Adenauer possessed a powerful resonance in the public opinion. The CDU/CSU had researched this issue very fully with various demographic surveys monitoring the CDU/CSU's and the Chancellor's popularity since the Federal Press Agency had contracted the Institut für Demoskopie in 1951.

The party's popularity dipped in the second half of 1956 through about the late spring of 1957. In fact, the SPD's support rose above the CDU/CSU between August 1956 and January 1957. It then remained about even until April 1957 when the

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<sup>13</sup> As Franz Meyers commented, "Herr Heck hat aus Amerika die Erfahrung migebracht, dass sich drueben der Wahlkampf zu einem grossen Teil vor den Fernsehschirmen und bei den Rundfunksendungen abspielt. Aber je naeher die Wahlen herankommen, desto mehr treten die personliche Vorstellung und der Kontakt des Kandidaten mit den Wählern in den Vordergrund, und zwar in politischen Versammlungen." Günter Buchstab, ed., *Adenauer: "Wir haben wirklich etwas geschaffen."* *Die Protokolle des CDU-Bundesvorstands, 1953-1957* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1990), 1165.

<sup>14</sup> Schmidtchen, *Die befragte Nation*, 154-155.

CDU/CSU began to pull away.<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, Adenauer's reputation drew support above that of his party. In the first quarter of 1957, a period when the CDU/CSU was lagging behind the SPD in the polls, 45 percent of West Germans agreed with Adenauer's policies versus 23 percent disagreeing and 31 percent undecided.<sup>16</sup> In December 1956, 56 percent of West Germans believed that Konrad Adenauer was West Germany's most capable politician at the present time, in comparison to the 6 percent that Erich Ollenhauer garnered. Also in December 1956 an Institut für Demoskopie survey indicated that West Germans were most likely describe Adenauer as "clever," "diplomatic," and "persistent, tough."<sup>17</sup> Undoubtedly, Adenauer possessed a certain legitimacy with the West German public that no other politician could approach.

The CDU realized that Adenauer represented a level of security to the West German population. One report from the CDU's *Bundesgeschäftsstelle* commented that with Adenauer the CDU possessed a figure representing experience, authority, and the establishment of the Federal Republic of Germany. The key to the campaign was to build the idea of personalities of "Adenauer and his team" who represented "independent men" and "not functionaries and pawns of the party apparatus." This image of the CDU being made up of capable men with real accomplishments was made in direct contrast to the CDU's portrayal of the SPD leadership as party hacks and ideological apparatchiks. The

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 160.

<sup>16</sup> Erich Peter Neumann and Elisabeth Noelle, eds., *Statistics on Adenauer. Portrait of a Statesman* (Allensbach: Verlag für Demoskopie, 1962), 42.

CDU had to run a campaign stressing that West Germany should not change horses in midstream. "Training new personnel is in general expensive and means continued risks (experiments!)."<sup>18</sup>

Up until his death in May 1957 from an infection caught in Nepal, Otto Lenz was critical in the formation of the CDU/CSU campaign, much as he was in the 1953 election. In early January 1957 Lenz reported to Adenauer, at a low point of the party's popularity, to explain that an "advertising action" was necessary because too steep of a climb in the party's popularity in the final months before the election would be impossible. In this report Lenz outlined the challenges and tasks of propaganda, including various brochures to be published by the Federal Press Agency, a poster campaign supporting NATO and support of Hungary, and the decrease of import taxes on tobacco. But the main focus of Lenz's activities was placed upon raising the popularity of Chancellor Adenauer. This action included a letter from the Chancellor sent to all West German households and a campaign train which carried Adenauer across West Germany while he gave speeches in each town and city where the train stopped.<sup>19</sup>

In terms of economics, the CDU/CSU feared that public opinion toward economic progress had dulled. A report from February 1957 indicated that although the party's economic policy was no less successful between 1953 and 1957 than it had been between

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>18</sup> Leitlinien für den Bundestagwahlkampf: Argumente und Tendenzen, VII-003-003/3, ACDP.

1949 and 1953, the public's confidence had decreased a bit. The report commented that, "The memory of the years between 1945 and 1948 has faded and the satisfaction of material needs has led the population less and less to a corresponding contentment. Instead, what is noticed is a continual extension of what are considered needs."<sup>20</sup> The campaign had to give a "representation of the economic successes since 1949 through 1953 with the help of graphic numerical examples."<sup>21</sup> The key for the campaign was to convince West Germans of the material improvement they enjoyed since 1948.

As in the 1953 election campaign, the issue of prices played a crucial role in the formation of public opinion toward the economy. It was perhaps the one issue that could present problems for the reelection of the Adenauer government. Public opinion showed great anxiety toward the rise of prices. In March 1957 the Institut für Demoskopie produced a report "Das Zentrum der Krise" (Center of the crisis) which analyzed public opinion toward prices. The majority of West Germans (72 percent) believed that prices would rise in the next quarter year. As the report commented, "One must come to terms with the realization that the stability of prices for the majority of the population also is the symbol for economic and political stability." There was a fear within the West German population that the economic gains of the past years would be lost. In addition, only 18 percent of West Germans believed that their economic conditions were better than the

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<sup>19</sup> Sehr verehrter Herr Bundeskanzler!, 3.1.1957, I-172-32/4, (NL Lenz), ACDP and Kitzinger, *German Electoral Politics*, 119-122.

<sup>20</sup> Sitzung am 12 Februar 1957, I-172-32/4, ACDP.

<sup>21</sup> Leitlinien für den Bundestagwahlkampf, VII-003-003/3, ACDP.

year before. Undoubtedly, living standards were rising, but with the improvement of the West German economy since 1948, the public's expectations had risen.<sup>22</sup>

Nevertheless people were not completely pessimistic. 33 percent of respondents believed that economic conditions were good, with another 48 percent believing they were middling. That left only 10 percent who thought conditions were bad.<sup>23</sup> In addition, all through the 1950s there was a guarded optimism in terms of personal living standards. For example, in the summer of 1956, 25 percent of respondents to an Institut für Demoskopie survey believed that their situation was better than the year before, up from 12 percent in May 1951. Perhaps more tellingly, only 16 percent in the summer of 1956 believed conditions were worse from the year before, compared to 56 percent in 1951. By 1956 the vast majority of respondents (84 percent) believed that there was either no difference or improvement in their condition from the year before. By the summer of 1957 this figure had climbed to 90 percent.<sup>24</sup>

Part of the guarded optimism was perhaps the result of strategic policies instituted by the Economics Minister Erhard which helped keep the rise in prices in check. From late 1956 into the summer of 1957, consumer prices remained about stable.<sup>25</sup> Erhard saw

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<sup>22</sup> Das Zentrum der Krise, März 1957, Institut für Demoskopie, I-172-37/5 (NL Lenz), ACDP.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Elisabeth Noelle and Erich Peter Neumann, eds., *The Germans: Public Opinion Polls, 1947-1966* (Westport CN: Greenwood Press, 1967), 374; and Schmidtchen, *Die befragte Nation*, 163.



the danger of the rise of prices in an election year. In a letter to Adenauer from March 1957, Erhard explained that the opposition and the unions were pushing for higher wages, driving the rise of prices, and creating an unfavorable climate for the government. Since Erhard had no faith that industry would hold firm against the unions' demands, he proposed two ideas to Adenauer. First, Erhard wanted to assemble 1,500-2,000 leaders of industry, crafts, wholesale trade, and retail so that he could inform them of the present dangers threatening the free market system. He then wanted to obtain promises from them that they would not contribute to inflation by raising wages prior to the election. Second, he wanted to gather representatives from 40 to 50 firms "whose products every housewife knows," and persuade them to not raise prices. They then would proclaim their intention through an advertisement appearing in leading newspapers.<sup>26</sup> It is not clear whether Erhard's first proposal was carried out, but an advertisement from the leading brand name manufacturers did appear in West German newspapers. In fact, other manufacturers and retailers fell in line and announced similar efforts. In addition, import duties on coffee and tobacco were lowered, a measure suggested by Otto Lenz which provided a visible example of the decrease in prices.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Statistisches Bundesamt, *Statistisches Jahrbuch für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1958), 427.

<sup>26</sup> Erhard an Adenauer 12 März 1957, III/23, Stiftung Bundeskanzler-Adenauer-Haus (hereafter StBKAH).

<sup>27</sup> Kitzinger, *German Electoral Politics*, 84; and Sehr verehrter Herr Bundeskanzler, 3.1.1957, I-172-32/4.

Furthermore, in January 1957 the Bundestag passed the reform of pension laws. This was important in creating favorable conditions for the CDU/CSU. The reform instituted a system of what has been called a “dynamic” or “productivity pension.” Pension payments were linked to the productivity of the economy and the per capita income of those employed. This meant that pensions would increase with a rise in the real social products. With this measure, pensions were increased immediately by 60 percent for the 7 million pensioners. It was calculated back to January 1, so many pensioners received a lump sum of money in the spring of 1957. Undoubtedly, this increase of pensions meant stronger support for the CDU/CSU.<sup>28</sup>

CDU/CSU propaganda on economics for the 1949 Bundestag election stressed the party’s ability to save West Germany from total despair. In contrast, the 1957 election underscored the sense of stability and increased prosperity that the West German public enjoyed. This approach dovetailed with the emphasis upon Chancellor Adenauer as a symbol of the nation’s, not the least the party’s, stability. The party was to take the “Economic Miracle” as one of its achievements. As one CDU report suggested, the idea of economic security had to be stressed with the slogans, “Prosperity for all—Stability—No Experiments—Continue Upwards—All should live better”<sup>29</sup>

In many respects, the Economics Minister Ludwig Erhard became, next to Adenauer, the most important symbol in the campaign. Erhard possessed a certain image

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 82-83.

<sup>29</sup> Leitlinien für den Bundestagwahlkampf, VII-003-003/3, ACDP.

with the West German public. He was described by the CDU “as the Minister of the consumer, the first German Economics Minister with wide popularity.”<sup>30</sup> The CDU was to take advantage of Erhard’s popularity and exploit further his image as the father of the Economic Miracle. This was an image that Erhard had cultivated since his days as head of the economics administration of the Bizone in 1948.

Central to the CDU/CSU’s campaign was a massive advertising campaign in popular magazines. The purpose of this campaign was to popularize Adenauer’s cabinet. The CDU/CSU’s advertising agent advised early on in the formation of the campaign, “It is continually to be kept in mind, that propaganda for these personalities must also be propaganda for Konrad Adenauer.” Each advertisement would portray Adenauer with the leading personalities of the cabinet. Later advertisements depicted the cabinet members themselves, creating a sense of each as capable individuals. Erhard was to be portrayed as the “representative of the consumer,” preferably in a scene with housewives.<sup>31</sup>

Prior to launching the campaign, the CDU/CSU’s advertising agent provided a careful analysis of the readership of the various magazines, including the total circulation, gender, and size of the cities of the readership. In all, the circulation of the proposed

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Leitsätze für die Besprechung über die Wahlpropaganda der CDU 1957, VII-003-003/3, ACDP. Although this document is not signed by the firm in charge of the CDU/CSU advertising, Die Werbe, the content and tone of the document suggests that it is a set of recommendations to the CDU/CSU.

magazines was quite large with the weekly distribution totaling 10.8 million copies.<sup>32</sup> In this way, the CDU/CSU was modifying its “product” for each of its prospective customers. Particularly important for the CDU/CSU’s propaganda were women’s magazines such as *Brigitte*, *Constanze*, and *Ihre Freundin*. Obtaining women’s votes, especially from Protestant women, was crucial for a CDU/CSU victory. The use of magazine advertisements was a step in the “modernization” or “Americanization” of West Germany’s political culture. Although still important, older methods such as rallies and leaflets were being replaced with more effective means of spreading the CDU/CSU’s image as a party representing stability and performance. Instead of putting forth program statements, the CDU/CSU was crafting its image with modified messages according to the target group. One of the party’s slogans from the campaign summed it up the overall spirit of the campaign well: “Our Performance is our Program.”

Here we see the mentality of commercial advertising appearing within the realm of political advertising. A report from E.P. Neumann to the *Bundesgeschäftsstelle* of the CDU reflected this very clearly. Neumann’s Institut für Demoskopie had connections to the advertising industry through its surveys commissioned by advertising agents. In this report he informed the CDU/CSU what a full advertising campaign would entail. Neumann suggested that the CDU/CSU prepare upwards of 30 different advertisements for the campaign. The strategy for the campaign was in direct contrast to many campaigns of commercial products that would show the same advertisement over and

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over again. Since the same people read many of the same magazines, Neumann believed that continually publishing the same advertisements over and over again during a concentrated period of time prior to the election would bore the readers. The advertisements would then lose their effectiveness. New advertisements, which were related to each other in layouts and conceptualization, would continue to attract the public's interest.<sup>33</sup> In addition, Neumann urged the CDU to investigate the resonance of many of the advertisements through test surveys before using them for the campaign.

In fact, the Institut für Demoskopie conducted a series of surveys to test the effectiveness of some of the CDU/CSU's propaganda. One thing was made very clear through these surveys: propaganda with the name "Adenauer" on it held more resonance than material with just "CDU," or at least were less likely have a negative reaction to the material. Respondents were more likely to agree with statements such as, "Adenauer has brought Germany back onto its feet," than if "CDU/CSU" replaced "Adenauer."<sup>34</sup> In addition, advertisements of the various cabinet members were tested to ensure that readers went away with the desired image from them. For example, from one Erhard advertisement the CDU/CSU wanted to ensure that the reader to got the image of Erhard

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<sup>32</sup> See the analysis of the magazine's readership provided by the advertising firm, Die Werbe. Contained in VII-003-003/3, ACDP.

<sup>33</sup> An die Bundesgeschäftsstelle der Christlich Demokratischen Union, 2.4.1957, I-172-30/5 (NL Lenz), ACDP.

<sup>34</sup> Propaganda mit Adenauer, Juli 1957, Institut für Demoskopie, ZSg 132/585, BA Koblenz.

as the defender of the housewife's interests.<sup>35</sup> Other aspects of the advertisements were tested such as their clarity and whether they were interesting or not.<sup>36</sup> Generally what the CDU/CSU learned from these surveys was that personalities sold the party better than the party could sell itself.

One advertisement portrayed Erhard and Adenauer in the midst of what appears as an intense discussion on policy (Figure 8.1). The visual depiction of Erhard working so closely with Adenauer lent itself to the CDU/CSU's idea of building "Adenauer and his team." Through an association with Adenauer, Erhard took on an image of stability and authority, a point backed up with title "Professor" before Erhard's name. The illustration put Erhard physically close to Adenauer, but clearly in a subservient role. Erhard was positioned behind Adenauer and looking slightly up to him. The text emphasized the visual impression. It made sure to point out that Adenauer had selected Erhard specifically for the position of Economics Minister.

Like much of the conservative propaganda at the time, the advertisement recounted the tremendous change of economic fortunes since the currency reform of 1948. But instead of just talking about economic policies, the advertisement was written to give the reader an impression of personalities. The text was written to portray Erhard as a man of action, as a "bold" man. The advertisement commented that, "He freed us from the guardianship of ration cards. He produced room in which healthy competition

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<sup>35</sup> For a discussion of Erhard's advertisements in terms of gender, see Chapter 7.

could operate. He made the Deutsche Mark into one of the hardest currencies in the world.” The result of these actions is not described as benefiting individuals, but instead all Germans. Economic reconstruction helped establish West Germany as the legitimate German state within the German nation. The text commented that, “Now and in the future we can help all Germans only if we continue undeterred on our path. Only this way will we achieve reunification.” In this way, Erhard and economic reconstruction are linked to Adenauer’s statesmanship and stability.

The magazine and newspaper advertising campaign was not the only means utilized to create the party’s image. With the help of a professional advertising agent, the CDU/CSU put together a very effective poster campaign in the months leading up to the election. As U.W. Kitzinger commented in his analysis of the 1957 election, “Most obvious to the casual observer—and most voters must have come into that category—was the CDU’s poster campaign. It was an epitome of the whole, brilliant in conception, executed professionally, centralized, expensive, and complete.”<sup>37</sup> While the SPD had its own posters put up by its party members, the CDU contracted with a professional advertising firm to take care of the posters. They had been contracted so early, in fact, that the firm was able to reserve the best locations in the cities to place the posters. In many respects the posters dovetailed with the overall message of the CDU’s campaign of “Men around Adenauer.” A report from the advertising agent that put together the

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<sup>36</sup> Männer neben Adenauer, Eine Serie von Anzeigen Tests (II), Frühjahr 1957, Institut für Demoskopie, ZSg 132/556/III, BA Koblenz.

CDU/CSU's poster campaign stressed the idea that "On all advertising pillars and billboards one saw the picture of the Chancellor, whether in large cities or in the countryside." By the advertising firm's estimates, posters were put up in towns and cities covering 90.8 percent of the West German population. In fact, 53 percent of those asked in October 1957 remembered seeing the CDU/CSU's posters.<sup>38</sup>

The report portrayed the ideal layout of the posters for the campaign (Figure 8.2). Adenauer was positioned at the top left of any row of posters. Interspersed between portraits of Adenauer's cabinet were the main slogans of the campaign: "No Experiments," "Actions count," "On the 15<sup>th</sup> of September," and "Vote CDU/CSU." With the Economics Minister as the second most important figure in the campaign, Erhard's portrait was placed always to the right of Adenauer. Taken as a whole the poster campaign strongly presented a visual representation of the campaign's central concepts. The portraits themselves depicted serious, capable looking men, an effect intensified by the colored portraits. The line up of portraits, punctuated by the main slogans, helped convey the idea of a unified team of responsible leaders. Also, the placement of Erhard's portrait next to Adenauer clearly showed that he was Adenauer's right-hand man.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> U.W. Kitzinger, *German Electoral Politics: A Study of the 1957 Campaign*, 112.

<sup>38</sup> Werbeagentur Dr. Hegemann GmbH, *Der Plakatanschlag zur Bundestagswahl 1957*, (Düsseldorf: Dr. Hegemann GmbH, 1957). Located in the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung Library, Sankt Augustin.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*



In addition to linking Erhard with Adenauer as a symbol of stability in West Germany, the CDU/CSU stressed the rising consumerism many West Germans enjoyed. Propaganda on economics, when linked to Adenauer, was meant to convey a feeling of stability. Economics was used to define the legitimacy of the Adenauer government, and with that the whole West German state, in the eyes of the electorate. Yet much of the CDU/CSU's propaganda did not just represent stability, but also the increased fulfillment of individual desire for consumer goods.

In fact, in preparation for the election, the CDU commissioned in March 1957 the Institut für Demoskopie to conduct a demographic survey on the slogan "Prosperity for All." The slogan was already closely associated with the CDU/CSU's main economic spokesman, Ludwig Erhard. Erhard had published a book of the same name in early 1957 which recounted the principles and successes of the Social Market Economy. The survey interviewed 50 men and women who were considered from the working class. Its primary goal was to compare the effectiveness of "Prosperity for All" versus "Property for All."<sup>40</sup>

The survey asked first what the respondents considered as "prosperity." In general, prosperity was defined as "the securing of the most important requirements of daily life, such as food, work, clothing, and caring for the old." During free time it was seen as going to the theater or movies, pursuing a hobby, and taking a vacation. The definition of "prosperity" very seldom included luxuries and articles such as automobiles

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and houses. The survey found that the slogan had great resonance among the group of respondents. Most (27 out of 50) had a positive reaction to a poster with the slogan. In addition 30 out of 50 respondents believed that the slogan was attainable. In other words, the majority thought that economic security was at hand for West Germans. In addition, the respondents favored the slogan “Prosperity for All” over “Property for All” (29 versus 6, with 15 no opinion).<sup>41</sup> With the results of this survey, the CDU/CSU went forward with “Prosperity for All” as one of its core slogans of the campaign.<sup>42</sup>

The CDU/CSU sought to exploit the sentiments expressed in the survey. Beginning in August 1957, the CDU/CSU ran a series of advertisements in radio and TV, women’s, and illustrated magazines. Designed by the Dr. Hegemann advertising firm, the firm that had designed the CDU/CSU’s poster campaign, the advertising series proclaimed “It’s going better for all of us.”<sup>43</sup> There were three variations of the advertisement, stating, “The clothing closest attests:” “The paycheck attests:” and “The shopping bag attests:” (Figure 8.3, Figure 8.4, and Figure 8.5). The text of each

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<sup>40</sup> Wohlstand für Alle, 15 März 1957, Institut für Demoskopie, I-172-37/5, (NL Lenz), ACDP.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Demographic polling played an important part in the selection of this slogan. One report on campaign planning commented that “Wohlstand für alle” should be used over other slogans because the Institut für Demoskopie survey found it “nicht als ärgerlich oder provokatorisch.” Leitsätze für die Besprechung über die Wahlpropaganda der CDU 1957, VII-003-003/3, ACDP.

<sup>43</sup> Vorstand der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands, *Gegnerische Kräfte und Einflüsse im Bundestagswahlkampf 1957* (Bonn: SPD Vorstand, 1958), 50-51. Located in the library of the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.

advertisement recounted the increased availability of consumer goods and the establishment of a stable, hard Deutsche Mark, linking these developments were thanks to Erhard's economic policies.

The last paragraph of the text was identical in the three variations of the advertisement. Keying upon the demographic survey looking at the resonance of the slogan "Prosperity for All," the advertisement proclaimed, "'Prosperity for All' is no longer a slogan. 'Prosperity for All' is and will become reality—for many already today, surely for all tomorrow. It will continue upwards as it has up until now, step for step, if we avoid all experiments." Instead of depicting Erhard as representing the interests of Germany, these advertisements packaged economic reconstruction as fulfilling individual materialistic desires. The Economic Miracle was not about a means of reaching reunification, but instead about increasing personal consumption.

But the Adenauer government had a wide variety of parallel propaganda campaigns at its disposal. With the 1957 Bundestag election, the CDU/CSU, the Federal Press Agency, and Die Waage came together to develop their propaganda campaigns leading up to the vote. A letter from E.P. Neumann, the political liaison for the Institut für Demoskopie, to Alphons Horten of Die Waage elucidated some of the connections between the CDU/CSU and Die Waage. Neumann reported to Horten that Otto Lenz, Adenauer's State Secretary and the mastermind behind the government's propaganda efforts, had agreed to a meeting with Die Waage and was interested in, "how they [Die Waage and the CDU/CSU] could pursue coordinated advertisements. He [Lenz] had

arranged with the Chancellor that close collaboration is something to aim for.”<sup>44</sup> Here Die Waage’s public pronouncements that it was not aligned with any particular party were put into serious question. Undoubtedly, Die Waage hoped for a victory by the “bourgeois” parties when it solicited funds, but it seems in more private moments, the leadership of Die Waage lent the most support to the CDU/CSU.<sup>45</sup>

With this cooperation, Die Waage’s advertisements fit well with the CDU/CSU’s vision of the main themes of the campaign: security and prosperity. In fact, some of Die Waage’s advertisements echoed the CDU/CSU’s slogans with “No Experiments” and “We know what we have.” The theme of Die Waage’s campaign for the election year was “Freedom from fear.” Die Waage thought that West Germans were gripped with fear: fear of the rise in prices, fear of unemployment, and fear of an economic downturn. The emphasis, much like the CDU/CSU’s, was placed upon demonstrating the real, tangible benefits of Erhard’s economic policies that many West Germans enjoyed. An important element of this advertising campaign was to stress that reliance upon the state through a planned economy would not alleviate these fears. Therefore it was necessary to show them the achievements that had been made since the currency reform and demonstrate the need to hold the course.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> E.P. Neumann an Horten, 19 Januar 1957, I-172-32/4, (NL Lenz), ACDP.

<sup>45</sup> At the annual meeting of Die Waage in February 1952, Greiss stressed that Die Waage “ist kein Organ der Regierung, einer Partei oder Wahlhilfeinstrument,” Waage Jahresversammlung am 8.2.1957, Die Waage, Zugang 137, Ludwig Erhard Stiftung, (hereafter, LES).

For the 1957 campaign, Die Waage utilized some new methods for spreading its message in order to reach not only Dr. Lieschen Müller, but also Lieschen Müller, that is not only for Dr. John Doe, but also John Doe.<sup>47</sup> Fritz and Otto remained the main characters in the dialogue series. But this was supplemented by a monologue series that would represent “our economy to various types of people.” Also, a cartoon series would reach a readership that was harder to reach through purely text advertisements.<sup>48</sup> In addition, a cartoon film was produced entitled “Behalte deinen klaren Blick” that recounted the achievements of the Social Market Economy. Throughout the film, when things are “seen through the wrong glasses,” the screen turned red and showed the plight of the worker under the planned economy.

The format of the Fritz and Otto series had evolved a bit since its earlier forms. Instead of a dialogue in which Fritz finally comes to a “clearer” understanding of the economy after a bit of persuasion from Otto, in this series both Fritz and Otto would agree right from the start. In addition, Fritz and Otto appeared decidedly more middle class as they were dressed in jackets and ties in all of the illustrations, giving the impression that somehow the two characters had risen out of the working class.

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<sup>46</sup> Anregungen zur Waage—Campagne bis zur Bundestagwahl 1957, Die Waage, Zugang 78, LES.

<sup>47</sup> The Federal Press Agency was concerned that Die Waage was not placing its advertisements in the optimal newspapers by concentrating upon newspapers that workers might not necessarily read. See Dr. P.M. Weber an Dr. Hohmann, 14 Februar 1957, B145/1630, BA Koblenz.

<sup>48</sup> Protokolle, Die Waage Vorstandssitzung am 13.3.1957, Die Waage, Zugang 136, LES.

One advertisement depicted Fritz and Otto standing before a prominently featured refrigerator (Figure 8.6). This advertisement clearly was referring to an exchange Erhard had with trade unionists in *Welt der Arbeit* entitled “A Refrigerator in every Household.” The author of the article demanded higher wages so that all could enjoy the products of modern technology. In the June 16, 1953 article Erhard responded to attacks calling for a more equal distribution of West Germany’s rising prosperity. He commented that at first any luxury good, which a refrigerator was in 1953, was consumed by the rich. Merely granting consumer credit would not sustain an increasing living standard. Instead increased productivity was the only way to increase real purchasing power.<sup>49</sup>

Within this context the message of the advertisement with the banner “Everyone has part of it!” was clear: the time was now in which broad sections of West German society had reached prosperity. Fritz explained that he was happy with the fact that he could afford a motor-scooter, and Brigitte had a washing machine, and that refrigerators had cost twice as much only four years before. But he thought that the new pension program was the most important result of Erhard’s economic policies because it spread the wealth to everyone. This program, he explained, was made possible because of the success of Erhard’s economic policy. As Fritz explained, “From nothing comes nothing!”

Die Waage’s comic strips contained the same view: the material conditions of West Germans had markedly improved (Figure 8.7). The comics portrayed West

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Germans as taking part of a new consumerism that many were already enjoying, or hoped to enjoy in the near future. The characters were depicted buying an auto, building their own home, going to the movies, and talking about buying new suits and appliances. It was Erhard's economic system that made "Life worth living again." as one strip commented.

The monologue series stressed the same ideas, although not through a visual representation as the comics had done. One advertisement with the slogan, "A new life obtained," pictured a refugee woman who, as the text explained, came to West Germany with her children when her husband did not return from internment as a prisoner of war (Figure 8.8). No mention of the psychological hardships of her experiences were made. Instead, the advertisement explained that the Social Market Economy had made possible a new life and secure future for a woman "standing alone." In this way the achievement of material well being was privileged over any psychological rehabilitation. In fact, material security made any psychological insecurity practically irrelevant in Die Waage's view. In this way, Die Waage's advertisements adhered to creating a feeling of "freedom from fear."

Through these various advertisements, the CDU/CSU and Die Waage identified a changing trend in West German consumerism and were successful in attaching a political meaning to it. Michael Wildt has argued that there were two phases of consumption in West Germany during the 1950s. In the years immediately following the currency reform

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<sup>49</sup> Ludwig Erhard, *Ludwig Erhard: Gedanken aus fünf Jahrzehnten, Reden und Schriften* ed. Karl Hohmann, (Düsseldorf: Econ Verlag, 1988), 369-372.

of 1948, West Germans were mainly trying to replace basic goods lost during the war, such as food, shelter, and clothing. Most of West Germans' incomes went to cover the most basic needs. Starting around 1957, the demand for more luxury goods started to increase. More money was spent at first for more fashionable clothing and going to the movies. A few years later this was followed by increased spending for goods such as vacations, travel, beauty products, and electrical items such as refrigerators, televisions, and electric ovens.<sup>50</sup> The CDU/CSU and Die Waage played off of this growing realization of consumerism. Through the application of advertising techniques they attributed the new consumerism many West Germans enjoyed to the policies of the CDU/CSU.

In some respects, the CDU/CSU's propaganda was a bit different from the previous election campaigns. For example, it did not often attack the SPD directly. This might be because the party was unlikely to lure voters from the SPD. Other than the slogan "no experiments," which referred to the danger of socialists experiments, most of the propaganda stressed the CDU/CSU's image as the party of stability and prosperity. These were messages that could be appealing to the smaller parties within the bourgeois camp. If anything, the CDU/CSU's attacks on the SPD could be seen not as a means of wooing prospective voters from the SPD as much as portraying the CDU/CSU as the only

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<sup>50</sup> Michael Wildt, *Am Beginn der "Konsumgesellschaft": Mangelerfahrung, Lebenshaltung, Wohlstandshoffnung in Westdeutschland in den fünfziger Jahren* (Hamburg: Ergebnisse Verlag, 1994), 74. See also Axel Schildt, *Moderne Zeiten: Freizeit, Massenmedien und "Zeitgeist" in der Bundesrepublik der 50er Jahre* (Hamburg: Hans Christians Verlag, 1995).



party strong and stable enough to thwart the SPD threat. When the CDU actually attacked the SPD directly, it was Adenauer who led the charge. Perhaps most famous of these attacks was July 7 speech in which Adenauer claimed that a SPD victory would be “the ruin (*Untergang*) of Germany.”<sup>51</sup>

In contrast to the CDU/CSU, the SPD approached the election campaign in a much different manner. The party commissioned various demographic surveys that acted as the basis of the preparation for the election.<sup>52</sup> Their surveys painted broad trends in public opinion, but did not carefully test the resonance of particular pieces of propaganda. For several years the SPD had been commissioning demographic surveys from EMNID. Leading up to the election, the SPD retained the DIVO Institut to conduct various surveys. From very early in the preparations for the election, the surveys indicated that the rise of prices was a possible issue on which the SPD could go on the offensive. One goal was to “make the CDU-Minister Erhard responsible for the price increases.” In terms of economics, the surveys, like those commissioned by the CDU/CSU, showed that the rise in prices was the biggest concern among the population. In addition, 75 percent

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<sup>51</sup> Konrad Repgen, “Finis Germaniae: Untergang Deutschlands durch einen SPD-Wahlsieg 1957?” in *Konrad Adenauer und seine Zeit: Politik und Persönlichkeit des ersten Bundeskanzlers, Band II: Beiträge der Wissenschaft*, ed. Dieter Blumenwitz, Klaus Gotto, Hans Maier, Konrad Repgen, and Hans-Peter Schwarz (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1976), 294-315.

<sup>52</sup> *Jahrbuch der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands, 1956/1957* (Bonn: Neuer Vorwärts Verlag, 1958), 298

of respondents believed that the federal government could do much more to help control the rise in prices.<sup>53</sup>

The SPD realized that because of its financial limitations it had to concentrate its efforts upon a number of target groups. Coming out of the 1953 election, the SPD sought some “lessons learned.” One report analyzed political attitudes through 1955. It divided voters into categories of “weak” or “strong” supporters of parties. The report commented that, “The ‘weak’ voter is above all pragmatic. . . . He feels no loyalty to a certain party and changes to any party which he believes will best consider his interests.” The report concluded that for the SPD to overcome the “30 percent hurdle,” it had to a better job of targeting the “weak” voters.<sup>54</sup> This conceptualization of “weak” and “strong” supporters became fundamental to the formulation of the SPD’s strategy in the upcoming election.

As the 1957 election neared, demographic surveys indicated that there was a substantial group that could be won over to the SPD. In January 1957 Fritz Heine, the head of the SPD’s campaign, had figured that there were still 10 million undecided voters, of which about half were going to vote. Ollenhauer commented at a meeting of the *Partei Vorstand* that “We should not overestimate the worth of the polls, but nevertheless we should pay serious attention to them, especially in regard to the high percentage of undecided voters.”<sup>55</sup> Demographic reports from the autumn of 1956

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<sup>53</sup> Protokoll der Sitzung des Werbung und Propaganda Ausschuß, 3 Mai 1956, SPD-PV 05994, Archiv der sozialen Demokratie, Bonn (hereafter AdsD).

<sup>54</sup> Neue SPD Wähler: Woher?, SPD-PV 02595, AdsD.

indicated the specific target groups, making up 37 percent of all voters, that the SPD felt it could win over. These groups consisted of “weak” SPD voters, “weak” CDU voters, “weak” voters of the smaller parties, undecided voters with SPD inclinations, and undecided voters with CDU inclinations. The undecided voters and the “weak” voters of smaller parties tended to be from the middle class and of a professional background.<sup>56</sup> The SPD’s strategy targeted these subgroups as essential for their victory in the election.<sup>57</sup>

In preparation for the election, the SPD began to formulate the technical approach it would use in the campaign. At the 1956 *Parteitag* (party convention) Bruno Gleitze, a polling expert within the SPD, spoke to the assembly about revamping the SPD’s political advertising. He stressed that political propaganda had to be sold as if it were a “brand name product.” But he did warn that although the party must be sold as if it a product, the propaganda should not be too loud or contain exaggerated phrasing. Even so, his comments reflected some of the changing attitudes within the party on substance versus image in the party’s propaganda. He commented that, “The simple person does not make the effort to take apart sentences or sort through ideas. What is not immediately

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<sup>55</sup> Sitzung des Parteivorstandes am 22.und 23.1.1957, SPD-Parteivorstand Protokolle 1957, AdsD.

<sup>56</sup> See a demographic report written by the SPD (some of it is worded identically as the “Neue Wähler: Woher?” found in the ACDP without the cover page. I-172-33/5 (NL Lenz), ACDP. Other internal SPD reports were found in Lenz’s records, indicating some “leaks” in the SPD’s secrecy.

<sup>57</sup> Reports from late in the campaign echoed this strategy. See for example, *Die Arbeiter vor der Bundestagswahl. Eine Studie, 7/57*. This report is located in the library of the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Bonn. See also Kitzinger, *German Electoral Politics*, 136-137.

picked up by him and elicits a positive reaction, has already evaporated.”<sup>58</sup> But it appears that the SPD did not follow this approach in the 1957 election. Instead, the party retained a more “substantive” campaign.

Overall, the *Werbung und Propaganda Ausschuss* (Advertising and Propaganda Committee) pushed for a different tone for the SPD’s campaign in comparison to the CDU/CSU’s. Well over a year before the election, the committee began to debate whether the SPD should run a more negative campaign, or concentrate on a more factual, positive campaign.<sup>59</sup> Fritz Heine pointed out that there were three options for the upcoming campaign: an aggressive, negative campaign, one that was factual and positive, or a combination of the two. Even in face of the realization in early 1957 that the CDU/CSU was going to run a campaign less with “argumentation than with atmosphere,” it opted for a more “factual” campaign.<sup>60</sup> This tone for the election campaign was confirmed by the *Parteivorstand* (party central committee).<sup>61</sup>

Meanwhile, the ongoing reform of the SPD had continued since the 1953 election. By 1957 the SPD was not calling for the socialization of the economy. Instead, its official program had been transforming since Schumacher’s death in 1952. The

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<sup>58</sup> Parolen und Propaganda, Vorschau auf den Bundestagwahl 1957, SPD-PV 02559, AdsD.

<sup>59</sup> Protokoll der Sitzung des Werbung und Propaganda Ausschuss, 3 Februar 1956, SPD-PV 0594, AdsD.

<sup>60</sup> 15 Sitzung des WPA, 18 January 1957, SPD-PV 0595, AdsD.

Dortmund Action Program of September 1952 showed cracks in the party's ideological positions. The program called for improved living standards, increased production, full employment, and the just distribution of the social product. Although the party still called for the socialization and planning of elements of the economy as one of its goals, there were now rumblings of "*echter Leistungswettbewerb*" (true competition) where suitable.<sup>62</sup> This thinking was further clarified by Kark Schiller with his saying, "competition insofar as possible, planning insofar as necessary."

Reformers had been growing in strength in the party since the SPD's defeat in the 1953 election, especially from local and regional levels. But there were many disagreements on what type of market-oriented socialism should be put forth by the party. The party's platform for the 1957 election proclaimed:

We Social Democrats demand a free economic development, free competition, and private property conscious of its responsibilities to the common good. Cartels, monopolies, and market dominating industrial groups are to be prevented from misusing their supremacy to the disadvantage of weaker groups. . . . Our free society must be protected from command economy measures.<sup>63</sup>

At the same time, there were members of the SPD who still saw socialization as an objective of the SPD. For example, the publication of a pamphlet by Willi Eichler, who was one of the leading reformers within the party, helped cause confusion when he stated

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<sup>61</sup> Sitzung des Parteivorstandes am 22 and 23 January 1957, SPD-Parteivorstand Protokolle 1957, AdsD.

<sup>62</sup> A.J. Nicholls, *Freedom with Freedom: The Social Market Economy in Germany, 1918-1963* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 302-305.

<sup>63</sup> *Sicherheit für Alle*, RWV 2/132, Nordrhein-Westfälisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, Düsseldorf (hereafter NWHStA), 8.

that socialization remained a goal of the SPD.<sup>64</sup> In all, the SPD tried to downplay its Marxist roots. U.W. Kitzinger also has pointed out that the party wanted to cleanse itself of any ideological taint, and portray itself as a unrevolutionary, trustworthy, and respectable party.<sup>65</sup>

Because much of the electorate divided itself between the socialist and bourgeois camps, there was a relatively small group which the SPD felt could act as a “swing” vote. Since the SPD’s demographic research indicated that much of this group came from the middle class, most of the propaganda on economics attempted to appeal to a more middle class prerogative. But this was a group that the party had no way of attracting because of the indeterminate and unsettled state of the party’s ideology. In this way, party program was still important in the 1957 election campaign, if only because the SPD’s program and propaganda seemed so disconnected, or at least created a picture that was a bit unclear. In contrast, the CDU/CSU’s image was unified, and perhaps more importantly, coherent. It presented a worldview to the voter that seemed understandable to the segment of the population it was after.

Undoubtedly, the SPD had brought much of its propaganda up to date with more visually appealing illustrated magazines supplementing traditional materials. For example, the party distributed 9.2 million copies of the magazine, *Illus*.<sup>66</sup> Each of the

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<sup>64</sup> Kitzinger, *German Electoral Politics*, 133.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 130-138.

<sup>66</sup> *Jahrbuch der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands*, 300-301.

four editions of the magazine contained articles and pictures attacking the CDU/CSU for rearmament and the threat of atomic war, while they promoted SPD proposals for the construction of more social housing (Figure 8.9). As in earlier campaigns, the SPD tried to hammer the CDU/CSU on the issue of increasing prices. But in comparison to propaganda from earlier campaigns, the people depicted were not so distinctly working class. Instead the subjects of the pictures were clearly from the middle class. Rather than only harping on the rising prices of basic goods, such as food, the SPD now accused the CDU/CSU of maintaining the high prices of things such as refrigerators because the party did not break up monopolies that controlled their prices.

In a series of pamphlets meant to exploit West German fears of economic developments, the SPD portrayed people who were clearly middle class. The fold-out brochure proclaimed, "*Sie stehen im Mittelpunkt*" (You are the focus), while explaining that the consumer was the center of the economy (Figure 8.10). The brochure charged that the CDU/CSU had allowed prices to rise and large industry to gain more and more power. As in the magazine *Illus*, this brochure attacked the CDU/CSU for increasing the prices of relative luxury goods such as cigarettes, coffee, and liquor through taxes. By 1957 the SPD was on the defensive so that it had to admit that living standards had grown considerably since the currency reform. The brochure commented, "Thanks to the willingness to work and the skill of our workers, white collar employees, technicians, and salesman many people in the Federal Republic have a welcomed high standard of living."

But from the SPD's view the CDU/CSU was not helping the consumer.<sup>67</sup> With the increased prosperity enjoyed by many West Germans, one has to wonder if the SPD's message was really hitting the mark.

Overall, Kitzinger was correct in his analysis of the 1957 election campaign. He argued that the SPD was rather constrained in the type of campaign it could run. Money was a major factor. The CDU/CSU was not dependent upon its party membership for the vast majority of its contributions funding the party. Therefore, the party leadership could devise its own campaign strategy. In contrast, the SPD could not abandon its membership by creating a campaign with a different tone. Much of its funding was drawn from contributions from members in the party, people who were close to the party's Marxist roots.<sup>68</sup> The tone of the campaign was like the party itself: a bit confused, divided, and filled with half measures. With this the party opened itself to the onslaughts of the CDU/CSU. The problem was that the party's propaganda could not really appeal to the crucial "swing vote" by coming clearly in favor of the free market. Although there might have been a sense of insecurity within the electorate about the future, it was not enough to shift people from the bourgeois to socialist camp, especially when the SPD's party image seemed confused. This was clearly exploited by the CDU/CSU, with its emphasis upon security and stability as personified by Adenauer and his team.

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<sup>67</sup> Sie stehen im Mittelpunkt, RWV 2/132, NWHStA.

<sup>68</sup> Kitzinger, *German Electoral Politics*, 150.



The issue of funding was also central to this issue of campaigning styles. The CDU/CSU and its parallel campaigns had financial resources much greater than what the SPD could contribute to the campaign. It is almost impossible to say exactly how much was spent in favor of the CDU/CSU, especially with the vast amount that was spent for parallel campaigns. Nevertheless, a few comparisons can be made to give an idea of the differences in spending. For example, Kitzinger estimated that the central party headquarters of the CDU spent about 6.7 to 7 million DM.<sup>69</sup> This appears about right in light of archival sources.<sup>70</sup> In comparison, the SPD central committee spent a little over 4 million DM. But what was defined as costs incurred by the central committee was merely the tip of the iceberg.. Kitzinger estimated about another 4 million DM spent by the SPD's local and regional organizations, giving the SPD's total spending a grand total of about 8 million DM. In comparison, the CDU/CSU spent at its various levels a total of 25-30 million DM.<sup>71</sup>

Beyond the union parties was a vast web of propaganda campaigns working on the government's behalf, including the actions of the Federal Press Agency, Adenauer's election train, and the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft Demokratischen Kreise*. Kitzinger estimated the costs at about 30-35 million DM. Overall, in areas where we can check, Kitzinger's

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 309.

<sup>70</sup> An estimate generated by the Bundesgeschäftsstelle of the CDU from April 1957 saw the costs at 6.5 million DM. Bundestagwahl, Kostenvoranschlag, VII-003-003/3, ACDP

<sup>71</sup> Kitzinger, *German Electoral Politics*, 310.

numbers appear to be about correct. In terms of Die Waage's costs, Kitzinger estimated that it should have cost about 1.5 million DM, which were about Die Waage's estimation of its costs.<sup>72</sup> From this, it might not be cavalier to take his estimates as approximately correct. The exact figures might be disputable, but the overall picture is clear: the gap between CDU/CSU and SPD election campaign spending was enormous.

What is also important however, is not just that the CDU/CSU had much more money to spend on the campaign in comparison to the SPD, but also that there was a web of organizations that could share information among themselves. One of the most important of these was that demographic survey results could be transferred among the CDU/CSU, the Federal Press Agency, and the ADK, not to mention that the surveys were paid for by the Federal Press Agency in the first place. The result was that the pro-Adenauer propaganda was mutually supporting and produced a coherent picture of the CDU/CSU.

The failure of the SPD in the 1957 Bundestag election resulted in reform of the party's propaganda efforts that were parallel to the reform leading to the Bad Godesberg Program.<sup>73</sup> In the autumn of 1957, after the crushing defeat in the Bundestag election, proposals were put forth from various elements within the SPD calling for the

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<sup>72</sup> Horten an Greiss und Jacobi, 5.2.1958, Die Waage, Zugang 117, LES.

<sup>73</sup> For a discussion of the SPD's road to reform, see Kurt Klotzbach, *Der Weg zur Staatspartei. Programmatik, praktische Politik und Organisation der deutschen Sozialdemokratie 1945 bis 1965* (Bonn: Verlag J.H.W. Dietz Nachf., 1982); Harold Kent Schellenger, Jr., *The SPD in the Bonn Republic: A Socialist Party Modernizes* (The

improvement of the party's propaganda. One report suggested a dramatic departure for the tone and style of the SPD's campaign. It commented that:

The last election has clearly shown with the reshuffling and changing of opinion before the election how little the political attitudes and decisions of the voters are influenced by real political developments and extensive ideas on these developments.<sup>74</sup>

Clearly the attitude of the SPD toward the electorate was in the process of changing, within at least certain circles. The task of the party was that, "We should place an emphasis of our advertisement and propaganda for the broad groups of voters not upon political information and influence, but instead all energy in the next four years should be employed for the creation of solid good will . . ." <sup>75</sup> An important element in the creation of this "good will" was the application of modern public relations techniques. The "stereotype" of the SPD as purely a worker party had to be changed if the party was to have success.

Part of this change of the SPD's attitude toward the electorate was an effort to popularize the party itself. One report admitted that the Social Democratic Party had tough new challenges. The report explained that, "The party must find new ways and means to talk about the ideas of social democracy understandable also to alienated groups." An important element in the this popularization of the SPD, the report concluded, could be achieved through the use of "modern social science." This included

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Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1968); and Diane L. Parness, *The SPD and the Challenge of Mass Politic. The Dilemma of the German Volkspartei* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991).

<sup>74</sup> Die grundsätzlichen Werbeaufgabe der nächsten 4 Jahre, SPD-PV 0592, AdsD.

more intensive use of demographic polling, especially research on the “motives” of the voters.<sup>76</sup> Reports after the election called for the modernization of the party’s advertising methods. The report went on to call for the more effective use of advertising professionals and the exact application of demographic research.<sup>77</sup> Some letters to Heine even suggested that the SPD borrow advertising techniques from *Die Waage*. In order to achieve “good will,” SPD party leaders were clamoring for revamping of the technical means with which the party campaigned.

Like the road to the reform of the party’s platform, this transition was not easy. The conflict between the old and new elements of the party were clearly evident in a meeting of the *Werbung und Propaganda Ausschuss* on January 31, 1958. Members of the committee complained that not enough had been done in the previous 12 years to modify the party’s advertisements in relation to psychological advertisements. They suggested that methods of commercial advertising had to be applied to political advertising. The intense competition among the parties demanded that such an approach be taken. One member commented that, in fact, the techniques of commercial advertising and political advertising were not that different. He asked, “What do we want with our propaganda? We want to sell ideas, a program, not to bring tangible things to people.

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Vorschlag zur Einrichtung einer parteiinternen Forschungsstelle, SPD-PV 0592, AdsD.

<sup>77</sup> Anmerkungen und Vorschläge für SPD-Propaganda, SPD-PV 0592, AdsD.

We must familiarize ourselves with it [commercial advertising]. We must build trust for our program, for our ideas, and for our people.”<sup>78</sup>

In contrast, Fritz Heine, the old campaign leader from the Weimar Republic, appeared resistant to such changes. He expressed fear of the influence that the “economy” would have on the politics of the party. He commented that, “The political leadership of the party can never allow decisions to be taken out its hands, or where the accent of the party would be placed.” He pointed out that much that was politically necessary might not lend itself to good propaganda. Undeterred by the attacks of the young reformers, he thought that the *Werbung und Propaganda Ausschuss* could have a greater influence upon the party’s central committee in the future if they developed a clear concept of their propaganda for the next election.<sup>79</sup> This was one salvo between the old and new-guard of the party.

Over the next few years much of the SPD’s leadership was jettisoned in favor of more vibrant, energetic personalities. For Heine the 1957 election would be his last as head of the party’s campaign committee. The leadership of Heine of the Press and Propaganda Committee represented to the reformers the party’s inflexible and encrusted leadership that kept new ideas from percolating through the party and ensured defeat in the ballot box. After the crushing defeat in the 1957 election, local party organizations complained that the election propoganda was inadequate and began to call for the removal

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<sup>78</sup> WPA Protokolle von 31 January 1958, SPD-PV 0595, AdsD.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

of Heine from his position.<sup>80</sup> At the next party conference in 1958, Heine was not reelected to the party central committee.<sup>81</sup> In May 1959, Waldemar von Knoeringen, a reformer who had acted as the Press and Propaganda committee's demographic polling expert, was named to the head of the Propaganda and Press Committee. In November 1959, the party put forth the Bad Godesberg Program in which the SPD accepted the free market, albeit with social underpinnings. For the next Bundestag election in 1961, the SPD picked up on campaign techniques used by the CDU/CSU, especially the concentration on personalities representing the party. In fact, the emphasis upon party personalities had begun already in the 1958 city election in Berlin. In this campaign, Willy Brandt was placed in the "center of the entire campaign."<sup>82</sup> This rising mayor would lead the SPD into power later in the 1960s.

In conclusion, the 1957 election saw the CDU/CSU reach its apex of power. The success of the party relied heavily upon the use of the "Economic Miracle" as a fundamental plank in its platform. The maturing economic reconstruction of West Germany reflected the party's image as representing stability and the ability to provide a new consumerism. The creation of the image was in large part due to the development of more "modern" political campaign techniques that gave the CDU/CSU a huge advantage over its main rival. The defeat in the 1957 campaign pushed the SPD toward a

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<sup>80</sup> Klotzbach, *Der Weg zur Staatspartei*, 413-417.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 428.

<sup>82</sup> Schellenger, *The SPD in the Bonn Republic*, 164.

modernization of its propaganda techniques, thereby making the transformation of the West German political culture complete. In all, the 1957 campaign pushed West German politics along its inexorable path toward the middle.

**MÄNNER NEBEN ADENAUER:**

# Professor Ludwig Erhard

Niemand denkt gerne an schlechte Zeiten zurück, die längst vergangen sind. Wer will sich heute noch an die Jahre der Not, der Besatzscheine und des Schwarzen Marktes erinnern? Sagen wir uns nicht leichtsin, wir seien eben fleißig gewesen, und unser gegenwärtiger Lebensstandard belohne uns nur für die viele Mühe?

Auch unsere Brüder und Schwestern in der Ostzone haben seit der Währungsreform schwer gearbeitet. Aber sie waren nicht frei, sie durften ihre Regierung nicht selbst wählen. So wurden sie um die Früchte ihres Schaffens betrogen.



Wir hatten das Glück, in der Persönlichkeit Dr. Konrad Adenauers einen Bundeskanzler zu bekommen, der das Wohl aller Bürger fördern wollte. Nach diesem Grundsatz suchte er seine Mitarbeiter aus.

Als Wirtschaftsminister berief er einen mutigen Mann, der gegen vielfachen Widerstand mit der Zwangswirtschaft aufräumte: Professor Ludwig Erhard. Er befreite uns von der Vormundschaft der Kartenzellen. Er verschaffte dem gesunden Wettbewerb wieder Spielraum. Er machte die D-Mark zu einer der härtesten Währungen der Welt. Jetzt und in Zukunft können wir allen Deutschen nur helfen, wenn wir unseren Weg unbeirrt weiter gehen. Nur so werden wir die Wiedervereinigung erreichen.

Auch Professor Ludwig Erhard gehört zu Adenauers großer deutscher Volkspartei, der CDU/CSU. Er setzt sich mit allen Kräften für ihr Programm ein:

**WOHLSTAND FÜR ALLE  
EINHEIT FÜR DEUTSCHLAND · FRIEDEN IN DER WELT**

Figure 8.1: Männer neben Adenauer: Professor Ludwig Erhard



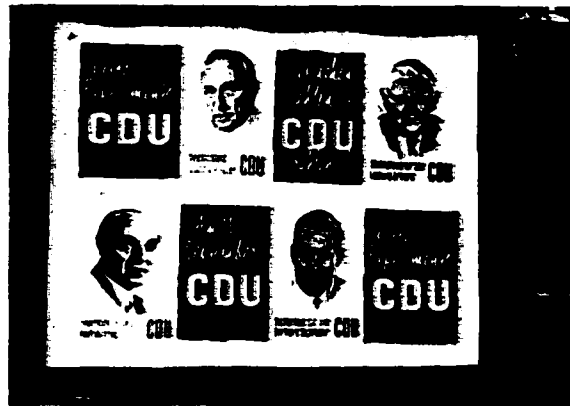
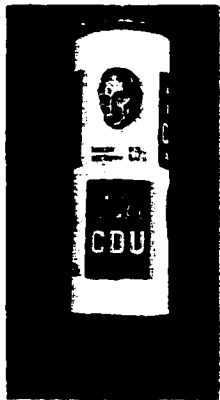
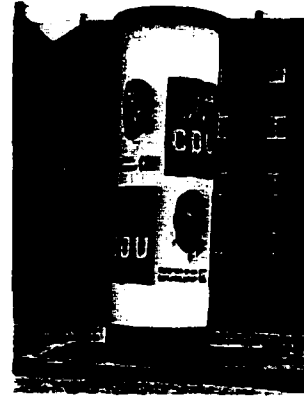
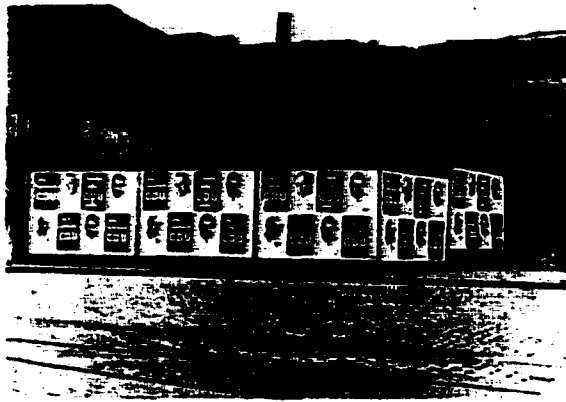


Figure 8.2: Posters from 1957 Bundestag campaign



Der Kleiderschrank bestätigt es:

## Uns allen geht es besser!

Und doch sind es noch keine 10 Jahre her, als man in Deutschland rechnete, daß auf jeden Deutschen nur alle 5 Jahre ein Teller kommt, alle 12 Jahre ein Paar Schuhe, nur alle 40 Jahre ein Kleid, daß nur jeder fünfte Wirtling in eigenen Wänden liegen könnte und nur jeder dritte Deutsche die Chance hätte, in seinem eigenen Sarg beerdigt zu werden - damals tatsächlich die einzige Chance.

Erinnern Sie sich noch?

Und heute? Schauen Sie sich doch einmal in Ihrem Kleiderschrank! Er bestätigt Ihnen: es geht uns besser, viel, viel besser, uns allen.

Professor Erhard hat sein Wort gehalten, das er gab, als er Bundeswirtschaftsminister wurde: eine Wirtschaftsverfassung anzustreben, die immer weitere und breitere Schichten unseres Volkes zu Wohlstand zu führen vermag.

**Wohlstand für alle ist kein Schlagwort mehr, Wohlstand für alle ist und wird Wirklichkeit: für viele heute schon, für alle sicher morgen. Es geht weiter aufwärts wie bisher, Schritt für Schritt, wenn wir Experimente vermeiden. Die Bundestagswahl gibt jedem die Chance. Wer mit Verstand wählt, wird Bewährtes wiederwählen: Adenauer und seine Mannschaft, zu der als Bundeswirtschaftsminister Ludwig Erhard gehört. Die Partei dieser Männer ist die CDU/CSU, jene große, alle Schichten unseres Volkes umfassende Partei, die unbeirrt ihr Ziel verfolgt:**

Wohlstand für alle  
 Einheit für Deutschland  
 Frieden in der Welt } **CDU**

Figure 8.3: Die Kleiderschrank bestätigt es: Uns allen geht es besser!

**Die Lohntüte bestätigt es:**

## **Uns allen geht es besser!**

Ja, es ist eine Tatsache: wir alle verdienen mehr! So nahm zum Beispiel der Brutto-Wochenverdienst der Industriearbeiter in den letzten sechs Jahren um 57 % zu, während die Einzelhandelspreise im gleichen Zeitraum nur um 6,4 % gestiegen sind. Arbeit für alle bei gutem Verdienst und stabiler Währung! Wann konnten wir uns jemals so viel leisten, so viele Wünsche erfüllen! Die Lohntüte bestätigt es: es geht uns besser, viel, viel besser – uns allen. Das soll unserer Regierung erst eine andere mal nachmachen!

**•Wohlstand für alle• ist kein Schlagwort mehr. •Wohlstand für alle• ist und wird Wirklichkeit – für viele bereits heute, für alle sicher morgen; es geht weiter aufwärts wie bisher, wenn wir keine Experimente machen. Am 15. September haben Sie es in der Hand: Wer mit Verstand wählt, wird Bewährtes wiederwählen – Adenauer und seine Mannschaft. Die Partei dieser Männer ist die CDU/CSU, die große, alle Schichten unseres Volkes umfassende Partei, die unbeirrt ihre Ziele verfolgt:**

**Wohlstand für alle  
Einheit für Deutschland  
Frieden in der Welt** } **CDU**

Figure 8.4: Die Lohntüte bestätigt es: Uns allen geht es besser!



Das Einkaufsnetz bestätigt es:

## Uns allen geht es besser!

Und doch sind es gerade 10 Jahre her... Für vier Wochen wurden damals folgende Rationen an den Normalverbraucher ausgegeben: 2000g Brot, 2400g Nahrungsmittel, 800g Fleisch, 107,5g Fett, 400g Fleisch, 100g Käse, keine Kartoffeln... Wir begingen das traurige Jubiläum der 100 Notstandsperiode, wir standen Schlange vor Geschäften, die keine Ware hatten — hungert, niemand, verzweifelt. Erinnern Sie sich noch?

Und heute? Schauen Sie sich nur das nächste Schaufenster an. Sie sehen selbst: es geht uns besser, viel, viel besser — uns allen!

Am 21. Juni 1948 versprach Professor Richard eine Wirtschaftsverfassung, die immer breitere Schichten unseres Volkes zu Wohlstand führen würde. Ludwig Richard hat Wort gehalten: Ihr Einkaufsnetz bestätigt es!

«Wohlstand für alle» ist kein Schlagwort mehr. «Wohlstand für alle» ist und wird Wirklichkeit — für viele bereits heute, für alle sicher morgen; es geht weiter aufwärts wie bisher, wenn wir keine Experimente machen. Am 15. September haben Sie es in der Hand: Wer mit Verstand wählt, wird Bewährtes wiederwählen — Adenauer und seine Mannschaft, zu der als Bundeswirtschaftsminister Ludwig Erhard gehört. Die Partei dieser Männer ist die CDU/CSU, die große, alle Schichten unseres Volkes umfassende Partei, die unbeirrt ihre Ziele verfolgt:

Wohlstand für alle  
Einheit für Deutschland  
Frieden in der Welt } **CDU**

Figure 8.5: Die Einkaufsnetz bestätigt es: Uns allen geht es besser!



## Alle haben was davon!

»Nein, Otto, versteh' mich nicht falsch: Ich bin natürlich froh über meinen Motorroller. Auch Brigitte ist ganz begeistert von ihrer neuen Waschmaschine. Und der Kühlschrank — der übrigens vor 4 Jahren genau das Doppelte gekostet hätte! — kommt uns allen schön zugute! Aber — was mir an Ludwig Erhard am meisten imponiert, ist eben doch die neue Rentenordnung.«

»Mensch — bis du was davon hast, vergehen ja noch 30 Jahre!«

»Ganz egal! Zu wissen, daß man auch noch im Alter anständig leben kann, daß man nicht nur nach Schema F wie bisher so 'n paar Pimperlinge kriegt, sondern auch mit seiner Rente am Erfolg der Wirtschaft beteiligt ist — das ist schon was! Mein alter Vater hat jetzt nach der Rentenreform 295 Mark. Davon kann er leben. Bisher mußte ich ihm 50 Mark im Monat zugeben, damit er überhaupt rumkam. Und jetzt ist er wieder — wie es sein soll — der liebe, gute Großvater, der noch hier und da seinen Enkelkindern mal 'ne kleine Freude machen kann.«

»Na Fritz — das soll er dem Erhard verdanken?«

»Aber klar! Der hat unsere Wirtschaft stark gemacht. Von nichts kommt nichts! Nur mit steigender Produktivität konnten wir eine solche Rentenreform überhaupt verkraften. Und Erhard hat sich für sie eingesetzt, weil er sofort einsah: Das ist ein Stück echter Sozialer Marktwirtschaft.«

»Tja — eigentlich sind mir seit 1948 doch 'n ganz schönes Stückchen vorangekommen...«



Deshalb bleiben wir auch in Zukunft bei Erhards Sozialer Marktwirtschaft

Figure 8.6: Alle haben was davon!

Mercedes wie wir alle,  
FRITZ und OTTO

Wenn man nicht  
blind ist ...

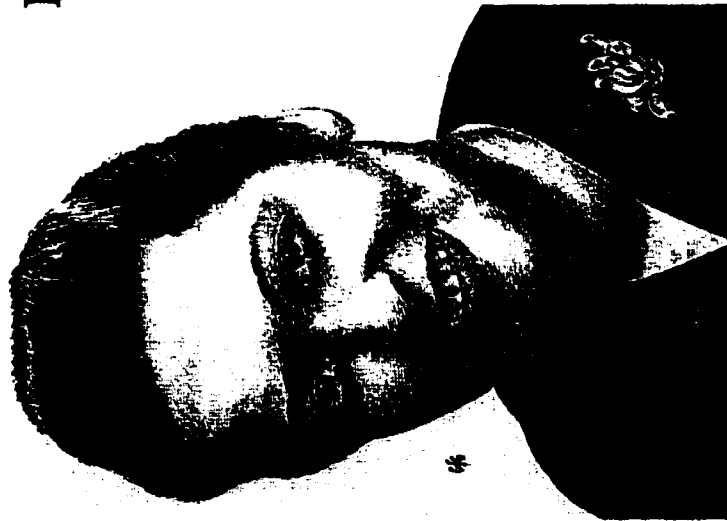


Deshalb bleiben wir auch in Zukunft  
bei Erhardt Seidlers Marktwirtschaft



Die Waage - Gesellschaft zur Förderung des Deutschen Ausgleichs e.V. - Vertreter Franz Gröbe - Köln am Rhein - Postfach 22-24

Figure 8.7: Wenn man nicht blind ist ...



## Das Leben neu gewonnen!

Diese Frau ist eins von vielen, die es nach der Flucht wieder geschafft haben, ihr Mann kehrt aus der Gefangenschaft nicht zurück, sie wurde aus Oberschlesien ausgewiesen und stand mit ihren Kindern plötzlich 1947 vor dem Nichts. Heute ist sie Buchhalterin in einem Industriewerk. Die Familie hat ihr Auskommen und sieht wieder hoffnungsvoll in die Zukunft. Seit dem Zusammenbruch nahm die Bundesrepublik rund 11,5 Millionen Vertriebene und Flüchtlinge auf und gab diesen geschickten, besitzlosen Menschen nicht nur eine Unterkunft, sondern auch die Möglichkeit, sich eine neue Existenz zu schaffen. Unsere freie Wirtschaft bot ihnen neue Arbeitsplätze. Sie bewältigte damit – natürlich nicht reibungslos – eine ihrer schwierigsten Aufgaben.

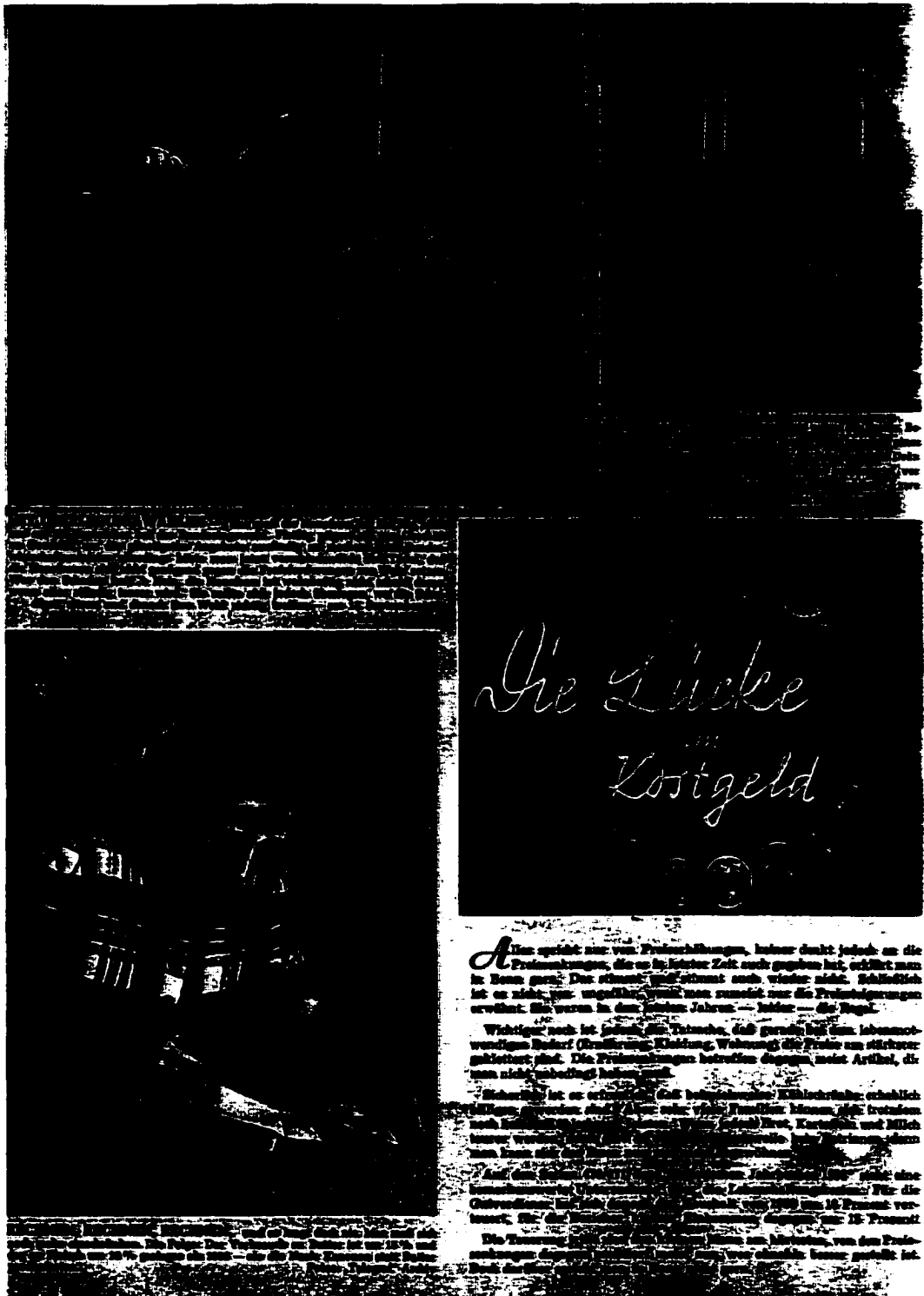
11,5 Millionen Flüchtlinge machen rund ein Viertel unserer Bevölkerung aus, beinahe jeder Vierte also gehört zu ihnen. Aber man kennt sie kaum noch heraus; fast alle haben einen gut bezahlten Arbeitsplatz gefunden, sie sind gut eingearbeitet und gut gekleidet – ganz wie die Einheimischen. Unsere Soziale Marktwirtschaft ist auch für diese Menschen zur Grundlage eines neuen Lebens geworden, zur Grundlage für eine sichere Zukunft.

**Deshalb bleiben wir auch in Zukunft bei Erhard's Sozialer Marktwirtschaft**



Die Waage · Gemeinschaft zur Förderung des Sozialen Ausgleichs e. V. · Vorsitzender Franz Greiss · Köln am Rhein · Schildergasse 32-34

Figure 8.8: Das Leben neu gewonnen!



# Die Lücke im Kostgeld

Man spricht nur von Preissteigerungen, keiner denkt jedoch an die Preisrückgänge, die es in letzter Zeit auch gegeben hat, schließt man in Bonn ganz. Das stimmt, und stimmt auch wieder nicht. Schließlich ist es nicht von ungefähr, wenn man summiert nur die Preissteigerungen erwähnt. Sie waren in dem letzten Jahre — leider — die Regel.

Wichtiges auch ist jedoch zu betonen, daß gerade bei dem lebensnotwendigen Bedarf (Ernährung, Kleidung, Wohnung) die Preise am stärksten gehoben sind. Die Preissteigerungen betreffen besonders, meist Artikel, die man nicht unbedingt haben muß.

Beispielsweise ist es allgemein bekannt, daß bei den Lebensmitteln erheblich höhere Steigerungen als bei den anderen Familien-Mengen zu beobachten sind. So sind zum Beispiel Brot, Kartoffeln und Milch teurer geworden, während bei den anderen Lebensmitteln die Steigerungen nur geringfügig sind.

Auf dem Gebiet der Dienstleistungen sind die Steigerungen ebenfalls eine Tatsache. So sind zum Beispiel die Preise für die öffentlichen Verkehrsmittel, die Post, die Telefonate, die Energie und die Gaspreise in den letzten Jahren um 10 Prozent vertieft. Die Preise für die öffentlichen Verkehrsmittel sind um 10 Prozent vertieft.

Die Preise für die öffentlichen Verkehrsmittel sind um 10 Prozent vertieft. Die Preise für die öffentlichen Verkehrsmittel sind um 10 Prozent vertieft.

Figure 8.9: Die Lücke im Kostgeld



# Wir haben viel erreicht

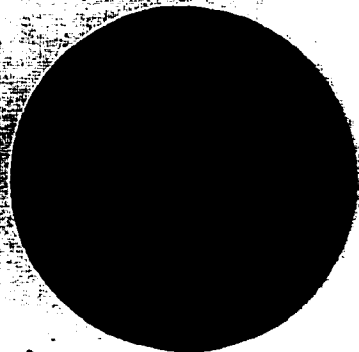
Dank der Arbeitsfreudigkeit und der Geschicklichkeit unserer Arbeiter, Angestellten, Techniker und Kaufleute haben viele Menschen heute in der Bundesrepublik einen erfreulich hohen Lebensstandard.

Die CDU/CSU, Bundesregierung hat dazu allerdings herzlich wenig beigetragen. Sie hat vielmehr mit ihrer Wirtschaftspolitik vor allem die Großindustrie gefördert. Der Verbrauches wurde mit Zeitungsanzeigen abgesperrt, die noch dazu aus unserer Sockeln bezahlt wurden. Mit dieser verbraucherfeindlichen Politik muß endlich Schluß gemacht werden. Die SPD fordert darum eine Wirtschaftspolitik, die den Verbraucher mehr als bisher an den Erfolgen des wirtschaftlichen Aufstieges beteiligt. Der von allen erarbeitete Reichtum soll auch allen zugute kommen. Die SPD wird mit ihrer Wirtschaftspolitik nicht die Großen unterstützen, sondern die Interessen der Kleinen im Lande vertreten. Sie wird sich für den Arbeiter und Angestellten, aber auch für die Handwerker und Bauern, für die freien Berufe und die kleinen und mittleren Gewerbetreibenden einsetzen. Wenn die SPD im neuen Bundestag die Mehrheit hat und ihre Vorstellungen verwirklichen kann, dann wird der Verbraucher, dann werden Sie im Mittelpunkt der Wirtschaft stehen.



## Wirtschaftliche Sicherheit für alle!

Darum



Copyright: DRUCKHAUS DEUTZ

Figure 8.10: Wir haben viel erreicht

## CHAPTER 9

### CONCLUSION

With its decisive victory in the 1957 Bundestag election, the CDU/CSU reached the zenith of its power. Neither before nor since has a single party in the Federal Republic of Germany achieved a majority of the vote. Yet almost immediately following its greatest triumph, the party began to experience a slow decline. Adenauer's failed bid for the presidency in late spring 1959, undermined in part by Adenauer's reluctance to allow Erhard as his successor for the Chancellorship, showed the divisions within the CDU/CSU. The party had grown dependent upon Adenauer, who was now in political decline, in both elections and for leadership within the party. The Spiegel affair of autumn 1962, in which Adenauer had the editorial staff of the magazine arrested after the publication of an article on the government's defense policy, spelled the end for Adenauer. Adenauer's successor, Ludwig Erhard, although charismatic and popular, did not have Adenauer's air of authority. His Chancellorship lasted only until 1966. In addition, in the 1960s the consolidation of the West German political system did not exclusively favor the CDU/CSU. By 1961, the SPD succeeded in picking up votes from the smaller parties and began to gain on the CDU/CSU.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Geoffrey Pridham, *Christian Democracy in Western Germany: The CDU/CSU in Government and Opposition, 1945-1976* (London: Croom Helm, 1977), 113-187.

After its crushing defeat in the 1957 election, the SPD speeded its pace along the painful course of reform. Following the election, the party leadership came under severe attack from local party leaders. Within the next few years much of the older party leadership was jettisoned in favor of younger, charismatic politicians who were seeking to reform the party. At the party conference at Stuttgart in 1958, a number of the party's old guard were not reelected to the executive board, signaling some of the larger changes that were to come.

In November 1959 the party convened a special party meeting in Bad Godesberg to adopt a new basic program for the party. Perhaps most striking about the program statement was what it did not contain, most notably any mention of Marx. In the section of the program discussing economics, there was no mention of socialization, although there was some reference to "public ownership" as "appropriate and necessary" when "sound economic power relations cannot be guaranteed by other means." The document represented the SPD's retreat from ideological conflict with the bourgeois parties. Perhaps most importantly, the Bad Godesberg Program changed the public image of SPD, and with that helped transform the party into a "*Volkspartei*" (people's party). The SPD's specific "sub-culture" of a primarily working-class following began to dissolve and in the 1960s the party was successful in attracting support from a broader range of West German society. Together, the developments in both the SPD and the CDU/CSU represented the emergence of the Federal Republic's party system that would dominate until the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. The parties of the middle, made up of the

CDU/CSU, SPD, and FDP, dominated the political landscape as the extremist and splinter parties disappeared.<sup>2</sup>

This work has shown that the CDU/CSU was successful in constructing and selling a political meaning of the Economic Miracle and the Social Market Economy over the course of the 1950s. With the use of economics as a major issue, the party was able to construct a party image that was effective in attracting votes from varied sociological groups within West Germany. As a result, the CDU/CSU became the first “people’s party” in the Federal Republic. The creation of a party that broke down Weimar voting patterns, an approach copied by the SPD, was crucial for the development of West Germany’s political party system. Together, the creation of broader “catch-all” parties proved to be a crucial difference between the unstable party system of the Weimar Republic and the stable democracy of the Federal Republic of Germany.

In addition, the “selling” of the Economic Miracle involved the adoption and implementation of American political campaigning styles, advertising techniques, and demographic polling. With these new propaganda techniques, the CDU/CSU was able to direct its message to specific sociological groups within the Federal Republic, thereby maximizing its success in the polls. In conjunction with the utilization of these new techniques, an orchestrated network of pro-Adenauer and pro-government propaganda organizations emerged that helped create a coherence in the conservative message. With

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<sup>2</sup> Susanne Miller and Heinrich Potthoff, *A History of German Social Democracy: From 1848 to the Present* (New York: Berg, 1983), 176-177. For a discussion on the West German political party system see Richard D. Partch, “The Transformation of the West German Party System: Patterns of Electoral Change and Consistency,” *German Studies Review* 3 (1980): 85-90.

this emphasis upon the creation and projection of a party image, West German election campaigns revolved less and less around ideological conflict. In many respects, there was an increased “consumerization” of politics in West Germany during the 1950s.

Finally, economics became a central source of a new, uniquely West German political identity. Through ongoing propaganda campaigns conservative political parties and business interests helped create an understanding of economic reconstruction that contributed to the legitimacy of the Federal Republic. The enormous economic and social changes that occurred in the Federal Republic during the 1950s were linked with a specific political meaning. Not only did economic reconstruction contribute to conservative electoral success, but it also helped construct a new West German identity and political consciousness based upon consumerism and economic success. This new consciousness helped West Germany overcome the social tensions that tore the Weimar Republic apart. In addition, economic reconstruction became a basis for a new, uniquely West German national identity that helped fill the vacuum left by the discredited form of nationalism represented by the Third Reich.

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- I-351 Nachlass Hermann Gottaut
- I-242 Nachlass Bruno Heck
- I-021 Nachlass Werner Hilpert
- I-172 Nachlass Otto Lenz
- I-032 Nachlass Dr. Franz Meyers
- I-236 Nachlass Alfred Müller-Armack
- II-94 Kreisverband Rhein Sieg
- III-002 Landesverband Westfalen-Lippe
- III-009 Landesverband Württemberg-Hollernzollern
- VI-059 Aktiongemeinschaft Soziale Marktwirtschaft
- VII-001 Bundespartei/Bundesvorstand, Bundesausschuß, Präsidium
- VII-002 Bundespartei/Vorsitzende
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