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IN GERMAN
HISTORY
VOLUME 18

SELLING THE ECONOMIC MIRACLE

ECONOMIC RECONSTRUCTION
AND POLITICS IN WEST
GERMANY, 1949-1957

MARK E. SPICKA

Selling the Economic Miracle

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Selling the Economic Miracle: Economic Reconstruction and Politics in West Germany, 1949–1957

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Economic Reconstruction and Politics
in West Germany
1949–1957



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Berghahn Books
New York • Oxford

First published in 2007 by

Berghahn Books

www.berghahnbooks.com

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Open access ebook edition published in 2018

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Spicka, Mark E.

Selling the economic miracle : reconstruction and politics in West Germany, 1949-1957 / Mark E. Spicka.

p. cm. -- (Monographs in German history ; . 17)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 1-84545-223-2 (hardcover : alk. paper)

1. Germany (West)--Economic policy--1945-1990. 2. Germany (West)--Economic conditions--1945-1990. 3. Germany (West)--Social policy--History--20th century. 4. Germany (West)--Politics and government--1945-1990. 5. Free enterprise--Germany (West)--History--20th century. I. Title.

HC286.5.S7223 2007

330.943'0875--dc22

2006100353

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-84545-223-0 hardback

ISBN: 978-1-78920-640-1 open access ebook



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To Susan, Margaret, and Natalie

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**This image is not available in the open access edition due to rights restrictions. It is accessible in the print edition on page 223.*

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

During the winter of 1993/94 I was teaching English to business students at a technical school in the comfortable Westphalian city of Münster. Wanting to get a first-hand glimpse of conditions in the former German Democratic Republic, I traveled to the East in late December 1993. Standing in line at Dresden's Semper Opera House, I had the good fortune to strike up a conversation with a young couple from Jena in Thuringia. Having never spent time with an American, they were kind enough to invite me back to their home. Conditions in their industrial city presented a striking contrast to the affluence of Münster. Jena consisted of grim, dilapidated apartments, stores, and factories, all thickly blanketed in coal soot. The frustrations of many East Germans regarding the lack of economic and social progress since reunification were aptly summed up by some graffiti scrawled on the wall of a row house: "Kohl lied!" The wife of this couple was educated as a doctor and her husband as a mechanical engineer, yet both of them were unemployed and squatting in an apartment house that lacked indoor running water. In these difficult circumstances, they spoke nostalgically of the days of the former East Germany, when the street cars were virtually free and they had enjoyed a sense of social security. The pair was leery of the free market's intrusion into their lives and definitely could not perceive any of its potential benefits.

Spending time with this couple made me realize how difficult a task it would be to tie the two German states together. It was not merely a matter of reconstructing the infrastructure, as many in the West thought, but also of changing people's minds. Now, almost twenty years later, the "wall in the mind" remains a formidable obstacle. Meeting this couple led me to wonder what transpired during the early Federal Republic in terms of West Germans' changing perceptions and meanings regarding the economy. To be sure, West Germany experienced an "economic miracle" of the 1950s that transformed society and undermined Social Democratic calls for the socialization and planning of the economy. Although after the Third Reich many West Germans were sharply critical of industry and free-market capitalism, within a few years most had become fiercely proud of their "social market economy." Clearly the conservative Christian Democratic Union and Ludwig Erhard, the Federal Republic's first economics

minister, had successfully positioned themselves as the bearers of the economic miracle—but, I wondered, just how they succeeded in doing this? And more importantly perhaps, what did this economic reconstruction mean to West Germans in the midst of building a new democracy out of the ruins of the Nazi past?

So many people have contributed in a variety of important ways to the completion of this work that I find it impossible to thank them all sufficiently. I could not imagine a better Ph.D. adviser than Alan D. Bayerchen, who oversaw the beginning stages of this project at Ohio State University. He always found the right balance between guiding me in a productive way and encouraging me to find my own intellectual path. I am deeply grateful to him for his guidance, support, and friendship. I must thank the members of my dissertation committee, John Rothney and Leila Rupp, for their astute insights and helpful advice. Ken Andrien, James Bartholomew, Carole Fink, Martha Garland, and Robin Judd, all at Ohio State, contributed immeasurably to my growth and development as a historian. I also benefited greatly from scholars who shared their insights as I wrestled with some of the fundamental issues of postwar West German history. Diethelm Prowe and Volker Berghahn were kind enough to read early drafts of the manuscript and provide invaluable suggestions to strengthen my analysis. I am very grateful to Robert Moeller for his excellent critique of a section of my manuscript dealing with the representation of gender roles in political propaganda. Thomas Schwartz's commentary on a conference paper presented at the 2003 meeting of the German Studies Association helped sharpen my thinking on the process of the Americanization of West German politics. Conversations with Julia Sneeringer and others at the 2000 Midwest German History Seminar at the University of Wisconsin helped me significantly in considering advertising's role in German political history. I appreciate the extensive time and care James C. Van Hook devoted to reviewing this manuscript. His constructive critique substantially strengthened this work. Marion Berghahn, Melissa Spinelli, and Jaime Taber at Berghahn Books provided extraordinary support in the production of this volume. I greatly appreciate their work in guiding this book to publication.

I am also grateful for the generous support I received from the Department of History, Graduate School, and Office of International Education, all of Ohio State University, and from the Fulbright Commission. Their assistance allowed me to complete essential archival research in Germany. During my year as a Fulbright scholar at the University of Cologne, I was fortunate to have Professor Jost Dülffer as my "*Betreuer*." Our conversations helped keep this project on track through the trying times of archival research. Dr. Sabine Behrenbeck at the University of Cologne was kind enough to give me a great deal of her time and attention as I struggled to find a focus for my project. At the Archiv für Christlich-Demokratische Politik, Dr. Frank Mueller and Hans-Jürgen Klegraf assisted me greatly as I searched the CDU records. Andreas Schirmer at the Ludwig Erhard Stiftung also provided me with considerable help during my research. Dr. Dirk Schindelbeck, who spent an entire day with me at the Kultur und Werbe geschichtliches Archiv in Freiburg, substantially expanded my under-

standing of public relations and advertising work in West Germany. The support staffs of the Bundesarchiv in Koblenz, Archiv der sozialen Demokratie in Bonn, the Nordrhein-Westfälisches Hauptstaatsarchiv in Düsseldorf, Archiv des Liberalismus in Gummersbach, the Konrad Adenauer Haus in Königswinter, Rheinisch-Westfälisches Wirtschaftsarchiv in Cologne, and the Hans Seidel Stiftung in Munich extended considerable assistance to my research. I am most grateful to all of them.

During my stay in Germany I was fortunate to have close friends who offered a haven from the grind of dissertation work. Kristina, Tibor, and Martin Sugár provided me with the atmosphere and comfort of a home-away-from-home and occasional tickets to Borussia Dortmund soccer matches. Helga and Beno Strasser have been dear family friends and assisted me immeasurably during my stays in Germany. Kelly Meyer and Cassandra Bonse were always willing to lend an ear as I vented dissertation excitement and frustrations. My graduate school friends and colleagues, Amy Alrich, Brad Austin, Michael Bryant, Laura Hilton, Jeffrey Lewis, Andrew Long, Kelly McFall, Doug Palmer, John Stapleton, John Stark, and Nick Steneck, always exercised a critical eye and a delicate touch in pointing out the strengths and weaknesses in my work. At Shippensburg University I have been blessed with many supportive colleagues. As chairperson of the Department of History and Philosophy, David Godshalk extended both encouragement and sound advice as this project developed. I am deeply indebted to Charles Loucks, who spent countless hours reading my manuscript and managed to significantly improve my sometimes clunky writing style. The University Research and Scholarship Program at Shippensburg University provided generous support that proved essential for the completion of the manuscript. I am grateful to Gay Jones, Diane Kalathas, Mary Mowery, and Teresa Strayer at the university's Lehman Memorial Library who indefatigably tracked down many obscure books and periodicals as I worked through my research.

My family and friends have given me more support than I could ever have hoped for. My parents were always extremely supportive of me during my journey through graduate school and into the realm of the professional historian. Over thirty years ago, my grandfather Homer Newell ignited a love of history within me that I carry still. My greatest debt, admiration, and love go to my wife Susan, without whose love and support this book would never have seen completion. Susan was always confident that I would complete this volume, even when I experienced doubts. Over the course of this project, we have experienced many wonderful life changes—most importantly our marriage and the births of our daughters, Margaret and Natalie. As I often times allowed writing and research to unduly divert my time and energy, Susan took on an immense amount of hard work. All the while she maintained her characteristic great wit and upbeat attitude. I could never begin to fully repay her for all she has done. However, with this project completed, I plan now to try.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACDP	Archiv für Christlich-Demokratische Politik
ADK	Arbeitsgemeinschaft demokratischen Kreise
AdsD	Achiv der sozialen Demokratie, Bonn
ASM	Aktionsgemeinschaft Soziale Marktwirtschaft
BA	Bundesarchiv
BDA	Bundesvereinigung Deutscher Arbeitgeberverbände
BDI	Bundesverband der Deutschen Industrie
BKU	Bund der Katholischer Unternehmer
CDU	Christlich Demokratische Union
CSU	Christlich Soziale Union
DGB	Deutsche Gewerkschaftsbund
DI	Deutsches Industrieinstitut
DIVO	Deutsches Institut für Volksumfragen
DP	Deutsche Partei
DM	Deutsche Mark
EDC	European Defense Community
EMNID	Ermittlungen, Meinungen, Nachrichten, Information, Dienste
EPU	European Payments Union
FDP	Freie Demokratische Partei
GB/BHE	Gesamtdeutscher Block/Bund der Heimatvertriebenen und Entrechteten
GfG	Gesellschaft für Gemeinschaftswerbung
IHK	Industrie- und Handelskammer
KPD	Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands
LES	Ludwig Erhard Stiftung
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NWHStA	Nordrhein-Westfälisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, Düsseldorf
OMGUS	Office of Military Government, United States
RM	Reichsmark
RWWA	Rheinisch-Westfälisches Wirtschaftsarchiv
SD	Sicherheitsdienst
SED	Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands

SPD	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands
StBKAH	Stiftung-Bundeskanzler Adenauerhaus
Wipog	Wirtschaftspolitische Gesellschaft von 1947
ZAW	Zentralamt für Wirtschaft

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, 19 October 1955¹

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

Werner Abelshauser²

In the aftermath of the Second World War, Germany appeared destined to be a pauper among European nations. Its cities, factories, and transportation system had suffered massive damage during the war. It had lost its sovereignty and was subject to the rule of the four occupying powers of the United States, Great Britain, France, and the Soviet Union who were not keen on rebuilding the industrial might of a defeated Germany. During the immediate postwar years many Germans scraped to get by, enduring dreadful housing and relying on the black market to supplement the sustenance provided by their ration cards. But beginning with the 20 June 1948 currency reform, in which the new Deutsche Mark (DM) replaced the worthless Reichsmark (RM) in the three western zones of occupation, consumer goods seemed to appear magically from nowhere in shop windows. Subsequently, West Germany experienced fantastic economic growth through the 1960s in what has been called the *Wirtschaftswunder* (economic miracle). With rising demand for goods spurred on by 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 expand 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.³ Workers' wages increased by 79 percent in real terms between 1949 and 1959.⁴ West

Notes for this section begin on page 21.

Germany literally rose from the ashes as its cities and factories were rebuilt, exports soared, and the West Germans' standard of living improved.

Politicians, economists, and historians have inextricably linked the story of West Germany's economic reconstruction to the nation's economic system, the *Soziale Marktwirtschaft* (social market economy). Emerging out of the ideas of neoliberal economists from the first half of the twentieth century, the social market economy forged a "middle way" between pure laissez-faire capitalism and the 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 regulate the market by establishing the "rules of the game" in order to curb monopolies and cartels and avoid the concentration of excessive economic power in the hands of a few. By containing the power of large capital to set prices unfairly, the system increased the power of individual consumers within the economy. But this economic theory had to be implemented within the harsh realities of the political world. It had to be transformed into an effective political tool. Leaders of the conservative Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union (CDU/CSU), most notably Konrad Adenauer, recognized the political usefulness of such a program and in the late 1940s pushed their party to adopt the social market economy as the basis of the party's economic platform. In addition, the supporters of the social market economy from a more academic and commercial background, such as Ludwig Erhard, the Federal Republic's economics minister in the 1950s, attributed West Germany's economic resurgence, characterized by the rise in productivity, exports, wages, and living standards, to the introduction of the economic system they espoused.⁵ The social market economy was transformed from an economic theory, or even abstract economic policy, into the basis of a political party's propaganda and public image—and, in part because of the CDU/CSU's efforts, into an important element in the West German identity.

Erhard, Adenauer, and the CDU/CSU identified the start of the social market economy with the June 1948 introduction of the Deutsche Mark throughout the three western zones of Germany and West Berlin and the simultaneous lifting of economic controls in the so-called Bizone of the American and British zones of occupation. Almost immediately after its implementation, the currency reform achieved mythical status among West Germans, who tell stories of food and goods appearing almost magically within shop windows as the new hard currency ended hoarding and the black market ceased to be the center of daily commerce for West Germans. Many observers have likened West Germany's reconstruction in the 1950s to a "phoenix rising out of the ashes" after its nearly total destruction. Some elevate the Federal Republic's economic miracle to legendary status; their hero is Ludwig Erhard.⁶ Revered 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. He would often proclaim that West Germany's economic

success was, in fact, no miracle, but the product of sound policies and the West German hard work and spirit. Even today, more than fifty years later, politicians from all parties have invoked Erhard's legacy as the panacea for the challenges the Federal Republic faces in integrating the former East Germany into the western economy.⁷

Some historians and social scientists have argued that economic reconstruction and the ensuing growth of consumerism offered West Germans citizens during the 1950s and 1960s an escape from their Nazi past. The challenge 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.⁸ Economics, to a large extent, became the basis for a new West German identity. 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 rather than with any political institutions or traditions. Revealingly, West Germany's constitution, the *Grundgesetz* (Basic Law), was completely unknown to 51 percent of respondents of a 1956 public opinion survey.⁹ During the 1950s more West Germans took greater pride in their nation's economic accomplishments than its government or political institutions. According to a survey from the late 1950s, 33 percent of West Germans touted economic success as a source of pride for their nation, while only 7 percent cited their government or political institutions.¹⁰ For many West Germans the June 1948 currency reform had a much greater impact on their lives than the establishment of the Basic Law in May 1949.¹¹

Looking back at the economic miracle years many fail to recognize that the acceptance and full introduction of the social market economy was by no means ensured. The Social Democratic Party (SPD) continually attacked Erhard and the CDU/CSU on grounds that their economic policy did not adequately take social concerns into account and allowed the old powers of monopolistic capitalism to reestablish their positions of power. In addition, the strain of an unfavorable balance of payments for West Germany during the Korean War led to what some economic historians have characterized as the reintroduction of a corporatist economic system that fatally undermined a competitive market in West Germany.¹² Meanwhile, throughout the 1950s Erhard engaged in an ongoing battle with heavy industry regarding the introduction of legislation limiting monopolies and cartels, which culminated in a relatively watered-down piece of anticartel legislation in 1957. Also in early 1957 the introduction of a "dynamic" pension signified the start of what could be seen as the West German welfare state—a concept abhorred by Erhard.¹³ Furthermore, and most germane to this study, many West Germans were reticent during the 1950s to accept the free market and the ideas of the social market economy, particularly with the economic strain caused by the Korean Crisis.¹⁴ Many parts of West German society, especially among the working class, regarded the reality of the economic miracle as not corresponding to its image. Consumption did not reach the heights that later public perception imagined. Goods such as the refrigerator that have come to symbolize a subsequent

perception of the economic miracle were during the first half of the 1950s available only to a limited number of people. For much of the immediate postwar period, West Germans struggled to meet basic needs; then, when reconstruction commenced by 1948/49, they continued to have a difficult time making ends meet in face of rising prices and the need to replace shelter and durable goods lost in the war. Not until the second half of the 1950s can one perceive a fully emergent consumer society in West Germany. Even then, many pensioners and single women “standing alone” were yet to experience the impact of West Germany’s economic resurgence.¹⁵

Visions of the 1950s and its economic miracle have maintained a powerful grip on the West Germans’ and later Germans’ sense of themselves and their nation. Subsequent views of the period have ranged from those of 1960s student protesters attacking what they saw as the restoration of old political and economic elites ensconced within the material self-satisfaction of the masses to the emergence in the 1970s of nostalgia for a period associated with a flood of consumer goods such as washing machines, the Volkswagen Beetle, blue jeans, and Elvis records.¹⁶ If the popular media and museums are any indication, this view of the 1950s continues to predominate today.¹⁷ However, even during the 1950s themselves, the meaning of economic reconstruction and the social market economy 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. The mass media, advertisers, and even government-supported trade fairs helped create the public perception of the economic miracle.¹⁸

Political parties also took an active role in shaping West Germans’ views of economic developments. Through an examination of election campaign propaganda and various public relations campaigns, this work explores how the CDU/CSU and conservative economic groups successfully constructed and sold a political meaning of the social market economy and the economic miracle. This creation of a political meaning and significance of economics contributed to conservative electoral success, constructed a new faith in market economics and what might be called economic citizenship by West Germans, and provided legitimacy for the new Federal Republic Germany itself. Clearly, the CDU/CSU and business organizations understood that hard, empirical economic statistics alone were not enough to move the citizenry, but that these economic realities must be attached to deeper political and cultural meanings—a lesson the rival SPD did not fully fathom. Overall, the task of selling the economic miracle was an important element in the establishment of the Federal Republic’s stable democracy during the 1950s. Indeed, the transformation of West Germany’s economy was paralleled by the emergence of a new political culture out of the rubble of the Nazi past and Allied occupation. This study seeks to illuminate the development of new electoral practices, centered on “selling” the economic miracle, that contributed to a strong party system resistant to the fracturing and weakness that doomed the Weimar Republic.

Although West Germany's economic resurgence since the Second World War has been a fundamental theme of its history, until relatively recently investigation of the social and cultural implications of economic reconstruction was curiously absent. Through the 1980s, much of the historiography of West Germany was dominated by political and diplomatic history that traced the creation of the Federal Republic's political institutions and its geopolitical position within the Cold War.¹⁹ In conjunction with a more traditional political approach to the Federal Republic's history, historians, economists, and political scientists have fully explored the course of West Germany's rapid economic reconstruction.²⁰ These works have focused on such issues as the development of Erhard's economic ideas,²¹ the implementation of the social market economy in the political arena,²² and the postwar transformation of the West German political economy.²³ Economic historians particularly pursued the question of whether the social market economy truly reshaped prewar economic and social structures or merely represented the restoration of older capitalist practices.²⁴ In the 1970s and 1980s Werner Abelshauser built on the restoration paradigm by denying that the economic miracle of the 1950s was initiated by Erhard and the social market economy, or even by the influx of Marshall Plan money. Rather, he argued, after West Germany experienced a vigorous reconstruction period in the immediate postwar years, the nation fell into longer-term patterns of economic development dating from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.²⁵ Others have pointed to the importance of the international trading system, created in large part by the United States, as an essential component in West Germany's economic resurgence.²⁶ Most recently, more balanced accounts by historians such as A.J. Nicholls and James Van Hook have weighed the relative impact of domestic policies supported by Erhard and encapsulated in the concept of the social market economy versus the importance of historical and international economic patterns determining West Germany's economic growth. This approach is, undoubtedly, the most judicious approach to complex, interconnected issues. These recent works strongly counter the restoration paradigm by portraying Erhard in a mostly favorable light and contending that Erhard and his ideas represented a new strain in German economic thought. More importantly in these works, they underscore the relatively wide political space that West Germans possessed by 1948 in order to develop economic policy, albeit within an international context.²⁷

To be sure, West Germany's economic history has been deeply researched, in terms of both tracing the country's economic growth and exploring its political economy. But academic discussions of economic systems and their impact reflect only one aspect of the significance of West Germany's economic reconstruction. Relatively untouched is a full exploration of the domestic political implication of its economic resurgence. Justifiably, almost all historians attribute a large portion of the CDU/CSU's electoral success in the 1950s to West Germany's economic success. But almost none of them investigate systematically and in depth how contemporary economic and political groups capitalized on West Germany's economic resurgence in elections. In other words, what meaning did political and

economic entities, including political parties, business associations, and official governmental organizations, attribute to the social market economy and the so-called economic miracle?

Recent scholarship has shed light on the cultural and social dimensions of politics in the era of the economic miracle. Much of this work seeks to transform and expand the concept of political culture by shifting focus from the mechanics of institutional political life to ways the creation of new political identities and consciousness shaped national politics. It was most directly through elections that these nascent identities influenced politics at the national level. In other words, these recent works highlight the interaction between the “politics of daily life” and formal, parliamentary politics—thereby demonstrating the interconnections between political, economic, social, and cultural history.²⁸ My work builds and expands upon such a fruitful reconceptualization of political culture. But instead of exclusively examining those cultural contexts outside of formal politics, it explores how political and national identities were molded and manipulated by the very political associations seeking to benefit from these newly formed identities. More specifically, during the 1950s, West German political and national identities were deliberately formed and shaped by the West German political leaders themselves. This was particularly salient for the CDU/CSU since as a new party, albeit one with roots in the Weimar-era Catholic Center Party, it had to create new constituencies and new political practices in the Federal Republic. In contrast, as a previously established party, the SPD looked to old approaches and leadership harking back to pre-Third Reich days.

Led by Konrad Adenauer, a former mayor of Cologne, a founder of the CDU in the British zone of occupation, and the future first chancellor of West Germany, the CDU/CSU expanded its share of the vote in each of the successive Bundestag (parliamentary) elections in 1949, 1953, and 1957. Economic reconstruction and economic policy embodied by Erhard along with the persona of Adenauer as a strong, steady leader were crucial elements in creating the CDU/CSU’s image over the course of the 1950s. Before the first Bundestag election in 1949, the CDU/CSU adopted the social market economy as its economic program and primary focus of its electoral campaigning. In large part, Adenauer supported the policy so that the CDU/CSU would not only integrate disparate elements within the party organization, but also win wider appeal at the ballot box, thereby branching out from its core following of Catholics whose loyalty stemmed from the Weimar traditions of the Catholic Center Party. The party could now appeal to other sociological groups, including some Protestants and pro-free market interests that might otherwise be attracted to a liberal or nationalist party. In addition, the adoption of such a policy would hinder a coalition between the CDU/CSU and the SPD, on both the federal and state levels, 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 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 proved unable to capitalize upon the economic miracle in elections and garner broad support. They thereby declined in importance relative to the CDU/CSU. 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 predominantly in Lower Saxony and became associated with middle-class conservatism. Outside of Lower Saxony and limited areas of northern Hesse, the party possessed little national appeal. The bourgeois Gesamtdeutscher Block/Bund der Heimatvertriebenen und Entrechteten (All-German Block/League of Expellees and Those Deprived of Their Rights, GB/BHE) was limited to the single issue of defending the rights of the expellees from Germany's lost lands 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 in the 1950s. Overall, the CDU/CSU was perhaps the only bourgeois party capable of crafting a self image that held broad appeal. In large part, the CDU/CSU's economic propaganda played a crucial part in attracting the party's broad-based support because the issue could be placed in myriad contexts—thereby generating a variety of political meanings.²⁹

The word “propaganda” is often used synonymously with “lies,” “deceit,” and “distortion” (or at least as the antithesis of the “truth”) generated by one side on an issue. Yet propaganda is also a communicative process. According to one good working definition, “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.”³⁰ It functions as a form of persuasion. But propaganda not only seeks to mold opinions; it also reflects the expectations, assumptions, desires, and fears of not only those who construct the propaganda but also society as a whole. The symbols and messages transmitted in propaganda serve as landmarks reflecting shifts in public perception of the world. Those creating effective propaganda attempt to shape messages that resonate within the public imagination. In this manner, propaganda both forms a society's views and is a product of that society's norms and expectations. An examination of the economic propaganda of the 1950s reveals the changing parameters of what was possible within political discourse regarding not just economics in particular, but also cultural politics in general. Propaganda on economics illustrates the developing political consciousness of West Germans and their thoughts regarding the new democracy, the more open, less class-based society, and the increasingly consumerist culture created after the Third Reich. This political campaign material functions particularly well as a mirror of developing West German perceptions of the Nazi past, the ever present communist alternative of East Germany, and the growing influence of America and mass culture.³¹

As Heidrun Abromeit demonstrated over thirty years ago in *Das Politische in der Werbung: Wahlwerbung und Wirtschaftswerbung in der Bundesrepublik*, West German election campaigns were not based upon programs and policy statements but revolved around the sale of political slogans and images as though they were goods. Over the course of the 1960s, so Abromeit argued, the Federal Republic's election campaigns became ever more geared toward projecting a party image, as opposed to making any factual appeal to the electorate.³² In fact, Abromeit identified a dynamic that had already emerged in the early years of the Federal Republic, if not during the occupation period. The CDU/CSU outclassed its rivals in conceptualizing a party image for itself even before the first Bundestag elections. With the reemergence of a democratic political life after the defeat of the Third Reich, Adenauer quickly realized that his party had to accept a free market economic system in order to differentiate itself from the Social Democrats and to attract voters beyond the CDU/CSU's traditional Catholic base. The CDU/CSU's electoral successes relied in part on the party's skill in shaping a coherent vision of economic reconstruction and West German identity. Throughout his tenure as chancellor, Adenauer excelled in managing public perception and his party's image, a fundamental component of modern party politics.

As the 1950s progressed, the CDU/CSU proved particularly adept at incorporating new campaigning techniques into its electoral repertoire in order to sell itself as the party of the economic miracle. The CDU/CSU's approach to electoral politics represented the creation of a more "Americanized" political culture in the sense that campaigns became less overtly ideological and increasingly based on a party's image or particular issues, and also because the CDU/CSU borrowed many electioneering techniques from the United States. Especially important was the use of public opinion polling to take the pulse of the nation, as well as to help devise political campaigns so that public opinion could be best exploited. In addition, by the 1957 election, the CDU/CSU was beginning to employ professional advertising agents to shape political campaigns and create a party image and identity that resonated within West German society. This change in the West German political culture entailed what could be called the "consumerization" of politics in the sense that CDU/CSU leaders and their advisers increasingly conceived of politics as the selling of a brand-name good imprinted with the identity of the producer, above any pretense of convincing the electorate of the merits of a rigid ideological program. Campaign advertisements were tested and modified to make sure that they appealed to the voters' tastes and predilections. The goal was to capture the widest market possible by securing the support of the party's core following while reaching out to various social classes and religious groups. In a sense, campaigns were more consumer/voter oriented at the expense of the producer/party focus on ideology that had characterized past elections, especially in the Weimar Republic.

To be sure, the influence of advertising on campaigning had precedents in German history. In its rise to power in the late 1920s and 1930s and especially in the creation of the "Führerkult" surrounding Adolf Hitler, the Nazi Party con-

ceived political propaganda as a form of commercial advertising. The party unmistakably represented its identity with the symbol of the swastika, relentlessly repeated slogans, and its main brand name, Hitler, to reach the broadest audiences.³³ But the Nazis lacked the means, or indeed, the desire, to know exactly the views of the voters. They still retained a party ideology meant to move the amorphous and undifferentiated masses without the exact tracking of the views of different social classes. In any case, with anything associated with Nazism being discredited, or at least considered taboo, during the postwar years, the CDU/CSU looked to the American model.

While one would not expect a conservative party led by a man in his seventies to embrace these communicative tools readily, the CDU/CSU and Adenauer led the way among West German parties in adopting new polling and advertising techniques. New methods in public opinion polling and political advertising equipped the CDU/CSU with the tools to translate its conceptions of the economy into electoral success. With these advantages, the party was much more effective than the SPD in its ability to identify key sociological groups of swing voters, to determine their collective political views, and to garner their votes by tailoring specific electoral appeals to them. By adopting this approach to campaigning, the party secured support from relatively diverse elements of the electorate that otherwise might have been missed and furthermore gobbled up the votes that were shed from the declining splinter parties. As a result, the CDU/CSU became a prototype of the “*Volkspartei*” (catch-all party) that would dominate West German politics in the future.³⁴ Faced with the success of the CDU/CSU, the SPD had no choice by the late 1950s but to take up both polling and modern political advertising as part of its transformation into a catch-all party. With both direct and indirect American influence, CDU/CSU and Adenauer were conceptualizing politics and elections in a manner different from both the Weimar past and their main competitor, the SPD. Throughout the 1950s, the SPD struggled to adjust to the new political terrain being shaped by the CDU/CSU. While the CDU/CSU captured a mass market of the electorate, the SPD continued to thrive only in their niche market of the working class.

The social market economy and the economic miracle proved to be effective political “products” because they were seen as going beyond politics by a nation that was exhausted from political ideology. In their classic study of comparative political cultures from the early 1960s, Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba offered insights into that phenomenon. Many West Germans, they noted, were relatively well informed and participated in the political process—witness for example that 78.5 percent of the electorate voted in 1949 and 87.8 percent in 1957. However, the authors observed that contemporary West Germans held a detached and almost practical attitude toward politics. Political discussions by West Germans tended to be very limited.³⁵ As the philosopher and critical theorist Theodor Adorno commented in 1959, the West German democracy appeared healthy, “[b]ut democracy has not domesticated itself to the point that people really experience it as their cause, and so consider themselves agents [*Subjecte*] of the politi-

cal process.”³⁶ Public opinion polling from the period tended to bear these views out. A June 1952 survey from the Institut für Demoskopie indicated that only 27 percent of respondents were interested in politics, while 41 percent reported being not particularly interested and 32 percent not at all. Generally in the 1950s only about 17 percent of those asked said that they sometimes discussed politics.³⁷

This reluctance to engage politically is no surprise, considering Germany’s recent history of the collapse of democracy with the Weimar Republic, the rise of Nazism, and life under a dictatorship. But this perspective also sheds light on the project of selling the economic miracle. The meanings of economic reconstruction were easily constructed within a number of different political contexts, such as West Germany’s anticommunist stance, the creation of a new Christian West Germany following the Nazi past, and the incorporation of consumerism into West German society. With a multiplicity of political meanings associated with economics, the issue thereby reached the maximum number of potential “consumers.” Economic reconstruction and the rise of consumerism were perfect political products because they were issues that did not challenge the political attitude expressed by most West Germans. They appeared on the surface to transcend self-interested party politics and instead got to the heart of what it meant to be West German. In the end, Adenauer and the CDU/CSU’s political message merely encouraged the citizens’ passive acquiescence in the construction of the new Federal Republic.

The creation of a new West German political culture that borrowed campaigning methods from the United States contributed to the stability of the West German democracy and its political party system. In his 1956 analysis of the relative strength of the newly founded Federal Republic of Germany, the Swiss journalist Fritz René Allemann proclaimed “*Bonn ist nicht Weimar*” (Bonn is not Weimar). The question of why the Federal Republic’s democracy has proved successful, whereas Germany’s first attempt with democracy was not, has been an important topic for political scientists and historians ever since. In 1965 Ralf Dahrendorf argued in *Society and Democracy in Germany* that Nazism and Germany’s defeat in World War II produced a “social revolution” that cleared the way for a modern society unencumbered by traditional values and loyalties—a process particularly hastened by the mass relocation across Germany of millions of refugees and those bombed out of their dwellings.³⁸ Undoubtedly the legacy of the Third Reich was crucial in the development of West Germany’s democracy. However, domestic changes during the early years of the Federal Republic—such as the transformation of the West German social structure accompanying a higher standard of living and greater economic and social mobility, the development of vibrant political parties, and the impact of the Basic Law—have all been crucial factors contributing to the consolidation of the West German party system and the stabilization of the Federal Republic’s democratic government.³⁹ Others have stressed the importance of international developments, such as the preference given by the three Western powers to moderate parties, especially by the licensing of the CDU/CSU, SPD, and FDP during the 1945–1949 occupation period, as a step that

afforded these parties a decisive advantage in the early elections of the Federal Republic.⁴⁰ Clearly structural changes in Germany's legal and political system have also contributed significantly to the strength of the Federal Republic's party system. Perhaps most importantly, the condition that a party must garner at least 5 percent of the vote to enter the Bundestag has hindered the splintering of the party system that afflicted the Weimar Republic. Also, the Basic Law recognizes the importance of political parties. Article 21 of the document underscores the importance of parties in forming and expressing the political will of the people. As a result, West Germany's political system has been described as a "party state" in which the parties direct and make the important political decisions.⁴¹

A crucial factor in the stabilization of the West German party system was the emergence of broad-based, moderate parties—which in some measure reflected the influence of American polling and advertising techniques. The creation of such a party system has been linked to the breakdown of specific sociological subcultures supporting particular political parties, a crucial change from the Weimar Republic. This weakening of voting subcultures allowed the creation of "catch-all" parties that collected votes from varied sociological subcultures. In contrast, political parties during the Weimar Republic tended to be based upon narrow segments of society with relatively parochial interests, thus making the creation of broadly based parties difficult, and often times, the building of a coalition all but impossible. For many parties election campaigns were centered on getting out the vote from their base as opposed to attracting new voters. The Nazi Party was the first German political party to attract voters from all social classes and interests, enabling it to achieve enough electoral success to seize power.⁴² Although its origins lay in the Catholic Center Party of the Weimar Republic, the CDU/CSU was conceived as an interconfessional party that sought to bridge the divide between Catholics and Protestants. Believing that such a party was essential for creating a stable party system and a strong bourgeois bloc against the Social Democrats, Adenauer quickly understood the usefulness of the social market economy and the economic miracle for integrating divergent social, religious, and economic groups into one bourgeois party. Perhaps this is most clearly shown by the religious affiliation of CDU/CSU voters: a bit more than 35 percent of the party's votes in the 1950s came from Protestants, whereas the Catholic Center Party during the Weimar Republic relied almost exclusively on Catholic voters.⁴³

Yet, the Federal Republic retained many continuities from the Weimar period, especially the persistence of certain social subcultures determining voting behavior. This is especially apparent in the case of Catholics transferring their loyalties from the Center Party to the CDU/CSU. In the 1953 Bundestag election, the CDU/CSU was able to attract 52.3 percent of the Catholic vote, a figure comparable to the 55.3 percent that the Center Party garnered in the 1924 Reichstag election. In addition, support for the CDU/CSU in terms of religious affiliation has remained constant from 1949 to the present, with around 65 percent of its votes coming from Catholics and about 35 percent from Protestants. Today, however, only one third of CDU/CSU votes come from practicing Catholics and

Protestants, reflecting the larger trends of secularization in the Federal Republic as whole. This constitutes a major change for the CDU/CSU, since church attendance was the strongest indicating factor in voting behavior, especially for the CDU/CSU. In the 1953 election, for example, over 58 percent of CDU/CSU voters attended church regularly—a measure of religiosity. At this time the CDU/CSU could legitimately claim to be the “Christian party” in the West German political system.⁴⁴

Undoubtedly, religious factors were extremely important in determining voting patterns, but they do not tell the full story of how the CDU/CSU was able to obtain its share of the votes. Despite the importance of religion to its core constituency, after the 1949 Bundestag election, the CDU/CSU did not stress the party’s Christian roots in its national-level campaigning. By the mid to late 1950s the CDU/CSU sensed the declining importance of religiosity in shaping voting behavior. In fact, the CDU/CSU’s party leadership consciously shied away from a strategy of self-identifying solely as the “Christian party” for fear of scaring off nonreligious voters. Instead, the concepts of the social market economy and the economic miracle were consistent components in the party’s electoral propaganda. This was not a haphazard strategy on the part of the CDU/CSU. Indeed, the CDU/CSU leaders, especially Adenauer, realized that religious West Germans were a core segment of its constituency that was unlikely to leave the Christian Democratic camp. The key to electoral success was to attract voters who did not solidly support the CDU/CSU. On the basis of polling data, the CDU/CSU knew by 1953, and surely by 1957, that a large percentage of its vote was assured by the religiosity of its constituencies—both Catholics and Protestants. But 42 percent of CDU/CSU voters attended church irregularly, seldom, or never. It does not appear that such voters would necessarily be attracted to the CDU/CSU because of its status as the “Christian party.” Watching his party’s popularity in the polls swing in tandem with the public’s confidence in the economy, Konrad Adenauer was keenly aware of the economy’s impact on West Germans’ perceptions of politics and political parties.⁴⁵ With the CDU/CSU’s base of religious West Germans remaining solid, the party used Adenauer’s leadership and economic success in the 1957 Bundestag election to gain a majority of 50.2 percent of the second ballots (votes for political parties rather than individual candidates), up from 31 percent in 1949.⁴⁶ From this perspective, a relatively small minority of the voters wielded disproportionate power in the voting booth by boosting the CDU/CSU from its previous plurality to a majority of the seats in the Bundestag.

The party’s seemingly incompatible religious and secular support raises the question of how the CDU/CSU managed to hold on to its religious roots and belief in the establishment of a connected, organic West German community, while adapting to new realities of consumerism, materialism, and mass culture. Party propaganda demonstrates that the meaning of the social market economy and the economic miracle created by the CDU/CSU was by no means unchanging during the 1950s. In fact, the process of selling the economic miracle highlighted the

shifting relationships within the CDU/CSU between adherents of antimaterialist and materialist views of the economy. Maria Mitchell has argued that following the conclusion of the war, Catholics in the CDU/CSU, often associated with the prewar Catholic *Sozialpolitik* (social policy), railed against liberalism, unfettered capitalism, secularism, nationalism, and consumerism as having prepared the ground for the growth of Nazism. By the late 1940s, this antimaterialist stance was joined with anti-Marxist sentiment to form the basis of the CDU/CSU's interconfessional alliance between Catholics and Protestants. This position rejected the materialism of socialism and the unfettered state power of Marxist regimes in Eastern Europe, and envisioned a new, Christian Germany as a bulwark against these threats. The acceptance of the social market economy by way of the Düsseldorf Principles in July 1949, Mitchell has argued, represented the culmination of a Christian, antimaterialist view of the economy that preserved individual freedom from state coercion, but also avoided the excesses of nineteenth-century liberalism.⁴⁷ Undoubtedly, the combination of antimaterialism and anti-Marxism formed a crucial element in the CDU/CSU's identity throughout the 1950s and worked as a powerful integrative force within the party.

This volume argues that propaganda from the first federal election in 1949 and the early 1950s reflected an antimaterialist conception of the economy as the CDU/CSU and conservative business interests stressed economic reconstruction as a precondition for the primary goal of reestablishing an organic, Christian society. They strongly differentiated such a society from the godless East German regime. By the end of the 1950s, however, the CDU/CSU image-makers had refashioned the predominately antimaterialist definition of the social market economy in the face of the realities of the burgeoning, consumerist economic miracle. Although the anti-Marxist stance continued to play an important role in the CDU/CSU vision of economic reconstruction, election campaign propaganda couched the social market economy in more materialist terms. Individualistic desires for production and consumption, campaigning materials reveal, were to be fulfilled through the party's economic policies. By the time of the 1953 and 1957 Bundestag campaigns, the CDU/CSU, through its use of Economics Minister Erhard, was clearly downplaying any Christian, antimaterialist concerns in its appeals to the electorate. Instead the party offered the voters opportunities for individualistic consumerism—albeit while associating this consumerism with the establishment of the West German nation itself. Together these propaganda strategies suggest that the meaning of a Christian Democratic economy for public consumption was indeed not static, but rather went through a period of constant redefinition and negotiation as the Federal Republic's social and economic conditions evolved in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

This process could be described as a gradual transition from the ideological, Christian antimaterialism of the early CDU/CSU to a more pragmatic materialism based on the social market economy and the economic miracle that could appeal to a broad, multi-class audience. All the while, however, the CDU/CSU and business public relations campaigns transformed and directed the conception of

consumerism from something that was identified as American, alien, and threatening to German culture, to something that was fundamentally West German and provided a sense of security. As Uta Poiger and Maria Höhn have shown in their respective studies of rock and roll in the two Germanies and the American military presence in Rhineland-Palatinate, social conservatives, often members or associates of the CDU/CSU, reacted sharply against consumerism and the perceived accompanying decline of morals during the 1950s. However, the efforts of these political leaders, who saw themselves as defenders of a vision of a Christian *Abendland* (Occident), were increasingly muted by Cold War liberals who argued that Western consumerism was an essential part of creating a vibrant and stable West Germany as a bulwark against the Soviet Union.⁴⁸ This work shows that a similar process of taming and co-opting consumerism was at work in a directly political realm, ironically by the very party that at its founding had sought to establish an antimaterialist, organic West Germany.

From such a perspective, this project contributes to the growing literature on the impact and interpretation of American culture in West Germany. As Poiger has pointed out, much of the early literature dealing with Americanization fell under two paradigms: “modernization” and “cultural imperialism.” The modernization approach saw a triumphant United States transforming West Germany’s political, economic, social, and cultural practices into a system that rejected a totalitarian past and was modeled on a democratic, market-driven United States. In contrast, the cultural imperialism approach viewed American culture as penetrating and manipulating West German traditions for the colonizers’ own gain. Poiger and more recent literature have pointed out a shortcoming of both paradigms in that they assumed West Germany was a passive, blank slate without considering the nation’s particular conditions and the agency of the West Germans themselves in rebuilding their society.⁴⁹ No doubt, American political techniques represented an approach that was new in West Germany, but it functioned within the particular West German context of past political practices, visions held by political leaders of a new democracy emerging out of the legacy of the Nazi past, and a rapidly changing West German society. West German political leadership refashioned and interpreted new political techniques within the realities of the Federal Republic. Unexpectedly, the right interpreted and adapted new political techniques more effectively than the left. As Diethelm Prowe has recently argued, Americanization presented conservatives with the political space to effectively reintegrate themselves into West German society and political life, but at the same time it helped democratize West Germany by promoting political stability and curtailing older authoritarian, conservative traditions.⁵⁰ To be sure, during the 1950s the West German democracy was characterized by a conservative, hierarchical vision of Adenauer and the CDU/CSU, but the crucial democratic political structures were established upon which the more active civic participation of the 1960s was based.

In many respects, the issues of Americanization, changing political and social practices, and gender intersected in the selling of the economic miracle. With the

disruption of gender roles and demographic imbalances caused by defeat, a gendered analysis of economic propaganda sheds light on the challenges of creating political identities in postwar Germany. The female experience, especially that of the *Trümmerfrauen* (rubble women) who cleared the destroyed German cities, became symbolic of the experiences of Germans as a whole during these “crisis years” and acted as a redemptive influence in the creation of a new West German national identity. The image of the rubble women helped express the painful memories of the rape by mostly Soviet soldiers of hundreds of thousands, if not millions of German women at the end of the war. In addition, the concept of the rubble women also helped contain what many saw as the moral degeneracy of German society centered on women’s prostitution and fraternization with Allied soldiers after the war—often acts stemming from the need to acquire the basic elements of survival for a woman’s whole family.⁵¹ The rubble women came to symbolize hard work, economic reconstruction, and a literal clearing away of the visible remnants of the recent past. They captured the nation’s imagination, in part because contemporary accounts depicted them as selflessly performing tasks outside women’s usual duties. But the experience of West Germans was fundamentally transformed during the 1950s by the burgeoning economic miracle. During this period, new gender roles for women based upon consumption superseded those of the postwar years and became important elements in a uniquely West German national identity. Through their roles as consumers within the free market system, women participated in what was defined as a most fundamental aspect of West German citizenship and helped establish the Federal Republic as a nation.⁵²

Both popular consensus and political-economic discourse in West Germany during the economic miracle years redefined women as images of *Trümmerfrauen* were replaced by those of consumers, homemakers, and mothers. However, it was not just women’s roles that were being transformed. The construction of a female “consumer citizen” would have proven impossible without the creation of the equal counterpart of the male “producer citizen”—contributing, as some historians have recently suggested, to a “remasculinization” of West Germany as men’s roles changed from POWs and soldiers to producers, providers, and fathers.⁵³ This gendered understanding of West Germany’s economic resurgence during the 1950s intersected, in fact, with the West Germans’ sense of themselves and their nation as a whole. The creation of ideal economic roles of female consumers and male producers laid the foundation for a new, gendered West German national identity that offered an escape from the recent past through economic reconstruction.

However, this gendered discourse on economics was not only central to the development of the public image of ideal gender roles and national identity in the new West German society; it also had direct political implications as well, especially in the realm of the political mobilization of the electorate. During the 1950s the CDU/CSU and business public relations organizations shaped and manipulated the meaning of economic reconstruction as a gendered experience in order to create new political identities that contributed to their own power. Their propaganda in the Federal Republic’s early Bundestag campaigns helped create a

lasting political meaning of West Germany's economic rebirth that constituted a key factor in the CDU/CSU's electoral success. In addition, these propaganda campaigns reaffirmed, following the upheaval of war and collapse, what the CDU/CSU portrayed as stable, traditional gender roles and situated the "natural" roles of female consumers and male producers within a larger political discourse on the nature and development of West Germany's economy and society.⁵⁴

As a result of the loss of men in the First and Second World Wars, West Germany experienced what was called a *Frauenüberschuss* (surplus of women). One survey from October 1946 reported that for every 100 males, there were 126 females. Since several million prisoners of war had not yet returned to Germany, this imbalance was even greater among West Germans of marriageable age. A 1946 census estimated that for every 1,000 marriageable males, there were 2,242 potential mates. Even in the mid 1950s, the imbalance between male and female remained; in 1955 women still made up over 53 per cent of the population in West Germany and West Berlin and outnumbered men by over 3 million.⁵⁵ This demographic imbalance in West Germany had a crucial impact upon elections in the newly-formed Federal Republic. Most dramatically, in the 1957 Bundestag election there were about 2.4 million more female than male voters out of the 31 million ballots cast in all, meaning that women accounted for almost 54 percent of all valid ballots. In this election, just under 54 percent of women voted for the CDU/CSU, in contrast to about 45 per cent of all men, thereby providing the party with 50.2 percent of the vote. Clearly, women were the crucial factor in giving the CDU/CSU the only absolute majority ever achieved in the Federal Republic of Germany.⁵⁶

In a 1956 analysis of the role of women in politics, Gabrielle Bremme argued that women's religious background determined their voting patterns. Prior to the Second World War, Germany was 62.7 percent Protestant, 32.4 percent Catholic, less than 1 per cent Jewish, and about 4 per cent other.⁵⁷ Because many of Germany's predominantly Protestant regions now lay in East Germany, the Federal Republic in 1950 was a little less than 46 per cent Catholic.⁵⁸ Given the significant influence Catholicism had within its cultural milieu, Bremme contended that women voted predominantly for the conservative CDU/CSU because the party had its roots in the Weimar Republic as the Catholic Center Party.⁵⁹ Although it defies precise quantification, the impact of Catholicism on women's voting behavior was undoubtedly significant. But the CDU/CSU also secured crucial support from Protestant female voters.⁶⁰ Moreover, in the second half of the 1950s the CDU/CSU stressed West Germany's rising economic fortunes and the accompanying growth in consumption as a means of garnering the female vote—especially from women who were not religious—while appeals on Christian or cultural grounds became increasingly muted.

Overall, the CDU/CSU's appeals evolved from speaking to the Christian woman to targeting the consuming woman. First, in the 1949 campaign, the CDU/CSU utilized what it presented as natural economic gender roles as a political metaphor for the nation's revival and regeneration. The party represented West

Germans' supposed return to the roles of female housewife and male breadwinner as a signal that the nation's emergence out of complete social and moral chaos and distress was a consequence of its policies. Second, after the economic shocks of the Korean War, the accompanying rise in prices of consumer goods, and redoubled demands for socialization by the Social Democrats, propaganda campaigns led by West German industry situated men and women as students of the free market. The campaigns instructed West Germans on their proper roles within the free market in precisely gendered terms as consumers and producers—but not for the ultimate goal of satisfying individual wants. Instead, the propaganda depicted these roles as being essential for the creation of a balanced, organic society that spread the benefits of the social market economy to all. Third, by the middle of the 1950s, the CDU/CSU propaganda not only underscored more prominently the economic upswing and the rising consumerism enjoyed by individual West Germans, but also used economic success as a means of defining the “true” Germany, the Federal Republic of Germany. Production and consumerism were portrayed not only as goals for their own sake, but also as civic duties that defined and strengthened the newly formed West German nation. In all, the CDU/CSU proved itself adept at creating gendered electoral appeals that consistently depicted the female consumer and male producer, while at the same time changing the basis of these appeals from an antimaterialist, ideological foundation to a materialist position that embraced the consumerism of the economic miracle. This was no haphazard strategy on the part of the CDU/CSU, but rather a conscious effort to appeal to segments of the electorate that could be swayed to support the party. This conceptual shift proved particularly significant when combined with new campaigning techniques that allowed the CDU/CSU propaganda to target and more effectively reach an intended audience—especially the crucial female swing voters.

Propaganda on economics not only reflected conservative conceptions of gender roles, but also underscored the vision of a more homogeneous, middle-class society, what the prominent 1950s sociologist Helmut Schelsky termed the “*nivellierte Mittelstandsgesellschaft*” (leveled middle-class society). Class conflict, he argued, seemed to be less sharp than during the interwar period as members of the proletariat moved into the middle class in step with rising wages, expanding pensions, and growing consumerism.⁶¹ Schelsky probably overstated his view of West German society, for historians such as Axel Schildt and Arnold Sywottek have shown that this “deproletarianization” did not fully develop as class identities and status continued to remain strong during the Federal Republic's formative years. They point out that educational opportunities still depended upon social status and affluence. In addition, they find that income and consumption did not reach high levels until the late 1950s.⁶² Volker Berghahn has identified a similar reconstitution of the bourgeoisie during the postwar era.⁶³ To be sure, class identities did not melt away as some contemporarily observers posited. However, as Schildt and Sywottek noted, West German society was slowly transforming during the period into a “modern” society characterized by the rise of a consumer

culture, increased leisure time, the introduction of new household technologies affecting day-to-day life, and eventually an openness to such changes in West German values. Clearly, West German society went through a period of “modernization,” particularly during the late 1950s and early 1960s.⁶⁴

In its propaganda on economics, the CDU/CSU sold a vision of the “levelled middle-class society,” or as Schildt and Sywottek described it, a “modern society,” in which all members of society benefited from the social market economy. As a party trying to establish broad-based support, the CDU/CSU also sought to undermine old, proletarian identities that benefited the Social Democrats. The fact that the CDU/CSU defined the 1948 currency reform, which supposedly put all West Germans on equal financial footing, as the birth of West Germany itself underscores the importance of the social market economy and the economic miracle in creating the “imagined community” of the Federal Republic. These economic developments ran parallel to, and were mutually supportive of the contributions of Cold War tensions in creating a sense of West Germanness. As mentioned earlier, within this context consumerism was not projected as something threatening, degenerate, or self-indulgent but rather became integrated into the very narrative of the development of the Federal Republic. It was a part of the vision of West Germany that the CDU/CSU was creating: Western, free, open, more equal, and to some extent liberal. However, at the same time this West German society also was to be an organic community, avoiding both the atomization of society in the United States and the godless communist alternative to the East. Economic success in West Germany was not a goal for mere certain individuals, but supposedly advanced the aim “Prosperity for All.”

Despite the fact that many West Germans did not necessarily participate in the fruits of the economic miracle, especially during the early 1950s, the CDU/CSU and conservative business associations succeeded at sensing and managing expectations of rising consumerism and exploiting the perception that the West German society was being transformed. In fact, much of the public opinion polling upon which Schildt and Sywottek based a large part of their work were the same data that contemporarily conservative political and business leaders used in formulating their propaganda campaigns. In a broader sense, the adoption of American political advertising and public opinion polling could be described as part of the very process of modernization that Schildt and Sywottek observe. In contrast, the SPD was not as successful in adapting to the perceived economic, sociological, and cultural transformation underway during the 1950s. The party continued to generate propaganda that spoke for the most part almost exclusively to its working-class constituents and lacked a broad-based appeal. Until the SPD abandoned its Marxist doctrine with the 1959 Bad Godesberg Program, the SPD was unable to become the *Volkspartei* that the CDU/CSU had become under Adenauer. Clearly, the heightened 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. However, without the rising living standards enjoyed by many West Germans, the CDU/CSU’s efforts to

capitalize upon the expanding economy would all have been for naught. In its own way, the CDU/CSU projected a definition of consumerism that was tied not merely to satisfying individual desires, but also to the very core concept of what it meant to be West German—thereby creating a common bond among the citizens of the young Federal Republic that helped avoid the social tensions that had torn the Weimar Republic asunder and engendering a level of civic passivity among the citizenship.

In many ways, this volume speaks to a broad range of scholars, including 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. This is the realm that I explore in this work. Chapter 1 discusses the economic thought behind the social market economy and examines 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 are the currency reform and economic reforms of June 1948, after which the economy in the western zones of occupation began to operate increasingly on a free market basis. Chapter 2 explores party politics and the CDU/CSU's adoption of the social market economy. 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 capable of leading responsible government, as evidenced by the end of West Germany's desperate conditions after the currency reform. Meanwhile, it associated the rival SPD with life before the currency reform: scarcity, ration cards, and domination by a burdensome Allied bureaucracy.

Chapter 3 discusses the impact of the Korean crisis upon the West German economy. It focuses upon the reorientation of public opinion toward the free market and the social market economy as a consequence of price increases caused by the Korean boom. During this time public opinion polling revealed a drop in public support for the free market and West Germans' growing fear of their economic future. Of particular importance was West German political and economic leaders' reading of the results of these surveys: they also began questioning the political feasibility of retaining the social market economy. Chapter 4 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 Social Compromise), also known as *Die Waage* (The Weigh Scales), an organization funded by West German industry, instituted what has been labeled the Federal Republic's first modern public relations campaign. Its purpose was to promote Erhard's social market economy through a series of ambitious advertising campaigns. With campaigns costing tens of millions of Deutsche Marks, *Die Waage* was one of the first organizations in West Germany to apply public opinion polling and American advertising techniques toward a political goal. *Die Waage* not only helped cre-

ate an understanding of the social market economy that linked economic freedom to political freedom; its advertisements also served as political propaganda for Erhard and somewhat more indirectly, the CDU/CSU.

Chapter 5 examines the 1953 Bundestag election campaign. This chapter discusses how the economic miracle was molded for use in a number of different political contexts. As prospects of German unification diminished and the Soviet Union suppressed the 17 June 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 utilized both West Germany's economic reconstruction and the social market economy as symbols of West Germany's ability to defend itself against the threat from the East. In conjunction with this position, the CDU/CSU red 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, together with the Federal Press Agency and *Die Waage*, the CDU/CSU employed a barrage of propaganda campaigns outside of its direct efforts that battered the SPD throughout the election season. It was during this election that more American-style campaigning techniques were first implemented in West Germany.

Chapter 6 discusses the CDU/CSU's greatest electoral triumph, the 1957 Bundestag election. This was the peak of the CDU/CSU's electoral success, when it 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, public opinion polling, 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 by one of the campaign's main slogans: "*Wohlstand für Alle*" (Prosperity for All). In addition, in the 1957 election campaign the CDU/CSU began connecting its economic policies to the consumer goods that were now becoming available to West Germans, such as fashionable clothing and electrical appliances. As this chapter demonstrates, the SPD's crushing defeat in this election spurred it not only to reform its platform, but also to revamp its propaganda techniques to be more like those of the CDU/CSU.

The 1957 election campaign marked the highpoint of Adenauer's government. The stunning CDU/CSU victory ensured the retention of the social market economy. The terms of debate had shifted so decidedly that there was no going back to the support of a planned socialist economy. But more importantly perhaps, West Germany had established a stable political party system. The splinter parties were quickly fading from the political scene as they collectively garnered only slightly over 10 percent of all votes cast in the election. The West Germans emerged from 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 measure upon economic success, consumerism, and the Deutsche Mark. Ultimately these enduring symbols, not the *Grundgesetz* or a stable democracy, were what lured East Germans into West Berlin when the Wall came down on the fateful night of 9 November 1989.

Notes

1. Ludwig Erhard, *Prosperity through Competition*, trans. Edith Temple Roberts and John B. Wood (New York, 1958), 178.
2. Werner Abelshauser, *Wirtschaftsgeschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 1945–1980* (Frankfurt am Main, 1983), 8.
3. Karl Hardach, *The Political Economy of Germany in the Twentieth Century* (Berkeley, 1980), 161, 186, 193.
4. Alan Kramer, *The West German Economy, 1945–1955* (New York, 1991), 218.
5. Perhaps the most famous effort to link the economic miracle and the social market economy was Ludwig Erhard's book, *Wohlstand für Alle* (Düsseldorf, 1957).
6. One example of the lasting impression Erhard and the economic miracle made on the German consciousness was illustrated to me during my research in Germany. A poster in my bank, advertising a new savings plan, depicted the stereotypical portrait of Erhard slightly smiling with a cigar in his mouth along with the slogan proclaiming, "Have your own economic miracle!" presumably to take place if one entrusted one's money into this savings plan. How many Americans, I wondered, could identify a secretary of the treasury from the 1950s, let alone know him so well that an advertising campaign could be based upon him.
7. The hundred-year anniversary of Erhard's birth in February 1997 saw a wave of publications on the man. 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, 1997). Leaders of both the CDU/CSU and the SPD evoked the social market economy as a way out of West Germany's economic troubles in 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. In addition, a number of Erhard biographies have appeared in roughly the last decade. See the harshly critical biography by Volker Hentschel, who portrays a bumbling Erhard whose success depended more upon luck than talent in *Ludwig Erhard: Ein Politikerleben* (Munich, 1996). Alfred C. Mierzejewski's *Ludwig Erhard: A Biography* (Chapel Hill, 2004) presents a much more positive view of Erhard's unyielding support of the free market as leading to West Germany's economic resurgence, even if Erhard proved himself to be ineffective within the political realm.
8. Herman Glaser, *Kulturgeschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Zwischen Grundgesetz und Großer Koalition, 1949–1967*, vol. 2 (Munich, 1986), 59–98. See also Theodor W. Adorno "What Does Coming to Terms with the Past Mean?" in *Bitburg in Moral and Political Perspective*, ed. Geoffrey Hartmann (Bloomington, 1986), 114–126, for more on the West German silencing of the recent past.
9. Heinz Rausch, "Politisches Bewußtsein und politische Einstellungen im Wandel," in *Die Identität der Deutschen*, ed. Werner Weidenfeld (Munich, 1983), 130.

10. Respondents could provide multiple answers. Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations* (Princeton, 1963), 64.
11. Forty percent of West Germans polled in March 1949 indicated that they were indifferent to the future of the West German constitution. In contrast, only 12 per cent of West Germans polled in June 1948 were undecided about whether they were happy the currency reform was carried out. Elisabeth Noelle and Erich Peter Neumann, eds., *The Germans: Public Opinion Polls, 1947–1966* (Westport, CT, 1967), 222 and 227.
12. See Werner Abelshauer, “The First Post-Liberal Nation: Stages in the Development of Modern Corporatism in Germany,” *European History Quarterly* 14 (1984): 285–317; and “Ansätze ‘Korporativer Marktwirtschaft’ in der Koreakrise der frühen fünfziger Jahre: Ein Briefwechsel zwischen dem Hohen Kommissar John McCloy und Bundeskanzler Konrad Adenauer,” *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 30, no. 4 (1982): 715–756.
13. See Volker Berghahn, *The Americanisation of West German Industry, 1945–1973* (New York, 1986); and James C. Van Hook, *Rebuilding Germany: The Creation of the Social Market Economy, 1949–1957* (Cambridge, 2004).
14. Distrust of the free market is clearly illustrated in public opinion polls from the time. In October 1952 only 29 percent of respondents to an Institut für Demoskopie survey supported the free market, down from 41 per cent in March 1949. *Das Soziale Klima*, Institut für Demoskopie, 1948–1951, ZSg 132/154, Bundesarchiv Koblenz (hereafter BA Koblenz); and Elisabeth Noelle and Erich Peter Neumann, eds., *Jahrbuch der öffentlichen Meinung 1947–1955* (Allensbach am Bodensee, 1956), 234.
15. See Arnold Syworteck, “From Starvation to Excess? Trends in the Consumer Society from the 1940s to the 1970s,” in *The Miracle Years: A Cultural History of West Germany, 1949–1968*, ed. Hanna Schissler (Princeton, 2001), 341–358.
16. See Axel Schildt, *Moderne Zeiten: Freizeit, Massenmedien und “Zeitgeist” in der Bundesrepublik der 50er Jahre* (Hamburg, 1995) in which he discusses the “discovery of the 1950s,” 16–21.
17. The Haus der Geschichte museum in Bonn, which opened in 1994, portrays the 1950s in a decidedly nostalgic tone. See the museum catalogue, *Haus der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, ed., *Erlebnis Geschichte: Deutschland vom Zweiten Weltkrieg bis heute* (Bonn, 1995). See also articles in a 1999 edition of *Der Spiegel* entitled “50 Jahre Bundesrepublik: Das deutsche Wunder,” especially “Die Flegeljahre der Republik: Der Aufstieg aus den Nichts,” *Der Spiegel*, 17 May 1999.
18. See Jeff R. Schutts, “Born Again in the Gospel of Refreshment? Coca-Colonization and the Re-making of Postwar German Identity”; and S. Jonathan Wiesen, “Miracles for Sale: Consumer Displays and Advertising in Postwar West Germany,” in *Consuming Germany in the Cold War*, ed. David F. Crew (Oxford, 2003), 121–150 and 151–178 respectively.
19. For a good introduction to the historiography of West Germany, see Rudolf Morsey, *Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Entstehung und Entwicklung bis 1969* (Munich, 1995). 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-volume overview of the Federal Republic, *Geschichte der Bundesrepublik*, edited by Karl Dietrich Bracher, Theodor Eschenburg, Joachim C. Fest, and Eberhard Jäckel. The works most pertinent here are: Theodor Eschenburg, *Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Jahre der Besatzung, 1945–1949* (Stuttgart, 1983); and Hans-Peter Schwarz, *Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Die Ära Adenauer, 1949–1957* (Stuttgart, 1981).
20. For one of the first works on this subject in English, see Henry C. Wallich, *Mainsprings of the German Revival* (New Haven, 1955).
21. See Christoph Heusgen, *Ludwig Erhards Lehre von der Sozialen Marktwirtschaft: Ursprünge, Kerngehalt, Wandlungen* (Bern, 1981); Horst Friedrich Wünsche, *Ludwig Erhards Gesellschafts- und Wirtschaftskonzeption: Soziale Marktwirtschaft als politische Ökonomie* (Stuttgart, 1986).

22. See A. J. Nicholls, *Freedom with Responsibility: The Social Market Economy in Germany, 1918–1963* (Oxford, 1994); Gerold Ambrosius, *Die Durchsetzung der sozialen Marktwirtschaft in Westdeutschland, 1945–1949* (Stuttgart, 1977); Hentschel, *Ludwig Erhard: Ein Politikerleben*; and Mierzejewski, *Ludwig Erhard: A Biography*.
23. See Charles S. Maier, *In Search of Stability: Explorations in Historical Political Economy* (Cambridge, 1987); Volker R. Berghahn, *The Americanisation of West German Industry, 1945–1973*; and Christoph Buchheim, *Die Wiedereingliederung Westdeutschlands in die Weltwirtschaft, 1945–1958* (Munich, 1990); in addition to Van Hook, *Rebuilding Germany: The Creation of the Social Market Economy, 1945–1957*.
24. See Van Hook's excellent discussion of the literature dealing with the Social Market Economy and West Germany's political economy, *Rebuilding Germany*, 1–18.
25. See Werner Abelshausen, *Wirtschaft in Westdeutschland, 1945–1948: Rekonstruktion und Wachstumsbedingungen in der amerikanischen und britischen Zone* (Stuttgart, 1975) and *Wirtschaftsgeschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 1945–1980*.
26. See especially Buchheim, *Die Wiedereingliederung Westdeutschlands in die Weltwirtschaft, 1945–1958*.
27. See Van Hook, *Rebuilding Germany* and Nicholls, *Freedom with Responsibility*.
28. Robert G. Moeller, ed., *West Germany under Construction: Politics, Society, and Culture in the Adenauer Era* (Ann Arbor, 1997), 2–3; and Schissler, *The Miracle Years: A Cultural History of West Germany, 1949–1968*. The selections in these books represent some of the best and most work in the social and cultural history of postwar West Germany.
29. For an overview of the political parties in West Germany, see Richard Stöss, ed., *Die Parteien der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 1945–1980* (Opladen, 1983).
30. Garth S. Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion* (London, 1992), 4.
31. 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, 1994); and Gerald Diesener and Rainer Gries, eds., *Propaganda in Deutschland: Zur Geschichte der politischen Massenbeeinflussung im 20. Jahrhundert* (Darmstadt, 1996).
32. Heidrun Abromeit, *Das Politische in der Werbung: Wahlwerbung und Wirtschaftswerbung in der Bundesrepublik* (Opladen, 1972).
33. Sabine Behrenbeck, "Der Führer: Die Einführung eines politischen Markenartikels," in Diesener and Gries, *Propaganda in Deutschland*, 50–78. See also Ian Kershaw, *The 'Hitler Myth: Image and Reality in the Third Reich* (Oxford, 1987).
34. See Dorothee Buchhaas, *Die Volkspartei: Programmatische Entwicklung der CDU, 1950–1973* (Düsseldorf, 1983); and Gordon Smith, *Democracy in Western Germany: Parties and Politics in the Federal Republic* (New York, 1986), 88–114.
35. Almond and Verba, *The Civic Culture*, 312–313.
36. Adorno "What Does Coming to Terms with the Past Mean?" 118.
37. Noelle and Neumann, *The Germans: Public Opinion Polls, 1947–1966*, 209–210.
38. See Ralf Dahrendorf, *Society and Democracy in Germany* (New York, 1967).
39. 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; Karl Rohe, *Wahlen und Wählertradition in Deutschland: Kulturelle Grundlagen deutscher Parteien und Parteiensysteme im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt am Main, 1992); Christopher S. Allen, ed., *Transformation of the German Political Party System: Institutional Crisis or Democratic Renewal?* (New York, 1999); and Richard D. Partch, "The Transformation of the West German Party System: Patterns of Electoral Change and Consistency," *German Studies Review* 3, no. 1 (1980): 85–120.
40. Daniel E. Rogers, *Politics after Hitler: The Western Allies and the German Party System* (New York, 1995). For more on the United States' influence on the development of West German politics, see Thomas Alan Schwartz, *America's Germany: John J. McCloy and the Federal Republic of Germany* (Cambridge, 1991).

41. David P. Conradt, *The German Polity* (White Plains, 1986), 85–88.
42. For a discussion on this topic, see Thomas Childers, *The Nazi Voter: The Social Foundations of Fascism in Germany, 1919–1933* (Chapel Hill, 1983); Richard Hamilton, *Who Voted for Hitler?* (Princeton, 1983); and the *Central European History* issue on the topic “Who Voted for Hitler?” *Central European History* 28, no. 1, (1984).
43. 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, 1990), 179–202.
44. *Ibid.*, 179–201; and Karl Schmitt, *Konfession und Wahlverhalten in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Berlin, 1989), 193–225. See also Franz Pappi, “Parteien und Sozialstruktur in der Bundesrepublik,” *Politische Vierteljahresschrift* 14, no. 2 (1973): 191–213. Christof Wolf argues that when examining voting behavior, the division should not be seen as between Catholic and Protestant, but instead as between religious and nonreligious. See Christof Wolf, “Konfessionelle versus religiöse Konfliktlinie in der deutschen Wählerschaft,” *Politische Vierteljahresschrift* 37, no. 4 (1996): 713–734.
45. See the polling figures in Gerhard Schmidtchen, *Die befragte Nation: Über den Einfluss der Meinungsforschung auf die Politik* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1959), 163.
46. All figures given in this work reflect the second ballot results. West Germany had a mixed electoral system that combined the plurality system, in which the candidate with the most votes “takes all” in a single-member district, and the proportional system, whereby a party’s number of seats in parliament is proportional to its percentage of the popular vote. In West Germany a voter casts ballots for single candidates in individual constituencies and for party lists. In the 1949 election a vote for a candidate would automatically be counted as a vote for that candidate’s party. Starting in 1953, voters cast two ballots—one for a candidate and another for a party list. The total number of seats for each party in the Bundestag was calculated through a formula that distributed seats proportionally to the number of votes a party received overall. For more on the development of West Germany’s election laws, see U. W. Kitzinger, *German Electoral Politics: A Study of the 1957 Campaign* (Oxford, 1960), 17–37.
47. See Maria Mitchell, “Materialism and Secularism: CDU Politicians and National Socialism, 1945–1949,” *The Journal of Modern History* 67, no. 2 (1995): 278–308 and “Christian Democracy and the Transformation of German Politics, 1945–1949” (Ph.D. diss., Boston University, 1989).
48. Uta Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels: Cold War Politics and American Culture in a Divided Germany* (Berkeley, 2000); and Maria Höhn, *GIs and Fräuleins: The German-American Encounter in 1950s West Germany* (Chapel Hill, 2002).
49. Uta Poiger, “Commentary: Beyond ‘Modernization’ and ‘Colonization,’” *Diplomatic History* 23, no. 1 (1999): 45–56. See Berghahn, *The Americanisation of West German Industry, 1945–1973*; Jeffrey Diefendorf et al., eds., *American Policy and the Reconstruction of West Germany, 1945–1955* (Washington D.C., 1993); Michael Ermarth, ed., *America and the Shaping of German Society* (Providence, 1993); Jessica C. Gienow-Hecht, *Transmission Impossible: American Journalism as Cultural Diplomacy in Postwar Germany, 1945–1955* (Baton Rouge, 1999); Petra Goedde, *GIs and Germans: Culture, Gender, and Foreign Relations, 1945–1949* (New Haven, 2003); and Reiner Pommerin, ed., *The American Impact on Postwar Germany* (Providence, 1995). For the influence of Taylorism in Weimar Germany, see Mary Nolan, *Visions of Modernity: American Business and the Modernization of Germany* (Oxford, 1994). For the impact of the United States in other areas of Europe, see Richard Kuisel, *Seducing the French: The Dilemma of Americanization* (Berkeley, 1993); Richard Pells, *Not Like Us: How Europeans Have Loved, Hate, and Transformed American Culture Since World War II* (New York, 1997); and Richard Wagnleitner, *Coca-Colonization and the Cold War: The Culture Mission of the United States in Austria After the Second World War* (Chapel Hill, 1994).
50. Diethelm Prowe, “The ‘Miracle’ of the Political-Culture Shift: Democratization Between Americanization and Conservative Reintegration,” in Schissler, *Miracle Years*, 451–458.

51. Elisabeth Heineman, "The Hour of the Women: Memories of Germany's 'Crisis Years' and West German National Identity," *American Historical Review* 101, no. 2 (1996): 354–395.
52. Erica Carter, *How German Is She? Postwar West German Reconstruction and the Consuming Woman* (Ann Arbor, 1997).
53. 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, no. 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, no. 1 (1998): 147–162; Heide Fehrenbach, "Rehabilitating the Fatherland: Race and German Reconstruction," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 24, no. 1 (1998): 107–127.
54. See Hanna Schissler's overview "Women in West Germany from 1945 to the Present," in *From Bundesrepublik to Deutschland: German Politics after Unification*, ed. Michael G. Huelshoff, Andrei S. Markovits, and Simon Reich (Ann Arbor, 1993), 117–136.
55. Helga Grebing, Peter Pozorski, and Rainer Schulze, *Die Nachkriegsentwicklung in Westdeutschland: 1945–1949, A: Die Wirtschaftlichen Grundlagen* (Stuttgart, 1980), 19; Robert G. Moeller, *Protecting Motherhood: Women and the Family in the Politics of Postwar West Germany* (Berkeley, 1993), 27–28; Statistisches Bundesamt, *Statistisches Jahrbuch für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 1958* (Stuttgart, 1958), 17.
56. *Statistisches Jahrbuch, 1958*, 108–109.
57. Klaus Gotto and Konrad Reggen, *Kirche, Katholiken und Nationalsozialismus* (Mainz, 1980), 121.
58. Statistisches Bundesamt, *Bevölkerung und Kultur, Volks und Berufszählung vom 6 Juni 1961* (Stuttgart, 1962), 27.
59. Gabrielle 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, 1956), 78–94.
60. The CDU/CSU received 36 per cent of its vote from Protestants. Schmitt, *Konfession und Wahlverhalten in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, 214–215.
61. See Helmut Schelsky, *Wandlungen der deutschen Familie in der Gegenwart: Darstellung und Deutung einer empirisch-soziologischen Tatbestandsaufnahme* (Dortmund, 1953); Ralf Dahrendorf, *Society and Democracy in Germany*; 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 Kontinuitätsproblem*, ed. Werner Conze and M. Rainer Lepsius (Stuttgart, 1983), 143–186.
62. Axel Schildt and Arnold Sywotek, "'Reconstruction' and 'Modernization': West German Social History during the 1950s" in Moeller, *West Germany Under Construction*, 413–440.
63. Volker R. Berghahn, "Recasting Bourgeois Germany," in Schissler, *The Miracle Years*, 326–340.
64. There have been a number of important works by Germans interested in the rise of consumer culture and the "modernization" of West Germany during the 1950s. See Schildt, *Moderne Zeiten: Freizeit, Massenmedien und "Zeitgeist" in der Bundesrepublik der 50er Jahre*; Axel Schildt and Arnold Sywotek, *Modernisierung im Wiederaufbau: Die westdeutsche Gesellschaft der 50er Jahre* (Bonn, 1993); and Michael Wildt, *Am Beginn der "Konsumgesellschaft": Mangelersparung, Lebenshaltung, Wohlstandshoffnung in Westdeutschland in den fünfziger Jahren* (Hamburg, 1994).

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



*T*he prevailing narrative of West Germany's economic resurgence during the 1950s has proven to be an enduring and central aspect of the Germans' sense of themselves. At the conclusion of the Second World War, it seemed that Germany was finished. When Allied armies defeated the Nazi regime in the spring of 1945, the once powerful German economy had almost completely collapsed. Allied bombs had smashed much of Germany's industrial base. Transportation within Germany had ground 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 for 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 order.¹ In the summer of 1945, industrial production in the American and British zones of occupation stood at 12 and 15 percent of 1936 levels respectively.² Such destruction was not limited to German industry and the transportation system; Allied bombs had also destroyed large sections of Germany's cities. Estimations at the end of the war figured that about 18 percent of the apartments and houses in the later British-American Bizonne were destroyed, while another 29 per cent suffered some level of damage.³ Large cities such as Hamburg saw over 50 per cent of their housing stock destroyed through Allied bombing.⁴ The quantity of rubble to be cleared from German cities almost surpassed imagination. German federal officials have estimated that the city of Cologne, which endured a series of 500 bomber raids during the war, had 31.2 cubic meters of rubble per inhabitant. If rubble were piled in an area of 100 yards by 40 yards, the heap would have towered 4.48 miles into the

Notes for this section begin on page 45.

sky.⁵ Unquestionably, the destruction of housing stock, transportation systems, and industrial plants that Germany endured as a consequence of the Second World War was extensive and catastrophic.⁶

Most Germans experienced severe personal and economic hardship following the war. After the collapse of the Third Reich, the West German economy suffered a paralysis in which production of both raw materials and finished goods was down, few goods were transported or sold, and people resorted to barter and hoarding, lacking confidence in the currency. With the destruction caused by bombing raids and the influx of some 10 million refugees and expellees from German lands to the East between 1945 and 1949, housing was extremely scarce—resulting often times in 5 or 6 people living in a single room. Within this massive displacement and chaos, millions of Germans, including some 10 million German POWs who returned home between 1945 and 1947, desperately sought their family members. Hunger was rampant: official ration levels hovered around 1200–1500 calories per day between 1945 and 1947, and the food actually being distributed provided as little as 1000 calories a day. To supplement inadequate rations, food was acquired from company canteens, private gardens, and packages from abroad. In addition, many Germans were forced to resort to illegal means to obtain the calories necessary for survival. The black market boomed during this time with cigarettes becoming an ersatz currency. Workers would often leave work in the cities to go forage out in the countryside, thereby contributing to the low productivity in the factories.⁷ Germans directed their growing resentment toward the Allied authorities, seeing them as impeding reconstruction by dismantling industrial plants and requiring reparations of needed raw materials as part of the Potsdam agreements. The *Trümmerfrauen* (rubble women) who cleared the debris blocking the streets of the destroyed West German cities became a deeply ingrained and lasting image for those who lived through the period—replacing the image of the morally compromised German woman who fraternized with the Allied soldiers for pleasure and to make ends meet.⁸ These were hard times for the West Germans, critical days in shaping the meaning they later attributed to 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 20 June 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 ceased hoarding and goods appeared in their windows as people experienced a renewed faith in the currency. From the perspective of many economists the currency reform and the accompanying liberalization of certain markets and materials were some of the key catalysts for the growth of the West German economy.⁹ Now that goods were available, the Germans had an incentive to work for real wages and no longer needed 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 hastened 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 possessed sufficient confidence in the economy to conduct normal business and participate in the free circulation of goods and money that is so critical to a healthy economy.

Led by Ludwig Erhard, the chief economic administrator of the British-American Bizone, West Germany's economic thinkers introduced the economic system of the social market economy in 1948. This socially conscious free market has remained the dominant economic policy in West Germany ever since. Although now identified with the welfare state, its proponents saw it at the time as a system supporting 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 overconcentration of economic power in the hands of cartels and the state that had been so prevalent during the Weimar Republic and Third Reich.¹⁰ The combination of the currency reform, Marshall Plan funds, and the social market economy has been described as the foundation on which the expansion of the economic miracle was based.¹¹ 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 terms, and at a healthy 5 percent yearly GNP growth through the mid 1960s. After the momentous year of 1948, West Germany transformed itself seemingly overnight from an economic cripple into a giant and enjoyed prodigious levels of growth through the 1950s and into the early 1960s.¹²

Although many historians have challenged the veracity of aspects of this outline of West Germany's economic history during the postwar years, it has taken hold in the West German national consciousness. Indeed, this narrative was partially created by Erhard himself during the 1950s, especially in his 1957 book *Wohlstand für Alle* (Prosperity for All, translated into English as *Prosperity through Competition*). Even today the legend of Erhard and the economic miracle are evoked in discussions on the economic reconstruction of the former East Germany and the challenges that a united Germany faces in a global economy. Undoubtedly, this narrative of destruction and reconstruction exerted an important influence upon the development of West German politics, especially during the 1950s. In many respects, this economic resurgence offered a sense of national redemption for Germans and became a source of legitimization for West Germany and conservative political interests. But before these themes are explored, it is necessary to briefly examine the roots and the development of the ideas underlying the social market economy and the evolution of economic policy in occupied Germany between 1945 and 1948. After the policy of autarky died with the Third Reich, economic thought went through its own reconstruction. 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 of overcoming some of the political challenges that faced the newly formed Federal Republic. Although the theorists of the social market economy grasped the political dimensions of their ideas, they could not have foreseen the manner in which their economic concepts would be transformed for public consumption. In any case, their ideas proved to be important ammunition in the battles that would rage within the West German political arena.

The social market economy had its roots in the “neoliberal” or “ordoliberal” economic thought of the interwar period. Having undergone a wartime economy, a revolution, and a transition to a democratic system, Germany experienced a vibrant debate on economics and social life after the end of the First World War—mostly from a statist, corporatist perspective. During the difficult Weimar period, when economic and political strife tore the nation apart—particularly during the period of rampant inflation between 1918 and 1923 and the Great Depression—solutions to the overwhelming economic problems of the day tended to entail heightened governmental involvement in the economy. Yet there were a number of economists who endorsed a more market-oriented approach—most notably Alfred Müller-Armack, Walter Eucken, Franz Böhm, Wilhelm Röpke, and Alexander Rüstow. Although differing in many respects, they all sought to reconcile nineteenth-century liberalism with the demands of the twentieth-century economy and politics, aiming especially to ward off the contemporary threats of fascism and communism. These thinkers believed in the retention of the free market system with a guarantee of at least a minimum social support for all in society. This defense of the free market demanded some form of governmental intervention in the economy in order to reduce the concentration of economic power in a few hands and to ensure freedom of the individual.¹³

The interest in the “social” question within economics and society had its roots in the 1872 founding of the Verein für Sozialpolitik (Association for Social Policy), a group of economists interested in social reform. According to these economists, the laissez-faire system of economic organization had not sufficiently alleviated the dreadful conditions of the working class. For this reason, the economists of the Verein turned away from pure liberalism to demand a “purposive state policy designed to regulate economic life.” An important component of their view was the endorsement of large-scale governmental measures designed to provide some measure of social security for the working class. By no means had the association completely forsaken laissez-faire economics; rather it advocated for the modern state taking on some responsibilities and functions within the free market. Although the Verein’s discussions on politics and the economy had limited short-term consequences, its influence on the debates regarding the role and function of the modern state was significant, particularly in the interwar years.¹⁴ 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 theorists who further elaborated the concepts of neoliberalism. Although during the 1920s Eucken supported a purely laissez-

faire approach, with the economic crisis of 1929 he came to reject this view as inadequate and envisioned a more active role for the state in the economy, a view echoed by fellow economist Alexander Rüstow.

In a September 1932 speech to the Verein für Sozialpolitik, Rüstow argued that a strong state influence on the economy did not contradict liberalism. Instead, the state should intervene in 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.¹⁵ 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 ways 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.¹⁶

Once the Nazis came to power, Eucken was relatively successful in creating some distance between his “Freiburg School” and the Nazi regime, despite the efforts of the university rector, Martin Heidegger, to “Nazify” the institution. 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 what he regarded as transcendent economic truths. From Eucken’s perspective, the truths of Adam Smith applied in the Europe of the mid twentieth century as well as in eighteenth-century Great Britain. In addition, he called for economists to become more involved in practical affairs and argued that economic issues had to be understood within a specific political context.¹⁷ It was during this time that he crafted his masterpiece, *Die Grundlagen der Nationalökonomie* (The Foundations of Economics). In this work, Eucken sought to understand the workings of economic systems, from any historical period, in their totality. In other words, he was interested in analyzing the economic, legal, social, and ethical underpinnings inherent in any economic system. In general, Eucken supported an economic system that was market driven, with the government laying down and enforcing the basic ground rules of the economy, yet not interfering with its running.¹⁸

In contrast to other neoliberal economists, Wilhelm Röpke expounded upon the social aspects of economic organization. When the Nazis came to power, Röpke emigrated first to Turkey and then to Geneva, Switzerland. In the face of 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 onslaughts from both the left and the right. The free market, he realized, was not perfect and must be protected by government intervention against monopoly or other anti-market forces. He was also aware of the problems that the proletariat presented for society: if their situation was not improved, they were destined to turn to communism. Reacting to this problem, Röpke advocated a governmental policy encouraging small- and medium-sized property owners, assisting independent farmers, and fighting against the sense of rootlessness so widespread in modern society.¹⁹

Röpke further developed his ideas in his two books written during the Second World War: *Gesellschaftskrisis der Gegenwart* (Contemporary Crisis of Society, 1942) and *Civitas Humana* (1944). In *Civitas Humana*, Röpke divided the economic systems since the eighteenth century 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. Röpke called for a third way that could be described as “economic humanism.” He favored the dismantling of modern mass society, a deproletariatization of society, and the creation of a new market economy in which free competition was guaranteed.²⁰ Röpke was especially interested in what he called the anthropo-sociological aspects of the economy. He saw the free market as resting upon a sound society. As he commented in *Civitas Humana*, a purely liberal point of view was problematic:

It [liberal capitalistic thought] overlooked that the Market represents but one narrow sphere of social life, a sphere which is surrounded and kept going by a more comprehensive one; a wider field in which mankind are not merely competitors, producers, men of business, members of unions, shareholders, saver and investors, but are simply human beings who do not live on bread alone, men as members of their family, as neighbors, as members of their churches, as colleagues, as citizens of the community, men as creatures of life and blood with their sentiments, passions, and ideals.

A healthy society and the free market must coexist together in order to avoid society becoming “engulfed by mass civilization, collectivized, proletarianized, uprooted, fundamentally dissatisfied and unstable.”²¹ Röpke interested himself in the role of economics in relation to all other social, political, and cultural endeavors of human society. From this perspective, he saw the free market as being intertwined and functioning in concert with an organic community.

Overall, the neoliberal thinkers were keenly interested in the relationship of the market to society as a whole and thought of economic policy as being directly related to political systems that emerged in a society. A functioning market and price system must be the basis of each action within the political economy. In order to assure competition, currency stability and convertibility must be maintained. This would encourage the full interaction of the factors of production and greater efficiency within the economy. In addition, such full competition required open markets, preserved by the government through a liberal trade policy. Also crucial was careful government intervention to guard against monopolies and ensure competition. Perhaps most importantly, these neoliberal economists embraced a decidedly broad view of economics and were concerned about the connection between economics and the creation of a just, open, and liberal society. The social dimension of a liberal economic system rested upon the idea that the free market contains within itself certain social and political advantages over centrally administered economic systems. A market system in which competition was preserved ensured the maximum expansion of the economy, whose surplus could be redistributed more equally throughout society. Moreover, from the neoliberal

perspective an economic system based upon competition required the maximum freedom for the members of society, in direct contrast to collective economic systems that inevitably led to tyranny and control. A liberal economic system was not only based upon the freedom of individuals, but was also an essential component in the establishment of that freedom.²²

From this perspective the neoliberals echoed some of the views advanced by the Austrian-born economist Friedrich August von Hayek, whose thought centered around the freedom of the individual in society. In von Hayek's view, one of the greatest threats to the freedom of the individual was socialism. He believed that there was no way that a planned economy could meet the needs of individuals within society. A planned economy could only be implemented by force, and the lives of individuals would be excessively controlled and regulated. As he commented in his 1944 *Road to Serfdom*, "planning leads to dictatorship because dictatorship is the most effective instrument of coercion and the enforcement of ideals and, as such, essential if central planning on a large scale is possible."²³ The expression of a free society in the economic realm is competition. Competition, von Hayek argued, allowed individuals to make free decisions outside of coercive control.²⁴ Despite their many agreements about the importance of competition in helping maintain a free society, von Hayek and the neoliberals differed strongly in that von Hayek rejected any government intervention or regulation to maintain markets or some form of social justice.

Although the ideas of the social market economy had a long history, two figures, Alfred Müller-Armack and Ludwig Erhard, were essential in transferring its abstract, theoretical ideas into the political realm. Erhard was born on 4 February 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, was severely wounded on the western front in September 1918, and convalesced in a hospital until June 1919. After his recovery, he enrolled at a *Handelshochschule* (business school) in Nuremberg in the autumn of 1919 and received his diploma in the spring of 1922. He then went to Frankfurt to earn his doctorate in economics in December 1925 under the direction of Franz Oppenheimer, a professor of sociology and theoretical economics. Oppenheimer developed theories on what he called "liberal socialism" that rejected both laissez-faire capitalism and Marxism. Oppenheimer thought that social justice had to be retained within an economy of free competition protected by the state. He also believed that a way of ensuring genuine free competition was to redistribute land more equally and thereby ensure the freedom of individuals. Erhard never accepted all of Oppenheimer's ideas, especially in regard to land redistribution, and reversed the adjective by supporting a "social liberalism." Nevertheless he advanced some of Oppenheimer's core ideas, especially his belief in free competition as the source of efficiency within the economy and his view that monopoly gravely threatened such competition. In addition, Erhard took his mentor's view that the govern-

ment should sometimes intervene in the economy in order to stimulate consumer demand and discourage the overconcentration of capital.²⁵

After working for a time in his father's clothing business, Erhard moved in 1928 to an institute involved in market research at the Nuremberg Commercial College under Wilhelm Vershofen, remaining there until 1942. During his time in Nuremberg, Erhard conducted market research on consumer goods—a newly emerging field. In 1935 his director, Vershofen, founded the Berlin-based Gesellschaft für Konsumforschung (Society for Consumer Research), which gathered economists, industrialist representatives from firms such as I.G. Farben, and representatives of economic associations to investigate the relationship of the consumer to producers and the motives behind consumers' buying. Over the course of the 1930s the modest institute expanded quickly through contracts from the federations of the finished and consumer goods industries to investigate their costs and earning conditions. Influenced by Vershofen's emphasis on consumer research, Erhard learned to respect the wishes and importance of the consumer in driving economic development. According to Vershofen, economists and businessmen alike must take into account ethical and psychological aspects of human behavior in their scientific inquiries in economics—an orientation toward the consumer that proved enduring and politically valuable for Erhard in his years as economics minister. As he later stated in that capacity, "Our economy serves the consumer, he alone is the standard and judge of economic activity"²⁶ In addition, the contacts he made during this time with industrialists from I.G. Farben and businessmen from the consumer goods industry, such as Philipp Reemtsma, head of a large tobacco firm, proved crucial in his efforts during the 1950s to "sell" the ideas of the social market economy.²⁷ Meanwhile, in January 1933 Hitler and the Nazis seized power in Germany. The Nazi regime quickly transformed Germany's economy into one that mixed capitalist, planned, and autarkic elements. Since Erhard was highly critical of the nationalist economic policies of Hjalmar Schacht, Hitler's economics minister and president of the Reichsbank through 1937, he could not hope for promotion to a university chair.

In 1942 Erhard left Vershofen's institute. It is unclear whether Erhard's departure resulted from his personal conflicts with Vershofen, or whether it was because he refused to join the Nazi Labor Front. In any case Erhard, an ardent supporter of the free market, disagreed sharply with Vershofen's support of cartels to order the economy. During the late 1930s and early 1940s, Erhard had become familiar with the leading economists of the neoliberal school, including Eucken, Rüstow, and Röpke.²⁸ Having parted with Vershofen, Erhard founded the Institut für Industrieforschung (Institute for Industrial Research) with funding from several major industrial firms. During 1942/43 Erhard concentrated upon studying Germany's transition to a peacetime economy after the war. The circulation of his 268-page memorandum *Kriegsfinanzierung und Schuldenkonsolidierung* (War Finance and Debt Consolidation) was a potentially dangerous move on Erhard's part for Josef Goebbels' declaration of "total war" in January 1942, talk of the

peace after the war's conclusion was unacceptable to the Nazi regime.²⁹ 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 regarding the postwar-era economy began to take shape. He proposed scaling down government control of the economy, beginning with the demobilization of labor and restructuring of the economy to ward peacetime production. After a transition period, market forces must 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 the price controls that were currently in place. Following a transition period during which the economy was to be structured for peacetime activity, at a decisive juncture the money supply must be reduced and the purchasing power of money decreased. In essence, Erhard treated Germany as though it were a bankrupt concern and what was needed to correct the situation was a sound monetary policy. In addition, he stressed the importance of a healthy, growing peacetime economy of consumer goods production within the context of the free market over capital goods expansion directed by heavy industry.³⁰

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."³¹ A Nazi Party member, Müller-Armack occupied a chair in economics during the war at the University of Münster in Westphalia.³² He also worked within a research institute conducting market research for the textile industry. After the war was concluded, Müller-Armack began to write and speak about the necessity of reintroducing market forces into the German economy. One of his most influential works was the *Wirtschaftslenkung und Marktwirtschaft* (Economic Control and the Free Market), published in 1946, of which one section was entitled "Soziale Marktwirtschaft," giving birth to the term "social market economy."³³ In this work, he argued that the economic "rules of the game," or what has been called *Wirtschaftsordnung*, must be reestablished in the wake of the war's disruptions, the most important "rule" being the reintroduction of market forces in the economy that would ensure the efficient allocation of resources and increased productivity.³⁴

But a key question was how Müller-Armack could possibly influence political leaders capable of implementing the ideas of the social market economy at a time, at least until 1947/48, when market economics were highly unpopular in the context of a ruined Germany and the belief that big business had been in league with the Nazis. Marxists from the left and Christian politicians from the right saw the age of free market capitalism passing, and some form of public ownership and economic planning emerging in its stead. 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 for the social market economy. In June 1947 Müller-Armack established contact with an organization of Hamburg businessmen called Volkswirtschaftliche Gesellschaft (Society of Political Econ-

omy). This organization helped publish some of Müller-Armack's pamphlets on the social market economy. More importantly, these businessmen 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 in early 1947, the FDP began moving toward a more liberal economic program, culminating in January 1948 with the Wageroog Program. This statement, promulgated 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.³⁵

Meanwhile, when the war ended, the American occupation forces appointed Erhard as economic administrator for the area of northern Bavaria. Due to both his antisocialist position and his relatively clean past during the Third Reich, in September 1945 the Americans recommended him to the Social Democratic (SPD) minister president of Bavaria as economics minister for the state of Bavaria, a post that he filled until January 1947. In December 1946 the SPD government in Bavaria was replaced by the conservative Christian Social Union (CSU). Following the change in government, some members of the CSU and the SPD accused Erhard of administrative incompetence and he subsequently resigned from his position. In November 1947 Erhard secured a position at the University of Munich through his contacts with the liberal economist Adolf Weber, and began promoting free market principles by publishing articles in newspapers such as *Die Neue Zeitung*. In these articles Erhard echoed the ideas of the neoliberals. He stressed the idea that the government was responsible for stepping into the economy in order to preserve free competition. In addition, he argued that the free market that enjoyed true free competition was a form of the economy that was social because it benefited all consumers—that is, everyone within society.³⁶

In the summer and fall of 1946 the British and Americans had begun planning the fusion of their occupation zones into one economic unit—a most daunting job indeed, given 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 coordinating the zonal administrations. In August 1946, the American military governor, General Lucius Clay, announced plans to create the so-called Bizone, which would maintain five central offices, staffed by German civil servants, to administer the economies, transportation, finances, post, and food supply of the two zones. Although the Bizone was officially implemented on 1 January 1947, it had been operational since September 1946.³⁷

Prior to joining the American and British zones' economies together, as early as December 1945 the occupation governments in the American, British, and French zones of occupation had allowed the establishment of German political parties. Retaining control of party licensing, the occupying powers gave special preference to the development of moderate parties such as the CDU/CSU, SPD,

and FDP.³⁸ The creation of the Bizone marked the start of disputes between the CDU and the SPD on economic issues. At the conclusion of the war, the SPD foresaw the creation of an “economic democracy” (*Wirtschaftsdemokratie*) that entailed the social and economic transformation of German society, including some form of a socialist planned economy—particularly in regard to heavy industry—and worker representation within companies’ boards. Meanwhile, by 1946 elements of the CDU were drifting toward support of the free market, while many of the party’s mainstream leaders supported “Christian Socialism.” The control of the new bureaucracies within the Bizone would become a central point of contention between the two parties.

The Economics Administration, the most important of the five Bizone offices, drew its staffers mostly from the Zentralamt für Wirtschaft (Central Economics Office, ZAW) in Minden in the British Zone. With the support of Britain’s Labour government, this group had been working toward the creation of a centrally planned economy in the British Zone. Yet in September 1946 the command of the new Economics Administration was given not to Viktor Agartz (SPD), who had run the ZAW in Minden, but instead, following tough negotiations between economics ministers from the British and American zones, to the Hessian economics minister Rudolf Mueller, who had clear free market proclivities. But in face of pressure from the head of the SPD, Kurt Schumacher, Mueller was replaced in January 1947 by Agartz, who sought to redouble SPD efforts for socialization and a planned economy. In addition, the SPD had occupied all of the economics minister positions in the *Länder* (states) by this point.³⁹ As a consequence, the CDU/CSU was excluded from decision making on economics throughout the Bizone. This setback galvanized cooperation among the bourgeois opposition against the SPD and sharpened the political and economic conflict between the SPD and the CDU/CSU. Faced with this political competition from the SPD, the CDU/CSU, especially the organization in the American Zone, began moving toward a liberal-conservative position that supported the free market.⁴⁰ Lacking national-level political bodies, political parties struggled against one other within the administrative offices of the developing Bizone. It was in this context that the positions and identity of the West German parties began to emerge.

In May 1947 the military governors of the two occupation zones announced the reorganization of the Bizone agencies by creating a number of new organizations centered in Frankfurt to streamline administration. To oversee the economic reconstruction of the combined zones, an overarching economic administration, the Wirtschaftsrat (Economics Council), functioned 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 Bizone’s economic reconstruction, including transportation, production and distribution of goods, raw materials, foreign and domestic trade, and price formation and controls. The Exekutivrat (Executive Council), comprised of representatives from the eight *Länder* (states) of the British and American zones,

was to oversee the interests of the *Länder* and coordinate the activities of the directors of the five *Verwaltungen* (administrations offices) of economics, transportation, finance, post, and food. Because the CDU/CSU's delegation to the Economic Council was larger than the SPD's, it was able to relegate the Social Democrats to the opposition and direct the activities of the Bizone. Johannes Semler, a Bavarian leader of the CSU who supported the free market, was tapped as the new director of the Economics Administration on 23 July 1947 after Victor Agartz resigned due to illness.⁴¹ Over the course of 1947, CDU/CSU representatives began working closely with other "bourgeois" parties in the Economics Council, 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 following the first parliamentary elections.

The new head of the Economics Administration, facing the extreme shortage of raw materials, food, and consumer goods, continued to follow a policy of price controls and rationing within the Bizone. As Agartz had before, Semler worked for the revival of heavy industry within the Ruhr as an essential element in the Bizone's overall economic recovery and sought to eliminate key bottlenecks in the economy, including problems in transportation, coal production, and electricity supply.⁴² However, in early January 1948 Semler had gotten himself into trouble with the American occupiers. In a meeting with CSU leaders, Semler was critical of the food supplied by the occupiers, labeling the grain fodder aid from the US as "chicken feed," a comment picked up by the American press. This prompted accusations that Semler was "sabotaging the cooperation of German offices with the Allied authorities." On 26 January 1948 he was dismissed by the Allied military governors, creating animosity on the part of the CDU/CSU members of the Economics Council. With Semler's ouster the threat grew that the Germans sitting on the various boards and committees of the Economics Administration would be less willing to cooperate with the occupying forces, thereby hindering reconstruction. After a cooling period, however, the tensions relaxed.⁴³ In any case, Erhard, the former economics minister of Bavaria, was named his permanent successor.

Before this turn of events, in the autumn of 1947, Erhard had been appointed to the *Sonderstelle für Geld und Kredit* (Special Bureau for Monetary and Currency Matters) of the Economics Council. From this position, and in consultation with the neoliberal economist Walter Eucken, Erhard quickly advanced a policy of sound money and price deregulation within the newly formed Bizone. With the money supply reduced, producers would have more incentive to generate consumer goods. Even after Erhard had left the Special Bureau, the organization continued to work for the introduction of new currency in the Bizone.⁴⁴ On 2 April 1948, Erhard officially took up the position of director of the Economics Administration of the Bizone. The FDP's acceptance of market principles proved to be crucial at this juncture. The Economics Council was divided, with forty-four CDU/CSU representatives versus forty-six Social Democrats and Commu-

nists, but the CDU/CSU leader, Konrad Adenauer, wanted at all costs to avoid forming a coalition with the SPD. 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 and emphasis upon heavy industry. The FDP, on the other hand, was promoting Erhard as director of the Economics Administration and its support was crucial in creating an antisocialist bloc. As a result, in heated discussions in early March 1948, the CDU/CSU and FDP compromised by nominating the Christian Socialist Herman Pünder from Cologne to head the whole Bizone, while Erhard was nominated as the director of the Economics Administration—a position to which he was elected on 2 March 1948.⁴⁵ As some historians have suggested, Erhard's quick rise from obscure industrial researcher to head of the economy in the Bizone was due more to political wheeling and dealing than the CDU/CSU's commitment to his economic ideas.⁴⁶

As director of the Economics Administration, Erhard was in a position to promote some of his basic economic principles—especially his firm belief in the competitive free market as the most efficient method of distributing resources and effectively uniting producer and consumer. Along with the imminent currency reform being pushed by the Americans, Erhard was proposing radical liberalization of controls over the Bizone economy. In addition, he thought German trade should be freed from restrictions and called for ending of some of the rationing—in other words, the introduction of the free market. Erhard also called for increasing production of consumer goods. In the months prior to the currency reform, Erhard pushed through the Law Governing the Guiding Principles for Controls and Pricing Policy after the Currency Reform, which allotted the director of the Economics Administration greater powers in resource allocation and pricing. This Guiding Principles Law, approved by the Economics Council on 18 June 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 20 June currency reform that price controls on a range of mostly consumer goods would be relaxed. In all about 400 items were no longer under price controls.

The occupying authorities feared that the removal of rationing and price controls and ceilings would weaken the currency through inflation. Erhard, however, was convinced that market forces, much better than bureaucratic controls, would unleash the potential of the economy through the rational decision making of both producers and consumers. When the military governor of the Bizone demanded that Erhard explain his actions, considering him to have no right to alter price controls, Erhard is reported to have replied, “I have not altered them. I have abolished them.” This process of price liberalization continued, and by July 1948, 90 percent of price controls had been eliminated. This applied for mostly manufactured and consumer goods, as a number of controls on items such as rents, utilities, transport fares, industrial raw materials, international transactions, and the capital market all remained in place.⁴⁷

In spite of what could be called Erhard's theatrics, the United States proved to be the decisive force in the creation of West Germany's new currency. When the American army occupied Germany in 1945, there was no clear plan in terms of monetary policy. But with the Reichsmark (RM) being practically worthless and the majority of the German population surviving through barter and the black market, it was clear that Germany's monetary situation had to be stabilized. A group of economic experts, led by Gerhard Colm and Ray Goldsmith, was dispatched to Germany by the American government to work out the details of a plan. There they worked with General Clay's financial advisor, Joseph Dodge, to produce the Colm-Dodge-Goldsmith Plan, which called for a currency reform in all four occupation zones. All through 1946 the four powers discussed plans for such a reform, but disagreements over who would print the new currency led to the breaking off of negotiations. By 25 September 1947, the decision had been made to introduce a new currency in the Western zones. From February until April 1948 the new Deutsche Mark notes arrived in Bremen from the United States. So as to appear politically neutral, the notes featured neither an issuing authority nor a place of issue or signature. On 20 June 1948, the new Deutsche Mark was introduced in the American, British, and French occupation zones. Not until four days later, after a currency reform was announced for the Soviet Zone, including East Berlin, was the western currency introduced into West Berlin.⁴⁸

With the currency reform, the old worthless Reichsmark 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 RM 60 for each employee in order to meet payroll. Wages, salaries, rents, and pensions continued at their old rates. In contrast, liquid assets, bank deposits, and liabilities were converted at the rate of RM 10 to DM 1. In effect, the currency reform drew about 93.5 percent of all currency out of circulation.⁴⁹ The aforementioned relaxation of price controls of many consumer goods was instituted in conjunction with the currency reform. Erhard had his press secretary announce on the radio this reduction of price controls on the day of the currency reform, although articles such as essential foodstuffs, coal and iron, and clothing remained under controls.⁵⁰

The public sensed that the currency reform had a positive effect on the economy. Official statistics indicated that industrial production rose 30 percent from the second to third quarter of 1948, although it is not entirely clear whether this reflected real production gains or that firms were more willing to report their actual production after the currency reform.⁵¹ 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 up absurd quantities of anything shopkeepers would sell. It was common to hear stories of people buying bulk supplies of Dr. Oetker's glaze for cakes—enough for 2,800—or hundreds of Reichsmarks' worth of aspirin, bathing salts, or rat poison.

The currency reform destroyed the black market, which had been a source of necessities for many West Germans. Overnight all kinds of goods appeared in storekeepers' windows. Newspapers reported an unbelievable availability of goods.⁵² Instead of a scarcity of goods being chased by abundant but worthless money, now there were available goods but money was scarce. People were given the incentive to work for wages instead of resorting to the black market and barter—thereby setting the economy on more stable footing. According to the popular news magazine *Der Spiegel*, black market prices had fallen dramatically after the currency reform, and sellers were having a hard time moving their goods. The article noted that with the fall of the black market value of American cigarettes, which thereby lowered the income derived from American GIs, German prostitutes in Frankfurt “for the first time in the history of the occupation, gave interested looks to Germans passing by with their valuable Deutsche Marks.”⁵³

Despite the new availability of consumer goods, clear drawbacks accompanied the currency reform. With one fell swoop—and, considering the hyperinflation of 1923, for the second time in twenty-five years—the small saver saw his savings wiped out. Within this context an important part of the currency reform mythology emerged that the reform was a “great leveler” in society because everyone started off with DM 40. But one must also consider that the owners of physical assets or means of industrial or agricultural production had 90 per cent of their debt wiped out. These were the same people who were in good position to enjoy the boom that emerged in the 1950s. Meanwhile, workers, pensioners, and small savers lost practically all their liquid assets. Even the 1952 passage of the so-called *Lastenausgleich* (equalization of burdens), which transferred wealth to those who had suffered material damage during the war, did not seriously alter the unequal distribution of wealth within West German society.⁵⁴

People were generally supportive of the currency reform soon after its enactment. In a survey conducted by the Institut für Demoskopie following the reform, 71 per cent of those polled expressed satisfaction that the currency reform had occurred. This number had climbed to 74 per cent by July 1948. As of October 1948, 43 per cent of respondents believed that their lives had become easier since the currency reform, while 37 per cent considered life to be more difficult.⁵⁵ In addition, an OMGUS (Office of Military Government, United States) survey reported a remarkable shift in people's concerns following the currency reform. Fifty-eight per cent of respondents in July 1948 anticipated improvement in their living conditions in the coming year, and belief that the black market was a serious problem tumbled from 48 per cent in June to 16 per cent the following month. The surveys reflected that West Germans were less anxious about obtaining necessary foodstuffs. Prior to the currency reform, 54 per cent of Germans in the American Zone named food procurement as their main concern. This figure had dropped to 19 per cent by July 1948, and by 1949 it was down to 10 per cent.⁵⁶ To a certain extent, the surveys reflect sentiments found by later social historians who have argued that researchers should approach the period between the defeat at the Battle of Stalingrad in 1943 and the 1948 currency reform as a whole, given

the common experience of bomb attacks, destruction, extreme shortages, and starvation. For many West Germans, it was not the ending of military hostilities in May 1945 but the currency reform that represented a dramatic change in their social conditions and an improvement in their ability to meet the most basic needs for existence.⁵⁷

Yet, the optimism following the currency reform 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 regarded their lives as more difficult since 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 anticipated that prices would rise in the next few weeks, while only 25 percent thought prices would fall. This concern continued through December 1948, when 36 percent believed prices would rise but decreased dramatically by March 1949, when only 7 percent thought prices would rise while 64 percent anticipated they would fall.⁵⁸ One survey conducted in the American Zone reported that huge majorities of respondents (no exact figure given) believed that the currency reform would increase the unemployment rate. In addition, though a large majority was willing to work more in order to earn more, many believed that they would not have the opportunity to do so.⁵⁹ Unemployment climbed from 442,000 in June 1948 to 937,000 in January 1949, since a number of firms had to let workers go when they could not afford to pay them in the more valuable Deutsche Mark after the currency reform. Wages were frozen until the beginning of November 1948 at levels established during the Third Reich. Workers' concerns about work, prices, and wages were expressed in a very tangible way when the trade union council of the Bizone called a 24-hour strike, held on 12 November 1948, to demand higher wages.⁶⁰

In addition, many West Germans were concerned about how the currency reform was implemented. One frequent complaint, as reported in an Institut für Demoskopie survey from June 1948, was that "social factors should be taken into consideration" when formulating the currency reform.⁶¹ In July 1948, 79 percent of West Germans believed that certain levels of society had disproportionately benefited from the currency reform. These advantaged groups included businessmen (named by 62 percent of respondents), manufacturers (38 percent), and capitalists (20 percent).⁶²

Despite the overall positive view many West Germans held of the currency reform, its impact on the West German economy has come under scrutiny. Some historians since the 1970s have questioned the validity of the idea "*Wirtschaftswunder*" in general and the overall effects of the currency reform on the development of the West German economy in particular. Foremost among these historians is Werner Abelshausen, who has argued that West Germany's economic growth from the late 1940s through the 1950s represented a period of catching up after the destructive impact of the war, and that eventually West Germany fell into longer-term trends of twentieth-century economic growth.⁶³ Abelshausen chal-

lenged the often accepted roots of the economic miracle by attacking the following postulates: that the West German recovery began with the currency reform of 20 June 1948; that this recovery was based upon foreign aid, especially the Marshall Plan; and that the changes in the political economy associated with the social market economy triggered the eventual West German economic recovery.⁶⁴

Abelshauser argued that between 1945 and 1948 the West German economy was plagued not so much by the destruction of the war, but instead by bottlenecks in the economy, especially coal shortages and the inadequate 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, the total amount of fixed industrial assets was actually about 20 per cent higher in 1945 than in 1936 because of the heavy war-time investment in German industry. Even in 1948, after the impact of depreciation, reparations, and dismantling had been felt, fixed industrial assets were about 11 per cent higher than in 1936.⁶⁵ Under the direction of economic planning the bottlenecks hindering the West German economy's potential growth had been overcome by late 1947, and real reconstruction had begun. Because of this achievement, production was already increasing by the time the currency reform was instituted in June 1948. The perception that the currency reform spurred the production of new goods was a function of the release of hoarded goods that had been building for more than a year beforehand. Therefore, the currency reform did not induce a rise in production.⁶⁶ More recently, scholars have challenged Abelshauser's view of the currency reform. They have particularly attacked what they call an overassessment of West German industrial production prior to the currency reform—thereby diminishing the size of the post-reform increase in industrial production.⁶⁷ To be sure, in laying claim to West Germany's economic resurgence during the late 1940s and 1950s, Erhard and the neoliberals focused too narrowly upon the currency reform and market liberalization as the keys to West Germany's and their own success. In contrast, newer works have not taken their accounts at face value and have wisely tried to place Erhard within the larger context of both internal and external forces driving West Germany's economic growth.⁶⁸

Apart from discussions on West Germany's political economy and more pertinent for this study, however, is Abelshauser's critique of the mythologies and legends that arose around the currency reform and proved critical for the development of politics in the Federal Republic. Abelshauser examined some of the legends that have subsequently emerged—such as the belief that the currency reform was the product of Germans or Ludwig Erhard in particular, that it represented an equal start economically for all West German citizens, and that it singlehandedly triggered West Germany's subsequent economic growth.⁶⁹ These views of the June 1948 currency reform and the social market economy provided conservatives with important political prestige—prestige that was apparent in West Germany's first federal elections in 1949. Throughout the 1950s the meaning of the economic miracle and the social market economy was to be constructed and reconstructed—

especially by those who stood to gain politically from public perceptions of these developments. Although studies of the political economy by economic historians can track the growth of the economy, they do not necessarily trace the perception of economic realities held by people at the time. These perceptions, perhaps more than any statistical analysis of the economy, had a critical impact upon developments underway in West Germany's political culture.

One must remember that on 20 June 1948, the currency reform was viewed by all in West Germany not as a German measure, or one led by Ludwig Erhard, but instead as one of the American occupier's policies. But even by the summer of 1948 the mythology surrounding the currency reform and birth of the economic miracle had begun to form. Some of the key aspects of this mythology included the view that German economic life was overwhelmingly handicapped by Allied military controls, an absence of a stable currency, the black market, and the Allied dismantling of the German industrial capital, as opposed to attributing economic problems to larger internal structural and international economic conditions. Immediately following the currency reform, the American-British newsreel *Welt im Film* (The World in Film) portrayed the reform to the population of the three Western zones of occupation. In an analysis of these films, Martin Loiperdinger concluded that their reportage of the currency reform included many of the "facts," especially in terms of problems accompanying the currency reform, such as social tensions and rising prices. At the same time, however, the films lent themselves to the creation of myths and legends surrounding the currency reform. They conveyed in an optimistic tone that the reform had ushered in a new era for German economic recovery. When they did admit that prices had risen, the films tried to persuade viewers that they could change prices by not frittering away their money and by rationally participating in the mechanism of supply and demand. When the 12 November 1948 workers' strike and ongoing rallies against price increases were portrayed, the films emphasized that this was not the proper way a democracy worked. Explaining that while it was legitimate that the workers were on strike, the single strike cost the Bizone DM 200 million in production while Marshall Plan funds were flowing into Germany. The film editing made the German workers appear selfish at a time when other nations were lending Germany a helping hand. All the while, Loiperdinger concluded, the films pointed to Ludwig Erhard as the person to solve West Germany's economic problems.⁷⁰

In fact, Erhard himself was responsible for the creation of the mythology and legend surrounding the currency reform. Since his days at the Society for Consumer Research in Nuremberg, Erhard had realized the importance of the "psychological" forces behind economics. He would later address this subject in his 1957 work, *Wohlstand für Alle*. Erhard argued that "psychology" was an instrument equal in value to traditional economic policies. People's actions and attitudes regarding economics had to be changed in order to bring them in line with general economic aims. 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.”⁷¹ Erhard was clearly aware of the importance of public opinion regarding the economy. In fact, as head of the Economics Administration, Erhard had commissioned the above-mentioned public opinion surveys from the Institut für Demoskopie in order to keep track of the swings of public opinion following the currency reform.⁷²

On 21 June 1948, the day after the currency reform, Erhard went to the airwaves to promote faith in the new currency and to explain the necessity of the reform. Erhard opened his speech by proclaiming that “[a]fter several days of mental and spiritual anxiety, we have relapsed into the routine of daily life.” Wishing to be viewed only as an “expert” who harbored no political ambition, Erhard explained that the German people could have confidence in what he called “our new currency” and in the decision to abandon the principle of a state-controlled economy. He was not, he argued, “appealing to some vague, obscure faith, not to an irrational belief in a 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 address 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 most listeners’ heads.⁷³ In terms of actually convincing the public, the effectiveness of Erhard’s public address was perhaps questionable, for at this point he was relatively unknown to the German public. Nevertheless, his speech was one of the opening 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 addition, it was a German voice that came onto the airwaves to reassure the public, not that of an American occupier—thereby helping Germans associate Erhard with what was seen as part of the liberation, both economically and politically, of Germans from Allied authorities.

In many respects, the currency reform intensified tensions between the three Western powers and the Soviet Union and acted as a powerful impetus in the establishment of the new Federal Republic of Germany. The Soviet Union countered with the introduction of its own currency in the Eastern Zone on 23 June 1948 and blockaded entry into West Berlin the following day. The Western allies responded with the Berlin Airlift, flying all food, fuel, and supplies into the besieged city until the Soviets lifted the blockade on 12 May 1949. Meanwhile, in February 1948 the three Western occupying powers along with the Benelux countries had recommended the creation of a West German government, followed by the proposal in July 1948 by the three Western military governors to the minister presidents of the *Länder* (states) in the Western Zones that they form a Parliamentary Council to draw up the constitution for the new West German state. The subsequent Parliamentary Council met in Bonn from September 1948 through May 1949 writing the draft for the West German constitution, the *Grundgesetz* (Basic Law). The Basic Law was passed by the Parliamentary Council on 8 May 1949, approved by the Western powers on 12 May, and ratified by the parliaments of the West German states on 23 May with elections scheduled for August.

In large part because of economic imperatives, particularly the need for a stable currency as aid began streaming into the Western zones, Germany was divided.

As subsequent chapters of this work will show, business and political interests constructed a meaning of the currency reform and the ensuing economic miracle that lent support to both the free market and the conservative CDU/CSU. Werner Abelshauser has identified perhaps the most important legacy of the currency reform in regard to the development of West German politics: the reform helped set up a dichotomy between the *Marktwirtschaft* (market economy) and *Planwirtschaft* (planned economy) that allowed no reconciliation, manifesting itself particularly in the 1949 election campaign. Abelshauser 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."⁷⁴ Although the SPD never supported such an economic system, the party during the 1950s did not manage to disassociate itself from it. Abelshauser 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. The fact remains, however, that Adenauer and the CDU/CSU found a way to ensure that economics did become a divisive or "wedge" issue creating a sharp distinction between the parties. This distinction was to be further developed and exploited by the CDU/CSU in the Federal Republic's first elections.

Notes

1. Abelshauser, *Wirtschaft in Westdeutschland, 1945–1948: Rekonstruktion und Wachstumsbedingungen in der amerikanischen und britischen Zone*, 151–153.
2. Kramer, *The West German Economy, 1945–1955*, 92–93.
3. Karl Hardach, *The Political Economy of Germany in the Twentieth Century*, 99.
4. Kramer, *The West German Economy, 1945–1955*, 17.
5. Jeffrey M. Diefendorf, *In the Wake of War: The Reconstruction of German Cities After World War II* (Oxford, 1993), 14–15.
6. Werner Abelshauser, however, has argued that the damage to West Germany's industrial base was not as severe as previously thought. He stated that West German capital assets actually rose from 1936 to 1945 by about 20 percent, then declined in the years 1944 and 1945 due to Allied bombing and between 1946 and 1948 by about 3 percent due to depreciation, reparations, and dismantling. See Werner Abelshauser, *Wirtschaftsgeschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 1945–1980*, 20.
7. Kramer, *The West German Economy, 1945–1955*, 75–80. See also Michael Wildt, *Der Traum vom Sattwerden: Hunger und Protest, Schwarzmarkt und Selbsthilfe in Hamburg, 1945–1948*

- (Hamburg, 1986); and Rainer Gries, *Die Rationen Gesellschaft, Versorgungskampf und Vergleichsmentalität: Leipzig, München, und Köln nach dem Kriege* (Münster, 1991).
8. Heineman, "The Hour of the Woman: Memories of Germany's 'Crisis Years' and West German National Identity," 354–395.
 9. Among many works, see for example Henry C. Wallich, *Mainsprings of the German Revival*; Nicholls, *Freedom with Responsibility: The Social Market Economy in Germany, 1918–1963*; and Christoph Buchheim, "Die Währungsreform 1948 in Westdeutschland," *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 36, no. 2 (1988): 189–231.
 10. 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, no. 3 (1979): 405–425; and Alfred Müller-Armack, "The Principles of Social Market Economy," *The German Economic Review* 2 (1965): 89–103.
 11. This conception of the *Wirtschaftswunder* was mainly based on Henry Wallich's *Mainsprings of German Revival* and Erhard's *Wohlstand für Alle*.
 12. Hardach, *The Political Economy of Germany in the Twentieth Century*, 161, 186, 193.
 13. Christoph Heusgen, *Ludwig Erhards Lehre von der Sozialen Marktwirtschaft: Ursprünge, Kerngehalt, Wandlungen*, 42–44; and Watrin, "The Principles of the Social Market Economy," 405–409.
 14. Watrin, "Principles," 407–408.
 15. Nicholls, *Freedom with Responsibility*, 46–49.
 16. *Ibid.*, 49–55.
 17. *Ibid.*, 62–68; Daniel Johnson, "Exiles and Half-exiles: Wilhelm Röpke, Alexander Rüstow and Walter Eucken," in *German Neo-Liberals and the Social Market Economy*, ed. Alan Peacock and Hans Willgerodt (New York, 1989), 48–52.
 18. Nicholls, *Freedom with Responsibility*, 110–111; and Norman P. Barry, "Political and Economic Thought of German Neo-Liberals," in Peacock and Willgerodt, *German Neo-Liberals and the Social Market Economy*, 113.
 19. Nicholls, *Freedom with Responsibilities*, 90–97.
 20. Heusgen, *Ludwig Erhards Lehre von der Sozialen Marktwirtschaft*, 50–54.
 21. Wilhelm Röpke, *Civitas Humana: A Humane Order of Society*, trans. Cyril Spencer Fox (London, 1948), 31–32.
 22. Watrin, "Principles," 414–422; and Barry, "Political and Economic Thought of German Neo-Liberals," 105–124.
 23. Friedrich A. Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom* (Chicago, 1994), 78.
 24. Heusgen, *Ludwig Erhards Lehre von der Sozialen Marktwirtschaft*, 45–50.
 25. Nicholls, *Freedom with Responsibility*, 73–78; Heusgen, *Ludwig Erhards Lehre von der Sozialen Marktwirtschaft*, 68–78; Mierzejewski, *Ludwig Erhard*, 4–10; and Volkhard Laitenberger, *Ludwig Erhard, Der Nationökonom als Politiker* (Göttingen, 1986), 7–23.
 26. Quoted in Mierzejewski, *Ludwig Erhard*, 35.
 27. Heusgen, *Ludwig Erhards Lehre von der Sozialen Marktwirtschaft*, 78–84; Laitenberger, *Ludwig Erhard*, 18–32; and Mierzejewski, *Ludwig Erhard*, 12–18. See also Hanns W. Brose, *Die Entdeckung des Verbrauchers: Ein Leben für die Werbung* (Düsseldorf, 1958), 55–58. Brose was an advertising agent associated with Vershofen who later conducted a massive public relations campaign for the benefit of Erhard and the social market economy; see chapter 4 of this volume. See also Dirk Schindelbeck and Volker Ilgen, "Haste Was, Biste Was!" *Werbung der Sozialen Marktwirtschaft* (Darmstadt, 1999), 86–87 for more on Brose and the Society for Consumer Research.
 28. Nicholls, *Freedom with Responsibility*, 116; and Mierzejewski, *Ludwig Erhard*, 11–18.
 29. Laitenberger, *Ludwig Erhard*, 35–37. Volker Hentschel, in his biography of Erhard, questioned whether this action truly posed a risk by Erhard. See *Ludwig Erhard: Ein Politikerleben*, 26–37. Hentschel suggests that the economics ministry, in conjunction with heavy industry, was al-

- ready interested in generating plans for the conversion of the wartime economy to a peacetime economy.
30. Nicholls, *Freedom with Responsibility*, 117–119; and Mierzejewski, *Ludwig Erhard*, 20–21.
 31. Eschenberg, *Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Jahre der Besatzung, 1945–1949*, 426.
 32. A.J. Nicholls, a historian clearly supportive of the neoliberal economists, argued that Müller-Armack joined the Nazi Party out of professional considerations. *Freedom with Responsibility*, 72.
 33. Eschenberg, *Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Jahre der Besatzung, 1945–1949*, 439.
 34. Watrin, “Principles,” 415.
 35. Nicholls, *Freedom with Responsibility*, 146–149. See also H. J. U ngeheuer, “Die Wirtschaftsprgrammatik und Wirtschaftspolitik der liberalen P arteien 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 M ichael Gutscher, *Die Entwicklung der FDP von ihren Anfängen bis 1961* (Meisenheim am Glan, 1967), 95–96.
 36. Nicholls, *Freedom with Responsibility*, 151–154; and Laitenberger, *Ludwig Erhard*, 44–55.
 37. Eschenberg, *Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Jahre der Besatzung, 1945–1949*, 375–384.
 38. Daniel E. Rogers, *Politics after Hitler: The Western Allies and the German Party System*. For an overview of the dev elopment of the par ties, see Eschenberg, *Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Jahre der Besatzung, 1945–1949*, 171–209.
 39. Jürgen Domes and Michael Wolffsohn, “Setting the Course for the Federal Republic of Germany: M ajor Policy D ecisions in the B i-Zonal E conomic Council and P arty I mages, 1947–1949,” *Zeitschrift für die Gesamte Staatswissenschaft* 135, no. 3 (1979): 333–340; and Eschenberg, *Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Jahre der Besatzung, 1945–1949*, 375–384.
 40. Ambrosius, *Die Durchsetzung der Sozialen Marktwirtschaft in Westdeutschland, 1945–1949*, 69–70. The development of the CDU’s economic policy will be examined in chapter 2 of this volume.
 41. Eschenberg, *Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Jahre der Besatzung, 1945–1949*, 384–396; and Van Hook, *Rebuilding Germany*, 135–136.
 42. Van Hook, *Rebuilding Germany*, 152–156.
 43. Nicholls, *Freedom with Responsibility*, 187–188; and D omes and Wolffsohn, “Setting the Course for the Federal Republic of Germany,” 338–339.
 44. Nicholls, *Freedom with Responsibility*, 156–157; and H ans Möller, “D ie w estdeutsche Währungsreform von 1948,” in *Währung und Wirtschaft in Westdeutschland, 1876–1975*, ed. Deutsche Bundesbank (Frankfurt am Main, 1976), 444–454.
 45. Nicholls, *Freedom with Responsibility*, 158.
 46. Van Hook, *Rebuilding Germany*, 141. See Volker Hentschel’s biography, which portrays Erhard more as a bumbling buffoon whose success overall was due more to luck rather than his abilities. Hentschel, *Ludwig Erhard: Ein Politikerleben*.
 47. Hentschel, *Ludwig Erhard: Ein Politikerleben*, 209–217; Gustav Stolper, Karl Häuser, and Knut Borchardt, *The German Economy: 1870 to the Present* (New York, 1967), 228–229, and Hardach, *The Political Economy of Germany in the Twentieth Century*, 144–145.
 48. Eckhard Wandel, “Historical Developments Prior to the German Currency Reform of 1948,” *Zeitschrift für die Gesamte Staatswissenschaft* 135, no. 3 (1979): 321–331.
 49. Abelshauser, *Wirtschaftsgeschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, 49–50.
 50. Nicholls, *Freedom with Responsibility*, 216–217; and Wallich, *Mainsprings of the German Revival*, 69–71.
 51. Kramer, *The West German Economy, 1945–1955*, 138.
 52. Wolfgang Benz, *Von der Besatzungsherrschaft zur Bundesrepublik: Stationen einer Staatgründung, 1946–1949* (Frankfurt, 1984), 142–143.
 53. “Der billigste Tag, Liebe kaum gefragt,” *Der Spiegel*, 26 June 1948, 5.

54. Kramer, *The West German Economy, 1945–1955*, 134–138.
55. Umfrage über der Währungsreform, Institut für Demoskopie, ZSg 132/1/2, BA Koblenz.
56. Anna J. Merritt and Richard L. Merritt, ed., *Public Opinion in Occupied Germany: The OMGUS Surveys, 1945–1949* (Urbana, IL, 1970), 251–252 and 294–295.
57. See Martin Broszat, Klaus-Dietmar Henke, and Hans Woller, eds., *Von Stalingrad zur Währungsreform: Zur Sozialgeschichte des Umbruchs in Deutschland* (Munich, 1988).
58. Merritt and Merritt, *Public Opinion in Occupied Germany*, 294; Umfrage über der Währungsreform, Institut für Demoskopie, ZSg 132/1/2, BA Koblenz.
59. Merritt and Merritt, *Public Opinion in Occupied Germany*, 251–252.
60. Kramer, *The West German Economy, 1945–1955*, 146; and Eschenburg, *Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Jahre der Besatzung, 1945–1949*, 434–436.
61. Noelle and Neumann, *Jahrbuch der Öffentlichen Meinung, 1947–1955*, 151.
62. *Ibid.*, 151.
63. See, in general, Abelshauer, *Wirtschaftsgeschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*.
64. Werner Abelshauer, “West German Economic Recovery, 1945–1951: A Reassessment,” *Three Banks Review* 135 (1982): 34–53.
65. Abelshauer, *Wirtschaftsgeschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, 20–21.
66. Abelshauer, “West German Economic Recovery,” 38–43.
67. For detailed rebuttals to Abelshauer, see Christoph Buchheim, “Die Währungsreform 1948 in Westdeutschland,” 189–231; and Albrecht Ritschl, “Die Währungsreform von 1948 und der Wiederaufstieg der westdeutschen Industrie,” *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 33, no. 1 (1985): 136–165. See, in general, Mierzejewski, *Ludwig Erhard*, 117–120; and Nicholls, *Freedom with Responsibility*, 165–174.
68. See Van Hook’s overview of the literature in *Rebuilding Germany*, 1–18.
69. Werner Abelshauer, “Die Währungsreform-Legende und Wirklichkeit,” in *Der schwierige Weg zur Demokratie: Die Bundesrepublik vor 40 Jahren*, ed. Landeszentrale für politische Bildung, Nordrhein-Westfalen (Düsseldorf, 1990), 220–221.
70. 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, no. 3 (1988): 299–309.
71. Erhard, *Prosperity through Competition*, 180. See also Erhard’s *Fragen an die Meinungsforschung* (Allensbach, 1961) for a discussion of Erhard’s view of the use and abuse of public opinion polls.
72. Gerhard Schmidtchen and Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, “Die Bedeutung Repräsentativer Bevölkerungsumfragen für die Offene Gesellschaft,” *Politische Vierteljahresschrift* 4 (1963): 168–169.
73. Erhard, *The Economics of Success*, trans. J. A. Arango-Jones and D. J. S. Thomson (London, 1963), 45–47.
74. Abelshauer, “Die Währungsreform—Legende und Wirklichkeit,” 233.

MARKET OR PLANNED? THE 1949 BUNDESTAG ELECTION



In the 14 August 1949 *Bundestagwahl* (federal parliamentary elections), the conservative Christian Democratic Party and its sister party in Bavaria, the Christian Social Union (CDU/CSU) collected 31 per cent of the vote, the largest percentage of all parties. It was enough to beat narrowly their main rival, the Social Democratic Party (SPD), which garnered 29.2 per cent. Together with the liberal Free Democratic Party (FDP, 11.9 per cent) and the conservative German Party (DP, 4 per cent), the CDU/CSU was able to form a government in the first Bundestag of the Federal Republic of Germany. In his *Regierungserklärung* (government statement) on 20 September, 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.¹

Historians examining the 1949 election campaign have concurred with Adenauer that the issue of economic policy proved decisive in the election. Moreover, during the campaign the social market economy and the CDU/CSU became united in public perception.² But the question remains: In what way did the choice of “Market or Planned” manage to play a crucial role in the federal elections of 1949? How did the CDU/CSU represent and use the social market economy as a political platform? And, perhaps more importantly, how did the 1949 election campaign prepare the way for subsequent use of the social market economy and the emerging concept of the economic miracle as political tools?

Notes for this section begin on page 88.

Jürgen Falter, a prominent scholar of German politics, has described the 1949 federal election campaign as not marking the beginning of the Federal Republic party system, especially in terms of the sociological characteristics of the parties. Instead, he argues that the 1949 election was the last of the type of elections in the pattern of the Reichstag elections of the Weimar Republic.³ This assessment is accurate, considering that there were many parties that successfully collected at least 5 percent of the vote in the individual *Länder* (states), the minimum to gain a seat in the Bundestag. This was much like the case of the splintered political system that plagued the Weimar Republic.⁴ 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 taking shape. The three parties that would form the stable party system through the 1980s, 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 strains of German political thought: parties of conservative, socialist, and liberal tendencies.⁵ In addition, the sociological subcultures that characterized Weimar political behavior had begun to disintegrate by the 1949 election. Most significant in regard to voting behavior was the breakdown of religious subcultures. Undoubtedly, the CDU/CSU, as successor to the prewar Catholic Center Party, garnered much of its support from Catholics—about two thirds of its voters. Overall, the CDU/CSU in the Federal Republic as the Center Party in the German Reich attracted a similar proportion of Catholics—about 55 percent. At the same time, the CDU/CSU was able to reach out to Protestant votes that were critical to its electoral success, a pattern that was absent in the Weimar Republic. For example, 1924 Reichstag election results show that nearly 100 percent of the Center Party's votes came from Catholics. In the 1950s the CDU/CSU gained a bit over 35 percent of its vote from Protestants.⁶ Along with its staunch anticommunist stance, the social market economy can be interpreted as a crucial political issue used by the CDU/CSU to break out of the Catholic ghetto to which its Center Party forerunner was consigned. Already by the 1949 election, the CDU/CSU was beginning to direct its propaganda regarding the social market economy toward groups that would make it a broad-based party, although its methods could be best described as unsophisticated.

I would also argue that although the 1949 Bundestag election represented continuities from Weimar, or perhaps the beginning of a transitional period, in regard to the sociological base of the parties, it also was very similar to Weimar elections in terms of the methods utilized in campaigning. The message of the CDU/CSU was transmitted to the public through traditional means: the leaflet, the political poster, and speeches.⁷ For the first Bundestag campaign, the CDU/CSU did not yet have at its disposal the wide battery of parallel propaganda instruments it would possess in the late 1950s, but instead was limited mainly to the propaganda generated by the party itself. There was no real use of either modern advertising techniques or public opinion polls, resources that would be fully utilized in the future Bundestag elections. The propaganda methods promulgated by the CDU/CSU were crude and direct, reminiscent of the techniques utilized during

the Weimar era. Although certain party personalities who advanced the CDU/CSU program rose to the forefront of the campaign, especially Konrad Adenauer and Ludwig Erhard, the campaign was not centered upon the party leaders to the extent of elections to come. In these subsequent campaigns, the CDU/CSU became highly successful at creating campaigns focused on leaders personifying certain images and positions of the party. In 1949, however, CDU/CSU programs or accomplishments took precedence over any one person. Propaganda was still based on a party's ideological position, in this case favoring the social market economy, and was directed primarily toward energizing the party faithful, which was characteristic of Weimar elections. In many respects, the "image" of the CDU/CSU as the party of the economic miracle had not fully emerged as it would in the late 1950s. In particular, the social market economy was defined not as the wellspring but the antithesis of self-indulgent consumerism, unfettered capitalism, and excessive individualism—qualities that the Christian element of the CDU/CSU saw as contributing to the rise of Nazism. The social market economy was portrayed as fundamental to what has been called an antimaterialist position toward the economy, in which the economic system would allow an organic, secure German community to reconstruct itself in contrast to the Nazi past, the social and moral turmoil of the immediate postwar years, and the perceived Marxist threat to the East.⁸ This approach is not surprising since most West Germans in 1949 were pursuing not luxury or consumerist goods, but rather basic necessities such as adequate food, shelter, and clothing. With its approach in the 1949 campaign, the CDU/CSU shaped the public consumption of the social market economy primarily as a position that could be seen by its base supporters as a holdover from some of the party's Catholic Center Party roots in the Weimar Republic. However, Adenauer was clearly interested in also using the program to reach out to new groups of voters.

At its founding in the individual zones of occupation the CDU/CSU had not supported a free market economy. In this respect, the CDU/CSU was similar to almost all of the emerging parties in Germany that sought more collectivist solutions to what seemed like unmasterable economic challenges born of Germany's vast destruction. In fact, Germany had a long tradition of state involvement in the economy, and public opinion in the immediate postwar years seemed to support such an approach. In the years following the war, the CDU was a patchwork of both differing ideologies and local political organizations—many times competing against each other for leadership at the national level. During the summer of 1945 Christian Democratic parties began to emerge across Germany with three main centers: the Rhineland (particularly Cologne), Frankfurt am Main, and Berlin. Overall, an avowed goal of the early CDU, whose actual name emerged from leaders in Berlin, was to create an interconfessional party that combined Catholics and Protestants pursuing Christian policies in the political, economic, and moral reconstruction of Germany.

Until 1950 there was no real centralized party machine running the CDU, so local organizations directed much of the party's decision making. The Christian

party in Bavaria, the CSU, remained completely separate from the CDU in its organization, although it campaigned with the CDU and sat in a combined *fraktion* (parliamentary faction) in the Bundestag. However, since many of the early CDU organizers were former Center Party and Christian trade union members, the three pillar organizations of the CDU, especially the CDU in the Rhineland that was situated within the British Zone of occupation, supported an economic program that could be best described as “Christian Socialist.” In June 1945 the Rhineland CDU leaders issued the *Kölner Leitsätze* (Cologne Principles), which advocated an egalitarian wage policy and a redistribution of industrial resources. Other regional CDU organizations took similar positions over the course of the summer of 1945. 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 stating in December 1945, had a background in Christian trade unions from before the Nazi seizure of power. He championed a form of socialism based upon “Christian responsibility” and proclaimed in 1945 that with the defeat of Nazism, a new socialist era was at hand in postwar Germany and that a capitalist, bourgeois age had come to an end—a sentiment echoed also by Konrad Adenauer in the British Zone.⁹

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 opposed simple nationalization. Instead, it envisioned 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 interests of Marxism, but also the hyperindividualism of free-market liberalism was to be forsaken in favor of the creation of a balanced, classless, Christian community that protected individual dignity and freedom from excessive statism. To many of the early CDU leaders, the materialism and secularism of the capitalist economy, combined with the Prussian traditions of statism, were what had caused Germany to fall prey to the Nazis. Christian Socialists believed Germany’s idealized *Gemeinschaft* (community) had been shattered in the nineteenth century by industrial capitalism’s focus on individual material acquisition within a mass, urban society. The Nazis’ hedonistic and pagan promises of a racial paradise on earth had merely exploited these trends already in place. The Communists to the East were the latest manifestation of these dangerous aspects of modern life: materialism, secularism, and state control of the individual. Christian Socialism seemed like a natural political position for the developing CDU in a devastated Germany and found fertile ground in the British Zone of occupation. With the Labour Party in power in Great Britain, the British occupiers announced plans in October 1946 to socialize the industrial heart of Germany, the Ruhr Valley. Christian Socialist and anticapitalist sentiments intensified with the “hunger winter” of 1946/47, during which most Germans’ living conditions dramatically worsened. The ideas of Christian Socialism were clearly expressed by the CDU in the British Zone’s Ahlen Program of February

1947, a program viewed by many historians as a middle station in the progression of the CDU's economic policy from Christian Socialism and the social market economy.¹⁰

The Ahlen Program espoused some of the Christian Socialist ideals, but fell far short in terms of laying out actual policies. It stated that “[t]he capitalist economic system has become unjust for the state and social interests of the German people.” The program went on to proclaim that “the content and goals of the social and economic new order cannot 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.¹¹ It was radical in the sense of wanting to reduce industrial concerns to their smallest profitable size and calling for a form of codetermination (*Mitbestimmung*) for workers in economic and social decision making, but it also constituted a barrier against communal ownership of the means of production.

The Ahlen Program represented a pragmatic tactical move on the part of Adenauer and the CDU's bourgeois-liberal elements. With his elections as chairperson of the CDU of the Rhineland regional organization in January 1946 and the British Zonal organization in March 1946, Konrad Adenauer had emerged as the CDU's leading figure in the West. Ultimately, Adenauer feared that Christian Socialism would limit the CDU's appeal and open the door to a possible coalition with the SPD—something that Adenauer saw as a disastrous development in the process of creating a party system dominated by non-Marxist parties. In order to ensure his position as chairperson of the CDU in the British Zone and to intercept the swing of public sentiment toward Christian Socialism in the vote for the North Rhine–Westphalia Landtag (state legislature) in April 1947, Adenauer pushed for the formation of a new economic program for the CDU in the British Zone.¹² Clearly the program was somewhat of a concession to the CDU's Christian Socialist wing, especially to Jacob Kaiser and the CDU in Berlin, a move that was essential because of the economic and social conditions of the winter of 1946/47. In fact, Adenauer was the driving force behind the Ahlen Program's creation. Its espousal of the “principle of the distribution of power” in the economy did much to undermine the nationalization plans held by Karl Arnold, a Weimarer trade unionist and CDU minister president of North Rhine–Westphalia from 1947 to 1957. Adenauer and Arnold had been in conflict over the CDU's direction since late 1945. Through this measure, Adenauer and the liberal wing of the party were able to integrate the CDU's left wing firmly and at the same time head off a further drifting of the party to the left. Adenauer continually used the Ahlen Program and his control of the CDU in the British Zone to thwart Arnold's nationalization efforts in late 1947.¹³ In addition, the Ahlen Program contributed to Adenauer's leadership of the CDU on a national level, at the expense of Kaiser's leadership from Berlin, as it helped open the road to the eventual acceptance of Erhard's social market economy under Adenauer's sponsorship.

The Ahlen Program reflected the ongoing development of Adenauer's economic and political thought. Early on in the CDU's formation, but especially as head of the CDU in the British Zone, Konrad Adenauer realized the danger that a policy of Christian Socialism presented in the political arena, especially on the national level. He saw the need for the party to distinguish itself from the Social Democrats and link itself to the center-right of the German political spectrum in order to draw more than just the Catholic vote. He feared that a party based solely upon Catholics, as had been the case for the Center Party during the Weimar Republic, and supporting Christian Socialism as part of its platform would revive divisions among the bourgeoisie that had weakened the Weimar system. Adenauer realized that to be successful, the CDU must be able to branch out and integrate support from Protestants and the conservative bourgeoisie within a nondenominational Christian Party. In a meeting of the British Zone CDU held in late June 1946, Adenauer commented that "[w]ith the word 'socialism' we will win over five people and twenty people will be driven away."¹⁴ As a result much of Adenauer's effort during 1946–1949 was centered upon developing a party program for the CDU that would allow a broad political constellation of constituents once the Federal Republic was formed. Adenauer later commented in his memoirs that a resurgence in German political life required a party that attracted both Catholics and Protestants. He elaborated further: "Only a very great party that included all strata of society could rebuild a prostrate, broken Germany. It must be a party which could appeal to employers and employed, the middle classes, farmers, civil servants, intellectuals, people from the North and the South, those driven from their homes and those who had simply fled." Consequently as leader of the CDU Adenauer worked hard to create bridges with Protestant political leaders in North Rhine–Westphalia and across western portions of Germany. Particularly important was his growing relationship with Robert Pferdemenges, a prominent Protestant banker from Cologne who played a key behind-the-scenes role in hammering out deals with the CDU's left wing and encouraged it to abandon Christian Socialism.¹⁵

The main threat to Germany, from Adenauer's perspective, no longer came from the right, as had been the case during the late Weimar Republic, but rather now from the left and the Social Democrats. If the CDU adopted a form of socialism as part of its program, the state governments would be able to enter into coalitions with the SPD, a development that Adenauer wanted to avoid at all costs. After the April 1947 Landtag elections in North Rhine–Westphalia, Karl Arnold retained a number of SPD members within the administration, most notably Ernst Nölting as economics minister. As minister president, Arnold continued pressing for the nationalization of industry within North Rhine–Westphalia, although his efforts were thwarted by the Americans, who were unwilling to allow such a policy to proceed as long as they were occupiers. The cooperation of the CDU with the SPD in North Rhine–Westphalia was unacceptable to Adenauer. Even worse still would be the creation of a grand coalition of the SPD and CDU at the national level. Support of the neoliberal ideas of the social market economy

held great appeal to Adenauer, since Erhard's free market system would rule out compromise between the CDU and the SPD.¹⁶ To Adenauer, the SPD represented a mortal threat to the reconstruction of a new Germany. As plans were hashed out for the first Bundestag election in early 1949, Adenauer argued that the CDU must be successful, for otherwise the SPD would build a coalition with the Communists in the first government—resulting in the enslavement of the German people by way of a socialist economic policy.¹⁷ He later commented that a socialist Germany would disturb him less with the socialization of heavy industry, than with the fact that the SPD had devolved into an “anti-Christian party” (*christentumsfeindlich Partei*) since 1945.¹⁸

The CDU's inner-party developments played themselves out within the context of an ever evolving national political situation. As previously discussed, the Bizone Economics Administration was fully established by the middle of 1947 with the full integration of the American and British Zones. With a stronger organization, the Bizone created a number of new political structures centered in Frankfurt to oversee the economic reconstruction of the combined British and American Zones more effectively. By this time many in the British Zone CDU, especially the members of the party's *Wirtschaftspolitische Ausschuß* (economics committee), were ready to abandon the Ahlen Program in favor of a more market-oriented economic program. In July 1947, the liberal corporate lawyer Franz Etzel was named chairperson of the economics committee of the CDU in the British Zone. On the national level of the CDU, the influence of Christian Socialists such as Kaiser from Berlin was clearly waning. In October 1948 Adenauer created a supra-zonal economics committee with Etzel as chairperson. The body included CSU representatives and was to work closely with the CDU/CSU representatives on the Economics Council (*Wirtschaftsrat*), a quasi-parliamentary body of the Bizone in Frankfurt, in developing party economic policy. Meanwhile, by late 1946 and early 1947 the Americans had made it clear that they would not tolerate plans for socialization and would veto proposals from any state legislature that went forward with such a policy—thereby contributing to further weakening of the party's left wing. Over the course of 1947, CDU/CSU representatives within the Economics Council began to support the free market more actively and worked with the smaller bourgeois parties to hammer the SPD for espousing a fruitless economic system from a bygone era.¹⁹ By March 1948 Ludwig Erhard had taken up the position of 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—creating the new availability of goods for West Germans.

The economic upswing that followed the currency reform signaled unmistakably to Adenauer that the social market economy possessed political currency and presented him with the perfect opportunity to push the CDU toward accepting it as a key part of the party's platform. As part of this effort, Adenauer invited Erhard to address the British Zone's CDU party conference in Recklinghausen at the end of August 1948. In this speech, entitled “*Marktwirtschaft moderner Prägung*” (Market Economy of a Modern Character), Erhard placed the West Ger-

man economy's conversion from the *Zwangswirtschaft* (controlled economy) to a *Marktwirtschaft* (market economy) in a broad context by connecting the economic transformation to fundamental social change that freed the new nation from the legacies of the Nazi and occupation past. He opened the speech with these 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.²⁰

This change in the economic order meant not the introduction of “plundering” or “irresponsibility,” but rather 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.”²¹ 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—echoing sentiments common among early leaders of the CDU. 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 unfettered free market and egotistic individualism surely would have elicited a strong negative response from some members of Erhard's audience who still held pro-Christian Socialist sentiments.

Implicitly, Erhard 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 a central aspect of the planned economy. In addition, Erhard stressed that the planned economy was a middle station that inevitably led to a controlled economy (*Zwangswirtschaft*), an economic system whose characteristics West Germans could easily understand by thinking back to the Nazi years and the early occupation period or even by looking eastward to the Stalinist Soviet Union. The controlled economy of the postwar years had created “societal chaos,” while the new currency had allowed the average German to consume more in the four weeks since its introduction than during the three years since the end of the war.²²

As an alternative to this system that inevitably led to tyranny, Erhard offered the social market economy. Germany, he argued, must establish an economic system “which through voluntary organization [*Einordnung*], through a conscious responsibility, struggles for the whole in a sensible, organic way.”²³ By expressing this concern for the whole of society Erhard highlighted the social element of the free market—echoing the neoliberal economist Wilhelm Röpke's belief that the economy should be somewhat regulated to benefit all in society, over purely egotistic laissez-faire capitalism. But also central to Erhard's view was that the notion of economic freedom was essential for the creation of a free society. In this way

Erhard defined the fundamentals of a free society, where “in my eyes the most important of all democratic freedoms is the free selection of goods, along with the free selection of professions.”²⁴ Building on some of the ideas of Röpke, Eucken, and other neoliberals, Erhard elucidated a view that would be repeated in political propaganda throughout the 1950s: political freedom and freedom to consume were inextricably intertwined; one could not be established without the other.

By October 1948, Adenauer was pushing for the creation of an economic program for the CDU of all three Western occupation zones.²⁵ On 25 February 1949 Erhard traveled to Königswinter to address the CDU’s zonal committee in the British Zone. Erhard argued to the group 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 electoral platform. As in earlier speeches to the CDU, he was sure to stress the social aspects of the free market, in order not to alienate the CDU politicians holding onto Christian Socialism.²⁶ Erhard’s speech supposedly resonated a great deal among those present.²⁷ This response reaffirmed Adenauer’s belief that the CDU should build its economic policies upon Erhard’s principles. After his presentation, Adenauer thanked Erhard for advancing these “fundamental truths” that developments since the currency reform had proven to be “really good principles.” The key task was to articulate these principles in “simple and clear terms” in the upcoming election campaign.²⁸

Others at the Königswinter 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’s Economics Council and Economics Administration were headquartered in Frankfurt. But he also maintained that social policy would play a crucial role in the election. From Albers’s perspective, Erhard was too much of a free market liberal. The trade unionist was leery of the acceptance of Erhard’s policy, suspecting this would mean the abandonment of the Ahlen Program. As a pragmatic politician, Adenauer affirmed that the party could not get caught up in rigid party program. “I have just said,” he retorted to Albers, “that all of these programs and program statements have no eternal value, but are concerned with matters that are vital now.” Adenauer then introduced 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 Ahlen Program and the social program.”²⁹ Again, an Adenauer-led CDU was attempting to reconcile the free market with some of the “social” roots of the Weimar Catholic Center Party. Prompted by the success of Erhard’s speech and the timid response from the left wing of the party, the CDU in the British Zone—and with that the whole CDU/CSU in the Western Zones—adopted the social market economy as a central part of its platform for the upcoming election and Adenauer permanently reined in the CDU’s Christian Socialist element. Clearly, Adenauer understood the importance of the social market econ-

omy not only as a club to wield against the Social Democrats in the Bundestag election, but also as a means to reel in the left wing of the CDU and prevent it from alienating more centrist voters.

The CDU's immediate task was to transform the ideas of the social market economy into an effective political campaign. One clear obstacle to this task was that in 1949 CDU had no overarching structure. Within the British Zone the party was organized at the zonal level, while in the American and French zones it was organized at the regional level (*Landesverbände*). In some parts of West Germany, the regional organizations' territory did not correspond to the administrative areas of the Federal States (*Länder*). For example, North Rhine–Westphalia had two regional organizations of the Rhineland and Westphalia-Lippe. In Lower Saxony there were three, with Hanover, Brunswick, and Oldenburg, and in Baden–Württemberg four, in North Baden, South Baden, North–Württemberg, and Württemberg–Hohenzollern.³⁰ At the beginning of 1947 the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft der CDU/CSU* (Working Group of the CDU/CSU) was formed in Frankfurt under the directorship of Bruno Dörpinghaus, a founder of the CDU in Hesse. This body acted as a “steering committee” but in fact possessed no formal power to determine policy for the party's regional branches. The *Arbeitsgemeinschaft der CDU/CSU* and its subordinate committees provided the *Landesverbände* (regional organizations) and *Kreisverbände* (district organizations) of the party with the main campaign themes and propaganda material for the election campaign.

In early January 1949 Dörpinghaus began constructing a central election committee under the working group charged with the responsibility of coordinating campaign propaganda throughout West Germany. This election campaign committee consisted of representatives from the various regional organizations, the British *Zonenverband* (zonal organization) of the CDU/CSU, the Frankfurt Economics Council, and the Parliamentary Council, which was drawing up the new West German constitution. The election committee's main task 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.”³¹ A number of other subcommittees were subsequently created for the campaign, such as the electoral law committee (*Wahlrechtsausschuß*) and the so-called Arithmetic Committee (*Arithmetiker-Ausschuß*), entrusted with providing demographic statistics on the Federal Republic and compiling data on previous state and local elections.³²

Despite the decentralized nature of the CDU/CSU, the party's image during the campaign was molded at the national level, and in particular by Adenauer's influence. The election committee planned the schedule of the nationwide speakers and the party's overall campaign strategy for the election campaign. In addition, on 5 March 1949, a press and propaganda committee was created to develop propaganda for the campaign. The committee supplied posters, leaflets, election brochures, and other campaign necessities to regional and district party organizations, including the CDU's sister organization in Bavaria, the CSU, for which

it replaced “CDU” with “CSU” on the materials.³³ On 19 March the press and propaganda committee convened its first meeting, with Dörpinghaus proposing a working staff be formed to take care of the technical planning and proofing of the campaign propaganda. Perhaps the most important information provided by the central party leadership was the *Union im Wahlkampf*, which detailed election information and speaker notes for the party organizers at the regional and district level. Between 20,000 and 25,000 of these election newspapers were distributed by the central committee.³⁴ In addition, the regional and district level organizations supplied propaganda material for local use.³⁵ Generally, the locally supplied propaganda concentrated upon introducing the local candidates through pamphlets or leaflets. Meanwhile, propaganda for more nationally oriented issues flowed out of the CDU/CSU’s central working group and its various subcommittees.

Adenauer and the CDU of the British Zone proved to be the crucial forces behind the creation of the CDU/CSU’s campaign. Undoubtedly, the British Zone CDU 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 actively on the press and propaganda committee. From the onset, Adenauer stressed that the SPD was the main opponent against which all efforts must be focused.³⁶ Adenauer feared that because the communist vote would always be available to the SPD in the Bundestag, the major goal of the campaign would be to prevent a combined majority of the SPD and the KPD (Communist Party of Germany).³⁷ With this in mind, Erhard and the social market economy lent themselves to being used as political weapons against the SPD. Adenauer made it very clear in a meeting of the press and propaganda committee that Erhard and the Frankfurt economic policy were to take center stage and that the campaign revolved around the question of “*Markt oder Plan*” (Market or Planned), contrasting the economic policies of the CDU/CSU and SPD.³⁸ The challenge was to transform the economic policy into effective propaganda.

But in most of the resulting propaganda, the social market economy was not clearly defined in any theoretical or formal sense. Instead, the CDU/CSU’s propaganda on economics centered around two issues. First, the CDU/CSU portrayed its policies—the currency reform for which the party sought credit and the social market economy—as unshackling the West German economy from Allied controls, rationing, industrial dismantling, and SPD economic planning, and thereby making the basic necessities available to a German populace that had suffered severe postwar deprivations. By taking this position, the party affirmed its capacity to run an effective government. Second, the CDU/CSU used the social market economy to represent the establishment of individual freedom within an organic West Germany community, in contrast to the tyranny and alienation associated with the SPD’s planned economy and the economic system of the Third Reich. With this approach the CDU/CSU reconciled the free market ideas of the social market economy with the party’s Christian Socialist roots. The newly available goods and economic expansion for which Erhard and the CDU/CSU claimed credit were not merely to satisfy individual desires or necessities, but to

help bring about the fundamental reconstruction of German social life after the intense upheaval and dislocation of the Third Reich and crisis years—including an idealized vision of family life and gender roles. The CDU/CSU's propaganda silenced any significant confrontation with the recent past and urged West Germans to look forward to a new beginning free of Nazi guilt. By taking this approach, the propaganda positioned West Germans as powerless victims in the immediate postwar period who now regained a sense of agency due to the CDU/CSU's economic policies. Finally, the CDU/CSU's propaganda avoided any technical jargon regarding the intricate details of economic policy. Instead, like any good political advertising, it translated the party's ideas into concrete terms and played upon the voters' prejudices and predispositions.

Particularly important to West Germans at the time was the challenge of economic reconstruction and securing sufficient food, clothing, and housing for survival. American-conducted public opinion surveys in January 1949 indicated that six out of ten Germans valued 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.³⁹ Clearly, larger, more abstract political ideas took a back seat to immediate and pragmatic concerns. The CDU/CSU played up these sentiments with propaganda centered upon improving West German conditions, especially after the currency reform of 1948.

In a 5 March meeting of the election committee, Dörpinghaus suggested that the proposed propaganda committee design brochures “for the man on the street, simple, uncomplicated with a lot of pictures.”⁴⁰ Adenauer underscored this principle in the 19 May 1949 meeting of the CDU's press and propaganda committee. In a discussion of the formulation of propaganda material, Adenauer suggested that, “we take this as a principle of the propaganda: simple, not too much, not too highbrow.” Especially effective would be some form of pictorial representation of the CDU/CSU program. Adenauer and Erich Köhler, the head of the regional organization in Hesse, were particularly convinced of the effectiveness of a primitive form of propaganda. In early 1949 they had seen a touring theater group from Caux near Geneva, which proclaimed a Christian-based ideology. Both were impressed with this group's ability to captivate the West German public. Adenauer commented about this fascination: “That is the best proof that one must speak simply to the public, not too much, few thoughts, large ideas simply represented.”⁴¹ The Frankfurt economic policy proved easy to shape into this simplistic approach. Walter Otto, a member of the CDU in the British Zone, emphasized the effect of graphics and pictures on the public, adding that the party propaganda, and posters in particular, should appeal not to the intellectuals, but rather to 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 creations, was a poster depicting a Man-

gol face hovering over Europe while a shield bearing the letters “SPD” crumbled before the Asiatic threat.⁴²

The ideas of the social market economy were put together in the *Düsseldorfer Leitsätze* (Düsseldorf Principles). This program statement was to replace the old Ahlen Program and kick off the CDU/CSU’s campaign. The Düsseldorf Principles were formulated mostly by members of the British Zone CDU. Franz Etzel, the chairman of the economics committee of the CDU in the British Zone and chair of a supranational economics committee, initiated the drawing up of the guidelines over the course of late 1948 and early 1949, with frequent consultation with Erhard.⁴³ On 30 March 1949, Etzel presented the rough draft to the British zonal committee. He argued that the social market economy should lay claim to the economic upswing since the currency reform. He went on to stress that although the conventional wisdom was that a weak and undercapitalized economy plagued with shortages must be remedied by a centralized planning, the CDU must make clear that it stood for freeing the energy in the economy through the social market economy. Etzel observed the need to define the concept of “social market economy” because of its multiple meanings. Interestingly, he pointed out that although the new program statement had nothing to do with the Ahlen Program, Adenauer desired that the old program be cited in the new proposal. Throughout the meeting, committee members banted about what the term actually meant. The conversation reflected both the difficulties of tailoring economic concepts to a political campaign and the approach that the Adenauer and CDU would take to campaigning. That is, the social market economy was not to be about pure economic ideas, but a broad social, economic, and political vision that the CDU offered to the electorate.

At the end of the session, Heinrich Lübke, a leader of the CDU in North Rhine–Westphalia and later the federal president between 1959 and 1969, commented: “Instead of saying planned economy, we should say centralized administrative economy or more popularly expressed, simply controlled economy [*Zwangswirtschaft*]. We reject the controlled economy, everyone can understand that. Central administrative economy would be better in my opinion than planned economy.” Later in the meeting, committee members engaged in a heated discussion about what controlled and planned economies actually meant. The conclusion was that the term planned economy could be more easily associated with economic conditions and organization before the currency reform and with the SPD’s platform in particular.⁴⁴ When suggestions were made later in June 1949 at meeting of the British Zone CDU to use the words “controlled economy,” Adenauer reacted strongly against the hairsplitting over the economics behind the terms. His advice was: “Speak simply. The public wants to be spoken to simply, and don’t rack your brains so much on this matter.” Despite some disagreement over campaign terminology, the term “planned economy” was employed over “controlled economy.” The CDU utilized the term “planned economy” because the SPD by this point had rejected the “controlled economy” and it was essential to differentiate between the parties in the campaign.⁴⁵ In particular situations, “con-

trolled economy” was used because of the images that it could evoke, especially the image of the Nazi economy, the immediate postwar years, and the communist system in the East. Clearly the party was not concerned that its economic concepts have theoretical purity, but rather was interested in what would best resonate with the electorate. As Adenauer argued at the zonal committee meeting, “We are writing the principles for the election, not for a scholarly work or textbook.”⁴⁶

The Düsseldorf Principles were released in a press conference on 15 July 1949, which also served as the start of the CDU/CSU election campaign. Adenauer invited the leading 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.”⁴⁷ In his opening remarks at the press conference, Adenauer gave the impression that the Principles were developed and agreed upon by the entire party, although they were almost solely the product of the CDU in the British Zone and the CSU had not, in fact, given its approval of the Principles.⁴⁸ The Düsseldorf Principles made clear that economic change was an integral component of reconstructing the social and moral fabric of the German community after the degradation of the Third Reich and the occupation period. The document opened by describing the low point that Germans had reached in the first half of 1948 when the struggle against hunger led to “ruthless self-interest” and the corruption in society awoke the “basest instincts.” It did not stress the currency reform, which was an American initiative, instead arguing that the CDU/CSU economic policy led to a political-economic turning point when the efficiency of workers at all levels rose and production climbed. It was the rejection of the “ration card economy [*Bezugscheinwirtschaft*] that gave freedom back to the consumer.” After 20 June, “The stores became full, courage, strength, and energy were roused, and the whole nation was ripped out of its state of lethargy.”⁴⁹ But it was not the currency reform alone that had spurred the economic upturn. Instead, the market reforms of the social market economy that accompanied the currency reform drove the Western Zones’ economic resurgence. Through this explanation of the currency reform and the social market economy, the CDU/CSU laid claim to the rising economy and made it a product of German, not American, measures, thereby projecting a sense of German agency. In addition, by identifying 20 June 1948 as a decisive moment in German economic and political life, the document silences any references to the Third Reich and asks West Germans only to look to the future with no meaningful reflection of their responsibility to the recent past.

But the Düsseldorf Principles also took care to devote much attention to social policy and to promise that the CDU/CSU policy would not revert “to a capitalist form and to an old liberalism of an unsocial, monopolistic type.” The Principles proclaimed that “[t]he ‘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.” From the perspective of the Düsseldorf Principles, the free market, if its excesses were avoided, safeguarded the freedom of individuals and

provided the most social justice for the citizens of West Germany.⁵⁰ With this concern for social issues, the CDU/CSU's economic program maintained a connection to the heritage of Catholic social policy while adopting a form of the free market. Maria Mitchell has commented that the Düsseldorf Principles and the Ahlen Program preceding it represented the CDU's interconfessional consensus formed by 1949. This consensus bound Catholics and Protestants together by an antimaterialist view of society and an economy that focused on a spiritual reconstruction of Germany against socialism of any form—be it in the guise of the SPD, the Communists to the East, or even Christian Socialism. She has persuasively argued that between 1946 and 1949 Adenauer and the antisocialist elements within the CDU successfully defined antimaterialism as opposed to any form of socialism—including Christian Socialism. This position strengthened the bond between liberal and conservative Protestants to Catholics with roots in the Weimar Center Party, thereby maximizing the potential constituency for the developing CDU.⁵¹

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, “[t]he system of the planned economy robs the productive man of his economic self-determination and freedom.”⁵² Yet, the principles also stressed the fact that the social market economy was not the same thing as the “free economy” of a liberal bent. In many respects, support for a pure free market system would have generated much resentment from potential voters. Instead, the principles suggested that in order to avoid a relapse into the problems of the “free economy,” the independent control of monopoly was necessary to secure “competition.” The program statement, with its use of the term “social market economy,” was able to retain the resonance that both “market” and “social” might have within the electorate.⁵³ At the same time, the SPD, although not directly mentioned, was associated with the planned economy and its system of statism, absence of freedom, and scarcity. Although Maria Mitchell's study of antimaterialism in the CDU is focused on the party's ideological foundations, especially in economic areas, the CDU leadership was by no means concerned with maintaining some sort of ideological purity or consistency. Not just in the 1949 Bundestag election, but also in future elections, the social market economy proved to be a pliable concept that went beyond its original antimaterialist definition.

With the social market economy as the focal point of the campaign, Erhard assumed a central role in the CDU/CSU's efforts, although he was not yet officially affiliated with the party. As the director of the Bizonia's Economics Administration, he was the perfect spokesperson to present the advantages of the social market economy to the West German electorate. By January 1949 Erhard had already affirmed that he would “go into the upcoming political party clashes with particular energy for the CDU.”⁵⁴ Erhard proved to be the speaker most requested by the regional and district party organizations during the campaign and made speeches all over West Germany, from Schleswig-Holstein to Bavaria.⁵⁵ Generally, Erhard's speeches were much better attended than other speakers' rallies. For example, in

the lower Rhine town of Krefeld, Erhard's rally attracted over 3,000 listeners. In comparison, the local party's other speaker of national stature, Anton Storch, who was the CDU/CSU's spokesperson on social issues, attracted only 300.⁵⁶

The 13 July 1949 issue of *Union im Wahlkampf* introduced Erhard to the rank-and-file party organizers. Erhard's profile helped establish the image that Erhard himself would cultivate during the 1950s. It stressed his substantial role in the rebirth of Germany by declaring: "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."⁵⁷ It went on to define Erhard's personal characteristics in a short profile: "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 presented him as "a real person of constant amiability and humor." All the while, Erhard was portrayed as an expert on economics who would help guarantee the continued economic reconstruction of Germany. He was a man of the people, yet one with the knowledge and understanding of economics to push Germany forward.⁵⁸

In his stump speeches, Erhard reiterated many of the ideas that he had expressed in some of his earlier speeches to CDU members. Economic freedom and political freedom were inextricably linked and the social market economy was an essential component in establishing individual agency and political self-determination. At the same time, however, he was sure to hit issues that appeared more likely to resonate with the population as a whole. During his campaign tour over the course of the summer of 1949, he outlined his economic views in an address to an assembly of voters in his home district, Um-Heidenheim. He opened the speech by again drawing the strong dichotomy between the market and planned economies. The central 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."⁵⁹

But also through this speech Erhard helped create a meaning of economics that associated the CDU/CSU's opponent, the SPD, with images of the Nazi past and the communist regimes to the East. Erhard identified the SPD as the "keeper of the controlled economy [*Zwangswirtschaft*]," something that no election campaign maneuvering could cover up. The socialist planned economy must eventually lead to the controlled economy, Erhard argued. He then blurred the lines between the tenets of the SPD's economic program and those in place in the Soviet Zone of Germany. Erhard insisted that "[t]he 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, he maintained, sought to drive the people back to a "gloomy mood of despair and a brooding fear of life [*Lebensangst*]." But the German people were not prepared "to become enslaved again by a revived bureaucracy and rule by bigwigs and fatcats [*Bonzokratie*]."⁶⁰ The speech continued to blend the SPD with some of the images of Germany's recent past under the

Nazi economy and the occupation before the currency reform, a rhetorical strategy that also implicitly distanced the CDU/CSU from the Third Reich. Erhard declared, “We want to help finally the German citizen get back civil courage, which was beaten down for fifteen 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.”⁶¹ Therefore, Germans of all levels, classes, and occupations should unite against this deadly danger presented to their newly-acquired freedom through an oppressive bureaucracy.

Along with Erhard’s speeches, posters were the chosen means to disseminate the ideas of the social market economy. They were perhaps the most powerful form of communication that the party created, and the CDU/CSU placed great emphasis upon their use throughout the campaign. Early in the planning of the campaign, Adenauer underscored the necessity of having a poster on which “not the Economics 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.” In any case, they were the most uniform sort of propaganda that the party utilized, with the press and propaganda committee developing the same posters for use across West Germany, thereby creating a unified and coherent party image that transcended local interests.⁶² They would give “the impression of the unity of the party from north to south.”⁶³ The central propaganda committee developed the posters with the participation of the regional organization managers, considering what they envisioned would be most effective within their particular region. The regional organization managers then determined how many posters they needed from the central committee. All told the central committee produced 1.7 million posters for the 1949 campaign.⁶⁴

Although the working group of the CDU/CSU generated most of the posters, the regional and district level party organizations also issued their own. There is no way to know the precise number locally issued, but since these local organizations’ finances were severely limited, it 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 regional organization distributed only 70,000 posters, not a great number considering that the Rhineland CDU was perhaps the best organized CDU/CSU branch in West Germany. The content of the posters issued by regional and district-level organizations was very different from those distributed by the central CDU/CSU organization. Most local-level organizations developed posters dealing with local issues or portraying the local candidates.⁶⁵ Although there were posters addressing a variety of issues—culture, refugees, home construction—most of the central committee’s posters concentrated on economic issues. In fact, the Rhineland’s regional organization complained that the bulk of the posters issued from Frankfurt did not focus on an important campaign issue in the predominantly Catholic Rhineland: political-cultural themes.⁶⁶ The central leadership, although lacking direct control over the conduct of the election campaign on the local level, could determine the themes and issues that were core to the campaign. Undoubtedly the local party

organizations could push issues that were particularly important to their respective districts, but the CDU/CSU working group shaped the main campaign themes.

Those posters dealing with economics underscored two major themes. The first echoed some of the sentiments in E rhard's speeches that constructed a dichotomy between the planned and market economies. Using this dichotomy, the posters helped spell out some of the political implications of both these economic systems. The other major theme was the economic reconstruction and progress over the course of the few years prior to the election. The improved economic conditions were attributed to the CDU/CSU's policies. Overall, the posters encouraged the creation of very crude and simplistic categories in the minds of voters that clearly differentiated the policies of the CDU/CSU and those of its opponent, the SPD. Implicit was the notion that the CDU/CSU was the more responsible party and thus the one best qualified to govern West Germany and reconstruct a German community free from the taint of the Nazi past. In contrast, the SPD was portrayed as a party incapable of defending the newly founded Federal Republic against the ever present Asiatic, Bolshevik threat and as retaining economic policies associated with Nazism and communism.

One of the posters most widely distributed by the Arbeitsgemeinschaft der CDU/CSU entitled "At the crossroads of the economy" epitomized this dichotomy (Illustration 2.1). The poster incorporated a large black and white "X" upon a field of blue. The words "reconstruction" and "work" were inscribed upon the white axis of the "X," while "controlled economy" and "bureaucracy" appeared on the black axis, thereby juxtaposing the two choices facing the voters. The poster possessed a certain visual unity, with the large "X" in the poster representing both the act of voting on the ballot and this economic crossroads confronting West Germany. The vital importance of the vote was emphasized by the slogan that tied the poster together: "Our vote leads to work and reconstruction. We are voting CDU." Perhaps an even more popular poster counterposed the conditions from 1946 and 1949 by juxtaposing short phrases from 1946 on a black field opposite a field of white with images of consumer products (Illustration 2.2). The poster evoked memories of critical food shortages, rationing, and the black market following the war through messages such as: "no coal," "ersatz coffee," "50 grams fat for January," and "5 kilograms potatoes." The poster also elicited memories of the despair that was pandemic within Germany with statements such as "Exchange suit for something to eat." and "Inquiries purposeless!" The mood of 1946 was clearly contrasted to the situation of 1949 as represented by the lower part of the poster, which was overflowing with food and consumer products including clothes and shoes, goods that were acutely scarce following the war. The bottom slogan tied these images together with the bold letters "CDU" and "This is what our economic policy provides you." In many respects the poster's layout helped support the message that the period of social and economic emergency had already passed in West Germany, and that the CDU was responsible for this upswing and what could be construed as "normalcy."



Illustration 2.1 At the crossroads of the economy



Illustration 2.2 This is what our economic policy provides you

The posters worked well together by setting up a series of dichotomies that underscored the voters' two alternatives in casting their lot with the CDU/CSU or SPD. They helped heighten the sense that economics was a key partisan wedge, and enabled the CDU/CSU to define itself as the party that having already brought prosperity and reconstruction was responsible for carrying West Germany into the future. The posters never tried to clearly define what the alternatives really entailed. They associated the SPD with the difficulties and the seemingly hopeless situation of the crisis years. They simply sought to elicit sentiments toward economic developments that were not based upon any rational assessment of the CDU/CSU's policies but instead played upon the perceptions and predisposition of the West German populace. The posters indicated the reestablishment of some form of a reconstructed West German community in which work and goods were now available. Even more importantly, they suggested the regaining of agency for individual West Germans. Because of the CDU/CSU's policies, the posters implied, West Germans would no longer need to face bureaucracies and economic conditions that were completely out of their control. They could, therefore, begin to reconstruct their own personal, family, and social lives.

The most effective of all the CDU/CSU posters was the one portraying an Asiatic-looking face hovering over Western Europe, beneath which the slogan read: "The savior: CDU" (Illustration 2.3). It resonated so strongly not only because it was visually striking but also because its meaning could be understood in a number of contexts. Clearly, given the powerful image of the Mongol invader from the thirteenth century and the religious term "savior," the intent was to evoke a sense that a crucial historical moment confronted not just West Germany, but all of Christian Western civilization. Turning back the Eastern threat would shape the future development of the Occident for centuries. Undoubtedly it was intended to exploit German racial prejudices and play off Nazi propaganda depicting the godless, Bolshevik, Asiatic hordes from the East. As Elizabeth Heineken has pointed out, this poster also evoked memories of the rape of hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of German women as the Soviet army moved into eastern portions of the Third Reich at the war's conclusion.⁶⁷ One version of the poster depicted a SPD shield splintering in the face of an Asiatic onslaught—an image that dovetailed very well with the CDU/CSU's self-image as the party of responsibility and protection. Not only was the CDU/CSU strong enough to safeguard West Germans from the threats from within—such as economic hardship and the portrayed soulless bureaucracy of the SPD's planned economy—but the party also was a free and open Western Europe's bulwark against the threats from the East. In the context of economics, it highlighted the contrast between the "East," with its controlled economy and the "West," with the social market economy that permitted the reconstruction of personal freedom and a coherent West German community. The poster aimed to disabuse the viewer of any faith that the SPD was up to the historical challenge.

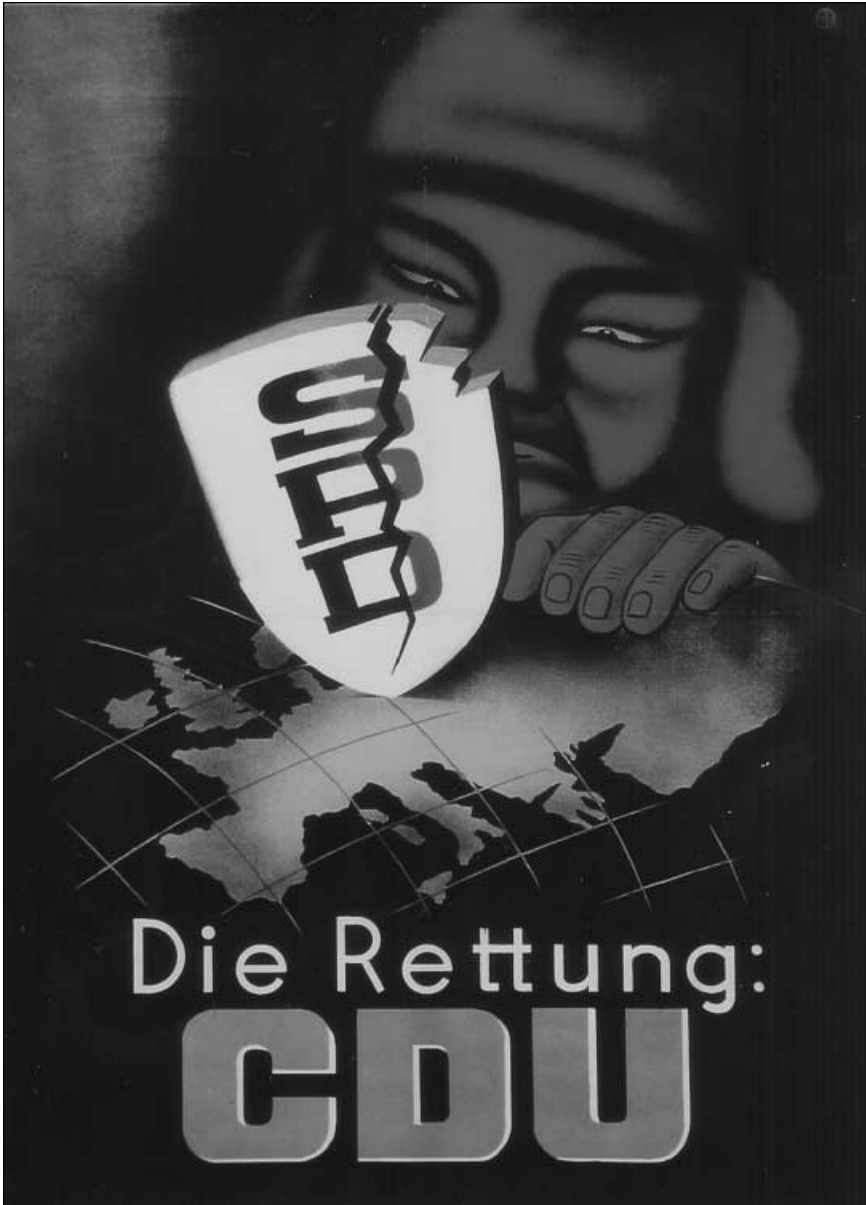


Illustration 2.3 The savior: CDU

The CDU/CSU message was reinforced by another important form of propaganda for the campaign: the *Flugblätter* (political leaflets). These were distributed in copious quantities in the days leading up to the 14 August election by the central, regional, and district party organizations, although those leaflets developed by the regional or district organizations usually dealt with local issues or incor-

porated information about the local candidates themselves. The central press and propaganda committee provided three different leaflets, two dealing specifically with economic issues and the other criticizing the SPD for attacks against Catholic education. Clearly the efforts of the Frankfurt leadership were insufficient, for only about 400,000 of the two economics-oriented leaflets were delivered to the Rhineland CDU, which had about 4.4 million voters in its districts. In addition, the regional party organizations complained that the leaflets arrived too late to be distributed fully and that the quantities were nowhere close to the millions promised by the central committee.⁶⁸ To overcome this shortfall, the regional organizations had to print their own copies of these leaflets.

Nevertheless, the leaflets reflected the way the central election committee was trying to represent the ideas of social market economy and construct its meaning in relation to the CDU/CSU. One of them warned West Germans to be sure to vote in the upcoming election, going on to remind them that only four years earlier all of Germany had lain in ruins. The last two years had seen a dramatic upswing in the economy—which was created by the politicians with experience and responsibility in the Economics Council of the Bizone. It stressed that the CDU/CSU was responsible for this economic upswing with the observation: “Think about it. It has been exclusively politicians of the CDU/CSU, who 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 suggestive 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, and forces deportation of workers into uranium mines.” The implication of this message was that the alternative to the CDU/CSU would not necessarily be able to defend West Germany against this threat, a point made most emphatically through posters. In contrast, the CDU/CSU was the party of strength and achievements. Through its policy of reconstruction it had distanced West Germany from its Nazi and occupation past, while at the same time protected the new state from threats from the East. The last page of the leaflet concluded that one should vote for the “Party of Responsibility—the CDU/CSU.”⁶⁹ In this view, the social market economy and economic reconstruction were not just matters of establishing basic living standards, but rather were basic elements in the survival of the West German state and society.

Another leaflet proclaimed: “You can’t do that! Why won’t the SPD recognize the success of the CDU/CSU’s social market economy?” It went on to accuse the SPD of spreading lies about West Germany’s economic reality in general and the CDU/CSU’s economic policy in particular. In many respects, the leaflet echoed some of the same sentiments as in 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 purported to expose and counter a series of false assertions made by the SPD with the “truth” of the CDU/CSU’s successes. Its main thrust was to underscore the connection among the CDU/CSU, the social market economy, and the upswing in

the West German economy. It concentrated upon the CDU/CSU's achievements, including the rise in employment over the past year. In contrast to CDU/CSU actions, the text commented, "As for the SPD, it's about their party program and not the improvement of the German economic situation." Again, the leaflet's propaganda created a clear dichotomy between the CDU/CSU's own action and results versus the inaction, rhetoric, and ideology of the SPD.⁷⁰

In comparison to propaganda commonly disseminated during the Weimar period, the CDU/CSU messages did not appeal to potential voters in terms of their class or profession.⁷¹ Instead, the CDU/CSU stressed that its achievements and the advantages of the social market economy benefited not merely one segment of West German society, but all West Germans. In this way the CDU/CSU's propaganda played off the common perception that all members of society had suffered equally in the rubble economy following the war and that the currency reform had smoothed over class differences. Furthermore, this approach jibed with Adenauer's strategy of molding the CDU/CSU into a true "*Volkspartei*." For the CDU/CSU to be successful, it must, from Adenauer's perspective, be the party for all West Germans rather than specific groups and subcultures. To Adenauer and the CDU/CSU, politics of social division and class struggle are what characterized the rival SPD. Perhaps the exception to the CDU/CSU's approach was propaganda directed toward women and refugees. These were specific groups that the party leadership sensed it must attract for electoral success. Overall, however, the material dealing with economic issues was not directed at any particular class or group. Despite the central election committee's approach, at the district and regional level, propaganda was often directed towards specific professions and groups of people.⁷² In this way, the party pursued a flexible, multifaceted approach to the election. The national-level party organization produced propaganda that represented the interests of the new West German nation. Meanwhile, the local party organization, which usually stressed the local candidates, could better understand the conditions and background of the voters in a particular district. Each local organization could tailor the party's appeal to local conditions without potentially jeopardizing its opportunity for broad appeal on a national level. In any case, for this election, the CDU/CSU did not yet have a statistical breakdown of the sociological makeup and public opinion of the West German constituency, so it lacked the information for formulating conclusions about the sentiments and mood of the West German electorate as a whole. Local party officials, on the other hand, were much better suited to make such conclusions about their own districts.

Although the CDU/CSU shied away from highlighting any differences involving class, profession, or social status, the party clearly formulated its propaganda in gendered terms. Undoubtedly, in the 1949 election, just as in the elections during the 1950s, women voters were the CDU/CSU's key supporters. The first election to the West German Bundestag in August 1949 reflected a re-emergence of voting and sociological patterns that had been present during the Weimar Republic.⁷³ Claudia Koonz and Renate Bridenthal have argued that the Weimar period, usually noted for the emancipation of women with the granting

of their 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 into the party structures. The female vote generally benefited the parties that had traditionally fought against women's rights, such as the Catholic Center Party and the Nationalist Party. Although women made gains in employment during the 1920s, most jobs open to them were unskilled and offered poor wages. Koonz and Bridenthal concluded that, "[w]ithout 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."⁷⁴ 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 ensure the regeneration of the race through their role as mothers. But Nazi ideology did not coincide with reality. Because of the demands of armament, women's employment continued to rise through the 1930s.⁷⁵

With the founding of the Federal Republic, the patterns of women's employment that emerged had links to 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. However, returning German soldiers and POWs increasingly pushed women out of their jobs, especially in the years following the 1948 currency reform.⁷⁶ In fact, by 1950 the percentage of working women was the lowest it had been since the beginning of the twentieth century, with about 31.3 percent of women working, down from 36.1 percent in 1939, when Germany was mobilizing for war.⁷⁷ As the 1950s advanced and the West German economy expanded, the percentage of women working increased again as female employment patterns fell back into the larger trend of the twentieth century, although the percentage did not reach the level of prewar Germany. In any case, employers relegated women to jobs that were the lowest on the pay scale. In addition, public policy discourse during the 1950s concerning issues such as governmental family allowances for children, legislation protecting women's participation in the workforce, and family-law reform attempted to create the idealized "complete" family headed by a husband and wife that was supported by the male's income.⁷⁸ This conservatism toward gender roles suggested that although the *Trümmerfrauen* represented the regeneration of the German nation, they did not signal 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.

Undoubtedly, the CDU/CSU leadership understood the importance the female vote was to have for the 1949 election. Alois Zimmer, a founder of the Rhineland-Palatinate CDU and a member of the CDU press and propaganda committee, commented in March 1949 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 house wives, but rather predominately to the Christian housewife . . . The election of the CDU will be decided through the vote of the Christian housewife.⁷⁹

The CDU/CSU made this appeal to the “Christian woman” through the selling of the social market economy. As mentioned earlier, the party sought to package its economic program in the form of the social market economy by stressing its antimaterialist, social aspects to the party’s core Catholic constituents, especially Catholic women. As a result, the propaganda the CDU/CSU aimed to ward women underscored the idea that the increased production and consumption resulting from the social market economy were not part of an individualistic goal of materialism, but instead allowed for the reconstruction of a secure West German familial life in particular and the regeneration of the German nation as a whole following the chaos and moral degeneracy that had reigned in the immediate postwar years.

One of the CDU/CSU’s most widely distributed series of posters compared conditions in West Germany in 1947 and 1949 by juxtaposing sharply contrasting photographs depicting West Germans in two opposing settings: one as victims of economic and social catastrophe, the other as strengthened individuals taking part in West Germany’s reconstruction. The 1947 photo under the words “hunger, want, misery” portrayed a woman in rags with a child by her side, marking her as one of the approximately 10 million refugees and expellees who streamed into the Western Zones between 1945–1949, or perhaps as someone who had endured the destruction of their homes by Allied bombing (Illustration 2.4). The 1949 photo under the words “forwards! upwards!” showed a woman standing over two children eating at a food-laden table. A brochure distributed by the CDU/CSU portrayed the same photographs 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.” By the next photo, the text proclaimed, “Christian 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.” In this schema, women were spared the hardships of the immediate postwar years and were now able to care for their children properly. The poster and brochure acknowledged the need for women to work, a message directed mainly to the millions of West German women “standing alone” (*alleinstehend*, the common German term for women without husbands) with their husbands dead, missing, or still held as POWs.⁸⁰ The total absence of men in the illustrations and the portrayal of a woman looking at her watch as her children eat, indicating pressing concerns outside the home, clearly suggests that this woman might be one who was “standing alone.” However, the poster and brochure made clear that “suitable” work for women was not to interfere with their primary task, raising children.⁸¹

This conception of gender roles within the context of postwar conditions was reinforced by another widely distributed poster that proclaimed, “And again the



Illustration 2.4 The success of the CDU

CDU, then: It should get even better” coupled with the graphic transformation of a gaunt woman holding an empty shopping basket, her hand filled with ration cards (Illustration 2.5). As the years progress and her basket fills, she becomes ever more attractive, full figured, and younger looking, suggesting that the work burden and hunger of the immediate postwar years had not only made difficult the

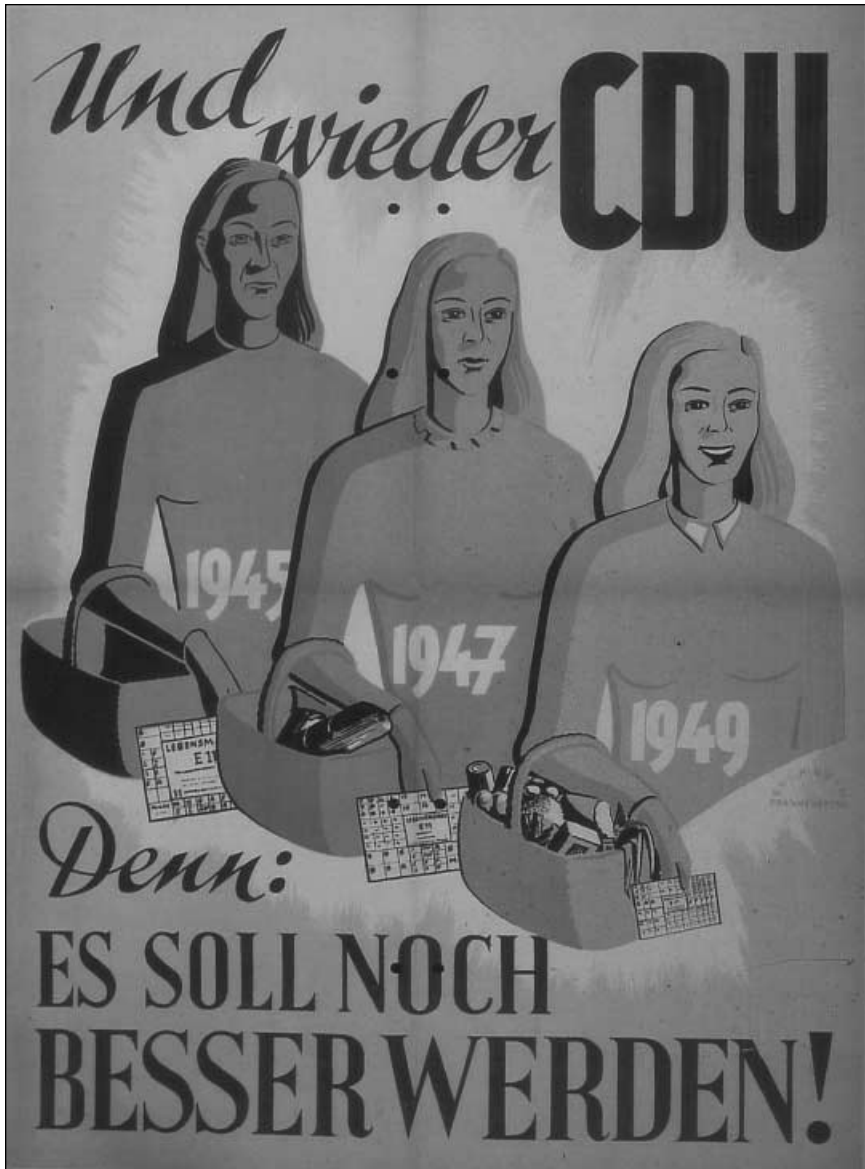


Illustration 2.5 It should get even better!

task of meeting basic needs but also robbed her of her sexual appeal. Not surprisingly, any reference to the common postwar occurrences of rape, fraternization, or cohabitation with a man not a woman's husband were completely silenced in the CDU/CSU posters, saving West Germans from a difficult confrontation with the immediate past. Taken altogether, the CDU/CSU posters indicated the sense that women were becoming more feminine as they regained their role as con-

sumers for the family. But this message was placed into a larger context than the mere meeting of individualistic needs. In one electoral appeal, couched in the form of a letter written to a woman's family member in the Eastern Zone, economic policies were clearly understood in terms of a wider, Christian worldview. As the letter explained, the social market economy had made possible the reconstruction of familiar life and avoided the "leveling" (*Gleichmacherei*) of women's roles that the SPD espoused. For that reason the woman was voting for the CDU ensuring that "a Christian, German rump state can speak for you in the eastern German zone."⁸²

The question remains, however, whether the CDU/CSU intended these posters and appeals for female or male consumption, or both. Were they meant to attract the male voter, who might have been reassured by women returning to recognizable, and in many respects, non-threatening roles? A female voter might have been happily reminded of the relief from the taxing times immediately following the war. One cannot say with certainty because there exists neither explicit discussion by the CDU/CSU of the propaganda's persuasive techniques nor relevant polling data. Like any good propaganda, it offered multiple readings depending upon the viewer's perspective. Yet all of the interpretations pointed in one direction: the CDU/CSU had restored "normalcy" and a sense of agency to Germans' lives, conditions that were defined by the propaganda itself. Undoubtedly, the posters did not necessarily depict a reality experienced by many West Germans whose lives continued to be in upheaval. Instead they reflected what West Germans wanted to be, or at the very least, the way the CDU/CSU perceived how people saw themselves. In any case, electoral appeals reaffirmed what was depicted as women's natural gender role of homemaker and suggested that by fulfilling this role, women were regenerating the nation.

The CDU/CSU propaganda contained little discussion or depiction of male economic roles in the newly formed West Germany. Several posters portrayed shattered factories and buildings devoid of any human beings as transformed spaces now inhabited by working men (Illustrations 2.6 and 2.7). Parallel to posters portraying women as somehow becoming more feminine, these posters indicated that men were becoming more masculine upon their return to the public sphere as producers after their absence as soldiers, POWs, and war-wounded. Brochures contrasted men sprawled on the street in despair at the war's end versus men working as productive parts of the reconstruction of West Germany. This transformation of men from their shattered existence after the war was a theme to be developed further in conservative propaganda. But despite these examples, most of the CDU/CSU's propaganda dealing with economic reconstruction was gender neutral or, if it was gender specific, dealt with women. Undoubtedly an important factor for this strategy was the *Frauenüberschuss* and the weight of the female vote. At the same time, however, the CDU/CSU propaganda echoed an approach ascribed by Julia Sneeringer to the Center Party during the Weimar Period, in which women voters were exhorted to heal the nation of its social and political ills in the privacy of the home. In addition, the CDU/CSU's overall strategy



Illustration 2.6 The success of the CDU

was much like that of conservative parties from Weimar, when, as Koonz and Bridenthal contended, “[w]omen 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.”⁸³ For the most part, this was the case with the CDU/CSU in the early postwar years.⁸⁴



Illustration 2.7 The success of the CDU

What is striking about the propaganda produced by the national-level CDU/CSU organization is that most of it did not, in general, deal head on with the Christian concerns of the party. Only one of the Arbeitsgemeinschaft-supplied leaflets touched upon such a concern. The Rhineland CDU, which was battling the Center Party for votes, complained that none of the posters dev-

oped by the CDU/CSU's working group addressed "cultural-political" issues and focused only on economic issues, which was problematic since posters were the main vehicles for projecting the party's national image.⁸⁵ Brochures and leaflets would mention that the party stood for "Christian responsibility" and "Christian principles" but did not really develop these ideas fully. 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 alienating more religious voters who still advocated Christian Socialism. At the same time, by adopting the social market economy Adenauer clearly wanted to create a new identity for the CDU/CSU and break the perception that the party was merely the continuation of the Catholic Center Party from the Weimar Republic.

Undoubtedly, representing Christian interests was an essential part of the CDU/CSU's identification. At the party's mass rally held on 21 July in Heidelberg, Adenauer concluded his speech that the election was a choice between a Christian or socialist government within the context of emphasizing the SPD's inability to protect a Christian Western Europe against the threat of communism. But this was after he had first highlighted the importance of this Bundestag election for the future of West Germany, extolled the CDU/CSU's economic achievements in the Frankfurt Economics Council and work within the Parliamentary Council, and castigated the SPD for supporting the failed planned economy. Following Adenauer, Gustav Heinemann, the mayor of Essen and the Federal Republic's president between 1969 and 1974, spoke of the necessity to create an interconfessional Christian party made up of Catholics and Protestants and urged Protestants to support the CDU/CSU and not to cast their votes for splinter parties that would complicate building an effective government. But at the same time the CDU/CSU leadership realized that stressing the Christian elements of the party too strongly might scare off the nonreligious, middle-class, Protestant vote, which was an essential component in creating broad support for the party. Instead, the CDU/CSU projected a vision in which those who desired, could clearly see the Christian elements in the CDU/CSU message, but it was not put forth too aggressively toward those it might alienate. Even during the formulation of the Christian Democratic movement and his struggle against Christian Socialism within the CDU, Adenauer realized that the party could not excessively underscore its Christian nature.⁸⁶ In fact, during the 1949 campaign members of the press and propaganda committee suggested that the party should begin heavy discussion of its "cultural politics" (*Kulturpolitik*) only two or three days before the election so as to undermine the SPD's claim that the CDU/CSU sought to be elected through support from the Church.⁸⁷

To some extent, the CDU/CSU could safely moderate the Christian elements in its national-level propaganda without jeopardizing its identity among many voters as the "Christian party." It is clear that within the individual dioceses throughout West Germany, the Catholic church mobilized their flocks for the CDU/

CSU. Although national statistics are not available, the situation of the archdiocese of Cologne might well illustrate larger, national developments. In that archdiocese, which included the heavily Catholic areas of not only Cologne, but also Düsseldorf, Essen, and Bonn, the Catholic Church held numerous rallies led by church officials, sent tens of thousands of speech outlines to church and lay leaders, and distributed 650,000 leaflets prior to the election.⁸⁸ The Rhineland CDU reported that the Catholic Church was leading an intensive propaganda campaign to get nonvoters out to the polls and urging voters to cast their ballots only for “Christian candidates.” Undoubtedly, some of these votes went to Center Party candidates, but the Church’s influence was also beneficial to the CDU/CSU as the Center Party’s share of the vote continued to decrease compared to previous state and local elections.⁸⁹ In addition, party leaders emphasized the party’s Christian elements at the regional and local level, since it was at these levels that the party generated propaganda that appealed to voters in terms of their religious background. The regional party organization in the North Rhine area commented that leaflets targeting both practicing Catholic and Protestant voters were created and distributed on the Sunday of the election. In addition, several leaflets announcing rallies posed the question of “Christian freedom or Marxist compulsion [*Zwang*],” a change from the theme advanced by the propaganda from the CDU/CSU’s working group.⁹⁰ Other local party organizations pushed the idea of the CDU/CSU as the Christian party, illustrated by a leaflet distributed in Dorsten, a small city on the northern edge of the Ruhr area. This leaflet presented voters with the choice between the “cold materialism of the East threatening us ever constantly” or the “Christian worldview.”⁹¹ This emphasis on cultural issues was especially apparent in areas of the Rhineland and Westphalia where the CDU was facing a strong Center Party presence and had to work hard to win over voters who might have lingering loyalty to the Center Party from the Weimar years.⁹² Local leadership from this area realized that gaining what were called “Christian nonvoters” was a key element to the party’s success.⁹³ From a broader perspective, however, the CDU/CSU’s national leadership realized that ultimate success lay beyond merely attracting voters to the party on the basis of the “cultural” elements.

As in election campaigns everywhere, the district-party organizations carried out much of the campaign’s grunt work. The district-level organizations were responsible for distributing pamphlets, placing posters, developing leaflets for the local candidates, maintaining contacts with the local press, getting supporters out to vote, and generating the funds to run the campaign. This meant that the CDU/CSU campaign floundered in areas with weaker organizations—especially outside of the CDU’s stronghold in North Rhine–Westphalia.⁹⁴ But the CDU/CSU’s loose overarching structure allowed the local party leaders to fine-tune the campaign message according to local conditions and tastes. Bruno Dörpinghaus, while forming the press and propaganda committee, entertained suggestions from the regional party organizations regarding membership of the body and sought committee representatives from all regional party organizations.⁹⁵ With this

approach, the CDU/CSU propaganda reflected the views of party members from across West Germany.

However, as previously mentioned, the campaign also left a considerable amount of room for the regional and district party organizations. This flexibility was also indicated by the fact that the social market economy could be portrayed in different contexts, depending on the local conditions. In a CDU election newspaper from the northern, agricultural, Protestant area of Ostfriesland, the social market economy was not portrayed as part of a defense against the godless materialism of socialism; rather, it was emphasized that the economic program had ended the ration-card economy and decreased unemployment. The newspaper responded to the challenge of the nationalist German Party, which enjoyed considerable local support, by portraying this rival party as endangering the unity of Germany and stressing that the CDU, although it represented multiple classes and national interests, was attentive to the importance of the farmer in the national economy and national life. In this way, the CDU of Ostfriesland molded its appeal to the local audience, although it still used the social market economy as a focal point.⁹⁶

In the south, although there was considerable tension between the CDU and the CSU, its Bavarian sister party, the two parties did coordinate the campaign to a certain extent. Clearly the CSU wanted to maintain its autonomy from the CDU, both organizationally and in the content of some of its propaganda, but the party received from the Arbeitsgemeinschaft the same propaganda material and election newspaper, *Union im Wahlkampf*, as the regional and district CDU organizations. The CSU did not stress all of the same themes as the CDU and highlighted certain “Bavarian issues,” but it placed a similar emphasis upon Erhard’s social market economy as a defining division between itself and the SPD—as evidenced by Erhard’s appearance at the CSU’s 16 July rally that launched its campaign.⁹⁷

The SPD campaign organization was similar to the CDU/CSU’s in the sense that it was the best organized of the parties in the field. If anything, the SPD was more centralized than CDU/CSU. As early as late 1948 a *Wahlkampfprogrammkommission* (election campaign program commission) was created, on which the leading figures of the party were represented.⁹⁸ The campaign leadership was centered in the party headquarters in Hanover under the guidance of Fritz Heine, who had coordinated SPD campaigns in the late Weimar period.⁹⁹ In addition, the SPD had a relatively large number of party members (683,000 versus the CDU/CSU’s 265,000 in 1950) whose dues and contributions enabled the party to finance the campaign.¹⁰⁰ Although the local SPD leadership was responsible for carrying out many propaganda activities, it was generally the top leadership of the party that generated the propaganda itself.¹⁰¹

The SPD’s counterpoint to Erhard’s role as the personality representing and promoting the party’s economic policy was the party’s chairman, Kurt Schumacher. Schumacher, who led the party until his death in August 1952, is best described as having a powerful personality and dogged determination. He volunteered for service in World War I and lost an arm from battlefield wounds. During the

Third Reich he spent almost ten years between July 1933 and March 1943 in four different concentration camps. Although physically shattered, in the spring of 1945 Schumacher set to work reconstructing the SPD in Hanover, where he stayed with his sister following his 1943 release from Dachau, and throughout the three western occupation zones. His ideas and actions proved to be the decisive force in the party's theoretical and ideological positions even after his death and until the adoption of the Bad Godesberg Program in 1959. Named chairman of the party on 9 May 1946, Schumacher was a pragmatic Marxist who viewed Marxist doctrine as merely a guide or method that would lead to social democracy. With this view, he emphatically rejected communism in East Germany as a degenerate form of Marxism. Nevertheless, Schumacher continued to adhere to an economic explanation for historical development and believed in a continuing class struggle. In order to achieve an "economic democracy" he advocated the socialization of certain key industries, such as raw material sectors. Mixed in his social democratic principles, he also retained a sense of German nationalism stemming from his West Prussian roots. He called for the reestablishment of Germany's 1937 borders and continually railed against Adenauer for his pro-Western policy, often calling him the "chancellor of the Allies."¹⁰²

Schumacher's view of the economy was clearly reflected in the propaganda produced by the SPD during the first Bundestag election. The *Wahlaufruf* (election statement) issued in July laid out the party's positions; much of the document attacked the CDU/CSU's economic policies in terms of class conflict. Among other things, it called for planning of the economy, full employment, improved living standards, and socialization of specific industries. It accused the policies of the Bizone's Economics Council of making "the poor even poorer, and the rich even richer."¹⁰³ Schumacher endorsed these SPD positions in his speeches throughout the campaign. In one election address delivered in Koblenz on 28 July 1949, Schumacher described the "Frankfurt economic policies" as "class struggle from above" (*Klassenkampf von oben*). They had merely heightened the differences between the rich and poor. In addition, the bourgeois parties had nothing to do with the economic upswing that West Germany had 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.¹⁰⁴ With the upswing of the economy and the increased availability of basic 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 to local party leaders, dated 4 August 1949, ten days before the election, emphasized 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.¹⁰⁵

Most of the leaflets distributed by the SPD concentrated upon the poor conditions within Germany, trying to remind West Germans that circumstances for many continued to be desperate. The leaflets did not delve deeply into specific economic policy, but instead highlighted the squalid living conditions, unemployment, high prices, and dislocation that beset many West Germans. In contrast to the CDU/CSU's portrayal of the economy, the SPD painted conditions not as improving, but quite the contrary, as becoming worse. The social market economy was associated with failure and desperation, not prosperity. If left to its own devices, the CDU/CSU would leave West Germany in ruins, illustrated in a leaflet picturing Erhard with his head in a textbook on the social market economy blindly leading the Western Zones over a precipice surrounded by destroyed buildings (Illustration 2.8).

In addition, the SPD emphasized the ties between large industry and the "bourgeois" parties. One leaflet, and an accompanying poster, read: "Political Power through Money." It explained that leading industrial organizations had met in July 1949 in order to gather funds for the "Erhard exploitation economy" (*Erhard'schen Ausbeuterwirtschaft*). The leaflet pointed out that firms were expected to contribute DM 2 to 4 for each of their workers to the bourgeois parties. Therefore, the SPD argued, industry was trying to buy CDU/CSU representatives. In sum, parties that sold out to industry exemplified 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).¹⁰⁶ Erhard was no more than a puppet of industrial special interests, while the "average" person was left struggling to make ends meet.

The SPD's propaganda was a bit mundane in comparison to the CDU/CSU's. The posters distributed by the SPD were less visually striking overall and 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 stereotypes common among West Germans, the SPD concentrated upon the negative developments in the economy. As indicated by some public opinion surveys taken between the currency reform and the August 1949 election, pragmatic economic concerns were at the forefront of West Germans' minds, surpassing any political idealism. The objections voiced by SPD 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 achieved allegedly as a result of its policies. In addition, claims that conditions had gotten worse for West Germans were a tough sell. In fact, the general trend in opinion among West Germans was that economic conditions were improving. A July 1948 poll from the Institut für Demoskopie reported that 37 percent of respondents believed that their economic conditions had improved since the currency reform, versus 42 percent who believed that they had worsened. By March 1949, 47 percent indicated conditions had improved contrasted

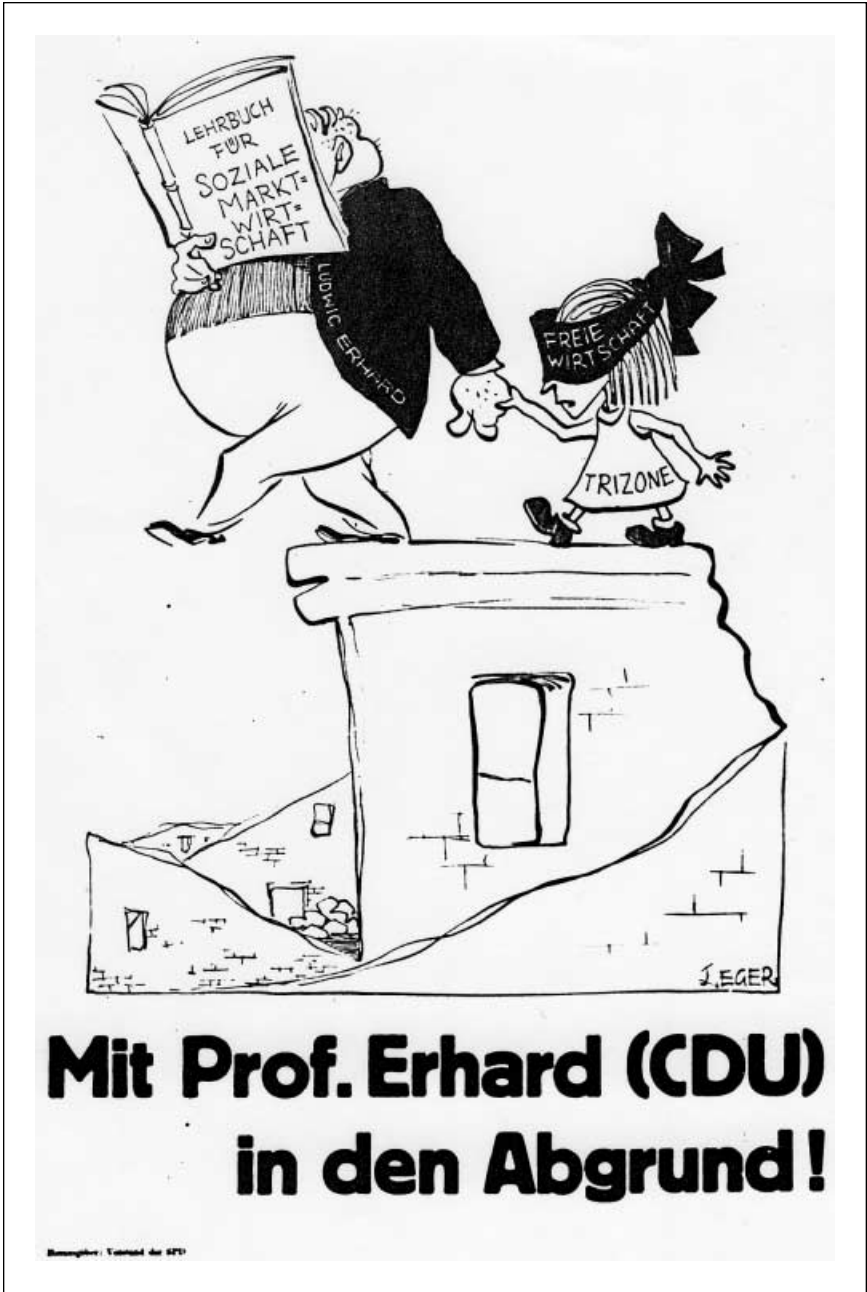


Illustration 2.8 With Professor Erhard into the abyss!

with only 3 percent who regarded their conditions as worse.¹⁰⁷ Although circumstances were still undoubtedly difficult, the general mood was gradually optimistic. Within this context, the SPD's message could appeal to only one social class: the working class. Thus in the first Bundestag election, the SPD was wooing its traditional base of support but not attempting to reach out to new sources of electoral support. This was in direct contrast to the CDU/CSU's approach of creating multidimensional propaganda that had broader appeal. 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.

Another important difference between the two main parties had begun to emerge by the 1949 campaign: the structure of party financing. The costs of the campaign are very difficult to quantify precisely because so much of the money was spent on the district and regional level. It is clear that in the first federal election of the new Federal Republic, the CDU/CSU's financial resources were limited. Early in the campaign, Adenauer stressed that the regional and district organizations had to gather their own funds for running the campaign.¹⁰⁸ Adenauer reinforced this position in an 8 May meeting of the press and propaganda committee when he commented that although the leadership of the CDU/CSU working group was assisting individual regional party organizations in financing the campaign, "this should not, however, divert attention from the fact that the main burden of the election is to be carried by the individual regional organizations and the local organizations respectively."¹⁰⁹ Udo Wengst, historian of the West German political system, has suggested that the main CDU/CSU working group sought to use its superior financial resources to wield greater influence on the regional party organizations. Because of their poor financial situation, regional party organizations were dependent upon the Frankfurt working group for much of the campaign propaganda material. For example, the Rhineland CDU reported using 42,000 of their own posters in the campaign, while they were provided with a total of 307,850 posters from the working group. With superior resources, Frankfurt could dominate the themes pursued in the propaganda material, especially on economic issues.¹¹⁰

However, the CDU/CSU did not raise sufficient funds to conduct the campaign fully. A 19 May meeting of the press and propaganda committee described the financial situation as "bad" and "a catastrophe."¹¹¹ A 21 June report from the *Landessekretariat* (Regional Secretariat) of the Rhineland CDU to district organizations complained that they had not been devoting enough effort to raising the funds needed to conduct the campaign. In addition, they had not been transferring the agreed upon funds to the regional party organization. Without these resources the regional organization would be unable to continue its election campaign work.¹¹²

One assessment by the CDU/CSU leadership estimated that the federal election campaign cost DM 575,000.¹¹³ Presumably this figure represents the amount that the working group spent on the campaign and not the money spent by the zonal, regional, and district organizations. In comparison, the SPD's executive committee doled out DM 250,000 for the 1949 campaign, and over DM 1,000,000

was spent by the entire SPD.¹¹⁴ Undoubtedly the CDU/CSU spent more on its election campaign than its SPD rivals did.

It is also difficult to estimate industry's contribution to the CDU/CSU's campaign. Early in the campaign, Adenauer urged the regional and district party organizations to raise moneys from all levels of society, including commercial and industrial interests.¹¹⁵ A final campaign report from the Rhineland CDU said that in the spring of 1949 "a circle of industry decided for a collection of a political fund," but it is not clear how much the group contributed.¹¹⁶ A collection of documents gathered together by the SPD, "Unternehmermillionen kaufen politische Macht" (Industrial millions buy political power), reported that leading industrialists 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 assist "the parties supporting the economic policy of Professor Erhard."¹¹⁷

But at the same time, Adenauer did not want the CDU/CSU to become too close to industrial interests. At a 19 May meeting of the press and propaganda committee, Adenauer again emphasized the need for the regional party organizations to raise their own funds. When one representative suggested local party organizations go to the respective *Industrie- und Handelskammern* (Chambers of Commerce, IHK), Adenauer responded quickly and sharply: "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."¹¹⁸

In the end, Adenauer and the CDU/CSU were disappointed at the amount of funds they managed to raise from industry. At the 19 May meeting, Walter Strauß, head of the legal office of the Bzone, noted that he had approached leaders of industry regarding the funds they were willing to give to the campaign. Many of the small and medium-sized companies could not contribute because the tax laws hindered their taking campaign contributions as a tax deduction.¹¹⁹ Adenauer commented in a 2 June meeting of the CDU's British zonal committee that all expectations of raising a great, central fund had been dashed. In general, the central working group could only help the regional party organization in a few situations, so that regional operatives must expect to finance themselves.¹²⁰ Some estimates of the funds contributed by industry range from DM 2 million to DM 4 million, although that appears to be a bit high. Industrial associations eventually agreed that their overall contributions would be divided as follows: CDU/CSU 65 percent, FDP 25 percent, and the DP 10 percent.¹²¹ Although the system was still in its infancy as of 1949, the practice of industry contributing funds mainly to the bourgeois parties already was forming. This system was to become much more effective and far-reaching in the federal elections of the 1950s. The difference in funding between the bourgeois parties and the SPD was not yet overwhelming, but a pattern had been set nevertheless.

The CDU/CSU achieved a slim plurality in the 1949 election, securing 31 percent of the vote to the SPD's 29.2 percent. An analysis of the election shows

that many of the patterns familiar to Weimar elections remained. The propaganda was reminiscent of that produced during Weimar campaigns, in which platform statements and crude, emotional propaganda played large roles. In addition, since a large number of relatively small parties had won seats, eleven different parties were entering the Bundestag. But this situation was to change in the Bundestag elections of the 1950s. The major parties of the Federal Republic party system—the CDU/CSU, SPD, and FDP—would emerge as dominant. In addition, in the future elections the CDU/CSU would develop new, more modern, sophisticated electioneering methods that were increasingly based upon techniques developed in commercial advertising and public opinion polling. In many different ways, the CDU/CSU was to fashion its image by drawing upon the emerging mythology surrounding the social market economy and the economic miracle. In the 1949 election, the party successfully employed the dichotomy of “market or planned” to act as a wedge issue against the SPD and positioned itself as the party establishing an antimaterialist, Christian West German community disconnected from the Nazi past. In the future, the CDU/CSU increasingly sought to cash in politically by taking credit for the creation of West Germany as the “*Wirtschaftswunderland*” in which individual consumerist desires were fulfilled and consumerism was safely defined as part of waging a geopolitical war against the godless communist East.

Notes

1. Konrad Adenauer, “Regierungserklärung,” in Adenauer, *Reden, 1917–1967: Eine Auswahl*, ed. Hans-Peter Schwarz (Stuttgart, 1975), 153–169.
2. Eschenberg, *Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Jahre der Besatzung, 1945–1949*, 533–536.
3. Jürgen W. Falter, “Kontinuität und Neubeginn: Die Bundestagswahl 1949 zwischen Weimar und Bonn,” *Politische Vierteljahresschrift* 22, no. 3 (1981): 236.
4. In the 1949 Bundestag election, a party gained a seat in the Bundestag either by winning the vote in an individual constituency or obtaining at least 5 percent of the vote in a *Land*, or state. This was changed before the 1953 election, in which a party needed either to win a seat directly or gain 5 percent of the vote *nationally*. Before the 1957 election the law was changed again so that a party needed to gain three seats directly or collect 5 percent of the vote nationally in order to enter the Bundestag.
5. Rohe, *Wahlen und Wählertraditionen in Deutschland: Kulturelle Grundlagen deutscher Parteien und Parteiensysteme im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, 165.
6. *Ibid.*, 170–171; Schmitt, *Konfession und Wahlverhalten in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, 128; and Schmitt, “Religious Cleavages in the West German Party System,” 186–201.
7. 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); Thomas Childers, “The Social Language of Politics in Germany: The Sociology of Political Discourse in the

- Weimar Republic," *American Historical Review* 95, no. 2 (1990): 331–358; and Julia E. Sneeringer, *Winning Women's Votes: Propaganda and Politics in Weimar Germany* (Chapel Hill, 2002).
8. For discussion of the CDU/CSU's antimaterialist view of the economy, see Mitchell, "Materialism and Secularism: CDU Politicians and National Socialism, 1945–1949," and Mitchell, "Christian Democracy and the Transformation of German Politics, 1945–1949."
 9. Hans-Otto Kleinmann, *Geschichte der CDU, 1945–1982* (Stuttgart, 1993), 54–55; Eschenburg, *Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Jahre der Besatzung, 1945–1949*, 187–188; and Mitchell, "Materialism and Secularism: CDU Politicians and National Socialism, 1945–1949," 288–290.
 10. Horst-Albert Kukuck, "Etappen im Ringen um eine Wirtschaftskonzeption der CDU 1945–1949," in *Politische Parteien auf dem Weg zur parlamentarischen Demokratie in Deutschland*, ed. Lothar Albertin and Werner Link (Düsseldorf, 1981), 239–260; and Mitchell, "Materialism and Secularism: CDU Politicians and National Socialism, 1945–1949," 278–308. See also Ambrosius, *Die Durchsetzung der Sozialen Marktwirtschaft*, 39; and Franz Focke, *Sozialismus aus christlicher Verantwortung* (Wuppertal, 1978), 253–255.
 11. "Das Ahlener Programm," in *Konrad Adenauer und die CDU der britischen Besatzungszone, 1946–1949: Dokumente zur Gründungsgeschichte der CDU Deutschlands*, ed. Helmuth Pütz (Bonn, 1975), 280.
 12. Kukuck, "Etappen im Ringen um eine Wirtschaftskonzeption der CDU 1945–1949," 247–249. See also Ambrosius, *Die Durchsetzung der Sozialen Marktwirtschaft*, 39.
 13. Ambrosius, *Die Durchsetzung der Sozialen Marktwirtschaft*, 39–43; and Hans-Peter Schwarz, *Konrad Adenauer: A German Politician and Statesman in a Period of War, Revolution, and Reconstruction*, vol. 1 (Providence, 1995), 358–381.
 14. Pütz, *Konrad Adenauer und die CDU der britischen Besatzungszone*, 149.
 15. Konrad Adenauer, *Memoirs, 1945–1953*, trans. Beate Ruhm von Oppen (Chicago, 1965), 45; and Schwarz, *Konrad Adenauer*, vol. 1, 328–358.
 16. Nicholls, *Freedom with Responsibility*, 234–235; Kukuck, "Etappen im Ringen um eine Wirtschaftskonzeption der CDU, 1945–1949," 252–254; Goeffrey Pridham, *Christian Democracy in Western Germany: The CDU/CSU in Government and Opposition, 1945–1976* (London, 1977), 28–37; and Schwarz, *Konrad Adenauer*, vol. 1, 328–381.
 17. Brigitte Kaff, ed., *Die Unionsparteien, 1946–1950: Protokolle der Arbeitsgemeinschaft der CDU/CSU Deutschlands und der Konferenzen der Landesvorsitzenden* (Düsseldorf, 1991), 258–259.
 18. *Ibid.*, 397–398.
 19. Kukuck, "Etappen im Ringen um eine Wirtschaftskonzeption der CDU, 1945–1949," 252–258; and Schwarz, *Adenauer*, vol. 1, 420–424.
 20. "Marktwirtschaft moderner Prägung," in Pütz, *Konrad Adenauer und die CDU der britischen Besatzungszone*, 657.
 21. *Ibid.*, 658.
 22. *Ibid.*, 659.
 23. *Ibid.*, 657–658.
 24. *Ibid.*, 665.
 25. *Ibid.*, 740.
 26. "Stenographische Niederschrift über die Sitzung des Zonenausschusses der CDU der britischen Zone am 24. und 25. Februar 1949 in Königswinter," in Pütz, *Konrad Adenauer und die CDU der britischen Besatzungszone*, 838; and Nicholls, *Freedom with Responsibility*, 236–238.
 27. Rudolf Uertz, *Christentum und Sozialismus in der frühen CDU: Grundlagen und Wirkungen der christlich-sozialen Ideen in der Union 1945–1949* (Stuttgart, 1981), 196.
 28. "Stenografische Niederschrift über die Sitzung des Zonenausschusses der CDU der britischen Zone am 24. und 25. Februar 1949 in Königswinter," in Pütz, *Konrad Adenauer und die CDU der britischen Besatzungszone*, 854–855.
 29. *Ibid.*, 858.
 30. Pridham, *Christian Democracy in Western Germany*, 247.

31. Rundschreiben Dörpinghaus an die Landesvorsitzenden und Landesgeschäftsführer der Union, 12 January, 1949, I-009-012/7 (NL Dörpinghaus), Archiv für Christlich-Demokratische Politik der Konrad-Adenauer Stiftung, Sankt Augustin (hereafter ACDP).
32. Udo Wengst, "Die CDU/CSU im Bundestagswahlkampf 1949," *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 34, no. 1 (1986): 3–4.
33. Rundschreiben Dörpinghaus an die Landesvorsitzenden der CDU/CSU, 7 March 1949, I-009-012/7 (NL Dörpinghaus), ACDP; and Kaff, *Die Unionsparteien, 1946–1950*, 402–404.
34. Am 8. März tagte im Adam Stegerwald-Haus zu Königswinter der Presse- und Propaganda-Ausschuss der Arbeitsgemeinschaft der CDU/CSU, I-009-006/2 (NL Dörpinghaus), ACDP.
35. See, for example, CDU des Rheinlandes Landessekretariat Köln-Marienburg, Die Bundestagswahl vom August 1949, VII-003-001/3, ACDP.
36. Aktennotiz Gottauts vom 18.2.1949 über eine Besprechung am 17.2.1949, I-009-008/3 (NL Dörpinghaus), ACDP.
37. Kaff, *Die Unionsparteien, 1946–1950*, 397.
38. *Ibid.*, 624.
39. Merritt and Merritt, *Public Opinion in Occupied Germany: The OMGUS Surveys, 1945–1949*, 41.
40. Kaff, *Die Unionsparteien, 1946–1950*, 402.
41. *Ibid.*, 456–457.
42. *Ibid.*, 622–623.
43. Wengst, "Die CDU/CSU im Bundestagswahlkampf 1949," 28–30.
44. Stenographische Niederschrift der Sitzung des Zonenausschusses der CDU in der britischen Zone, 30 March 1949, I-009-004/1 (NL Dörpinghaus), ACDP.
45. 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.
46. *Ibid.*
47. VII-003-001/2, ACDP.
48. Wengst, "Die CDU/CSU im Bundestagswahlkampf 1949," 38.
49. Pütz, *Konrad Adenauer und die CDU der britischen Besatzungszone*, 866.
50. *Ibid.*, 867–868.
51. Mitchell, "Christian Democracy and the Transformation of German Politics, 1945–1949," 283–349.
52. Pütz, *Konrad Adenauer und die CDU der britischen Besatzungszone*, 868.
53. *Ibid.*, 869.
54. Wengst, "Die CDU/CSU im Bundestagswahlkampf 1949," 25.
55. *Ibid.*, 24.
56. Bericht über den Wahlkampf, 22 August 1949, RW 100/17, 204, Nordrhein-Westfälisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, Düsseldorf (hereafter NWHStA).
57. "Erhard," *Union im Wahlkampf: Informations- und Rednerdienst der Arbeitsgemeinschaft der CDU/CSU Deutschlands*, 13 July 1949, 1.
58. *Ibid.*, 1.
59. "Männer und Frauen des Wahlkreis Ulm-Heidenheim," B102/9085, BA Koblenz. This was a speech that Erhard repeated during his stump tour throughout West Germany.
60. *Ibid.*, 2.
61. *Ibid.*, 3.
62. Kaff, *Die Unionsparteien, 1946–1950*, 455.
63. Rundschreiben Dörpinghaus an die Mitglieder des Presse- und Propagandaausschusses, der Arbeitsstabes und die Landesgeschäftsführer vom 12.5.49, I-009-006/2 (NL Dörpinghaus), ACDP.
64. Kaff, *Die Unionsparteien, 1946–1950*, 625.
65. CDU des Rheinlands, Landessekretariat Köln-Marienburg, Die Bundestagswahl vom August 1949, VII-003-001/3, ACDP, 3.

66. Ibid.
67. Heineman, "The Hour of the Women: Memories of Germany's 'Crisis Years' and West German National Identity," 364–371.
68. CDU des Rheinlands, Landessekretariat Köln-Marienburg, Die Bundestagwahl vom August 1949, VII-003-001/3, ACDP.
69. Sie werden ja sicher wählen, VII-003-001/3, ACDP.
70. Warum will die SPD die Erfolge der sozialen Marktwirtschaft der CDU/CSU nicht anerkennen? VII-003-001/2, ACDP.
71. For an examination of electoral appeals in the Weimar Republic based upon class or profession, see Childers, "The Social Language of Politics in Germany: The Sociology of Political Discourse in the Weimar Republic," 331–358.
72. See, for example, a report on the CDU activities for the British Zone in distributing leaflets directed toward women, students, refugees, young people, former prisoners of war professionals, and the elderly. CDU der Zonenausschuß für die Britische Zone, 13 October 1949, I-009-004/2 (NL Dörpinghaus), ACDP.
73. For more on women in Weimar Reichstag elections, see Sneeringer, *Winning Women's Votes*.
74. 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, 1984), 56.
75. Ute Frevert, *Women in German History: From Bourgeois Emancipation to Sexual Liberation*, trans. Stuart McKinnon-Evans (Oxford, 1989), 217–239. For an examination of Nazi propaganda in regard to women, see Leila J. Rupp, *Mobilizing Women for War: German and American Propaganda, 1939–1945* (Princeton, 1978).
76. Doris Schubert, ed., *Frauen in der deutschen Nachkriegszeit, Vol. 2. Frauenarbeit, 1945–1949: Quellen und Materialen* (Düsseldorf, 1984), 76.
77. 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, 1983), 35.
78. Moeller, *Protecting Motherhood*, 1–7 and 211–228.
79. Kaff, *Die Unionsparteien 1946–1950*, 433.
80. In May 1945, there were 12 million German soldiers in Allied POW camps. Even in March 1947, 2.2 remained. Kramer, *The West German Economy*, 10.
81. One third of German households in 1950 were headed by single women. Schissler, "Women in West Germany," 117. For an examination of "women standing alone," see Elizabeth D. Heineman, *What Difference Does a Husband Make? Women and Marital Status in Nazi and Post-war Germany* (Berkeley, 1999).
82. "Liebe Lore" *Die Rheinische Volksblätter*, VII-003-001/2, ACDP.
83. Sneeringer, *Winning Women's Votes: Politics and Propaganda in Weimar Germany*; and Bridenthal and Koonz, "Beyond *Kinder, Küche, Kirche*," 54.
84. Generally women did not hold leading positions within the party. A letter from the CDU/CSU's central committee to state-level party organizations commented that it would be desirable if several regional party organizations named a woman to their delegation to the election committee. Tagung des Wahlrechts-Ausschusses, 19 March 1949, VII-003-001/1, ACDP. Minutes from a press and propaganda committee meeting indicate that candidates for the elections were to be selected by the following qualifications: (1) Politicians and Parliamentarians with experience (2) Experts in legal issues (3) Experts in economics, finance, agricultural and cultural policies (4) Women, refugees, members of the *Junge Union* (CDU's youth organization), and those bombed out by the airwar, indicating a certain "tokenism" that was present in the party. Presse und Propaganda Ausschuß der Arbeitsgemeinschaft der CDU/CSU, 8 May 1949 I-009-006/2 (NL Dörpinghaus), ACDP. Gabrielle Bremme reported that in the 1950s only 8.8 percent of the members of the CDU's Bundesparteivorstand (Federal Executive Committee) were female. Bremme, *Die Politische Rolle der Frau*, 164.

85. CDU des Rheinlands, Landessekretariat Köln-Marienburg, Die Bundestagswahl vom August 1949, VII-003-001/3, ACDP.
86. See "Wahlrede bei einer CDU/CSU-Kundgebung im Haidelberger Schloß" in Adenauer, *Reden, 1917–1967: Eine Auswahl*, 137–149; Wengst, "Die CDU/CSU im Bundestagswahlkampf 1949," 42–45; and Schwarz, *Konrad Adenauer*, vol. 1, 336 and 353–354.
87. Am 8. Mai tagte im Adami Stegerwald-Haus zu Königswinter der Presse- und Propaganda-Ausschuß der Arbeitsgemeinschaft der CDU/CSU, I-009-006/2 (NL Dörpinghaus), ACDP.
88. Klaus Gotto, "Die deutschen Katholiken und die Wahlen in der Adenauer-Ära," in *Katholizismus im politischen System der Bundesrepublik, 1949–1963*, ed. Albrecht Langner (Paderborn, 1978), 22–25.
89. CDU des Rheinlands, Landessekretariat Köln-Marienburg, Die Bundestagswahl vom August 1949, VII-003-001/3, ACDP.
90. Leitsätze über die organisatorische und propagandistische Vorbereitung der Bundestagswahl, III-002-251/2 (LV Westfalen), ACDP.
91. Männer und Frauen des Amtsbezirkes Gahlen, RWV 48, 122, NWHStA.
92. In some cases, the CDU gathered the names and addresses of Center Party members and followers and sent them CDU material directly. See, for example, Rundschreiben Nr. 4, Kreispartei Dinslaken, 13 June 1949, RWV 48/198, 117, NWHStA; and CDU des Rheinlands, Landessekretariat Köln-Marienburg, Die Bundestagswahl vom August 1949, VII-003-001/3, ACDP.
93. Vorbereitung und Durchführung des Wahlkampfes, RWV 48, 118, NWHStA.
94. Geoffrey Pridham, *Christian Democracy in Western Germany*, 63–64; and Wulf Schönbohm, *Die CDU wird moderne Volkspartei: Selbstverständnis, Mitglieder, Organisation und Apparat 1950–1980* (Stuttgart, 1985): 45–47.
95. Kaff, *Die Unionsparteien, 1946–1950*, 400–401 and 452–453.
96. Für Einheit, Frieden, und Recht: Wahlzeitung der Christlich Demokratischen Union, Bezirksverband Ostfriesland der CDU, VII-003-001/1, ACDP.
97. Wengst, "Die CDU/CSU im Bundestagswahlkampf 1949," 1–41.
98. Protokoll der PV-Sitzung, 10 and 11 December 1948, SPD Parteivorstand Protokolle 1948, Archiv der sozialen Demokratie, Bonn (hereafter AdsD).
99. 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*, ed. Gerhard A. Ritter (Düsseldorf, 1997), 296.
100. Gordon Smith, *Democracy in Western Germany: Parties and Politics in the Federal Republic* (New York, 1986), 135.
101. Jürgen Niemann, *Auftakt zur Demokratie: Die Bundestagswahlkampf 1949 zwischen Improvisation und Ideologie* (Bochum, 1994), 54–55.
102. Diane L. Parness, *The SPD and the Challenge of Mass Politics: The Dilemma of the German Volkspartei* (Boulder, 1991), 50–59; Harold Kent Schellenger, Jr., *The SPD in the Bonn Republic: A Socialist Party Modernizes* (The Hague, 1968), 32–41; and Kurt Klotzbach: *Der Weg zur Staatspartei: Programmatik, praktische Politik und Organisation der deutschen Sozialdemokratie, 1945 bis 1965* (Bonn, 1982).
103. Für ein freies Deutschland in einem neuen Europa, SPD-LO Hamburg, Mappe 1972, AdsD.
104. Speech by Dr. Kurt Schumacher in Koblenz, 28 July 1949, Bestand Schumacher, Mappe 48, AdsD.
105. SPD-LO Hamburg, Mappe 105, AdsD.
106. Politische Macht durch Geld, ZSg 1-90/52, BA Koblenz.
107. *Das Soziale Klima: Ein Bericht über Umfragen in Deutschland 1948–1951*, Institut für Demoskopie, ZSg 132/154, BA Koblenz.
108. Kaff, *Die Unionsparteien, 1946–1950*, 400.
109. Rundschreiben Dörpinghaus' an die Mitglieder des Presse- und Propagandaausschusses, des Arbeitsstabes und die Landesgeschäftsführer, 12 May 1949, I-009-006/2 (NL Dörpinghaus), ACDP.

110. 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.
111. Kaff, *Die Unionsparteien, 1946–1950*, 603.
112. Christlich Demokratische Union des Rheinlandes, Rundschreiben 20/49, 21 June 1949, II-94-44 (Kreisverband Rhein Sieg), ACDP.
113. Kaff, *Die Unionsparteien, 1946–1950*, 624.
114. Protokoll der PV-Sitzung, 6 January 1953, SPD Parteivorstand Protokolle 1953, AdsD.
115. Protokolle des Presse- und Propagandaausschusses, 8 May 1949, I-009-006/2 (NL Dörpinghaus), ACDP.
116. CDU des Rheinlands, Landessekretariat, Die Bundestagwahl vom 14. August 1949, VII-003-001/3, ACDP.
117. Protokoll der Außerordentlichen Sitzung der Arbeitsgemeinschaft Steine und Erden on 8.6.49 and Rundschreiben des Hauptgeschäftsführers der Wirtschaftsvereinigung der Bauindustrie vom 10.6.49, in "Unternehmermillionen kaufen politische Macht. Finanzierung und Korruption der Regierungsparteien durch die Managementschicht der Wirtschaft," a report published by the executive committee of the SPD and held in the library of the AdsD, 103 and 58.
118. Kaff, *Die Unionsparteien, 1946–1950*, 604.
119. *Ibid.*, 603.
120. Stenographische Niederschrift über die Sitzung des Zonenausschusses der CDU in der britischen Zone, 2 and 3 June 1949, I-009-004/1 (NL Dörpinghaus), ACDP.
121. "Unternehmermillionen kaufen politische Macht," 57, 58.

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



*T*he CDU/CSU had based its 1949 election campaign upon connecting the improvement of material conditions and the construction of a West German, organic Christian community to the introduction of the party's social market economy. Following the election and the creation of a CDU/CSU-led coalition, Ludwig Erhard moved from his position as head of the Economics Administration of the Bizone to become the economics minister of the newly formed Federal Republic. Yet, the concepts of the social market economy were by no means necessarily accepted by political leaders from either the left or the right, or by the general public. As head of the Economics Administration, Erhard had had a relatively free hand in developing policy. As economics minister, he now had to work within a network of other ministries and under a highly capable, controlling chancellor in Konrad Adenauer. Historians have argued that during the 1950s Erhard lacked a *Hausmacht* (internal political base) to fully institute his policies regarding the social market economy, especially in terms of anticartel legislation. Many of Erhard's political rivals within the government possessed this power base, such as the finance minister, Fritz Schäffer, who could always rely on his party, the CSU, for support in political battles over finance and investment policy. Erhard's problem was intensified by the fact that only 40 percent of his old Economics Administration officials were transferred into the new Economics Ministry.

Erhard personally did not possess the political instincts to wage the continual bureaucratic turf and policy wars that are a fact of life in any political system. In any case, he conflicted personally with Adenauer, who did not regard the eco-

Notes for this section begin on page 105.

nomics minister as sufficiently diligent in his administrative duties within the Economics Ministry and constantly attacked Erhard for his failings both publicly and privately, through memorandums and in cabinet meetings. In many respects, Adenauer's criticisms of Erhard were on the mark, as he had earned his well-deserved reputation for avoiding bureaucratic paperwork. In addition, Adenauer was highly critical of Erhard's tendency to contradict in the press policies that had been agreed upon privately within the cabinet. Perhaps most importantly for Erhard, Adenauer was not fundamentally committed to the free market and viewed economic policy not in the more objective terms of a correct or faulty policy, as Erhard did, but often as a matter of political expediency. As a result of these circumstances, some historians have argued, Erhard never achieved anything as far-reaching as he had managed with his liberalization of goods in June 1948 and later as economics minister was constantly on the defensive when it came to policy formation.¹

To be sure, Erhard faced daunting challenges. He confronted not only the necessity of instituting key aspects of the social market economy, such as limitations of cartels, the complete end of economic controls, and the liberalization of trade, but also the imperative of generating public support for these economic policies as a consequence of the economic challenges generated by the Korean War. The experience of the economic turbulence 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, this economic crisis and the accompanying rise in prices revealed the public's tendency to support a planned economy rather than an economic policy that allowed market forces to influence prices. The so-called Korean Crisis, during which prices skyrocketed owing to the increased cost of raw materials, proved to be the turning point in "selling" the social market economy and the economic miracle.

In many respects, the experience of a drastic dip in public support for Erhard and the social market economy, demonstrated by public opinion polls, galvanized a variety of forces to intensify their efforts to "educate" the West German population so as to shore up support for the free market system. The crisis helped unite business interests within the consumer goods industry and neoliberal economists interested in supporting the social market economy with the CDU/CSU's political leadership, which saw its party's popularity drop in unison with public confidence in the economy. The result was that all these groups perceived it to be in their common interest to devise means of bolstering support for the social market economy. At the center of this on-going public relations campaign was Ludwig Erhard, who was connected to all three groups. In response to the drop in public confidence in the free market during the Korean Crisis, by 1952 forces supporting the social market economy began introducing new advertising techniques that sought to produce a political meaning of the economic miracle. This meaning not only provided support for conservative political interests and business but also helped create a new, distinctly West German sense of nationality. In addition, the Korean Crisis acted as a catalyst in the further transformation of

West Germany's political culture as it adopted a more Americanized form of election campaigning based upon public opinion polling and modern methods of political advertising. In conjunction with the swings in West German public opinion, both business and political leaders sought new and more effective means of communicating with the public, aiming not merely to understand, but also to manage and manipulate their views.

Following the June 1948 currency reform, the West German economy experienced decidedly healthy economic growth. Between the first and second halves of 1948, industrial production rose 21.5 percent. Economic historians have identified this period as crucial to West Germany's long-term economic growth, as businesses enjoyed high profits with the rise of prices and low corporate taxes. This growth created an important source of investment in capital-poor West Germany, money to be ploughed back into reconstruction and expansion. However, six months after the currency reform, West Germany experienced a period of relative economic deflation and stagnation. Between January 1949 and March 1950 industrial production increased by 23 percent, but this constituted a relative slowdown after the post-currency reform boom during which West Germans spent their new Deutsche Marks on sorely needed goods. By February 1950 unemployment in the Federal Republic had reached two million, or about 12.2 percent. The relative economic slowdown and heightened unemployment generated some concern among economic experts and the public alike, especially in light of the relatively fresh memories of the end of the Weimar Republic and the danger of high unemployment.²

A number of different factors triggered the end of the post-currency reform boom. The price increases outpaced wages and kept down consumption, budget surpluses had accumulated, and the United States was experiencing a recession. In the second half of 1949 the Deutsche Mark experienced relative appreciation because of the devaluation of many European currencies; therefore exports slumped and West Germany faced the danger of becoming a dumping ground for foreign exports. In September 1949 the exchange rate of the dollar was raised from DM 3.33 to DM 4.20—but this devaluation of over 20 percent did not keep up with the devaluations introduced by France and Great Britain. The British pound, for example, was devalued by over 30 percent.³ Moreover, although jobs continued to be created in the wake of the currency reform, this increase was more than offset by the flood of refugees from the Soviet Zone—about ten million by early 1950—thereby elevating the unemployment figures.

A number of proposed solutions to the problem of the relative economic slowdown surfaced between the autumn of 1949 and the early spring of 1950. The more extreme proposals for full-employment policies, supported by the Social Democrats, trade unions, and even some members of Adenauer's cabinet, advocated a looser monetary policy by the West German central bank, the Bank deutscher Länder. Budget deficits could be used to increase demand, while some form of price controls could help curb possible inflation. Under political pressure, in early 1950 a DM 2 billion make-work program was approved by the Eco-

nomics Ministry and the Bank deutscher Länder. By the time that plan was instituted three months later, the economic situation had been transformed completely by the Korean boom. The economic slowdown also had an impact upon Erhard's political clout. The apparent lack of a speedy response to the downturn on the part of Erhard and the Economics Ministry hurt Erhard's political standing within the cabinet.⁴ Erhard and the Bank deutscher 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 payments equilibrium should take precedence over full employment. Although imports were sure to flood into West Germany, Erhard was continuing to fight for the liberalization of foreign trade—especially within Western Europe. A stable currency and free trade, he was convinced, would encourage West German producers to take advantage of the high profitability of exports. If West Germany remained competitive abroad, exports could contribute significantly to its economic health, despite the short-term balance of payments shortages and excessive imports of consumer goods.⁵ The reduction of trade barriers proved significant in October 1949 as West Germany's balance of payments to Western Europe went from a positive \$31.4 million to a negative \$110.4 million between the summer and autumn of 1949. Erhard began to feel political pressure from the U.S. High Commissioner, the Bank deutscher Länder, and even some experts within the Economics Ministry. They all called for trade restrictions, of which some minor ones were introduced in early 1950.⁶

Even Adenauer began to question the soundness of Erhard's economic policies. In early 1950 Adenauer contacted the neoliberal economist Wilhelm Röpke, who at the time was a professor in Geneva, asking him to assess West Germany's economic policy. Adenauer's motives were not clear, since Erhard's resignation might have helped strengthen rumors of a grand coalition between the CDU/CSU and the SPD, a situation that was already present in the state of 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 memorandum to Adenauer was published along 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 in the major urban and industrial areas, and the continued overstaffing of industries lingering on from the wartime controlled economy. Röpke supported Erhard's economic policies and underscored the fact that the market economy had fostered a general economic upswing following the currency reform. He stressed the need for further liberalization of foreign trade, realistic interest rates, and the eventual abandonment of foreign exchange controls.⁷

But the outbreak of the Korean War in June of 1950 dramatically changed West Germany's economic situation. New orders for goods to support the war effort streamed into the country. 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 1952.⁸ 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 of 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, and they had increased by another 14 percent as of March 1951.⁹ By October 1950, West Germany had consumed its quota of \$320 million in credits via the European Payments Union (EPU), an organization instituted in the summer of 1950 to act as a clearinghouse for credits in foreign trade for nations participating in the Marshall Plan. The EPU was designed to encourage trade among European nations by avoiding problems of bilateral trade agreements and foreign currency restrictions. West Germany was the recipient of an extra credit of \$120 million in November 1950, but also ran through this sum by February 1951 because of the increase in raw materials required for producing war supplies.¹⁰ In contrast, the United States prepared for war through measures similar to those instituted during World War II: by allocating resources under the Defense Production Act and declaring a state of national emergency. All the while, Erhard, despite the flood of imported goods into West Germany, continued to struggle for the liberalization of trade.

Because of the increased price of raw materials vital to West German industrial production, the Korean War produced a steep hike in prices. In the autumn of 1949 the cost of living index equaled 105 (1950=100). This figure jumped to 119 in the second quarter of 1951, during the peak of the Korean Crisis. Gross hourly wages also rose during this period, from 95 (1950=100) to 117 in the second quarter of 1951.¹¹ In fact, the index of real weekly earnings continued to go up during this period from 87 in 1949 to 115 at the end of 1952.¹² But what would prove crucial was the public's perception of the increase in prices, rather than the actual reality of the situation.

Erhard worried that spiraling inflation, caused by rising prices and higher wage demands, would lead to the reintroduction of price controls and rationing. As he had done following the currency reform in June 1948 and in the midst of the strikes of November 1948, Erhard went to the air waves to reach out to the West German people. On 15 September 1950, Erhard presented a speech explaining the economic consequences of the Korean War. Prior to the Korean War, he pointed out, West Germany was on the road to economic recovery as its exports rose and unemployment dropped. Surely, the boom situation stemming from the war could threaten those gains.¹³ Erhard argued that in order to secure the benefits from the Korean boom, West Germany had to retain a stable price index in the face of the rising cost of raw materials. In other words, Erhard wanted the importation of raw materials to be directed toward increasing the production of exports and not to domestic consumption.

Erhard then got to the crux of his message: he was trying to explain the danger of the trade union demands for a general wage increase of 15 to 20 percent.

“We must also remember,” he argued, “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 “[t]he German worker must be made to see that he risks his social security and his job if he expects social benefits from the action of the trade unions.” Here he presaged the position that he would take through much of the 1950s: the German worker must give up immediate gains for the future benefits that would result from investment in increased productivity and efficiency. To forgo consumption now would allow West Germany to enter into world markets and reap the benefits later. In addition, an increase in prices and a subsequent drop in exports could lead to an attack on the market economy by those who supported the planned economy.¹⁴ In many respects, Erhard was advocating an economic program that he would support throughout his public service both as economics minister and eventually chancellor. But at the time of the Korean Crisis, Erhard did not have at his disposal public relations and propaganda instruments to manage public opinion effectively. The challenges that the Korean War presented for the social market economy would help spur greater efforts to devise a coherent public relations campaign for the benefit of Erhard and his economic principles.

In the fall of 1950 the Allied High Commission in West Germany also worried that the Federal Republic of Germany was not devoting enough of its limited resources to production for the war effort and was expending too much of its scarce capital on the importation of consumer or luxury goods. Despite these Allied concerns, the West German government refused to commit itself to a policy of economic controls. The Allies became even more worried about an emerging shortage of coal, which actually was still under price controls, because of its vital role in the overall economy. In February 1951 West Germany had run out of EPU credits to import raw materials, despite the granting of an extra quota, and was forced to institute import restrictions on all nonessential goods from EPU nations. By early 1951 the crisis had come to a head, with the Bank deutscher Länder withdrawing a billion DM of credits from the banks of the individual states in order to stem inflation. In addition, the United States was dissatisfied with West Germany’s contribution to the war effort. On 6 March 1951, 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 allocations and for the control of selected prices.”¹⁵

At this time it appeared that Adenauer’s support of Erhard had begun to waver. In February 1951 Adenauer declared before the CDU/CSU executive committee that he was no principled adherent of the free market and would not advocate it unless it was successful. In fact, in March 1952 Adenauer convened a group of economic experts to advise him from a position counter to Erhard’s own ideas on economics.¹⁶ In a letter to Erhard, the chancellor attacked his economics minister, charging that his behavior was impossible and that he completely misunder-

stood the nature of the federal government. Erhard was also chided for his overly confident public pronouncements, especially regarding his handling of the emerging coal shortage and his public attacks on policy he had agreed to in cabinet sessions. In addition, Adenauer held Erhard personally responsible for the economic troubles that West Germany was experiencing. He finally appointed Ludwig Westrick as the new state secretary of the Economics Ministry and charged him with the task of bringing order to the ministry. Adenauer also demanded that Erhard devote more time to the job of running the ministry.¹⁷ Yet despite his manifest displeasure, Adenauer retained Erhard as his economics minister. Perhaps Adenauer regarded Erhard as a linchpin to the CDU/FDP coalition and concluded that the risks of opening the door to a possible “grand coalition” of the CDU/SPD outweighed the benefits of sacking him.¹⁸

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 the country had repaid the European Payment Union credit in full. By early summer of 1951 the Korean boom had leveled off. During the boom West Germany’s exports had doubled and its factories’ productivity improved. In the end the country experienced a relatively small hike in prices and wages. By 1952, the Federal Republic’s government resumed the liberalization of trade with other European nations. A period of economic crisis had been averted, and West Germany’s economy continued its boom through the 1950s. In fact, the period of the Korean War could be seen as setting the stage for subsequent West German economic growth. West German industry had excess capacity going into the Korean War and could fill orders quickly. With this opportunity, West Germany again reentered foreign markets and thereby was able to acquire the capital for imports that fueled its economy.¹⁹

Werner Abelshauser has argued that the Korean Crisis constituted a significant juncture in the development of West Germany’s political economy. During this period, a system of “societal corporatism” emerged in which the true free market was replaced by a political cartel. Key to this system was a process of interest reconciliation in a triangular pattern among business associations, trade unions, and the state. During the Korean Crisis of 1950–1952 the umbrella organizations of business associations and trade unions won an important voice in the creation of German economic policy, and in addition regained a role in economic planning and control, both autonomously and in conjunction with the state. As a result of the United States’ attack on Erhard’s liberalization policies and its demand that West Germany allocate 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 vehicle for direct controls on raw material allocation and investment planning. At the suggestion of the *Bundesverband der Deutschen Industrie* (Federation of German Industry, BDI), the main German industrial organization, Adenauer’s government created the office of “Adviser to the Federal Government on

Raw Materials” in March 1951—a post filled by Otto A. Friedrich, head of the Phoenix Rubberworks of Hamburg. In addition, the *Investitionshilfe-Gesetz* (Investment Aid Law) of December 1951 lent DM 1 billion, extracted through a tax on smaller business and the consumer industry, to heavy industry, the energy sector, and railroads to aid in their expansion.²⁰

Abelshausen’s interpretation has come under fire from more recent scholarship. In his biography of Otto Friedrich, Volker Berghahn has argued that Abelshausen misunderstood the developments of the Korean Crisis in general and the context of the letter exchange between McCloy and Adenauer in particular. Berghahn contended that in view of the ongoing discussion between the Allied High Commission and the German government, McCloy’s letter to Adenauer was not demanding the complete dismantling of the free market, but rather calling for government control of the raw materials devoted to the production of West Germany’s export goods. He further argued that Friedrich was careful in his capacity as adviser on raw materials not to undermine the West German market economy fundamentally.²¹ Others have gone on to argue that the controls imposed upon the economy during the Korean Crisis were lifted in the ensuing years.²² In other words, West Germany’s social market economy did not suffer fatal damage during the Korean Crisis. James Van Hook has made a similar case with regard to the 1951 Investment Aid Law in which he contends that Abelshausen’s use of the term “corporatism” is excessive in describing Erhard’s agreeing to government/business involvement in raising needed capital for underinvested sectors of the economy, and that the scheme overall was “market conforming.”²³

Whatever the impact of the Korean War on West Germany’s political economy, its effects on the public at large were significant to say the least. Polling clearly tracked the dramatic swing in public opinion during the Korean Crisis. A report entitled *Das Soziale Klima* (The Social Climate) prepared by a public-opinion polling organization, the Institut für Demoskopie in Allensbach, showed a dramatic dropoff 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 per cent of respondents believing that things were better, while 42 per cent reported things as worse and 11 per cent saw no difference (10 per cent responded with no answer). By March 1949 the positive figure had climbed to 47 per cent and the negative had decreased to 31 per cent. Yet the economic conditions in late 1949 and during the Korean War triggered a dramatic dropoff in people’s optimism. In April 1951, only 12 per cent of the respondents considered themselves better off than a year earlier. In comparison, 56 per cent believed that they were worse off. It was not until April 1953 that respondents believing things were better (24 per cent) outnumbered those who saw things as worse (19 per cent).²⁴ This drop in optimism was also reflected in a survey that asked, “Do you see the new year with hope or with apprehension?” Only 27 per cent in 1950 looked forward to the coming year,

whereas 48 percent had done so in 1949. By 1953, in time for the next Bundestag election, this figure had gone up to 60 percent.²⁵

Clearly the inflation of the Korean Crisis 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 spread dramatically. In April 1950 only 26 percent of the respondents believed that such a war would break out. By June of 1950 this figure had increased to 53 percent and remained relatively high at 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 1951.²⁶ But insuring the peace was not the foremost concern of the West German populace. In October 1951, 45 percent of respondents regarded the "improvement of the economic situation" as West Germany's most important concern, while only 20 percent thought that securing peace was the most important concern.²⁷

In conjunction with this declining optimism among West Germans and the heightened concern about the nation's economic wellbeing, polling results documented a perceptible dip in the support of the free market in relation to the planned economy. In a survey conducted by the Institut für Demoskopie in March 1949, less than a year after the currency reform, 41 percent of respondents preferred the free movement of prices, while 47 percent favored controlled prices.²⁸ This percentage dropped significantly over the course of the economic difficulties stemming from the Korean War. In March 1951 only 37 percent endorsed the social market economy, and by October 1952 this figure had dipped to 29 percent. During those years, those respondents favoring a form of planned economy remained stable at around 47 percent.²⁹

Meanwhile, the West German population attributed the rise in prices during the Korean Crisis to the policies of their 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 were possible). Forty-six percent thought that the government's economic policy was responsible, while 37 percent attributed the rise to price increases on the world market. 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 responded yes, and only 9 percent answered no.³⁰ This assignment of blame affected the public's perception of the CDU/CSU. A January 1952 survey asked West Germans, "Which party has done the most for people—I mean for people in their living conditions?" Twenty percent responded by naming the SPD, while only 12 percent favored the CDU/CSU.³¹ However, the results of this survey improved for the CDU/CSU as the 1953 federal elections approached. A March 1953 survey showed that 24 percent believed that the SPD would most likely attempt to improve the economic situation for all classes of society, as opposed to a much closer 22 percent for the CDU/CSU.³² Institut für Demoskopie polls indicated that the CDU/CSU dropped below the SPD in popularity during the summer of 1950 and remained there until February of 1953. Clearly the eco-

conomic problems of the Korean Crisis influenced the public's opinion of both the Adenauer government and the CDU/CSU.³³

In addition, polls reflected the public's general ignorance regarding the actual nature of the social market economy. In a public opinion poll from April 1950, respondents were asked 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 answered the question in line with Erhard's understanding, offering responses that included notions of the "free market, the economic policy of the government and liberal economy." Fifty-six percent of the respondents had no idea what the social market economy was, while 27 percent gave vague or incorrect answers.³⁴ This pattern had not dramatically changed by November 1952 in which 48 percent had no idea and 37 percent gave vague or incorrect answers on the country's social market economy. This time only 8 percent could correctly identify the components of the social market economy.³⁵

Despite the confusion surrounding the term "social market economy," it had 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 be social, while 73 percent were for democratic, 58 percent for Christian, and 25 percent for authoritarian. Polls during this time demonstrated that most critics of the government's economic policy concentrated on the idea that it was not social. Consequently, the CDU/CSU needed to first associate the social market economy with the government and then inculcate the belief that the social market economy was actually social.³⁶

The survey also showed that 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 had 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 endorsed the social market economy, while 6 percent would oppose it, 8 percent were undecided, and 48 percent did not give any answer regarding the definition of the social market economy.³⁷ Yet at the same time opinions on the social market economy were problematic for the CDU/CSU's prospects. Although there was a tendency among respondents to support a party having such a program, regardless of whether they could accurately identify the social market economy, a problem surfaced in linking 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 only 5 percent identified it as a CDU/CSU policy. 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.³⁸

These survey results could be interpreted as casting doubt on the crucial role that the social market economy played in the 1949 election campaign. How could the “*Markt oder Plan*” issue have been a crucial platform if there prevailed such widespread ignorance about the subject? One could also question the validity of the survey results, particularly since the polling techniques at the time were relatively crude. The Institut für Demoskopie utilized the quota method of polling, instead of the more exact, and more expensive, random sampling method.³⁹ But the Institut für Demoskopie was accurate in much of its polling, especially its predictions of the Bundestag elections. Instead of dismissing the polling as invalid, one must examine its results in the context of the information being disseminated on the social market economy. The poll asked respondents to identify the social market economy in technical terms. One must bear in mind that the CDU/CSU couched its discussion of more abstract economic ideas in tangible, real ways. Without ever defining it, the CDU/CSU associated its economic program with the concrete examples of West Germany’s economic resurgence or with ideas about the creation of an organic, Christian West German society. For a large portion of the electorate, the CDU/CSU was the party of economic reconstruction and responsibility, above any consideration of the party’s support for one economic system over another.

It is also important to keep in mind not only that these polls were read and disseminated by leaders in politics and business alike, but also that the surveys themselves were commissioned by the very same people. Those who viewed the social market economy as crucial to continuing West Germany’s economic upswing, especially Ludwig Erhard, paid particular attention to the polls’ results. Aware of the danger that the Korean Crisis presented to the social market economy, these same groups began to realize the necessity of educating the West German populace on the workings of the free market system if it was to continue. In addition, the 1953 and 1957 election propaganda espoused a clear 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 more specifically of the linkage between the new prosperity with conservative economic policies. In many respects, the Korean Crisis was the turning point in the “selling” of the economic miracle. Adenauer saw the popularity of his party drop precipitously in conjunction with the effects of economic crisis.⁴⁰ Although he lacked complete faith in Erhard and did not even particularly like him, the chancellor was acutely conscious of the political capital that Erhard could provide him. The Korean Crisis’s impact upon public opinion spurred the creation of private business public relations campaigns, active government propaganda campaigns, and new CDU/CSU political advertising strategies to spread the ideas of the social market economy and the economic miracle. With these efforts, a new, uniquely West German political culture began to take shape. New American-style public relations and advertising techniques were utilized to drum up support for both the social market economy and the CDU/CSU. In this respect, developments in economics were closely intertwined with the evolution of West Germany’s political culture.

Economics Minister Ludwig Erhard, as the personification of the economic miracle, took center stage in these efforts. In October 1948, four months after the currency reform, the Institut für Demoskopie surveyed West Germans regarding their opinion of Erhard. Sixty-three 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 regarded him as mediocre, 16 percent had a bad opinion of him, and 16 percent were undecided.⁴¹ By 1951, 14 percent still had a good opinion of Erhard, but the percentage of those holding a poor opinion of him had climbed to 49 percent. By 1954 these results had reversed.⁴² This trend was to continue through the 1950s.

The Korean Crisis revealed the shaky support for the social market economy on the part of both the government and public opinion. Clearly, over the course of the early 1950s Erhard's reputation and public opinion grew enormously. Undoubtedly, this upswing in the public opinion of Erhard had much to do with the dramatic improvement in West Germany's economic fortunes. But, also during this time, Ludwig Erhard's image and the creation of the mythology of the economic miracle were carefully crafted by both political and economic leaders, many times with decidedly different goals in mind. Erhard was clearly interested in claiming West Germany's economic resurgence as a product of not only his policies, but also his discipline, calmness, and foresight of future economic developments. In his 1957 book *Wohlstand für Alle*, Erhard portrayed himself during the Korean War as steadfastly defending the free market in the face of political pressure for price controls. As he put it:

Because in Germany I kept to the rules of economic order and healthy commonsense, I was asked: freeze prices now or resign. I neither resigned nor ordered a price freeze. That my socialist opponents should have looked at things from a party political point of view I cannot grudge them. It was worse that even good friends should have gone so wrong as to think that my economic policy would land Germany in disaster. I argued that one should remain quiet for a time, and this proved itself worth while.⁴³

The campaign to mold public perception of the economic miracle would continue through the 1950s. As a result of his own efforts, and of those politically allied with him, Erhard came to personify the very idea of the economic miracle and promoted this economic resurgence as a crucial aspect of the legitimacy of the Federal Republic itself.

Notes

1. Nicholls, *Freedom with Responsibility*, 270–273; and Mierzejewski, *Ludwig Erhard*, 87–91.
2. Wallich, *Mainsprings of the German Revival*, 73–81; Kramer, *The West German Economy, 1945–1955*, 163–173; and Stolper, Häuser, and Borchart, *The German Economy: 1870 to the Present*, 228–233.

3. Wallich, *Mainsprings of the German Revival*, 80; and Hardach, *The Political Economy of Germany in the Twentieth Century*, 184.
4. Wallich, *Mainsprings of the German Revival*, 86–87; and Nicholls, *Freedom with Responsibility*, 273.
5. Nicholls, *Freedom with Responsibility*, 270–278; and Schwarz, *Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Die Ära Adenauer, 1949–1957*, 61.
6. Van Hook, *Rebuilding Germany*, 206–209.
7. Nicholls, *Freedom with Responsibility*, 273–274.
8. Werner Abelshäuser, “Probleme der Wiederaufbau der westdeutschen Wirtschaft 1945–1953,” in *Politische Weichenstellungen im Nachkriegsdeutschland, 1945–1953*, ed. Heinrich August Winkler (Göttingen, 1979), 241.
9. Wallich, *Mainsprings of the German Revival*, 87.
10. Schwartz, *America’s Germany: John J. McCloy and the Federal Republic of Germany*, 204–205.
11. Abelshäuser, “Probleme des Wiederaufbaus der westdeutschen Wirtschaft, 1945–1953,” 241.
12. Wallich, *Mainsprings of the German Revival*, 298.
13. Erhard, *The Economics of Success*, 72–73.
14. *Ibid.*, 74–76.
15. Nicholls, *Freedom with Responsibility*, 282–291; and Werner Abelshäuser, “The First Post-Liberal Nation: Stages in the Development of Modern Corporatism in Germany,” 304–311.
16. Daniel Koerfer, *Kampf ums Kanzleramt: Erhard und Adenauer* (Stuttgart, 1987), 96–97.
17. Letter from Konrad Adenauer to Ludwig Erhard, 19 March 1951, in *Die Korea-Krise als ordnungspolitische Herausforderung der deutschen Wirtschaftspolitik, Texte und Dokumente*, ed. Horst Friedrich Wünsche (Stuttgart, 1986), 341–344.
18. Nicholls, *Freedom with Responsibility*, 287.
19. Wallich, *Mainsprings of the German Revival*, 91–95; and Stolper et al., *The German Economy*, 228–246.
20. Werner Abelshäuser, “The First Post-Liberal Nation,” 286, 304–311; “Ansätze ‘Korporativer Marktwirtschaft’ in der Koreakrise der frühen fünfziger Jahre: Ein Briefwechsel zwischen dem Hohen Kommissar John McCloy und Bundeskanzler Konrad Adenauer,” *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 30, no. 4 (1982): 715–756; and “Korea, Die Ruhr und Erhards Marktwirtschaft: Die Energiekrise von 1950/51,” *Rheinische Vierteljahrsblätter* 45, no. 3 (1981): 310–316.
21. Volker R. Berghahn and Paul J. Friedrich, *Otto A. Friedrich, Ein politischer Unternehmer: Sein Leben und seine Zeit, 1902–1975* (Frankfurt, 1993), 138–160.
22. Wünsche, *Die Korea-Krise als ordnungspolitische Herausforderung der deutschen Wirtschaftspolitik*, 124–125.
23. Van Hook, *Rebuilding Germany*, 189–232.
24. *Das Soziale Klima*, ZSg 132/154, BA Koblenz; and Noelle and Neumann, *Jahrbuch der öffentlichen Meinung, 1947–1955*, 42.
25. Rüdiger Schulz, “Die Reaktion der Bundesbürger auf die politischen und wirtschaftlichen Herausforderungen der Korea-Krise,” in Wünsche, *Die Korea Krise als ordnungspolitische Herausforderung der deutschen Wirtschaftspolitik*, 72.
26. Noelle and Neumann, *Jahrbuch der öffentlichen Meinung, 1947–1955*, 53.
27. *Ibid.*, 392.
28. *Ibid.*, 155.
29. *Das Soziale Klima*, ZSg 132/154, BA Koblenz, 10; and Noelle and Neumann, *Jahrbuch der öffentlichen Meinung 1947–1955*, 234.
30. Schulz, “Die Reaktionen der Bundesbürger auf die politischen und wirtschaftlichen Herausforderungen der Korea-Krise,” 77.
31. Noelle and Neumann, *Jahrbuch der öffentlichen Meinung, 1947–1955*, 255.
32. *Ibid.*, 255.
33. Schmidtchen, *Die befragte Nation: Über den Einfluss der Meinungsforschung auf die Politik*, 160.
34. *Das Soziale Klima*, ZSg 132/154, BA Koblenz, 11.

35. Der Wirtschaftliche Aufstieg—Verdienst der Arbeiter und U nternemer? Über die S oziale Marktwirtschaft, Institut für Demoskopie, Rheinisch-Westfälisches Wirtschaftsarchiv zu Köln e.V. (hereafter RWWA) Abt 16, Nr 4, Fasz 1, 1.
36. Ibid., 6–7.
37. Ibid., 8.
38. Schulz, “Reaktionen der B undesbürger auf die polirtschen und wir tschaftlichen Herausforderungen der Korea-Krise,” 76.
39. Hans Kellerer, “Opinion and Attitude Research in Western Germany and West-Berlin,” *International Journal of Opinion and Attitude Research* 5 (1951–1952): 513.
40. One poll indicated that among the respondents who indicated that they supported a particular party, support of the CDU/CSU dropped from 34 percent in the middle of 1950 to 24 percent by the middle of 1951. Noelle and Neuman, *The Germans: Public Opinion Polls, 1947–1966*, 400.
41. *Das Soziale Klima*, ZSg 132/154, BA Koblenz.
42. Noelle and Neumann, *Jahrbuch der öffentlichen Meinung, 1947–1955*, 185.
43. Erhard, *Prosperity through Competition*, 40.

PUBLIC RELATIONS FOR THE SOCIAL MARKET ECONOMY: DIE WAAGE



*T*he Korean War represented a turning point in the success of selling the social market economy and the economic miracle. It galvanized the efforts of a variety of political and economic groups to cultivate West German support for the free market and to translate the ongoing economic upswing into electoral success for the CDU/CSU. Their efforts demanded the revamping of political communication and public relations techniques, including public-opinion polling and advertising methods. The economic stress caused by the Korean War shook public confidence in the economy as a whole and the social market economy in particular and weakened support for the economic system within governmental circles, especially on the part of Chancellor Adenauer. Public opinion polls from the period clearly indicated that West Germans were distrustful of not only the free market economy but also of industry's role in society itself. In addition, within the government the crisis raised the question of whether the social market economy should be jettisoned in favor of a more politically palatable economic policy that involved some form of price controls. The threatening emergence of a socialist government from the 1953 Bundestag election appeared imminent to supporters of the social market economy. By the spring of 1951, if not before, business and economic interests began to bolster support for the social market economy by engaging in public relations measures that were distinct from, but complementary to the efforts led by the CDU/CSU and the Federal government. These public relations campaigns reaffirmed the social market economy and economic reconstruction as part of a properly functioning West German society and in addition redefined them as an essential element in the creation of a new West German identity.

Notes for this section begin on page 139.

The Wirtschaftspolitische Gesellschaft von 1947 (Political-Economic Society of 1947, Wipog), founded in the autumn of 1947, constituted one of the first of a multitude of organizations that aimed to conduct public relations campaigns on behalf of the social market economy. Comprised of representatives of business, self-employed professionals, and bureaucrats, Wipog hosted numerous conferences and produced multiple pamphlets that promoted interest in political-economic issues among the West German people.¹ It sought the “political and economic integration of the Western world with the goal of increasing the national product, which would render harmless social opposition and unrest. Only in this way was it possible to develop the moral strength necessary to counter the expansive threat of communism.”² Through its meetings, information bulletins, and press contacts—particularly with the conservative *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*—Wipog influenced public opinion relatively indirectly through what might be called “opinion makers.” One feature that differentiated Wipog from other organizations was its utilization of public opinion polls, the first of which was conducted before the August 1949 Bundestag election, to get a sense of the West German views regarding the economy, nationalization of industry, businessmen, economic prospects, and the nation’s political future.³ Despite its efforts, by the mid 1950s Wipog had fallen apart and its impact was limited. Yet because of its use of polling and its founders’, contributors’, and advisers’ continuing pursuit of public relations for the social market economy, Wipog has been characterized as a trailblazer, an originator of the multiple organizations and groups that defined and promulgated economic concepts throughout the 1950s.⁴

Another organization marshalling support for the social market economy in the 1950s, the Aktionsgemeinschaft Soziale Marktwirtschaft (Action Group for the Social Market Economy, ASM), was founded on 23 January 1953 in Heidelberg by mainly academics, journalists, and industrialists of the neoliberal school. Its advisory committee included some neoliberal economists, such as Hans Illau, Franz Böhm, and Alexander Rüstow. One of its early solicitations to potential members warned that action must be taken in the decisive election year of 1953 because “the supporters of the planned economy will make the totalitarian claim to power with undiminished sharpness.” It went on to explain that in the months leading up to the election, the ASM would pursue what it called the “Program for Freedom” in a popular form. The organization was particularly concerned about ensuring the efficiency of free competition and sought the extension of limitations on monopolies—an issue that was just coming to a head in the Bundestag. To the ASM, economics and politics were inseparably connected as the competition of the free market was essential to the creation of a free democracy.⁵ Throughout the 1950s, the ASM organized conferences in defense of the social market economy, featuring talks by prominent neo-liberals, including Ludwig Erhard, with titles such as “The Decision for Freedom” and “We demand from the government and Bundestag the completion of the social market economy.” Compared to other propaganda campaigns promoting the social market economy, the ASM’s efforts were rather modest. Its conferences were attended by a few hundred peo-

ple each, and it printed several thousand copies of its conference minutes. Although the organization continues today it was plagued by limited financial support in the 1950s.⁶ Undoubtedly it was active among certain circles of academics, journalists, and politicians, but because of the nature of its activities, it did not reach the broadest audiences.

The most significant, best financially supported, and most visible of these efforts to drum up support for E rhard and the social market economy was the *Gemeinschaft zur Förderung des sozialen Ausgleichs e. V.* (Society for the Promotion of Social Compromise), officially organized in 1952. It was more widely known as *Die Waage* (The Weigh Scales), the symbol the organization adopted in order to evoke a sense of balance and cooperation between employer and employee.⁷ This group of businessmen launched what has been called the Germany's first modern public relations campaign.⁸ In a letter soliciting potential contributors to *Die Waage*, the executive board laid out 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 enduring validity of our economic system.*⁹

Overall, *Die Waage* sought to convince the West German public of the advantages of the social market economy, to improve labor-management relations, and to polish up the image of industrialists, which had been tarnished by the Depression and collaboration with Hitler.

Die Waage sprang onto the public relations scene concurrently with a number of industrial and business organizations meant not only to protect industry's political interests but also to rehabilitate the industrialist's image in West German society. Most notable was the creation in 1950 of the *Bundesverband der Deutschen Industrie* (Federation of German Industry, BDI), which constituted industry's major political pressure group, and the *Bundesvereinigung Deutscher Arbeitgeberverbände* (Federation of German Employers, BDA), which focused on social and labor policy issues. Later in 1951, the *Deutsches Industrieinstitut* (German Institute of Industry, DI) was founded to organize and conduct public relations campaigns on behalf of West German industry, especially to counter the threat of labor unions and to portray industrialists as striving to benefit not merely themselves, but of all of society. The DI, which was coordinated closely with the BDI and BDA, performed a variety of public relations tasks to improve the reputation of the "*Unternehmer*," particularly through its publications of numerous pro-industry books, pamphlets, and newsletters.¹⁰

But compared to these industrial and business organizations, which often spoke to other industrialists, academics, and journalists as much as the public at large, *Die Waage* reached out more directly to the West German masses through modern advertising campaigns. *Die Waage* conducted an extensive public relations campaign on behalf of the social market economy—which indirectly benefited

Erhard and the CDU/CSU. Its public relations tools were wide-ranging, including advertisements appearing in leading daily and weekly newspapers such as the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* and *Der Spiegel*, a series of poster campaigns, and a number of movies screened in hundreds of theaters across West Germany. In all, a total of thirty print advertising series appeared between 1952 and 1965, but the group concentrated its most intense activity between 1953 and 1957, which were election years and crucial junctures in the formation of public opinion regarding economics.

The efforts of Die Waage constituted a vital component in the ambitious propaganda and communicative efforts promoting Erhard, the social market economy, and the economic miracle. The organization spearheaded the first truly massive public relations effort to utilize extensive public opinion surveys as a basis for constructing advertisements that sought to mold West German conceptions on the economy with precision. Moreover, Die Waage's pioneering techniques had an impact that transcended their primary task of shoring up support for the social market economy. As this organization conducted its efforts over the course of the 1950s, other political groups, including political parties such as the SPD and the FDP, took notice of Die Waage's extensive application of public opinion polling and modern advertising and began incorporating these techniques into their own campaigns. Through this process, Die Waage's influence rippled through a developing West German political culture and helped it take a more "Americanized" form. Furthermore, during the years of Bundestag elections, Die Waage was effective in creating thinly veiled political propaganda for Erhard, and through that effort, for the CDU/CSU also. Although not formally connected to the CDU/CSU or the Federal government, Die Waage became one of many, albeit particularly important, propaganda efforts working for the benefit of the Adenauer government.

Die Waage's public relations efforts tied the increased consumerism depicted in their advertisements to the legitimization of the Federal Republic itself. The advertisements exalted the new West German prosperity as the rebirth of the true German nation and its people. Furthermore, its advertising campaigns contributed to an understanding of West Germany that pivoted on a uniquely West German identity focused upon economic success. In the world of Die Waage's advertisements, the free market system facilitated the emergence of the new, free West Germany. By establishing these connections, the propaganda not only sought to improve the tarnished image of industry, but also to enhance the legitimacy of the Federal Republic, particularly versus the rival communist German Democratic Republic. Taken all together, Die Waage's depictions of class, social, and gender roles revealed the organization's conception of an organic, reconstructed West German society. Many of Die Waage's founders were leading members of the Bund der Katholischer Unternehmer (Organization of Catholic Entrepreneurs, BKU), an organization founded in Cologne in March 1949 to "combat the supposedly victorious and unstoppable forces of collectivism with the confidence and truth of Christian thought." As the organization's guiding principles stated,

the BKU sought the “creation of a healthy social and living order, based upon Christian principles.” The organization endorsed “competition of the free market economy and with that the connected necessity for a free, but socially-conscious business community” with the eventual goal of “the establishment of the social peace [*Befriedung*] through the overcoming of the proletariat.”¹¹

This class-conscious view was clearly reflected in Die Waage’s efforts, which were predicated upon the conservative industrialists’ fears of both the social fissures that had torn apart the ill-fated Weimar Republic apart and the threat that Marxism presented to West Germany. Die Waage’s leadership had grown up under the Kaiser, come of age during the tumultuous Weimar Republic, and become mature adults during the Nazi period.¹² They had witnessed governments rise and fall and experienced what they saw as the pernicious impact of the masses upon the course of German history. Die Waage’s underlying assumption was that social peace must be established not only to create a stable West German democracy, but also to permit industry to enjoy a profitable business environment. Die Waage’s advertisements therefore proposed a harmonious relationship between the sexes, among the classes, and especially between labor and management. Just as the interaction of women in their consumer roles and men as producers promoted the harmonious functioning of the economic system, so too would labor and industry, acting in concert, ensure increased living standards for all. Persuading workers to take up their natural role within the social market economy and illustrating to them that the economic system benefited all West Germans, not just industrialists, were crucial steps, from Die Waage’s view, in overcoming the class tensions that had spelled the destruction of Weimar Germany and thwarting the godless, alien threat of Marxism. The working class must be weaned from its old radicalism and convinced that it shared in the social market economy’s benefits, a perspective exemplified by advertisements showing members of the working class who had acquired middle-class attitudes evidenced by their discussions of the free market, labor relations, and their efforts to save money to buy homes.¹³ Thus Die Waage’s advertisements depicted consumption not as an end in itself, but instead as the expression of a properly functioning society in which all were free to take up their natural roles, privileges, and duties. By endorsing this organic view of the economy’s relationship to society, Die Waage echoed many of the antimaterialist sentiments incorporated in the early CDU/CSU propaganda trumpeting the social market economy and West Germany’s economic reconstruction. Ironically, in its crusade against a depersonalized, mass society, Die Waage drew upon public relations techniques that emerged as an integral part of just such a society.

Die Waage’s founders, mainly businessmen from West Germany’s industrial Rhineland region, first assembled in Cologne on 23 September 1952. The chairman of Die Waage was Franz Greiß, who also served as president of the Industrie und Handelskammer Köln (Chamber of Commerce, Cologne, IHK) and chairman of the BKU. In fact, Greiß later reported that his inspiration for developing Die Waage came from a Catholic social-scientist member of the BKU, Götz

Briefs, who commented to him in October 1951 that business seemed capable of devising advertisements for all types of products, yet not appeals for appropriate economic reforms.¹⁴ The organization's vice-chairman was Dr. Fritz Jacobi, an executive with Bayer AG, and the treasurer was Alphons Herten of Glasthütte J. Weck. The founders came mostly from the chemical and energy industry along with a large consumer-industry contingent, among them Philipp F. Reemtsma of the Reemtsma Cigarette Company. Although Die Waage was officially registered as a nonprofit organization on 25 November 1952, its founding process had begun over a year beforehand when Greiß and Herten began recruiting possible contributors and supporters to the organization.

The three officially stated goals of Die Waage were: "1. A factual clarification for the public of the social market economy and a demonstration of the economic advantages that 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*]." ¹⁵ As the organization dedicated itself to this ambitious and comprehensive public relations campaign, it stressed that this undertaking intended to enhance understanding of the social market economy not only for "Lieschen Müller" (John Doe) but also "Dr. Lieschen Müller"—that is to the widest segment of society. Franz Greiß reasoned that industry should conduct a public relations campaign as though the social market economy were its own product, because this invaluable system ensured the industrialist's ability to perform his economic functions effectively and fully.¹⁶

This group of industrialists looked to American business for a model to guide their public-relations and goodwill activities. Most particularly, the American Advertising Council in the United States served as an inspiration.¹⁷ This so-called Ad Council, formed in 1942, sought to disseminate advertisements for the national or public good. It counted among its triumphs the wartime creation of the "Rosie the Riveter" character and the later "Smookey the Bear." The Ad Council was mostly funded by voluntary contributions from industry. In fact, the Austrian advertising expert H. F. J. Kropff saw the emergence of the Ad Council as a crucial step in rehabilitating American advertising from its previous reputation for merely churning out exaggerations, fabrications, and deception. In addition, the Ad Council's success 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."¹⁸ One 1953 article in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* suggested that not only did the United States exemplify a strong and stable democracy, but it also had developed and made available methods of enhancing public trust in democracy. Applying the methods of the Ad Council, the article continued, was an important way that such trust could be built up in West Germany. Die Waage, the article concluded, was perhaps the best example of these American methods currently employed in West Germany.¹⁹

From early on, Die Waage enlisted an advertising agency, the Gesellschaft für Gemeinschaftswerbung (GfG), to craft and carry out its public relations campaign. Hanns W. Brose had founded the GfG in May 1929 in Berlin and consciously developed the firm along American lines. During the late 1920s, American influence in public relations and advertising was growing in Germany, as in Europe as a whole, with Anglo-American firms such as J. Walter Thompson, Lord and Thomas and Co., H.K. McCann Co., and Erwin, Wasey and Co. opening German branch offices.²⁰ In fact, beginning in January 1928, Brose worked in Berlin for Erwin, Wasey and Co. as an advertisement copy-editor. Given the absence of any formal training programs in Germany for advertising, it was with Erwin, Wasey and Co., Brose would later claim, that he absorbed the American style and approach to advertising.²¹ On several trips to the United States, Brose also picked up knowledge of American advertising techniques, which he held as the inspiration for his own advertisements.²² In 1935 Brose became involved with the Gesellschaft für Konsumforschung (Society for Consumer Research), then under Wilhelm Vershofen's direction, and made contact with economists such as Ludwig Erhard, who was working with Vershofen at the time. This organization was conducting trailblazing work in market research and the sources of consumer motivation—an essential part of what Brose called the “history of the discovery of the consumer.”²³

After the war, American advertising firms reopened many of their branch offices in West Germany while many of the West German agencies themselves incorporated an American influence into the style of their advertisements and the structure of their agencies, which now became “full-service” operations—that is, they provided market research, ad layout, and ad placement. As Brose would later comment in 1958, “When one views the development of advertising in Germany over the last 30 years, one cannot overestimate the example and influence of American advertising agencies.”²⁴ In 1945 Brose transferred his advertising firm's headquarters from Berlin to Frankfurt am Main in the American Zone of occupation. Perhaps one reason the GfG proved so attractive to Die Waage was that Brose had previous experience with “*Gemeinschaftswerbung*” (cooperative advertising), advertising developed for an association of businesses in pursuit of some common goal. During the Second World War Brose had spearheaded the “*Glückauf-Aktion*,” a project in which business interests donated funds to support a public relations campaign aimed at attracting apprentices to enter coal mining work and invigorating an occupational self-consciousness among miners. As part of this effort Brose helped craft twelve different advertisements that were to appear once the war had ended.

Key features of Brose's advertisements from the 1930s and 1940s, such as pictorial headers, long texts, and recurring themes, layouts, and graphics in successive advertisements, would appear in the advertisements Brose developed for Die Waage's actions. Brose insisted that ads must recount and narrate (*erzählen*) so that the reader could feel informed—otherwise they would, like mere posters, “shine and gleam and make noise with no effect.”²⁵ This style of advertising closely mirrored the ads appearing in American magazines in the 1920s and

1930s. These ads, with relatively long texts, invited readers to identify with the ads' characters through a shared conversation, experience, or special knowledge created by a compelling "human-interest" story. The underlying idea was to sell not the product itself, but rather some sort of individual benefit, both rational and emotional, that the prospective consumer gained from the product. Although such advertisements retained factual and "objective" elements, the shift was toward a more subjective perspective set in a clear social context that appealed to the readers' desires, fears, and hopes and allowed them to participate in the advertisements themselves. Often the ads would feature a testimonial by a respected social leader—a doctor, for example—or a before-and-after scenario that would highlight how the product had changed a consumer's life. By replacing the more product-centered approach of early-twentieth century American advertising, which seemingly constituted mere announcements describing the goods, the ultimate hope was that the reader would now begin to identify with the advertiser in relation to some common problem or situation.²⁶

This quintessentially American approach to advertising ran counter to the advertising traditions that had developed in Europe. Victoria De Grazia has posited that the unique European advertising style that had developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries reflected Old World market conditions—namely "authentic" craftsmanship in the production of goods and their sale within established, narrow markets to customers who already knew these products. This orientation contrasted starkly with the American pattern of mass-producing standardized articles for a mass market. Consistent with "Old World" market circumstances, European advertising through World War II still generally followed what has been described as the "*Ding an sich*" (thing in itself) approach. This approach emphasized the inherent qualities of the product as contrasted with the common American practice of placing the product within a social context to create its value and meaning. In Europe, poster art with scant text remained the preferred medium of this *Ding an sich* style because graphics facilitated an intuitive process by which, as De Grazia explained, "goods should be animated by symbolic, evocative pictorial traditions, using subliminal references and psychological suggestion to activate latent desire."²⁷

In contrast, in the American style products were portrayed much more realistically and the ads emphasized what the product could do for the consumer. As De Grazia pointed out, Americans faithfully reproduced products in their ads, while Europeans translated them graphically in a seductive manner.²⁸ The American mode of advertising continued to creep into Europe during the 1920s and the 1930s. In fact, one effect of the American influence of advertising on German and European advertising was to help legitimate the advertiser and advertising agency within society as businesses that were somehow more "scientific" in approach rather than charlatans trying to dupe the unsuspecting public with alluring images and colors in artful posters. Clearly, the European style of advertising crossed into the political realm by using eye-catching posters to influence voters and citizens of the state—an approach used by not only the Nazis, but other political

parties during the Weimar Republic. To Europeans the line between advertising and propaganda was thin, if even existent. The American influence, however, caused advertising to become more “scientific,” with carefully constructed layouts based upon statistical analysis of income, tastes, and consumption, and frequent reliance on the work of the behavioral psychologist John B. Watson to better understand the connection between social behavior and emotions.²⁹

During the Third Reich, German advertising was placed under the direction and control of the Nazi regime, as was the case for all the media within Germany. In September 1933 the regime established the *Werberat der deutschen Wirtschaft* (Advertising Council of the German Economy), composed of about eighty representatives from a range of branches of industry and the advertising business. The council, which answered to Josef Goebbels’s notorious Nazi propaganda machine, the Ministry of Propaganda and Public Enlightenment, carried out the “Aryanization” of the advertising industry by purging it of Jews. It also oversaw ads to ensure that they reflected proper German thought and ideals and that they used German words rather than foreign alternatives. Through its policy of *Gleichschaltung* (coordination) of advertising, the Nazi regime completely obliterated the difference between advertising and political propaganda as many advertisers were put to work generating state propaganda.³⁰ In addition, the Nazi suppression of hundreds of newspapers and magazines, Nazi limitations on billboard space, and the growing state control of the economy rendered advertising both increasingly difficult and unnecessary. Firms spent increasing amounts of their advertising budgets in state-sponsored media, such as the Nazi newspaper *Völkischer Beobachter* or Hermann Göring’s journal on the Four Year Plan. Despite the limitations and controls imposed upon German advertisers during the Third Reich, one does find evidence of the further refinement of German advertising as it adopted a more American style. For example, text-centered magazine advertising increased during the Third Reich, for the poster medium was tightly controlled and devoted mostly to political propaganda purposes.³¹ Despite the Nazi intrusion into advertising, many of the advertising agents, among them Bose himself, quite effortlessly made the transition from the Nazi regime to the Federal Republic.³²

Ultimately, the incorporation of American-style advertising, which really took off in the 1950s, manifested itself in the shift from a more producer- or sender-oriented advertising to a more consumer- or receiver-oriented advertising. With this shift advertisers increasingly took into account the views and predilections of the consumer rather than focusing on the qualities of the good in and of itself. When developing ad layout and copy, American advertisers were urged to think of themselves as speaking to individual consumers and to consider their views and beliefs.³³ By contrast, throughout the first half of the twentieth century European advertisers and propagandists talked about their craft in “mass psychological” terms in which they stressed the irrational qualities of the amorphous, undifferentiated masses—often evoking the French social psychologist Gustave Le Bon and his analysis of the herd mentality of the crowd. Hans Domizlaff, a leader in German advertising from the 1920s through the 1950s, drew heavily upon Le

Bon's insights as he created a "brand identity" for such firms such as Reemtsma and Siemens. In his quest to "*Ins Gehirn der Masse kriechen*" (creep into the mind of the masses), he envisioned the essential problem of advertising in biological terms: it involved introducing an idea into the masses through simple repetition as if injecting a contagion into an organism so that it could spread on its own. He saw himself as an artist giving life to a brand name's own identity and meaning—and thereby imprinting that identity and meaning upon the goods produced under that brand name. As he later commented, "A brand name has a face like a person."³⁴ To be sure, the idea of attributing certain qualities to firms, and with that their goods, was also an essential part of American advertising. But on the other hand, during the 1920s and 1930s American advertising firms invested heavily into getting to "know" the individual consumer very precisely through painstaking market research, polling, and analysis of the readership of the magazines and newspapers that ran their ads—techniques that were almost nonexistent in Germany. Clearly Brose saw the American techniques as crucial in the process of selling the social market economy. Yet, Brose retained an element of the European tradition throughout his ads during the 1930s and through the 1950s: rather than adopt the American use of a universal vernacular of advertising, he retained a "Germanness" throughout his advertisements—often, for example, by having the characters in the ads use colloquial or class-specific language. As Brose argued in his memoirs, successful advertisements needed to be pitched to the local mentality—an idea that, he claimed, was resisted by the American firms who believed in utilizing in ads what they saw as a universal vernacular that transcended region and class in the selling of goods.³⁵

Brose's more American-style advertisement that spoke to the subjective experiences of readers is illustrated in his extensive use of polling. Early in its formation, Die Waage drew heavily upon public polling research, both to get a sense of public opinion in West Germany and to craft its advertisements with precision. Especially crucial was the public opinion research generated by the Institut für Demoskopie in Allensbach—which during the 1950s was to become the most important of the West German organizations conducting polling on political views. The Institut für Demoskopie was formed in 1948 by Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann and her husband, Erich Peter Neumann, whom she married in 1946. Noelle-Neumann, who had studied journalism and the emerging field of public opinion polling at the University of Missouri in the United States between 1937 and 1938, earned a Ph.D. from the University of Berlin with a dissertation examining the press's role in the formation of American public opinion. Once back in Germany, she published her 1940 book, *Researching Opinion and the Masses in the USA: Surveys on Politics and the Press*. Her role within the Nazi state has recently come under intensive scrutiny. Noelle-Neumann joined a Nazi student organization in 1935, and the fact that the authorities allowed her to study abroad in the late 1930s demonstrates her political reliability. During the war she wrote for *Das Reich*, a weekly journal for German intellectuals founded by Josef Goebbels. She produced articles for the journal that were characterized by strident

völkisch (nationalist or racist) and anti-Semitic sentiments, such as one in which she explained that Jews controlled the American media and had fostered a hostile American public opinion towards Germany. Immediately after the war Noelle-Neumann worked with the French military intelligence organizing some surveys in 1946/47. Early in 1948 she incorporated 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 adviser and pollster in the service of the conservative CDU/CSU.³⁶

Particularly important for Die Waage's public relations campaign was a summary of surveys conducted by Noelle-Neumann's Institut für Demoskopie between 1948 and 1951. These surveys were compiled for the GfG in a single 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, especially industry and labor? Finally, what were the views on the trade unions and codetermination in plants and factories? The Institut für Demoskopie also included as part of the survey a report on "Public Relations and Opinion Research in the United States of America and Great Britain." Drawing on experiences in the United States and Great Britain, this short report underscored the need for business and large industry to involve themselves in public relations.³⁷

Das Soziale Klima documented a prevailing ignorance among the West German populace about the social market economy, with only 12 percent of respondents able to correctly identify the economic system (see also the figures from chapter 3 of this volume). This report also revealed a widespread distrust of the industrialists. A June 1950 survey queried whether most manufacturers think "only of their profit, or are also socially-minded." Sixty percent believed that industrialists were concerned only about profits, versus 16 percent who regarded them as socially minded. In addition, 59 percent believed that manufacturers would have to be forced to watch out for their workers' interests.³⁸ Despite this negative view of industrialists, the workers also appeared to be receptive to a system of industrial relations that was more advantageous to management. More than 73 percent of workers could not correctly identify the demands of the trade unions regarding the issue of *Mitbestimmung* (codetermination), the proposal that worker representatives sit on the supervisory boards of firms. One had to consider that a third of workers believed that only consultation with management, not codetermination, should be instituted. In addition, another third argued that workers should have input only upon matters of shop-floor management.³⁹ In general, people were more concerned with issues involving their own economic well-being than more abstract worker representation issues such as codetermination.

More significantly, perhaps, the report stated that the June 1948 currency reform was a "*Nullpunkt*" (starting point) in influencing public opinion. Views the German populace held toward the economy were distorted by the catastrophe of the war and defeat, but with the improved living conditions accompanying the

currency reform, the population was more open to industry's arguments.⁴⁰ After examining various factors affecting West Germany's social conditions, 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 masses' views of the current economic system. The answer is, with a number of qualifications, affirmative."⁴¹ But the report warned that the divisions between haves and have-nots and between the government and the governed were continually widening. A "continual analysis of the mentality of the masses" was crucial to improving public opinion of the social market economy. The report stressed that because public opinion is not easily moved, a systematic approach must be adopted in order to change it. In addition, such a public relations action must be taken even where it represented a dramatic departure from past practices on the part of business, which tended to stay out of politics. A government averse to the market economy would lead to extensive economic and political "displeasure" (*Unwillens*) for business.⁴²

Having sketched out of the contours of West German public opinion, *Das Soziale Klima* was, in fact, used by Die Waage's executive board as a tool to recruit donors. An early action plan for Die Waage, designed to attract potential donors, was entitled "Something Must Be Done," summed up *Das Soziale Klima*, and provided data depicting the rising discontent among the West German populace regarding economic developments of the last two years in a self-described "scientific" fashion. This report, put together by the GfG, was meant to encourage business interests to contribute to Die Waage's efforts; therefore, it emphasized the political implications of Die Waage's proposed public relations campaign. 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 viewed in an ever more negative light, and because of this the government's economic system based on the social market economy and its representatives, the industrialists, were viewed negatively. If the head of the SPD, Kurt Schumacher, came to power, the proposal underscored, it would mean the socialization of key industries, including coal and steel, followed by banking, transportation, insurance, energy, and large chemical industries—which were exactly the industries upon which Die Waage concentrated its fundraising efforts. In addition, those industries not threatened by socialization, the report warned, should be wary of the effects that codetermination could have on their firms. Therefore, it was imperative that an anti-Marxist majority of at least ten to twenty representatives in the Bundestag be secured in the 1953 federal election. This could be done by winning over the vacillating or undecided mass of people. But the report left open the question of which party Die Waage's campaign should support. Although Die Waage was emphatically anti-Marxist, the organization was not officially tied to any political party or religious community.⁴³ The report proposed a series of advertisements that highlighted the increased living standards since 1948, the relationship of employers and employees in solving the age's social problems, and the progress that indus-

try provided humanity. Die Waage envisioned a campaign consisting of 26 advertisements appearing in 78 different newspapers and costing DM 6.3 million over the course of 1952. The report then jumped into a summary of *Das Soziale Klima*.

One is struck by how this proposal stressed that Die Waage's goals and methods were based upon empirical and scientific research conducted by the Institut für Demoskopie. Within the context of fundraising, the Institut für Demoskopie's surveys were crucial tools for demonstrating both the legitimacy of Die Waage itself within a newly founded democracy and the need to organize such an undertaking. The proposal was also meant to counter the common businessman's perception of advertising and public relations as a disreputable pursuit conducted by commercial hucksters or propagandists—especially after the deluge of propaganda churned out during the Third Reich. This description of Die Waage's initial advertising plan stressed that “Die Waage's proposal does not start with any subjective opinions, unclear conceptions, or unrealistic ideas—it starts with the facts and exact knowledge.” After examining the survey results, the proposal commented that, “The dissatisfaction of the broad masses with the economic conditions is, according to the Institute [für Demoskopie], the result of a lack of information.”⁴⁴ Now that it knew precisely what information the “broad masses” lacked, the report implied, Die Waage could turn these masses in a favorable direction.

In order to demonstrate the empirical necessity of creating a public relations campaign, the report summarized the survey results compiled in *Das Soziale Klima*. For example, it stressed that in April 1951, 56 percent of the West German population reported that conditions were worse than the year before, whereas in November 1950 only 27 percent maintained this position. Seventy-eight percent of respondents believed something must be done to stop the rise in prices, and almost half (46 percent) held the government responsible for this rise. In addition, most workers were dissatisfied with businessmen, with 69 percent seeing them as “unsocial.” Overall, according to the report, the public was generally ignorant of Economics Minister Erhard's policies, basic economic issues, and the advantages that the social market economy provided. The proposal reported that close to a third of the population was politically indecisive, evidence showing the need to launch a public relations campaign 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, Die Waage's public relations proposal stressed the idea that workers were not necessarily interested in class struggle, but their ability to withstand class warfare slogans was undermined by a lack of education. 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 essence a “*tabula rasa*” and were open to a public relations campaign on the behalf of industry. The dissatisfaction of the broad masses with the economic situation, the report claimed, was the result of a lack of information on the social market economy.⁴⁵ It concluded that “the government and business community—so says

the Institut für Demoskopie—need the support of public relations, which does not only give the public a view of the disadvantages of system [as the opposition gives], but shows the advantages that are not presently being brought to the attention of the masses. The opposition is developing more daring and vision than the government and business community. All of the parameters have been given so that this now can be reversed.”⁴⁶

But in many respects, by 1952 Die Waage had softened the overtly political overtones of its appeals to businessmen, while it began to use Erhard’s position as economics minister to lend legitimacy to Die Waage’s efforts. Since Die Waage’s inception, its founders had been in close contact with Erhard, who because of his experience at Professor Vershofen’s Society for Consumer Research in the 1930s was accustomed to concerning himself with the mentality of the consumer. Already by early May 1952, Die Waage had prepared letters to be sent out by Ludwig Erhard to “financially strong” leaders of industry such as August Oetker, Continental Gummiwerke, Merck, and Otto Friederich, head of Phoenix Gummiwerke. Die Waage’s vice-chairman, Fritz Jacobi, explained to Erhard that the advertisements would not be polemical and aggressively political; such an approach must wait for an election year. Instead, he argued, “the long neglected, true clarification of the ideas, nature, and goals of the social market economy in a positive form had to make up for lost time in seeking the approval of the entire nation.”⁴⁷

In these solicitations, Erhard warned that ignoring public opinion in the new democratic state could not be tolerated. He cautioned to businessmen that the stakes were too high for them to ignore the efforts of Die Waage: “Even a contribution that appears difficult to afford in respect to 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 was, in many respects, an appeal for the industrialists to become more overtly involved in politics—an unfamiliar role to many of them. But at the same time, Erhard’s letter emphasized that this public relations campaign would be “independent of all party election slogans and independent of group interests.” Undoubtedly Erhard took this position because prospective contributors supported not only the CDU/CSU, but also the FDP and the DP. A public relations campaign meant industrialists should accept a certain sense of responsibility for all bourgeois parties, or at least this was what the executive board of Die Waage wanted to stress to prospective contributors.⁴⁸

The Institut für Demoskopie also played a direct role in Die Waage’s fundraising. On 14 April, Erich Peter Neumann, a political consultant to the CDU and the husband of Dr. Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, the head of the Institut für Demoskopie, presented a talk in Cologne on “The responsibility of the business community for public relations.”⁴⁹ Together, over 200 politicians, journalists, and businessmen were invited to hear him speak.⁵⁰ Neumann outlined the business community’s role in public relations, beginning his talk with the idea that busi-

nessmen perceived themselves to be engaged in a fight to protect certain principles, without regard to whether those principles were correct or valid. They were in a combative position and had to ensure that their interests remained in harmony with the development of the larger worldwide (*Weltbild*) of society as a whole. In order to help businessmen accomplish this task, Neumann proclaimed that he was putting forth this “impartial, objective finding.”⁵¹

Neumann pointed out, that in fact, he and the businessmen dealt with the same concern—humanity and then went on to demonstrate the need for public opinion research and its power to make human society understandable. He underscored that the rules of society and its workings remained hazy at best. Compounding this problem was the fact that the masses had exerted an ever growing influence on politics over the course of the twentieth century. One had no measure, other than in a general way, of 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 maintained, “The representative polling method allows us to measure the circumstances of society, whose results, and this is the decisive point, permits us to generalize as a laboratory analysis from some material.” Clearly, the tools of polling research could not be ignored. As Neumann contended, “We are engaged not with the investigation of opinions, but instead with discovering the patterns of behavior stemming from knowledge and ignorance.”⁵²

Neumann highlighted not only the possibilities of public opinion research, but also the dangers that business interests were facing. The SPD drew funds from such a wide membership that it could finance its own ongoing propaganda campaigns. He did not mention, of course, the fact that the business contributions to the CDU/CSU far surpassed the funds the SPD raised through party membership dues. In addition, the trade unions “were constantly effective in regard to shaping opinion, therefore in influencing public opinion.” He argued that, “No matter what goodwill 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.”⁵³

By citing a series of public opinion surveys, Neumann demonstrated that a more informed population tended to be less radical in its political views. One of these surveys asked West Germans, “What do you think: should people demonstrate and make a commotion in Bonn more often than they 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 such disturbances were positive, while 64 per cent regarded them as damaging. The survey did not clearly define what it meant by an “uninformed” versus an “informed” individual; however two interesting assumptions are revealed in this poll. First, Neumann implicitly set up a relationship between a decline in radical behavior and the information that would be provided by Die Waage’s proposed public relations campaign. Neumann assumed that the information supplied by

Die Waage would automatically produce an output of less radical behavior. In other words, he took for granted that if informed, an individual would agree with industry's views. At the very least the individual would be mollified, if business and industry were the gatekeepers of that information.⁵⁴ Second, the variables of information provided and any drop in support for radical behavior could be effectively monitored and manipulated through empirical polling surveys. The creation of a public relations campaign would be useless without a proper, systematic means to test the effectiveness of such a campaign. From this perspective, surveys were not so much about taking the pulse of the people as about directing and manipulating public opinion.

Despite Neumann's call for a business-led public relations campaign, there were surely dissenting views regarding industry's appropriate role in strengthening support for the policies of political leaders. Undoubtedly, by 1952 industry had contributed considerable funding to political parties for their election campaigns, especially to the CDU/CSU, FDP, and DP 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 distrustful of all forms of political enthusiasm."⁵⁵ The industrial leaders of the early 1950s had seen a number of governments come and go over the course of their lifetimes and were wary of binding themselves too closely to any political group. Their own experience had taught them to be skeptical of any idealism or enthusiasm about politics. In general, they held a fundamental cynicism toward politics, much like the public at large, and favored concentrating upon narrow business interests. The report also concluded that business leaders avoided any real discussion of politics and thought that political activity was generally bad for one's character.⁵⁶ Given the many companies' collaboration with the Nazi regime, war crimes trials prosecuting some leading industrialists, and a generally negative public opinion toward industry, West German industry had every reason to be leery about openly engaging in politics. There is no doubt that in the circumstances of postwar West Germany, where critical issues concerning industry such as dismantling, denazification, decartelization, and codetermination were being hashed out, industry was, in fact, extremely active in politics—albeit most businessmen tried to conceal such activities from the glare of public view.⁵⁷ In the guise of a reportedly nonpartisan organization, Die Waage was asking business and industry to openly back a political figure. Neumann's solicitations on the behalf of Die Waage illustrate well that businessmen had to be carefully goaded into such participation.

Clearly, business was willing to contribute money anonymously to political parties, although the CDU/CSU was disappointed by the total contributions during the 1949 campaign.⁵⁸ Fearing the socialization of certain industries that would ensure a SPD victory in the 1953 Bundestag election, by the autumn of 1952 the national industrial association, the BDI, and its accompanying employer association, the BDA, had decided to create so-called *Fördergesellschaften*, or promo-

tional associations, to better organize business influence within the political realm. In contrast to the centralized organization of the BDI and the BDA, these *Fördergesellschaften* were formed at the *Land* (state) level for more effective fundraising and served as conveyor belts carrying funding to the bourgeois political parties. The purpose of these associations was to better coordinate political contributions from economic groups in anticipation of the 1953 Bundestag election. Defined formally as trade associations, the membership dues they collected were deductible as business expenses. The dues paid by individual businesses were based upon total payroll for an industrial firm and turnover for a commercial firm. These promotional associations would exploit contacts with local business and industry and then funnel money to state-level party organizations for state elections and to the national-level political parties for the federal elections. In return, the active businessmen running these associations would have the personal opportunity to approach the politically powerful personally regarding the passage of whatever economic and social legislation they were interested in.⁵⁹

One problematic question was what the relationship was to be between Die Waage and the *Fördergesellschaften*, particularly how these two organizations would coordinate fund raising. In a letter to the CDU's propaganda chief, Otto Lenz, Erich Neumann reported on an October 1952 meeting of the *Fördergesellschaften* at which the business representatives had attacked Die Waage because they had no way to influence Die Waage's activities. In fact, the BDI and BDA had been raising this issue for the last month. Neumann believed that his argument that it was absolutely necessary for business to conduct public relations had fallen on deaf ears and that 90 percent of these businessmen understood nothing about propaganda.⁶⁰ Die Waage and the *Fördergesellschaften* met early in the development of Die Waage, in December 1952, to explore their future collaboration. The *Fördergesellschaften* were apparently worried that contributions to Die Waage would divert funds that normally went through the umbrella business organizations of the BDI and BDA to political parties. It was suggested, apparently by Die Waage, that about DM 100,000 to 150,000 per month could be allocated from the *Fördergesellschaften* to Die Waage. The representatives of the *Fördergesellschaften* replied that this idea would require approval by the various associations.⁶¹ 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* soured further over the course of late 1952 into 1953. At a March 1953 meeting of Die Waage's *Vorstand* (executive board) and *Beirat* (advisory board), Die Waage decided that it should clearly explain to firms that a contribution to the organization did not replace one to a *Fördergesellschaft*.⁶² During the election summer of 1953, concerns surfaced that Die Waage's actions were unnecessarily dividing industry's resources.⁶³ At a December 1953 meeting of Die Waage's contributors, Economics Minister Ludwig Erhard advised against Die Waage getting involved with *Fördergesellschaften* lest this jeopardize the unity that prevailed among Die Waage's leadership. Erhard's position, of course, must be understood

within a larger context. At this point he was caught up in his struggle with the BDI, which most strongly represented heavy industry, over the proposed anticartel legislation making its way through the Bundestag. In the spring of 1952, an anticartel bill, largely formulated by Erhard and bureaucrats in the Economics Ministry with the aim of completely outlawing cartels, was introduced to the Bundestag for initial reading and discussion. However, it did not reach committee until February 1953, in part because of political pressure applied by the BDI. After many acrimonious exchanges between Erhard and the BDI, the Bundestag passed a watered-down version of the initial bill that limited but did not outlaw cartels, but this was not until the summer of 1957, long after the 1953 elections.⁶⁴ In the meantime, Otto Friedrich of P. Hoenix Gummiwerke, an active member of the BDI, supported Erhard's view of keeping Die Waage independent from the *Fördergesellschaften*. To document the dangers such a connection posed for Die Waage, Friedrich asserted that he ascertained from his dealings with the Deutsches Industrieinstitut, the public relations arm of the BDI he had helped found, that the BDI would like to snuff out (*abzuwürgen*) Die Waage. Erhard agreed that the *Fördergesellschaften* must be left to their own activities, but Die Waage must continue with its task of educating the public on the social market economy.⁶⁵

In February 1954 leaders of Die Waage, including Greiß, Jacobi, and Horten, met with representatives of the BDI in Cologne and tried to convince Gustav Stein, a prominent figure in the BDI, that their organization 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 in the guise of operators soliciting contributions for Die Waage. It was decided that the *Fördergesellschaften* in the future needed to closely coordinate with Die Waage to prevent such cases from recurring. In addition, it was agreed that Stein would attend the *Beirat* (advisory board) meetings of Die Waage and that Horten would sit in on the meetings of the central *Fördergesellschaft* organization. Although Die Waage and the *Fördergesellschaften* had learned to coexist, the two organizations apparently never truly saw eye to eye in respect to fundraising goals and the public relations actions that were to be taken by industrial interests.⁶⁶ In general, this comes as no surprise. Regarding it as an essential part of developing the social market economy, Erhard wanted to pursue anticartel legislation that the representatives of the BDI feared. In addition, Die Waage's membership tended to come from the chemical, automobile, and consumer industries, often medium-sized firms that were clearly familiar and comfortable with the methods of advertising. On the other hand, the BDI remained a bastion of heavy industrial interests born and developed in a tradition of business collusion—particularly in the coal and steel industry. Die Waage represented an expression of Erhard's belief in public relations, in an open and free market economy, and in a consumer orientation that was at odds with the BDI's efforts to revive business practices and labor relations from the prewar period. Simply put, Die Waage's direct public relations campaigns would generate the type of publicity that the BDI did not want.

Despite the tense relations with West Germany's main industrial organizations, Die Waage proved relatively successful in its fundraising efforts. In a spring 1952 letter to Die Waage's chairman, Franz Greiß, Brose estimated that the organization would require about DM 12.5 million to support its advertising campaign for the Bundestag election through the late summer of 1953.⁶⁷ Clearly, the heads of Die Waage had to scale back the grandiose plans of their advertising agent. Die Waage took in about DM 3.8 million over the course of 1952/53, with the costs of its publications totaling DM 3.78 million.⁶⁸ Die Waage faced the challenge that contributions to the organization did not qualify as tax-deductible under the West German tax code. However, Die Waage's treasurer Alphons Horten devised a clever scheme to encourage contributions. He allowed corporate donors to channel their contributions directly to Die Waage's advertising agent, thus enabling the individual firms to write off the funds since they fell under the category of normal advertising expenditures for the firm. This facilitated corporate contributions and thereby ensured a stream of funds that allowed Die Waage to continue its massive public relations campaigns well into the 1960s.⁶⁹

One is struck by the high proportion of those contributions (totaling DM 425,000) that came from the firms created out of the former I.G. Farben firms, namely BASF, Hoechst, and Bayer. Other large contributors included Robert Bosch GmbH (DM 100,000), Birkmann GmbH (DM 200,000), Chemie Werke Huels (DM 100,000), Continental Gummi (DM 100,000), Daimler Benz (DM 100,000), Esso AG (DM 151,000), Karstadt AG (DM 150,000), Kaufhof (DM 150,000), Opel AG (DM 200,000), and Reemstma (DM 250,000). Overall, the auto, chemical, retail goods, and consumer goods firms were well represented. The notable absence of any contribution from coal, iron, steel, and other heavy industries was the consequence, one can surmise, of Die Waage's ongoing conflict with the BDI. As previously mentioned, the two organizations were deeply divided in terms of both Die Waage's methods of public relations and its support of Erhard's antimonopoly and anticartel philosophy.⁷⁰

Once it had "sold" the idea of a public relations campaign to certain sectors of the West German economy, Die Waage's next main challenge was figuring out how to portray the abstract ideas of the social market economy for consumption by a broad audience. The plan was that Die Waage's advisory and executive boards would develop and discuss the basic concepts of the campaigns, establish the general guidelines for transforming their ideas into advertisements, and make the final decisions regarding the advertisement. Brose and the GfG were charged with the technical planning of the advertisements and selection of media to utilize for the campaign.⁷¹ As things worked out, however, Brose elaborated some of the conceptual dimensions of the campaigns and provided Die Waage's leadership with preliminary materials.⁷² Clear constraints determined how the economic ideas were transformed into suitable advertising materials for the consuming public. The advertisements had to be constructed so as to avoid offending the sensibilities of contributors by appearing too "political" or overly glorifying a certain political figure, such as Erhard, at the expense of the ideas of the social market

economy.⁷³ All the while, the advertisements had to clearly communicate their antisocialist message.

From early on, Die Waage's leadership ruled out any substantive or precise discussion of the social market economy in the advertisements. At a November 1952 executive board meeting, some members objected to a possible advertisement with the title "*Das ist Soziale Marktwirtschaft*" (That is the social market economy) because it treated the term "purely theoretically," and decided to postpone its publication. Dr. Illau, an economist associated with neoliberal theory, maintained that the advertisements should clearly define the term "social market economy." But the executive board endorsed Brose's advice to "avoid dry definitions and point the readers to practical examples of their own advantages from the social market economy"—a stance clearly reflecting his American-style approach to advertising.⁷⁴ Nevertheless, Die Waage constantly agonized over the proper relationship between image and substance within its advertisements. This question often pitted Brose, Chairman Greiß, and Treasurer Horten against Vice-Chairman Jacobi. Jacobi once bitterly complained to Greiß that one proposed brochure was "so deficient in its actual execution that it could not be tolerated by people of even moderate education." Some of the Die Waage's financial contributors backed Jacobi's view and continually criticized the advertisements' lack of substantive content.⁷⁵

Indeed, during this time the question arose whether the phrase "social market economy" should be incorporated into the advertisements at all, since the term "social," often associated with the SPD, could unduly confuse the intended audience. A November 1952 survey conducted for the 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 grasp of the phrase's meaning. But in a December 1952 executive board meeting, Horten reported a conversation with Economics Minister Erhard in which Erhard insisted that the advertisements retain the term "social market economy." Hanns Brose warned against "changing horses in mid-gallop," lest opponents of the social market economy seize the opportunity to claim that the "social" aspects of the free market system were on shaky ground. Greiß decided to continue employing the term "social market economy" unless the coalition parties formulated a substitute term.⁷⁶ Ultimately, in the ads appearing before the 1953 Bundestag election, the term was changed to "Erhard's social market economy," although his party affiliation was not mentioned.⁷⁷

Die Waage's initial campaign between 9 October and 31 December 1952 featured a series of ten advertisements that ran in 445 daily and weekly newspapers, for a total circulation of around 12 million newspapers.⁷⁸ These ten advertisements incorporated five different titles with two illustration and text variations for each title-type. The Institut für Demoskopie claimed about 36 percent of the population saw and recognized these advertisements between 5 and 15 December 1952.⁷⁹ The advertisements included the basic elements of commercial advertising: slogan, illustration, and logo. The ads' titles were "*Wie schnell der Mensch vergisst*" (How quickly people forget), "*Das deutsche Wunder*" (The German 'miracle'), "*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 each advertisement depicted a scene from everyday West German life above the title. The remainder of the ad consisted of the text, Die Waage’s logo, the scales, and the general 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).

These advertisements created a narrative of the economic and social history of the newly formed Federal Republic. The currency reform legend proved to be a central element in Die Waage’s advertisements, as had been in the CDU’s 1949 election campaign. An Institut für Demoskopie survey asked West Germans in April 1952 whether West Germany had experienced an economic upswing since the currency reform. Eighty-eight percent of the respondents answered yes, while only 4 percent thought no and 8 percent were undecided. The survey observed that “[f]rom 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 displaced by newer, fresh impressions? And to whom, should the occasion arise, could the credit for this upturn be attributed? These two questions are of principal importance in respect to Die Waage’s advertisements.”⁸⁰ Die Waage’s ads left no doubt as to who or what should take credit for the economic upturn.

The advertisement *“Wie Schnell der Mensch vergisst”* (Illustration 4.1), the most widely published of this series, opened with text that evoked images of everyday life immediately following the conclusion of the war: “Trading 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 Bizone in 1947 there was a pair of new shoes for every 30 people.”⁸¹ The text went on to paint a picture of despair, hardship, and deprivation. Ironically, the ad urged the reader not to forget how far West Germany had come since the end of the war but silenced any reference to the Third Reich, thereby placing West Germans in the roles of victims. But there came a dramatic change in 1948: “and then in the summer of 1948 came the currency reform. . . . We had a hard currency again”—ignoring the American role in the Deutsche Mark’s introduction. Without ever mentioning him by name, Die Waage portrayed Economics Minister Erhard as the savior of the West German nation and economy. It was his ideas of the social market economy that secured West Germany’s economic recovery: “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. Having noted the advent of the currency reform, the advertisement affirmed that with solid money in hand, “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 created the opportunity to work and earn money. The same advertisement commented that money was not rationed but earned, and “[f]or that reason, every person, be it worker or industrialist [*Unter-*



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-Zope“ gab's um 1947 auch ein Paar Schuhe auf 30 Menschen. Es gab „schwarzes Brot“ für 30 Mark und Butter das Pfund für 300. Kartoffelzüge gab's, an denen verbitterte Menschen wie Trauben hingen, und Kohlenzüge, die leergestohlen in zertrümmerte Bahnhöfe einliefen. 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“ beschlagnahmen. 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 zerriß 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 *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.

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 zerfetzten 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 freiheitliche 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

Illustration 4.1 How quickly people forget (a)

nehmer] should earn on the free ‘market’ what ability and desire to work brings him.” The alternate text of “*Wie schnell der Mensch vergisst*” (Illustration 4.2) 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, through their cooperation in the freedom of the social market economy. This democratic action then unleashed the energy for the reconstruction: *One Man* ended the script 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 was inextricably linked with the acquisition of some form of German self-determination and the reconstruction of a smoothly working, organic society, all of which were ascribed to Erhard’s actions. Having economic freedom was tantamount to the founding of West Germany itself and distanced the new state from the Nazi past. Clearly, the message was that West Germans should not overlook how far both worker and industrialist had come in securing both their economic freedom and a better living standard. The ad explained that “[w]e should never forget what worker and industrialist have accomplished in courageous cooperation since those days. No one should deny the shared benefits. No one should disturb this social peace!” By implication any demand from the left, be it socialization of heavy industry or higher wages, was not only disruptive, but downright un-German.

The advertisements’ illustrations strengthened the texts’ message. They presented images that resonated with the West Germans. The illustrations hinted at what the concept of “freedom” meant in the new West Germany by creating an image of life under the *Zwangswirtschaft* (controlled economy). One illustration depicted a scene in the *Alltagsleben* (everyday life) of Germans during the years before the currency reform. In the foreground a sullen old man walks by 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 seeking family or loved ones, which reflected a common experience since in October 1946, 10 million Germans in the Western Zones were still searching for next of kin.⁸² In the background a relatively well-dressed man smokes a cigarette, which was the basic form of exchange in pre-currency reform Germany, and converses with a young woman, suggesting perhaps a more salacious relationship and the prevalent view of moral degeneracy during the rubble years. The other version of “*Wie schnell der Mensch vergisst*” portrayed haggard old men and women and small, emaciated children clothed in rags around them, standing in a food line under the watchful eye of what appears to be a police officer. 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 freedom from the misery and despair depicted here. In this way the advertisement was linking the “freedom” unleashed by the social market economy not only with some form of state sovereignty, but also with a free-



WIE SCHNELL DER MENSCH VERGISST

Schübig gekleidete Frauen und Männer, mit ausgemergelten Gesichtern, reihen sich an zum Schlangestehen. „Nicht drängeln!“ Sie sind verbittert und rücksichtslos, sie hungern. Die zugeteilten Kalorien reichen zur Bettelsuppe. Verzweifelt klopfen sie draußen beim Bauern an. Sie jammern auf den Ämtern um einen Bezugsschein. 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 Kulturnation . . . 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 erstehen Werkstätten und Fabriken. Menschen schufteten bis in die Nacht, sie schaffen sich den ersehnten Arbeitsplatz. Die Währungsreform 1948 bringt endlich das langersehnte gesunde Geld – jetzt kommt die ungeheure Maschinerie 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 nüchternere 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 Bezugsscheinwirtschaft, mit Zuteilungen und Schlangestehen. Mutig zerriß er die „Behördlichen Vorschriften zur Bewirtschaftung gewerblicher Erzeugnisse“. Er sagte:

„Geld ist der einzige Bezugsschein 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 frei 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 geeinte Kraft / führt die Soziale Marktwirtschaft

Illustration 4.2 How quickly people forget (b)

dom from the burdens that were inflicted upon Germans by the Allies during the war, by occupying forces in the immediate postwar years, and implicitly from the burdens of guilt for the Nazi past—thereby suggesting the founding of a new Germany on political, social, and familial levels.

Although Die Waage's advertisements were aimed at both "reeducating" West Germans to support the free market and creating a political meaning of the economic reconstruction since the currency reform, they simultaneously helped define "ideal" gender roles within West Germany's social market economy, particularly for the male worker. Two of the ten advertisements of the Die Waage's first campaign were targeted specifically to ward the male worker, although women's roles in the economy were also depicted with the slogan, "*Fragt die Frauen*" (Ask the women, Illustration 4.3). Appearing in magazines just before Christmas of 1952, these advertisements meant to portray the tangible results of the economic ideas expressed in previous advertisements. One of these ads contained an illustration that lured readers into the advertisement's message. It shows women, laden with bags and packages, window shopping along a crowded street. The store windows are crammed with new goods available for purchase. In the background stand what appear 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 toward one of the store windows, as if some good within has captured her fancy.

The accompanying text developed further the concept of freedom within this vision of a new West German society that Die Waage was constructing. Initially it explained that women occupied a crucial role in the economy. It was for women that men made houses, churches, motors, and soap. As the illustration clearly demonstrated, the text defined women's role in the economy as that of the consumer. And as consumers women held an important responsibility in West Germany's new economic system, especially since they constituted 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 path that West Germany would follow. They were privy to a certain knowledge of the meaning of the "free" market. The advertisement explained that women had experienced firsthand how the social market economy had achieved the liberation from the ration-card economy. The word "free" was repeated throughout the advertisement. It was free competition that paved the way for the free selection of goods of ever increasing quality, and at better prices. The advertisement extended the definition of "freedom" established in earlier advertisements. Freedom was not only freedom from the misery of the immediate postwar years, but also the freedom to consume, an activity in which women were particularly involved. From the perspective of the advertisement, workers should "ask the women" to find out what this freedom meant.

Other advertisements in Die Waage's initial campaign underscored the need for cooperation between management and labor, all the while conveying ideas



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 Befreiung von der elenden Kartenswirtschaft, von Bezugsscheinen, 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

Illustration 4.3 Ask the women

about masculine gender roles in postwar West Germany. One advertisement picturing men reconstructing a building, against a backdrop of factories with billowing smokestacks, proclaimed, “Das Deutsche Wunder” (The German ‘miracle,’ Illustration 4.4). According to the text both the hard work and skills of manage-



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 besiegten, 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 Höchstziffern. 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 tiefen 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 Wohlstand Aller durch geeinte Kraft



führt die SOZIALE MARKTWIRTSCHAFT

Illustration 4.4 The German “miracle”

ment and labor had created this “miracle”—reflecting a common sentiment among Erhard and his supporters, neoliberal economists, and businessmen to challenge the concept of a miracle and rather underscore work and economic policy as the sources of West Germany’s economic reconstruction. This advertisement went on to comment that “[s]everal 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.” Male workers contributing their strength and energy to the reconstruction of the West German economy was to be a recurring motif throughout Die Waage’s advertisements. The process described almost resembled a soldier’s call to arms, reflecting a shift in “duty” for men in postwar West Germany from soldiers during the Third Reich to producers in the new free society: “In unanimous cooperation—under the sign of the social market economy, industrialists and workers have produced together continually more, better, and cheaper goods—for the benefit of all.” The advertisement attributed a certain agency to the West German worker after the defeat of the Second World War, the subsequent “hour of the women,” in the immediate postwar years, and the Allied occupation. It was he, the German man, who rebuilt the economy, while the American-instituted currency reform and the influx of American capital through the Marshall Plan were ignored by the advertisement.

Together, these advertisements presented Die Waage’s vision of the new West German society: one featuring a harmonious balance between employers and employees and the reconstruction of “natural” gender roles with men taking up their role as producers and women as consumers. In future advertisements Die Waage would develop more fully this theme of a balanced, organic West German society and attempt to appeal more directly toward women. But in this initial campaign, Die Waage’s ads were primarily directed toward men. In any case, the ads laid out the organization’s basic conceptual framework. In a nod to major contributors from the consumer industry, Die Waage’s advertisements emphasized consumerism more than the CDU/CSU’s propaganda from the 1949 campaign had, but they both underscored the same idea: the social market economy established basic freedoms and facilitated the reconstruction of West German society.

In January 1953, the Institut für Demoskopie conducted a series of surveys to assess the effectiveness of Die Waage’s first campaign. The Institut’s report commented that the goals of Die Waage’s advertisements had differed from those in commercial advertising. They sought to popularize a political concept and create goodwill over an extended period of time. Therefore, the survey sought to establish a baseline of people’s knowledge of and attitudes toward the social market economy in relation to whether or not they had seen the advertisements. The survey results showed that of the men who had seen the advertisements, 55 percent favored the social market economy as opposed to 43 percent among those who had not seen the advertisements. For women the figure was a 44 percent endorsement of the social market economy among those who had seen the advertisements, while only 32 percent of those who had not seen them supported the social mar-

ket economy. Evaluation of these data raises the question of whether such divergent assessments of the social market economy were simply a function of exposure to the advertisements or a function of the audience that had seen the advertisements. In all likelihood that audience was disproportionately well-educated, from a higher social class, and more likely to support the social market economy in the first place. The report concluded with a call for a more exact study of the social structure of the groups reading Die Waage's advertisements.⁸³

For the publicist H. F. J. Kropff, the advertisements' strength was their clear division of the layout space, creating a strong overall impression. He thought the unified quality of the entire series and the continual appearance of the advertisements enhanced their effectiveness in shaping public support for the social market economy. By developing such successful materials, Die Waage in effect created a brand name for itself. But Kropff did observe that the similarity of the advertisements' layout might cause some to overlook the individual advertisements. In addition, the quiet tone of the advertisements might not be ideally tailored to the audience that the industrialists were trying to win over. Perhaps, Kropff suggested, the layout of the advertisements might have appealed to the aesthetic sensibilities of the industrialist rather than those who were the target of the advertisements—primarily, members of the working class.⁸⁴

In Kropff's opinion Die Waage confronted a particularly difficult task: it was not enough for the advertisements to be noticed; they also must have the power to decisively influence people's opinions and overcome many of their prejudices—that is, they must appeal to readers on a rational level. It would be misguided, however, for the ad makers to reach out to the broadest masses in regard to the “social compromise” without appealing to their emotions as well. Thus, the key to successful advertisements was to combine rational and emotional elements. Die Waage's use of illustrations, clearly, was designed 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 expressed in a “popular [*volkstümlicher*] form.” The advertisements' forceful titles and interesting illustrations combined with a logically built text could achieve this. Through the skillful combination of emotional and rational elements, the advertisements, from Kropff's view, achieved a psychological and aesthetic unity that appealed to the sensibilities of a certain readership.⁸⁵

The key question was whether the ads were reaching the intended audience of the “broadest masses.” In this regard, Kropff viewed Die Waage's ads as problematic. The first series of advertisements appeared to be too didactic. They resembled “speeches which managers delivered to the workers—as a somewhat one-sided conversation between direct superiors and workers in the factory.” Moreover, the logic and length of the advertisements took for granted readers' relatively sophisticated interest and patience on the subject of social tensions. This shortcoming prevented the advertisements from reaching the widest segment of society—in particular, one could surmise, members of the working class. Overall, Kropff suggested that the advertisements were a bit indirect, since they were more

collar worker, bureaucrat; 16 per cent, self-employed; and 13, per cent worker). Generally, most readers sensed 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 a more likable, decent, and convincing character. In addition, seeing Querkopf's rounded face, people viewed him as being more friendly, good-natured, open, and not so conceited. In contrast, although many people saw Klarkopf as intelligent, a large percentage also considered him as a bit snobbish. Despite the fact that Querkopf appeared more believable, 56 percent of respondents with an income under DM 250 a month and 55 percent of those with incomes exceeding DM 250 thought Klarkopf's position was the more convincing. In addition, 48 percent of respondents concluded that Querkopf left the two characters' conversation convinced, as opposed to 33 percent for neither being convinced and 8 percent for Klarkopf.⁸⁹

The report concluded that the qualities of the two characters were reversed in terms of which was the more sympathetic from the readers' perspective. The higher social class of one of the figures created some resentment among the readers. The report argued that the artwork must be redone so that the two characters appeared to be from the same social class. Querkopf's hat tended to bring about the "proletariatization" of Querkopf, while Klarkopf's more managerial hat 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 as Klarkopf, who was renamed "Fritz." In addition, some of Klarkopf's sharper features were softened and he was made older, so as not to seem like a younger man lecturing the older, working-man Querkopf.⁹⁰ In the advertisements that actually ran beginning in May 1953, Die Waage's executive board decided to follow the report's findings and blur the characters' class origins.

The Institut für Demoskopie also concluded that the advertisement's picture format was effective. About half the respondents reacted in a way that the advertisers wanted, including 55 percent of the respondents who believed that Klarkopf was correct. Fifty-nine percent of all respondents could correctly characterize the advertisement as backing the social market economy, and 48 percent said that the advertisement supported cooperation between workers and industrialists. At the same time, however, 19 percent responded that the advertisement backed a planned economy and 16 percent thought it favored socialization. In conclusion, the survey commented that 36 percent of the respondents found the advertisements interesting, which may not seem like a large number. But, the report commented, one must remember that in a survey conducted in June of 1952, only 27 percent of respondents expressed an interest in politics. Therefore, on balance the advertisements positively resonated among the public.⁹¹

With the creation of Fritz and Otto as the principal characters of its advertisements, Die Waage was primed for the upcoming 1953 federal election. It was at this point that Die Waage's activities shifted into high gear to support Erhard and his social market economy. Fritz and Otto embodied key qualities of Die Waage's new ideal West German male. Both were veterans who had been prisoners of war

but had seamlessly integrated into the new democratic society. They were to be depicted in masculine places—on the job, in bars, fishing, or picking up their paychecks. Although they were defined by their role as producers in the economy, they had shed any radical tendencies of the proletariat. In this way, Die Waage projected a view of the social market economy and a reconstructed West Germany where “natural” labor and gender roles were reaffirmed—clearly jibing very well with the CDU/CSU’s vision of the 1949 campaign. These advertisements also helped define a political meaning of the social market economy. This economic system was equated with the establishment of political freedom in West Germany and implicitly associated the SPD with a potential loss of that freedom. 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.

But Die Waage also represented a change in the shaping of public opinion that had occurred between the 1949 and 1953 elections. No longer did it suffice to produce propaganda that merely appealed to the “primitive levels” of society as in Adenauer’s approach in the 1949 campaign. Now, Die Waage could lend support to the CDU/CSU cause through a battery of carefully tested advertisements that aimed to resonate with the West German population. Private business interests had taken an important step in the “Americanization” of the West German political culture. Following Die Waage’s lead, the CDU/CSU and the federal government began transforming their approach to electoral and public relations campaigns.

Notes

1. See Hans Edgar Jahn, *Lebendige Demokratie: Die Praxis der politischen Meinungspflege in Deutschland* (Frankfurt am Main, 1956), 229–231.
2. Wipog document quoted in Gerhard Schmidtchen, *Die Befragte Nation: Über den Einfluß der Meinungsforschung auf die Politik*, 134–135.
3. *Ibid.*, 135
4. Schindelbeck and Ilgen, “Haste Was, Biste Was!” *Werbung für die Soziale Marktwirtschaft*, 33–35.
5. Das Programm der Freiheit, ZSg 1 1/1, BA Koblenz.
6. For example, by September 1953, the organization had received only DM 57,000 in contributions since its founding in January 1953. This paled in comparison to other propaganda efforts. Protokolle der Vorstandssitzung, 14 September, 1953, VI-059-277 (Aktionsgemeinschaft Soziale Marktwirtschaft), ACDP.
7. For an in-depth look at Die Waage, see Schindelbeck and Ilgen, “Haste Was, Biste Was!” *Werbung der Soziale Marktwirtschaft*.
8. H. F. 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, BA Koblenz.
9. Die Waage, Zugang 121, Ludwig Erhard Stiftung, Bonn (hereafter LES).

10. For more on industry's public relations efforts during the 1950s, especially in regard to its relationship to the Nazi regime and its role in the new West Germany, see S. Jonathan Wiesen, *West German Industry and the Challenge of the Nazi Past, 1945–1955* (Chapel Hill, 2001). On the creation of the Deutsches Industrieinstitut, see 101–119. For more on the changing attitudes and structures of West German industry, see Berghahn, *The Americanisation of West German Industry, 1945–1973*. For more on the founding of the BDI, BDA, and the DI, see Grand Braunthal, *The Federation of German Industry in Politics* (Ithaca, 1965).
11. Klaus-Dieter Schmidt, *Soziale Gerechtigkeit durch unternehmerische Initiative: Der Bund der Katholischer Unternehmer, 1949–1990* (Munich, 1994), 32–35.
12. Most of Die Waage's original members and contributors were born in the early twentieth century. See Schindelbeck and Ilgen, "Haste Was, Biste Was!" *Werbung der Soziale Marktwirtschaft*, 49.
13. For more on the reconstruction of the middle class in the Federal Republic, see Volker R. Berghahn, "Recasting Bourgeois Germany," 326–340.
14. Schindelbeck and Ilgen, "Haste Was, Biste Was!" *Werbung der Soziale Marktwirtschaft*, 13.
15. Die Waage, Zugang 127, LES.
16. Franz Greiß, "Erhards Soziale Marktwirtschaft und Die Waage," in *Ludwig Erhard: Beiträge zu seiner Politischen Biographie, Festschrift zum Fünfundsechzigsten Geburtstag*, ed. G. Schroeder, Alfred Müller-Armack, Karl Hohmann, Johannes Gross, Rüdiger Altmann (Frankfurt am Main, 1972), 96–97.
17. *Ibid.*, 96–97; and Simone Schüfer "Die deutsche Medienkampagne für die Soziale Marktwirtschaft: Dokumentation der Waage/Gemeinschaft zur Förderung des sozialen Ausgleichs e.V." (M.A. Thesis, University of Mainz, 1992), 31–32.
18. H. F. J. Kropff, "Werbung im Zeichen der Waage: Die Deutsche Werbung tritt in ein neue Phase," *Die Anzeige* 3, no. 29 (1953): 318.
19. *Ibid.*, 316–318. See also "Werbung für Alle," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 20 January, 1953.
20. Brose, *Die Entdeckung des Verbrauchers*, 15. For more on the influence of American advertisers, see Victoria De Grazia, *Irresistible Empire: America's Advance through Twentieth-Century Europe*, Cambridge, 2005.
21. Brose, *Die Entdeckung des Verbrauchers*, 34–38.
22. Broschüre Brose, 3, Die Waage, Zugang 136, LES. See also Kropff, "Werbung im Zeichen der Waage," 316–318.
23. Brose, *Die Entdeckung des Verbrauchers*, 55–58.
24. Harm G. Schröter, "Die Amerikanisierung der Werbung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland," *Jahrbuch für Wirtschaftsgechichte* (1997): 93–115; and Brose, *Die Entdeckung des Verbrauchers*, 36.
25. Hanns W. Brose, "20 Jahre Deutscher Azeigengeschichte," *Die Anzeige* (April 1949): 144–147.
26. Compare advertisements in Brose's *Die Entdeckung des Verbrauchers* with those contained in Roland Marchand's *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity, 1920–1940* (Berkeley, 1985). See pages 9–24 for the communicative approach in American advertising.
27. De Grazia, *Irresistible Empire*, 251.
28. *Ibid.*, 265–267.
29. *Ibid.*, 226–283. For more on the development of German advertising through Weimar, see Dirk Reinhardt, *Von der Reklame zum Marketing: Geschichte der Wirtschaftswerbung in Deutschland* (Berlin, 1993).
30. Uwe Westphal, *Werbung im Dritten Reich* (Berlin, 1989), 1–90.
31. De Grazia, *Irresistible Empire*, 275–279.
32. Westphal, *Werbung im Dritten Reich*, 158–163.
33. Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream*, 10.
34. Rainer Gries, Volker Ilgen, and Dirk Schindelbeck, "Ins Gehirn der Masse kreiichen": *Werbung und Mentalitätsgechichte* (Darmstadt, 1995), 45–73.
35. *Ibid.*, 37–88. For more on the development of a "universal vernacular" in ads, see De Grazia, *Irresistible Empire*, 237–238.

36. Christopher Simpson, "Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann's 'Spiral of Silence' and the Historical Context of Communication Theory," *Journal of Communication* 46, no. 3 (1996): 148–171; Leo Bogart, "The Pollster and the Nazis," *Commentary* 92, no. 2 (1991): 47–49; and Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, "Political Opinion Polling in Germany," in *Political Opinion Polling: An International Review*, ed. Robert M. Worcester (London, 1983), 44–60.
37. Public Relations und Meinungsforschung in den USA und in England, Institut für Demoskopie, ZSg 132/154 II, BA Koblenz.
38. *Das Soziale Klima*, ZSg 132/154 I, BA Koblenz.
39. *Ibid.*, 37–39.
40. *Ibid.*, 2.
41. *Ibid.*, 51.
42. *Ibid.*, 53.
43. Eine Werbung zur Förderung des sozialen Ausgleichs, 4 December 1951, Die Waage, Zugang 60, LES.
44. *Ibid.*
45. *Ibid.*
46. *Ibid.*
47. Die Waage, Zugang 124, LES.
48. *Ibid.*
49. Protokoll über die Sitzung von Vorstand und Beirat der Waage, 9 March 1953, Die Waage, Zugang 127, LES.
50. Die Waage, Zugang 128, LES.
51. "Die Verantwortung des Unternehmers für die öffentliche Meinung," Vortrag von Erich Peter Neumann, Spring 1953, Institut für Demoskopie, ZSg 132/278, BA.
52. *Ibid.*
53. *Ibid.*
54. *Ibid.*
55. Gabriel Almond, *The Politics of German Business* (Santa Monica, CA, 1955), iii, 29–35.
56. *Ibid.*, 52–58.
57. For more on the political involvement of West German industry, see Wiesen's *West German Industry and the Challenge of the Nazi Past* and Volker R. Berghahn and Paul J. Friedrich, *Otto A. Friedrich: Ein Politischer Unternehmer*.
58. German industry had a tradition of giving money to political parties. See for example, Henry Ashby Turner, *German Big Business and the Rise of Hitler* (Oxford, 1985).
59. Almond, *The Politics of German Business*, 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, 1968), 44–48.
60. Letter from E. P. Neumann to Otto Lenz, 30 October 1952, I-172-32/2, (NL Lenz), ACDP.
61. Besprechen zwischen Vertretern der Fördergesellschaft und der Gemeinschaft "Die Waage," 10 December 1952, Die Waage, Zugang 124, LES.
62. Protokoll über die Sitzung von Vorstand und Beirat der Waage, 9 March 1953, Die Waage, Zugang 127, LES.
63. This sentiment was reported by BASF general director Dr. Karl Würster along with members of the executive board. Aktennotiz: Besprechung mit Herrn Generaldirektor Dr. Karl Würster, 2 June 1953, Die Waage, Zugang 124, LES.
64. Berghahn, *The Americanisation of West German Industry, 1945–1973*, 155–181.
65. Bericht über die Besprechung des Waage-Förderer-Kreises am Dienstag, 15 December, 1953, Die Waage, Zugang 129, LES.
66. Notiz am BDI Besprechung, 2 February 1954, Die Waage, Zugang 129, LES.
67. Letter from Brose to Greiß, 24 April 1952, Die Waage, Zugang 61, LES.
68. Letter to Dr. Haberland, Generaldirektor Bayer, 18 February 1954, Die Waage, Zugang 124, LES.
69. Schindelbeck and Ilgen, "Haste Was, Biste Was!" *Werbung für die Soziale Marktwirtschaft*, 68–71.

70. Die Waage, Zugang 129, LES.
71. Die Waage—Ein Bericht über die Tätigkeit in den Jahren 1952–1960, Abt 16, Nr 1, Fasz 2, RWWA.
72. Schindelbeck and Ilgen, “*Haste Was, Biste Was!*” *Werbung für die Soziale Marktwirtschaft*, 82–83.
73. Karl Wurster, the general director of BASF, complained that the ads from the summer of 1953 were glorifying Erhard and that readers who remembered the “*Führerkult* of the Third Reich” might find the ads tasteless. Aktennotiz: B esprechung mit Herrn Generaldirektor Dr. Karl Wurster, 2 June 1953, Die Waage, Zugang 124, LES.
74. Sitzung, 3 November 1952, Die Waage, Zugang, 127, LES.
75. Schindelbeck and Ilgen, “*Haste Was, Biste Was!*” *Werbung für die Soziale Marktwirtschaft*, 82–85.
76. Bericht über die Sitzung von Vorstand und Beirat der Waage, 1 December 1952, Die Waage, Zugang 127, LES.
77. See Protokoll von Vorstand und Beirat, 19 January 1953, Die Waage, Zugang 127, LES.
78. Die Waage—Ein Bericht über die Tätigkeit in den Jahren 1952–1960, Abt 16, Nr 1, Fasz 2, RWWA.
79. Die Waage, Die Betrachtung einer Anzeigen-Serie, January 1952, Institut für Demoskopie, ZSg 132/218, BA Koblenz.
80. Die Wirtschaftliche Aufstieg—Verdienst der Arbeiter oder Unternehmer? Über die Soziale Marktwirtschaft, Institut für Demoskopie, November 1952, Abt, 16, Nr 4, Fasz 1, RWWA.
81. 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, January 1953, Institut für Demoskopie, ZSg 132/218, BA Koblenz.
82. Kramer, *The West German Economy*, 10–11.
83. Die Waage, Die Beachtung einer Anzeigen-Serie, January 1953, Institut für Demoskopie, ZSg 132/218, BA Koblenz.
84. Kropff, “Werbung im Zeichen der Waage,” 310.
85. *Ibid.*, 310.
86. *Ibid.*, 310–312.
87. *Ibid.*, 319.
88. Eine Untersuchung über die voraussichtliche Wirkung eines Aufklärungs-Feldzuges, March 1953, Institut für Demoskopie, Abt 16, Nr.4, Fasz 11, RWWA.
89. *Ibid.*
90. *Ibid.*
91. *Ibid.*

CREATING A CDU/CSU PUBLIC RELATIONS MACHINE: THE 1953 BUNDESTAG ELECTION



A number of historians of the Federal Republic's party system have identified the 1953 Bundestag election as a "critical election" in the development of the West German political system. This is undoubtedly valid from the perspective of how the major parties fared at the polls. These historians note that the Federal Republic's party system was fully established by the 1953 election with the major parties of the CDU/CSU, SPD, and FDP coming to the fore. When West Germans went to the polls on 6 September, 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 compared to 60.2 in 1949 (the CDU/CSU was up to 45.2 percent from 31 percent, and the SPD declined slightly to 28.8 percent from 29.2 percent). In addition, a total of six parties gained seats in the 1953 Bundestag compared to eleven in 1949 as many of the small bourgeois parties had declined in strength. From the perspective of the number of viable parties, the 1949 election was, like Weimar elections, characterized by numerous splinter parties, while the 1953 election ushered in a party system (developed further in the 1960s) in which the larger parties of the CDU/CSU and SPD struggled against each other and the FDP acted as a crucial linchpin in the formation of coalition governments.¹

The 1953 Bundestag campaign also represented an important transition in the West German political culture. In many of the technical aspects and its tone, the campaign were similar to the 1949 campaign, but it clearly showed the beginnings of an evolution of politics based increasingly upon image, mood, and par-

Notes for this section begin on page 199.

ticular issues instead of clearly articulated ideological positions. In regard to both technical aspects, including the use of new opinion polling and advertising techniques, and substantive aspects, such as an increased emphasis on the party's image, the 1953 campaign was an important step in the Americanization of the West German political culture—a process that would intensify in the 1957 campaign. By 1953 much of the old ideological strife focused on differences between rigid party programs meant to appeal to the parties' bases, which had prevailed in the 1949 election and Weimar elections, was beginning to fade. To be sure, the tone of the election still echoed Weimar elections, particularly with partisan defamation of the opposition, not least by Adenauer himself. But Bundestag elections were now becoming more like referenda on the personalities running for chancellor.² As the party that was truly driving this transformation forward, the CDU/CSU had begun to develop a party image based in large part on Chancellor Konrad Adenauer. In conjunction with the focus on party personalities, the 1953 campaign reflected an emerging transformation in the tools of political communication. Spurred on by a resurgent SPD, the CDU/CSU developed new methods for understanding and connecting with the electorate. The media of the Weimar and 1949 elections—the speech, the leaflet, and the poster—were being supplemented and updated by the infusion of new public opinion polling and advertising techniques. The application of these new techniques ushered in what could be called the “consumerization” of West Germany's political culture. In hopes of reaching a broader constituency, the CDU/CSU's campaigns increasingly sold its image by carefully tracking and catering to the views and opinions of the electorate, rather than barraging the voters with the party's ideology itself. With the threat of an SPD victory looming, the CDU/CSU developed a whole network of public relations institutions at its direct disposal, or working on its behalf, to influence public opinion. Ironically, it was the 77-year-old Adenauer who encouraged his conservative party to campaign in an innovative style that borrowed heavily from the United States. At the same time the SPD remained stagnant in its approach to electoral campaigning and accordingly began to lag behind the CDU/CSU at the ballot box.

The 1953 Bundestag election did not hinge upon the issue of economics, as had the 1949 campaign with its theme of *Markt oder Plan*. Instead geopolitical issues, such as the threat of communism, Adenauer's policy of aligning the Federal Republic with the West, the question of West German rearmament, and German unification emerged as the main focal points of the campaign. The CDU/CSU cultivated and capitalized on the public's faith in Adenauer to orchestrate West German diplomacy and to establish the nation as a respected member of the international community. Even in light of Adenauer's longer-term diplomatic policies, events in East Germany in the summer before the election most substantially set the tone for campaign. On 17 June, only eight weeks before the election, worker protests demanding greater availability of consumer goods erupted in East Berlin and spread throughout East Germany to some 270 villages and cities, involving upward of 400,000 protesters. By that evening Soviet troops had been

called out to crush the protests. This particular episode illustrated starkly to the electorate what appeared to be the imminent Soviet threat not only to German unity but to the West German state itself. Further evidence of the Soviet regime's brutality was its refusal to accept foodstuffs as humanitarian aid offered to East Germans by the American and West German governments in late July. Within this context of Cold War tensions, Adenauer's quest for close cooperation with the West and especially the United States was continually highlighted throughout the campaign—starting with Adenauer's visit to the United States in April 1953 and culminating in Secretary of State John Foster Dulles's comment, three days before the election on 3 September, that the defeat of Adenauer's government would jeopardize prospects for German unification.

After the election, the CDU/CSU clearly acknowledged that the key factors in the party's success were Adenauer's foreign policy and leadership within the context of the increased public goodwill toward the government resulting from West Germany's economic resurgence.³ Given the importance of foreign policy in the campaign, economic reconstruction proved an adaptable political tool. The CDU/CSU shaped the meaning of the social market economy and the burgeoning economic miracle to demonstrate the party's achievements within the context of heightened tensions between the two Germanys. In contrast, the party depicted the controlled economy in East Germany as a natural outgrowth of Marxist ideology. With this stance, the CDU/CSU portrayed the SPD as a danger to West German security—both from within and from without. The CDU/CSU campaign centered increasingly upon its concrete political, diplomatic, and economic accomplishments, as opposed to any ideological program. Clearly subdued in its propaganda were the Christian roots of the party—an issue that had played more prominently in its antimaterialist position in 1949. Instead of stressing that the social market economy allowed the creation of an organic, Christian society, the CDU/CSU began to talk more explicitly about how its economic policy enabled consumerism to grow in the “*Wirtschaftswunderland*” of West Germany. With its new approach to campaigning, the 1953 election reflected the CDU/CSU's ability to transcend programmatic politics and create an ever developing image of itself that appealed across sociological and economic divisions in West German society. Clearly, in this election the CDU/CSU had acquired the tools to understand and reach the broadest constituencies, thereby enabling it to emerge as a *Volkspartei*.

After the 1949 election and particularly during the Korean War with its 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.⁴ Public opinion polling showed at the time that the CDU/CSU's popularity fluctuated in conjunction with the public's confidence in the economy—a point not lost on Adenauer.⁵ 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, with the SPD vote increasing in all of the states except Schleswig-Holstein. Clearly, by 1953 the SPD was threatening the CDU/CSU's position as the coalition-building party in the government.⁶

It was within this context of the growing SPD challenge that the CDU/CSU-led government erected a network of institutions to influence and shape public opinion. Outside of governmental organizations, industry reacted quickly to the drop in confidence in the social market economy and the Adenauer government by creating its own public relations campaigns—most notably the activities of De Waage. The government's most important effort to shape 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 Herbert Blankenhorn, Adenauer's personal advisor and the general secretary of the CDU in the British Zone, explained to Federal Finance Minister Fritz Schäffer that such a body was essential to governmental activities.⁷ Adenauer commented that the organization would be necessary "to develop a good relationship with newspapers and journalists."⁸ 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). Despite its modest beginnings, the Federal Press Agency became an important tool for the chancellor because until 1958 it functioned as part of the Chancellery, and therefore acted directly under the chancellor's orders and in his interests.⁹

The Federal Press Agency performed what has been described as "*Hörrohr- und Sprachrohrfunktion*" (ear horn and megaphone functions) for the government, one of its chief tasks being to gather information from leading international newspapers and magazines, along with almost all of the German-speaking media. The agency made this information available to the chancellor, ministers, state secretaries, and other high government officials through short reports called "*Nachrichtenspiegel*" (mirror of news reports). In many ways, in fact, the agency's "*Sprachrohr*" function was a secondary one, especially during its first years. The most important ongoing function was the government's official information sheet, "*Bulletin*," which was distributed to journalists and provided updates on the government's activities.¹⁰

Despite its one-man beginnings, the Federal Press Agency grew quickly during the early 1950s, and its reach lengthened noticeably as the 1953 Bundestag elections approached. In these first years, the Federal Press Agency experienced a quick succession of leadership as Adenauer searched for what he unfortunately termed "a democratic Goebbels"—an indication that he had not yet completely comprehended the fundamental transformation of public relations that was currently underway in West Germany.¹¹ It was not until January 1952 that the government named a permanent head of the Federal Press Agency: Felix von Eckardt, a relatively unknown figure among journalists in Bonn. The organization's funding grew quickly through the 1950s. In the fiscal year 1949/50, the agency had a planned budget of DM 450,000. This expanded to about DM 12.5 million by the fiscal year 1956/57.¹² During the 1950s the Federal Press Agency also grew quickly in

size. In October 1951 the Federal Press Agency employed a staff of 22, which by February 1957 had swelled to 419.¹³ With the increased funding and manpower, the Federal Press Agency's influence grew apace through the 1950s as it conducted a variety of public relations campaigns on behalf of the chancellor's government.

One of the challenges of the Federal Press Agency's "*Sprachrohr*" functions was to generate public relations materials for the government that the public would deem creditable. Aware of the public's distrust of official governmental announcements after the experiences of the Third Reich, the Federal Press Agency very seldom issued propaganda directly for the government. Instead, the Federal Press Agency constructed a number of "camouflaged" organizations so that the propaganda produced by these organizations, be it brochures, leaflets, information bulletins, films, or posters, would not be obviously linked to the government. These organizations, including groups producing propaganda on issues such as European integration, NATO membership, and West German rearmament, comprised a wide variety of agencies at the government's disposal to manufacture support for its policies. The most important of these organizations in terms of West German politics was the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft demokratischen Kreise* (Working Group of Democratic Circles, ADK).¹⁴

Adenauer's state secretary in the Chancellery, Otto Lenz, named to the post by Federal President Theodor Heuss on 29 March 1951, sat at the center of this web of propaganda activities on the government's behalf. Born in 1903 in Wetzlar, Lenz was trained as a lawyer and had been an active member of the Center Party from the 1920s until its dissolution by the Nazis in 1933. In October 1944 he was arrested by the Gestapo and sentenced to four years in prison because of his association with some Catholic opponents to the Nazi regime. As one of Adenauer's closest advisors on domestic politics, Lenz counted among his responsibilities the major task of expanding the government's press and propaganda activities, creating what Adenauer described as "propaganda with popular appeal" and coordinating the propaganda activities of the Federal Press Agency and the CDU/CSU. In many respects, he functioned as the public relations manager of Adenauer's government. Clearly, Adenauer's choice of Lenz signaled his wholehearted acceptance of an American-style approach to campaigning and public relations.

Lenz maintained close contacts with Erich Peter Neumann of the Institut für Demoskopie and was instrumental in promoting the use of public opinion surveys within the government and the CDU/CSU.¹⁵ In addition, he played the decisive role in the transformation of the government's and CDU/CSU's propaganda. As early as August 1952, he was warning Adenauer that the party's propaganda was deficient and advocating a fundamental reconceptualization of the CDU/CSU's preparations for the 1953 Bundestag election. Although the CDU/CSU should continue to develop a platform (*Wahlprogramm*) disseminated through the press, the party should begin to concentrate upon "mass propaganda" featuring attention-grabbing slogans that stuck with people and proved convincing. To reach the broadest masses, Lenz explained, propaganda must appeal to the emotions—as statistics from psychology had recently documented. As part of

such an approach, the CDU/CSU should emphasize its personalities—including Economics Minister Erhard.¹⁶ Throughout 1951 he had already underscored that the government must not merely rely on the press to influence public opinion, but rather must utilize what he termed “modern methods.”¹⁷ Clearly, Lenz’s modeled his public relations on American methods. He clearly expressed his support of this philosophy in a November 1951 letter to Frau Dr. Heilmann, the head of the Gesellschaft für Auslandskunde, an organization founded in 1948 whose goal was to create contacts between West Germans and foreigners with similar interests. That summer Heilmann had visited the United States to study American public relations techniques and had established contacts with public relations experts and scholars. To draw upon Heilmann’s expertise, Lenz requested a detailed letter from her on how Americans conducted public relations, commenting that “I would really like to organize something similar in Germany.”¹⁸

As part of Lenz’s drive to transform the CDU/CSU’s electoral practices, a process clearly revealed in the 1953 campaign, public opinion polling assumed an increasingly important role. Overall, by the early 1950s, such polling had made serious inroads into West German politics; in fact, various groups were employing public opinion polling as early as 1948. In that year Ludwig Erhard, as head of the Economics Administration of the Bizone, had commissioned surveys from the Institut für Demoskopie to get a sense of the public’s reaction to the currency reform.¹⁹ The FDP, in preparation for the 1950 state elections in North Rhine–Westphalia, was the first political party to commission polling surveys.²⁰ Die Waage’s exploitation of public opinion polling on a massive scale to track sociopolitical views and the effectiveness of their advertisements constituted a major innovation in the implementation of public opinion surveys. In the ensuing years, the CDU/CSU was the foremost political party in the scope of its use of public opinion surveys and thereby contributed significantly to the transformation of the West German political culture. As these methods took hold, parties were less and less inclined to plumb the opinions of the amorphous masses in an unsystematic or haphazard manner. Instead, armed with polling statistics, parties could now differentiate specific segments of the electorate and appeal to them with greater precision. Political advertising became less focused upon the party itself and its ideology, and more on the views and predilections of the targeted groups of voters. In many respects, this change was analogous to the way commercial advertising was transformed from the 1920s through the 1950s from a producer- to a more consumer-centered perspective.

Modern political polling developed in the 1930s in the United States when such pioneers as George Gallup, Elmo Roper, and Archibald Crossley began to conduct “scientific” polls tracking presidential elections. During the late 1930s and 1940s American political parties, interest groups, and candidates quickly accepted polling and incorporated it into their campaigns. But faith in the pollsters faltered with the 1948 presidential election, when polls predicted Thomas Dewey would defeat the incumbent Harry Truman. The problem lay in their use of the “survey” method, which polled a cross section of the larger population, but left

each individual interviewer to decide whom to poll. As a result, those who were easily accessible were more likely to be interviewed, thereby skewing the sample. Very quickly polling groups took up the random polling method, which also interviewed a cross section of the population but ensured that this group was randomly selected, thereby enhancing its reliability.²¹

In contrast to the United States, in Germany polling research was practically unknown prior to the Second World War. Yet before and during the war the Nazi regime was interested in gathering information on public opinion. One of the regime's most ambitious efforts was led by SS Colonel Otto Ohlendorf and the internal ideological security arm of the party and state, the Sicherheitsdienst (security service, SD). To evaluate the effectiveness of Nazi propaganda and strengthen the regime's hold on power, the SD utilized a network of secret interrogators to gather information on Germans' opinions on the Nazi Party and morale in regard to the war. In the course of these investigations, which clearly were not grounded in social scientific methods, the interrogators talked to ordinary Germans in trains and other public places in order to sound out German public opinion.²²

As part of its democratization efforts after the war, the American occupation government established the Opinion Survey Section, which carried out seventy-two surveys between October 1945 and September 1949 testing German opinions on the economy, politics, and the recent past. Meanwhile, once the war was over, a number of West German polling institutes were established. In 1945 Karl-Georg Stackelberg set up the EMNID Institut in Bielefeld (Ermittlungen, Meinungen, Nachrichten, Information, Dienste; Ascertainment, Opinion, Communication, Information, Services), followed by Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann and her Institut für Demoskopie in Allensbach am Bodensee, which began conducting surveys for the French in 1946 and was incorporated in 1948. The Institut für Demoskopie served as an important conduit of American polling techniques to West Germany, for Noelle-Neumann had studied journalism in the 1930s at the University of Missouri, where she learned about the work of early pollsters such as George Gallup and Elmo Roper.²³

West German political leaders took immediate notice of these homegrown institutes. The government along with the CDU/CSU began utilizing polling surveys in early 1951 in order to monitor the pulse of West German public opinion and learn how to "sell" its policies more effectively. Since the Institut für Demoskopie was not just involved in tracking West German opinion in regard to politics but also conducted consumer research, the Institut quite naturally facilitated the transfer of commercial advertising practices into the political realm. According to one estimate, out of the 131 Institut-conducted surveys in 1952, 34 dealt with politics, 32 with market research, and 30 with radio listener research.²⁴ Erich Peter Neumann, Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann's husband, director of the Institut für Demoskopie, and a CDU member of the Bundestag between 1961 and 1965, had indicated to Chancellor Adenauer in September 1949 that the Institut could "provide political information with the help of modern, reliable psychological methods, which could not be obtained in any other way" Indeed, Neumann vol-

unteered to make a presentation explaining the usefulness of public opinion surveys.²⁵ Although Adenauer did not accept the offer, the Chancellery's reply to Neumann indicated that the chancellor "hoped to have the opportunity for such a presentation at a later time."²⁶

Clearly, Erich Peter Neumann accorded public opinion polling an essential role in establishing a West German democracy in light of Germany's recent past—especially the failure of the Weimar Republic and the rise of the Nazis. In December 1951 Neumann addressed a convention of West Germany's leading public opinion polling experts. He underscored the impact that polling could have upon the future of the West German democracy. Speculating about what might have been in the midst of German democracy's darkest hour in the early 1930s, he asked his audience, "Had the Reichsgovernment been well informed that a great danger was at the door, would it have been able to stop this development, and what could it have done?"²⁷ Neumann emphatically believed that the Reichsgovernment, if armed with the appropriate information, could have stemmed the Nazi tide and rescued the Weimar democracy. The parallel he drew to the present situation was doubtlessly clear to the conservative members of the audience, who in the context of the Cold War would have regarded the SPD as a potential threat to the West German democracy. The key, from Neumann's perspective, was that the government must acquire the right information to know and direct public opinion.

In 1963 Noelle-Neumann and Gerhard Schmidtchen, a sociologist who had worked at the Institut für Demoskopie, published an essay entitled "The Significance of Representative Public Opinion Polling in an Open Society"—an essay that explored the issues of polling in a democracy. Much of their article focused on defending polling against charges that it cheapened politics by forcing politicians to say and do only what the public demanded—thereby subordinating solid policy to political expediency. Polling data, they argued, could inform politicians who needed to do a better job communicating with the public and convincing it that their policies were the best options. In an era of "psychological democratization, in which the broad social classes long for a sense of worth," they explained, bureaucratic statistics, personal reports on the public mood, and the secret service (*Geheimdienst*) were no longer sufficient to guide political parties and governments. Their essay echoed the speech of Noelle-Neumann's husband by evoking the breakdown of the Weimar Republic. This failure of democracy in Germany would not be repeated, they contended, if a determined political leadership continually observed the ongoing political-psychological situation.

The assumption in Schmidtchen's, Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann's, and her husband's views, is that the broad social classes are fundamentally a dangerous force whose irrationality needs to be understood if they are to be controlled. In this view, the essential danger in the early 1930s was not the Nazis themselves, but the fact that the population believed in and supported the Nazis. In other words, these experts defended the use of surveys as a scientific and empirical means of understanding the fundamental irrationality of the electorate and removing what

they called the randomness of social speculation in the political decision making process. As Noelle-Neumann and Schmidtchen put it: "In a nation in which continuous political surveys are done, there will be no more latent trends. Potentially radical trends in the population of the German Federal Republic will be constantly controlled." Scientifically based research would enable the political leadership to deal with new social problems emerging in a dynamic society and "to realize progress without paralyzing social conflict, without coups and revolutions."

Ultimately, Schmidtchen and Noelle-Neumann's vision was very much a top-down view of democracy. Surveys would have a pedagogical value for the political leadership in determining how to direct society in a democracy and in creating a "reservoir of energy for democracy" by "providing the public spirit [*Gemeinsinn*] of the people with convincing political themes." Schmidtchen and Noelle-Neumann were critical of the classical Enlightenment conception of a rational, open society. They concluded that "[w]e know today, that the electorate does not possess the rational qualities, which according to classical democratic theories it must provide."²⁸ It would be political leadership, armed with scientific knowledge derived from public opinion surveys, that would supply those essential rational qualities. Overall, these polling experts were redefining public opinion surveys and propaganda, dissociating them from the overpowering instruments of a totalitarian regime, like the Third Reich, and repositioning them as necessary tools in a functioning democracy.

At first, Adenauer hesitated to accept public opinion polling. Upon receiving the first polling results, he reportedly commented: "This public opinion polling is the devil's work! How can it be possible to find out so precisely what people think politically, or what they think about the political parties and how they will vote. I distrust clairvoyants and people who claim they can read the future."²⁹ Yet, Adenauer eventually came to embrace public opinion polling. Throughout his chancellorship, he was constantly briefed with extensive polling data. In fact, one is struck by his deep familiarity with the information, as reflected by his comments in various minutes of party and governmental meetings, letters, and memoranda. Given his overall mistrust of the West German people because of their support of the Nazis, Konrad Adenauer found in polling the perfect tool for managing public opinion in the newly established democracy. But it was not only a method of entering into a discussion with the West German people. In the 1949 campaign, Adenauer and other party leaders urged that the CDU/CSU propaganda appeal to the "primitive levels of society" and present simple ideas requiring little thought. Clearly, Adenauer did not hold the electorate's intellectual abilities and rationality in high regard. Public opinion polling offered a reputedly empirical and scientific method to tap into the sentiments of the amorphous, irrational, and potentially dangerous masses. Accordingly, the new techniques described by members of the *Institut für Demoskopie* jibed very well with Adenauer's assumptions on politics and views of the German people. Adenauer, the CDU/CSU, and economic leaders alike viewed polling as means not only of tracking public opinion but directing it, obtaining power, and holding onto that power.

Through the spring of 1950, Neumann continued to approach Adenauer about the possibility of the Institut für Demoskopie's working on behalf of the government of the Federal Republic of Germany. He suggested that every month the institute deliver two information reports on the development of public opinion in the Federal Republic at a cost of DM 2,000 per month.³⁰ By July 1950, the Federal Press Agency had already commissioned the Institut für Demoskopie to conduct a survey costing DM 5,000, although as yet there was no formal contract for establishing an ongoing relationship. In November 1950 Dr. Heinrich Brand, an official within the Chancellery, indicated in his notes that Adenauer wanted to test public opinion regarding the issue of an eventual West German contingent within a European army.³¹ 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 extending from 1 November 1950 to 28 February 1951.³² The relationship with the Institut für Demoskopie and EMNID continued through the 1950s, with the amount spent on both institutes' surveys continually increasing. A March 1957 report indicated that a yearly budget of DM 150,000 was available for public opinion surveys, with DM 49,000 going to EMNID and DM 90,000 to the Institut für Demoskopie. Overall, the government and the CDU/CSU accumulated a vast and detailed body of information on public opinion covering an array of topics.³³

Utilizing knowledge acquired from the polls, the government and the Federal Press Agency set about influencing and directing public opinion through their network of public relations organizations. The above-mentioned Arbeitsgemeinschaft demokratischen Kreise (ADK) acted as a key organization distributing the material produced by the Federal Press Agency. Since its founding in December of 1951 the ADK had pursued its goal of developing the West Germans' belief and trust in democracy. It saw itself as the "Institute of Publicity" charged 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 public relations techniques³⁴

The head of the ADK, Hans Edgar Jahn, has explained that one challenge confronting politics in West Germany was overcoming the "*ohne mich*" (without me) attitude among its citizens. This "*ohne mich*" sentiment was meant not just in regard to West Germans' reluctance for rearmament, but also referred to their general apathy vis-à-vis the state, political parties, and politics in general. Polling statistics clearly supported Jahn's view. A June 1952 survey indicated that only 27 percent of Germans registered interest in politics, while 41 percent responded "not particularly interested" and 32 percent "not at all interested."³⁵ Voting participation was generally high in West Germany—usually with around 80–85 percent voting in Bundestag elections—but a sense prevailed that voting constituted the citizen's sole obligation.³⁶ Jahn believed that integrating West Germans into political life would be a difficult task and that Allied methods of "reeducation" should be rejected. "The government" he argued, "must make its policies trans-

parent with the most modern methods from technology and publicity. Good policies with advantages for the population must also be sold well.”³⁷ Although it was packaged as a grass-roots organization helping develop West German civil society and democracy, in actuality the ADK functioned as one of the most important organizations promoting the policies of the Adenauer-led government, while its links to the government were deliberately kept obscured.

Clearly, Jahn and the ADK based their public relations philosophies on practices developed in the United States. The United States had been the center of modern public relations methods since the beginning of the twentieth century. With the growth of a mass, increasingly urban, industrialized society, public relations was regarded by politicians and businessmen alike as an essential means of managing an increasingly influential public opinion. In 1904 Ivy Lee, a Princeton-trained financial journalist who emerged as the leader in the field, began doing public relations work primarily for big business and industrialists—in part to help large capitalist enterprises explain and defend their interests vis-à-vis the rising challenges of working-class radicalism and middle-class, progressive muckrakers. Lee helped develop a methodology called the “two-way concept” of public relations whereby his client would listen as well as communicate information to the public. This contrasted sharply with American business’s traditionally tight-lipped stance toward the public and the press—most notably expressed by the railroad magnate Cornelius Vanderbilt’s infamous retort, “The public be damned.”

By contrast, Lee stressed building public trust by truthfully reporting the facts and maintaining an open attitude. To enhance such trust-building, Lee subsequently added another concept: convincing the public that the company was working for the public’s benefit. Yet one could never be certain just what, for Lee, constituted “truth” and “openness.” While on John D. Rockefeller Jr.’s payroll, Lee spun the so-called Ludlow Massacre of 1914, during which fourteen miners were shot down by strikebreakers acting on behalf of Rockefeller’s Colorado Iron and Fuel Company, in the most favorable light. That summer Lee released a series of bulletins that reported the facts of the strike in a most distorted and misleading fashion—suggesting that the strikers provoked violence and that one of strike supporters, Mother Jones, operated a house of prostitution.³⁸ Through the 1920s until his death in 1934, Lee continued representing big business, including efforts to improve I.G. Farben’s image in the United States in the midst of increasing Nazi aggression and anti-Semitism.³⁹

During World War I, the United States government utilized public relations to bolster support for the war, spur military recruitment, and sell war bonds. It relied heavily on the famous Committee on Public Information—known more often as the Creel Committee, after its civilian director, George Creel. Established immediately following the United States’ entry into the war, the Creel Committee exploited all forms of media—the printed word, film, posters, radio, the spoken word—to advance its efforts and produced some of the harshest propaganda of the war. Perhaps its most notable product was the wave of posters, articles, and films vilifying the Germans as “the Hun.”⁴⁰ One of the hundreds of journalists

and publicists working for the C reel Committee was E dward Bernays. Born in Vienna in 1891, Bernays—who was a nephe w of Sigmund Freud—became the driving force in the dev elopment of public r elations techniques in the postwar United States. Describing himself as “counsel on public r elations,” Bernays combed thought from psychology, sociology, and market research and produced his semi-nal work, *Crystallizing Public Opinion*, in 1923.

Bernays rejected Lee’s belief in swaying the public through rational arguments and fully embraced the notion that the public opinion was driv en by prejudice, emotion, and the subconscious. *Crystallizing Public Opinion* built upon and more formally developed Lee’s “two-way concept” of public r elations in which the publicist enters into a discussion with the public and tries to understand it. A t the same time the book explor ed ideas of the “her d mentality” and irrationality in public opinion—clearly drawing upon G ustave Le Bon’s analysis of the cr owd. For Bernays, sound public relations required careful psychological and sociological study of the public mind. The public was not to be challenged with a dir ect argument, but instead must be led indirectly to a particular point of view or belief. This process was par t of what B ernays termed “engineering consent”—reflecting his belief in public relations’ important social function in shaping public opinion. Public relations’ principal task, as he saw it, was not to engage a public of heterogeneous opinions with ideas, since that may spawn fur ther debate and possible confusion. I nstead, the public r elations expert must attract the public with symbols and pictur es that touch upon deep emotions—ther eby creating a homogenous public perception of an issue, not a rational debate. O ften appeals would be articulated by so-called “opinion makers,” such as doctors, sports stars, and celebrities, in whom the public could unthinkingly place its tr ust. Bernays was renowned for staging the “created event” that would attract media attention, thereby generating publicity and influencing people’s opinions. Perhaps the best-known of Bernays’ creations was the so-called “torches of freedom” demonstration staged on Easter Sunday in 1930 as a protest against women’s inequality. For this media event Bernays organized a group of women, many of whom w ere former suffragists, to mar ch down Fifth Avenue in New York smoking cigar ettes. This public flouting of the taboo against women smoking in public generated considerable media attention throughout the nation. This event, Bernays later claimed, helped break down social barriers against women smoking and increased cigarette sales. In any case, by transforming cigarettes from mere consumer products into symbols of freedom, Bernays creatively demonstrated his technique of reshaping the public’s perception of r eality not through debate but thr ough symbols and thereby changing public opinion.⁴¹

The concept of public r elations, although it first spr ead to German industry in the prewar era, did not begin to fully pervade the Federal Republic’s political culture until after the war. In 1951 one of the trailblazers and popularizers of public relations for West Germany’s industry, Carl Hundhausen, published *Werbung um öffentlichen Vertrauen* (*Winning the Public Trust* in English translation), which served as the handbook for West Germans interested in conducting American-style pub-

lic relations. Between the wars Hundhausen had spent time in the United States, where he absorbed American public relations techniques—especially those of Bernays. Following the Second World War, he handled considerable public relations work for a variety of firms, including Krupp, and also wrote several books on the subject.⁴² His efforts familiarized a broad range of West German industrialists, journalists, advertisers, and politicians with American public relations efforts. These American public relations principles were increasingly employed to defend conservative political-economic ideologies. Die Waage's efforts to promote the social market economy clearly represented a public relations campaign based upon Lee's and Bernays' ideas. The Federal Republic's government also began to utilize such techniques. In May 1951, the ADK chief Hans Edgar Jahn made a presentation to Adenauer's state secretary, Otto Lenz, on "Democratic Information and Educational Work [*Bildungsarbeit*] on the Basis of Anglo-Saxon Public Relations Techniques"—followed up by a meeting in June in which they discussed publicity for the broad masses. Jahn then provided Lenz, at Lenz's request, with a report on American public relations techniques sometime during 1952. In fact, until 1963, Jahn would meet with the chancellor's state secretary to discuss the government's policies and their reception among the public. Jahn contended, perhaps exaggerating, that his influence upon Lenz was the key factor in the introduction of American public relations techniques into the government and the CDU/CSU.⁴³

Much of what Jahn's various books would treat as the basis of American public relations techniques harked back to Ivy Lee and his "two-way concept" of communication. Public relations materials, Jahn stressed, must address the reader as an individual rather than as part of the "masses," utilize illustrations to make publications more attractive to the reader, and take advantage of public opinion polling to initiate a "discussion" with the public—echoing some of the public relations and advertising techniques developed and implemented in the United States. Such techniques, Jahn observed, were originally employed by economic and business interests but could also be applied to the world of politics. In other words, the techniques used to sell goods could easily be transferred to sell political ideas. In the memoirs he wrote years later, Jahn argued that "[i]t is 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."⁴⁴

In many respects Jahn's philosophy reflected the CDU/CSU's move away from a "doctrinaire program" to more modern public relations techniques that combined citizens and state institutions in a living, organic whole. Only the creation of trust and a common sense of cause between individual citizens and state, in part created by active public relations, could effect this union. Jahn placed this conception of public relations within a distinctly German context. As he explained in his 1956 analysis of public relations work in West Germany, *Lebendige Demokratie* (Living Democracy), humanity had reached a crucial point at which indi-

vidualism and freedom stood before the burgeoning threat of collectivism and tyranny. To counter the depersonalization (*Vermassung*) of society and the associated danger of collectivism, new methods of speaking to the people must be developed. The defeat of Germany in 1945 had destroyed the German people's political faith (*politische Glaube*) and now politicians must act more as psychologists or doctors than as dogmatists. To develop democratic roots where there were none, politicians had to maintain constant contact with individual people and convince them that their interests coincided with those of the larger community and political system.⁴⁵

Jahn regarded the ADK as having a crucial role in creating this organic union between citizens and state. The ADK built up its organization over the course of 1952/53. By the middle of 1952, it already had hundreds of workers throughout the Federal Republic organizing meetings and presentations that explored such issues as rearmament, the European Coal and Steel Community, and German reunification. The organization also had a number of experts at its disposal to present speeches and lead discussions. At these meetings, the ADK would distribute its own political information bulletins and brochures supplied by the Federal Press Agency or other organizations. By 1953 the ADK was reported to have held over 2,200 assemblies and discussions that drew in almost 200,000 people, a figure that would grow over the next few years. In addition, the ADK distributed 1.1 million brochures, pamphlets, and books in 1953.⁴⁶

Perhaps its most unusual effort in public relations was its use of film, with 40 percent of its public events featuring films—mostly produced on behalf of the Federal Press Agency. The ADK utilized a newly founded firm named Mobilwerbung to screen these films. Created at Lenz's suggestion, Mobilwerbung dispatched over a dozen Volkswagen buses equipped with projectors and screens to town squares and other public places. This firm performed considerable work for the CDU/CSU during the 1953 Bundestag campaign, informing audiences about such themes as reconstruction, reunification, the Schuman Plan, the 17 June uprising in East Berlin, and Adenauer's 1953 trip to the United States.⁴⁷ Perhaps most importantly, the ADK staged these events not as didactic instruction on the part of government, but instead as grassroots discussions among citizens concerning the future of their nation. Although few of the ADK's public discussions and presentations dealt with economics, by distributing pro-government materials the ADK helped support the government's economic policy.⁴⁸

The Federal Press Agency itself was also active in support of the government as the 1953 Bundestag election neared. In August of 1952 Felix von Eckardt, the head of the agency, outlined for Adenauer its strategy for the upcoming campaign. The key to success, he argued, was "to convince the man on the street that the economic upswing, unquestionably caused by the policies of the government, has not benefited only certain groups, but all levels of society." The agency's propaganda should highlight the benefits of the government's economic policy particularly to those who had suffered severely during the war. Von Eckardt counseled the chancellor that this display of the economic upswing should not be con-

veyed through any logical argumentation. Instead, the populace wanted to see the government take concrete measures that would appear to guarantee a higher living standard. Von Eckardt suggested one such measure, lowering the taxes on basic groceries, such as milk, bread, meat, butter, and sugar, would accomplish this—and it was, in fact, a policy that the government instituted prior to the election.⁴⁹ As the election neared, the Federal Press Agency geared up its public relations efforts, especially providing material to journalists recounting the work and successes of the Adenauer's government. Von Eckardt reported that between January and July 1953 the Federal Press Agency spent around DM 2.2 million and disseminated over 100 new publications. Many of these dealt with economic issues, for example brochures supporting the social market economy.⁵⁰ Thanks to the government's public relations machinery, propaganda on behalf of the CDU/CSU was increasingly professionalized, coordinated, and ubiquitous compared to the 1949 campaign.

As the government churned out an array of propaganda materials in support of its own policies, the personality of Chancellor Adenauer played the central role in the election campaign—clearly a departure from the 1949 campaign. During the years prior to the election, Adenauer's popularity had grown rapidly. According to the polls, respondents naming him the “most capable German politician” climbed from 5 percent in September 1948 to 33 percent in August 1952. This contrasted with Schumacher's positive assessment before his death in August 1952 hovering around 12 percent.⁵¹ By June 1953, 51 percent of respondents named Adenauer as the “most capable,” in comparison to a mere 6 percent for Erich Ollenhauer, the main SPD candidate.⁵² As the popularity of Adenauer rose, that of the CDU/CSU grew apace. Party leadership after the election identified Adenauer's trip to the United States in April 1953 as the campaign's turning point, arguing that the trip “crystallized” the public's perception of Adenauer as a statesmanlike figure.⁵³ Polling results backed up this assessment. Particularly revealing were the responses to a running poll by the Institut für Demoskopie's that asked: “Which party do you support?” At the time of Adenauer's trip to the United States, the CDU/CSU's popularity climbed from 37 to 39 percent with the 17 June uprising, and up to 45 percent by the time of the election.⁵⁴ Perceptions of Adenauer's policy also shot up dramatically: witness the 27 percent of respondents supporting his policy in late 1951, compared to the 52 percent favorable figure by the summer of 1953.⁵⁵ The West German public increasingly perceived Adenauer and his leadership as signifying growing respect and acceptance for West Germany abroad and greater stability at home.

In no small measure, Adenauer's enhanced reputation was the result of the public relations work orchestrated by the Federal Press Agency and its associated organizations. Adenauer's trip to the United States itself, hosted by President Eisenhower, was largely conceived and carried out with political propaganda in mind. Lenz and the Federal Press Agency did their utmost to convert the trip into political capital. Most notable among their efforts was the production of the film *Ein Mann wirbt für Sein Volk* (A Man Promotes his Nation), a somewhat clum-

sily crafted, half-hour documentary depicting Adenauer's visit. It portrayed a strong and vibrant leader who was building a close friendship and partnership between West Germany and the United States—a theme developed especially through “photo ops” of such events as President Eisenhower's White House reception for Adenauer and the chancellor's dramatic wreath-laying at Arlington National Cemetery. The film, like much of the agency's propaganda, was produced and screened by the Mobilwerbung firm and its subsidiaries, although the Federal Press Agency's von Eckardt oversaw its final content.⁵⁶

Despite his dislike for journalists, Adenauer cultivated his relationship with the press during the run-up to the election by granting a number of interviews with selected journalists. In addition, a special rail car, used by Hermann Göring during the Third Reich, hustled Adenauer across West Germany during the campaign. Accompanying the chancellor was his publicity team and a group of hand-picked reporters who rode in a dining/sleeping car on Adenauer's train with the expectation that they would help favorably shape Adenauer's image on the campaign trail. Finally, the Federal Press Agency effectively orchestrated Adenauer's stops at towns and villages into “events” that sparked intense interest among the local inhabitants. Loudspeakers at local gatherings would announce his much anticipated arrival, replete with brass bands, flags, and the mass distribution of leaflets and other propaganda materials. Upon seeing how well villagers, refugees, and common people received Adenauer during the campaign, Herbert Blankenhorn made a telling observation. He had feared that the middle classes “would never produce a personality who possessed the mystic quality of leadership for a state of the masses” and that totalitarian regimes understood the need for a “dynamic, powerful character who satisfies people's fantasies and their inner need for protection. Without a shadow of doubt, the Chancellor has something of these qualities, so difficult to define.” Adenauer rarely disappointed the crowds thanks in part to his aggressive style of speaking, which was filled with ferocious and often personal attacks against his political opponents—especially the SPD.⁵⁷

Not only was Adenauer the focal point of the election, but as in the 1949 election, he had an important role in plotting the CDU/CSU's campaign strategy. From Adenauer's perspective, the stakes were high for the 1953 election. The chancellor was absolutely adamant in his belief that the defeat of the union parties and a subsequent coalition led by the SPD would prove calamitous for West Germany. As indicated by many of the polls taken in the early 1950s, an SPD victory was a distinct possibility. As Adenauer explained in a January 1952 CDU executive committee meeting, “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.”⁵⁸ 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 without a doubt, socialism and materialism will take over.” For Adenauer, the SPD constituted a “totalitarian party” that would undo all of his

work to integrate West Germany with the West. So deep was Adenauer's animosity toward the SPD that he did not even attend the funeral of his bitter SPD rival, Kurt Schumacher, in August 1952.⁵⁹

As in the 1949 election, the SPD bore the brunt of the CDU/CSU's attacks, which this time around were conducted by a broad network of institutions built to influence public opinion. However, Adenauer not only had to contend with the SPD from the left, but also had to thwart the aspirations of the bourgeois parties from the right. As former Nazis had regained voting rights by the 1953 election, the FDP and DP, coalition partners of the CDU/CSU, had strengthened their nationalist platforms and, for enhanced electoral support, created stronger ties to veterans' groups for support. Adenauer hoped to contain these nationalist sentiments as they would threaten his policy of integrating West Germany with the West and revitalize what to him were the worst elements in Germany's past. A key challenge he faced in the 1953 campaign would be to restrain some of these nationalist elements within the more moderate confines of the CDU/CSU as a whole, or at a minimum within a coalition led by the party. Consequently, the CDU/CSU's propaganda attempted to attract more nationalist opinions. To appeal to the growing number of military associations, Adenauer visited the Werl prison, where the British still detained some military officers for war crimes, and spoke personally with the Waffen SS General Kurt Meyer to ensure that his confinement conditions were appropriate. In addition, the chancellor traveled to the town of Friedrichsruhe outside of Hamburg to lay a wreath at Bismarck's grave.⁶⁰

Even with these side issues, public opinion surveys indicated early on that the public was disgruntled over the rise of prices resulting from the Korean War and directed its resentment toward the government. During the Korean Crisis, Institut für Demoskopie surveys showed that many West Germans held the government as responsible for the price hikes (46 percent), while 37 percent assigned the blame to world market prices. In addition, 75 percent responded that the government could do something about the rise in prices if it wished.⁶¹ This criticism of the government remained, although its intensity declined as the election approached. In July 1953, 25 percent of respondents regarded economic problems, wages, prices, and currency as the most important questions facing West Germans, down from 45 percent in October 1951. Meanwhile the issue of reunification as the primary concern grew from 18 to 38 percent over the same period.⁶² By September 1953, 36 percent of the population believed the government should concern itself with the solving economic problems, compared to the 32 percent believing German reunification was the most pressing problem.⁶³

In the Federal Press Agency, the government had an instrument to influence public opinion on an ongoing basis. As noted earlier part of the agency's strategy was to obscure its link to propaganda by publishing materials that did not acknowledge the agency as their originator and then supplying these materials to various organizations for distribution. One such example during the Korean Crisis was the brochure *Preisfibel* (Price Primer), which was designed to instruct 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 funding from the German Chamber of Commerce. The publication proved quite popular. In fact, the *Deutscher Hausfrauenverband* (League of German Housewives) requested 100,000 copies, although it received only 50,000, with the remainder going to various political and economic organizations, universities, and libraries.

In exploring the workings of supply and demand, the brochure positioned the female homemaker as a student of the free market. It opened with “Ten short stories on prices! Unbelievable, but true!” which tried to delve into the irrationality of “buyers’ psychoses” and at the same time introduce the concept of the West German consumer citizen. Among the stories were examples of consumers buying more expensive products because they were marked as “special,” along with illustrations of how a planned economy disrupted the natural flow of supply and demand. The brochure stressed how consumers’ actions influenced the workings of the market and had larger political-economic implications for West Germany as a whole. The *Preisfibel*’s influence was relatively limited since its distribution was not extensive, and it was probably read only within select circles. Nevertheless, it was but 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 actually so severe but rather were a matter of perception, and a planned economy would only worsen economic conditions. The brochures had titles such as “Aufstieg oder Katastrophe” (Ascent or Catastrophe), “Verdiene[n] 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?).⁶⁴

Economic conditions markedly improved for the CDU/CSU in the months leading up to the election. As a report from the CDU/CSU’s central party 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.”⁶⁵ Undoubtedly the shocks from the Korean Crisis, especially the rise in prices, had undermined support for both the government and its economic policy of the social market economy. By 1953, however, the effects of the Korean Crisis had begun to wane and public perception was catching up with economic statistics. 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 believing prices had risen dropped from 50 percent in late 1952 to 24 percent in September 1953, the month of the election. Meanwhile, those convinced prices had remained constant rose from 35 to 52 percent over the same period. Even those contending that prices had declined went up to 12 percent by election time.⁶⁶ In addition, in July 1953 85 percent of respondents indicated that their economic

condition had gotten better or remained the same during the last year. This figure had jumped up from only 43 percent in May 1951.⁶⁷

This shift in public opinion resulted from the fact that price indexes had fallen to levels not significantly 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).⁶⁸ Moreover, in order to give consumers the impression that prices were falling during the months before the election, the government tactically lowered taxes on consumer products such as coffee, tea, and tobacco—a move suggested by von Eckardt and described by some as motivated purely by polling results. The unemployment figure also fell below 5.5 percent, with the total unemployment under 1 million by the time of the election. Given these developments, the CDU/CSU's claims that times were improving rang true with the public.⁶⁹

In addition to the Federal Press Agency-supplied public opinion polls that functioned as market research of the electorate, the CDU/CSU began commissioning specific surveys to test the resonance of particular pieces of propaganda—just as was often done for advertising spots. One such survey explored the effectiveness of political leaflets. The survey concluded that the effectiveness in convincing the public of its ideas was not dependent on the leaflet's content, but rather on its propensity to be noticed by the public.⁷⁰ This survey reflected a number of developments. First, it showed how the Institut für Demoskopie was transferring techniques from commercial advertising to the political realm. Increasingly, a party's program was a product to be sold to the electorate. Second, the survey also demonstrated the more "scientific" efforts on the part of the CDU/CSU to craft its image, rather than to base its political campaigns upon a political program or speculation about the public mood. Clearly, the CDU/CSU was innovating in terms of the techniques used to shape its message and image for public consumption. In fact, for the first time, the party utilized a private advertising firm, that of Dr. Hegemann from Düsseldorf, to distribute its posters—allowing the party leadership to concentrate on running the campaign.⁷¹

A crucial requirement for this development of a CDU/CSU "image" was the construction of a more centralized party structure to direct and organize the election campaign—a move accomplished at the October 1950 Goslar Congress. The CDU federal party organization now consisted of the *Parteitag* (party convention), made up of representatives from the regional organizations, the *Bundesparteiausschuß* (federal party committee), which included chairpersons and leading members from the regional organizations, the chairpersons of the federal and state *Fraktionen* (parliamentary factions), and members of the *Bundesparteivorstand* (federal executive committee). The *Bundesparteiausschuß* elected the executive committee members, while the *Parteitag* elected the party chairperson and two deputies. At the Goslar Congress Adenauer was voted chairperson by an overwhelming majority of 302 ayes with 22 abstentions and 4 nays. Part of creating a national party organization was the formation of the *Bundesgeschäftsstelle* (central party headquarters). The *Bundesgeschäftsstelle* took over the party's administrative

duties, including coordinating election campaigns, but was financed mainly from the regional organizations. Heading the *Bundesgeschäftsstelle* was Bruno Heck, a relatively unknown politician from Swabia Adenauer named to the post in the spring of 1952. Despite the efforts to construct a federal-level party machinery, in many respects much of the actual political and administrative power within the party, as with the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft der CDU/CSU* in 1949, remained with the regional organizations.

The CDU did not achieve a highly organized party bureaucracy until the 1960s. In contrast, during the 1950s it remained an association of regional organizations, since many of the party members associated party bureaucracy and centralization with past totalitarianism, the SPD, or the East German Marxist party, the SED (*Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands*, Socialist Unity Party). Throughout the 1950s, the CDU leadership contemptuously referred to SPD “functionaries” to draw a contrast to what they saw as their party’s more grassroots workings and doggedly sought to retain that dynamic. For example, the regional organizations made certain that the federal party proceeded through them to contact the district organizations. In addition the regional organizations drew up the list of candidates for both state and federal elections. In many instances serious rivalries divided the regional parties—especially among regional organization within the individual states, such as the Rhineland and Westphalia-Lippe organizations in the state of North Rhine–Westphalia. In addition, regional organizations in the southern part of West Germany tended to resist centralization more determinedly than those in the north.⁷² The most striking element in the regionalization of the CDU/CSU’s campaigning was the Christian Social Union (CSU), the CDU’s sister party in the Bundestag parliamentary faction. It was an autonomous political party that had allied itself with the CDU at the national level. Overall, because of Adenauer’s popularity on the national scene, the CSU tended to fall in line with the CDU in the formulation of its Bundestag campaigns.

It was primarily in elections, however, that the CDU’s federal organization came to life and exerted its power. Despite the political importance of regional politicians, the leadership in Bonn, especially the powerful presence of Adenauer and his staff, established the party’s public positions and propaganda for the election campaigns. The *Bundesgeschäftsstelle* asserted itself prior to the 1953 election with efforts representing a clear movement toward the centralization of CDU/CSU campaigning—especially in comparison to the 1949 campaign. In many instances the district organizations were quite weak owing to low membership and became active only during election campaigns. The *Bundesgeschäftsstelle* wanted to direct the district organizations as much as possible; for example, it dispatched to every district organization a detailed “*Wahlhelfer*” (election guide) describing the work that needed to be done before the election.⁷³ In any event, despite the central leadership’s desire to control not only the conceptual but also the technical aspects of the campaign, the regional-level organizations still constituted the major force directing the actual campaigning within their regions.⁷⁴ They also exerted some influence on the conceptual framework of the campaign. As the strategy for

the campaign was coalescing, in January 1953 Heck met with the regional party managers to discuss their requirements for the campaign and the respective responsibilities of the federal and regional party organizations. This session also decided that several regional party managers would participate in the committee charged with drawing up party propaganda—along with members of the *Bundesgeschäftsstelle* and commercial advertising experts.⁷⁵

In addition, considerable tension sometimes divided the federal and regional levels of the party with regard to financing. Income from monthly party dues in the CDU was miniscule: for example, about 210,000 members contributed roughly DM 100,000 a month in 1953—with most of that money remaining at the district levels. For election campaigns, the lion's share of the CDU's money came from the so-called *Fördergesellschaften*, the promotional associations, that organized industrial and business fund raising in the individual states.⁷⁶ In a March 1953 meeting of the CDU's executive committee, Adenauer commented that the party's regional organizations had ensured that the promotional associations were closely tied to them rather than to the party's national-level organization, which presented a serious problem for the running of a national campaign. At that point the party had negotiated with the promotional associations to contribute DM 6 million to the CDU for 1953, with 4 million going toward operating costs for the party (3 million to the regional organizations and 1 million to the central party) and 2 million going to the central party organization for the election campaign. At this juncture the CDU treasurer Ernst Bach estimated the federal party's campaign costs at about DM 2.6 million. Adenauer stressed that the campaign be centrally directed and “must display the same poster in Kiel and Constance,” meanwhile acknowledging that propaganda must also incorporate features with local and regional appeal or otherwise fall flat.⁷⁷ Despite the drive for centralization of the campaign, by the summer of 1953 Bach realized that DM 1 million earmarked for the central party campaign fund was being diverted directly to the regional organizations—especially in North Rhine–Westphalia. Adenauer did not hesitate to express his extreme displeasure at his party treasurer's allowing such a diversion to occur and stressed the importance of the funds to run an effective campaign.⁷⁸ Apparently, the central party eventually made up the difference by pursuing deficit spending and relying on income derived from subscriptions by industry to the so-called *Wirtschaftsbild*—an information sheet covering economic developments.⁷⁹ Despite these conflicts and problems in financing the central party, the *Bundesgeschäftsstelle* controlled enough of the funds and possessed sufficient leadership to shape the main campaign concepts.

Planning for the 1953 campaign began in earnest in October 1952, almost a year in advance of the election, when the “Wednesday circle” consisting of Adenauer, Heck, Lenz, Bach, and von Eckardt began holding weekly meetings to discuss campaign strategy.⁸⁰ Heck and the centralized party leadership of the *Bundesgeschäftsstelle* formulated the main vision that the party would project, while regional- and district-level party organizations did much of the campaign work. For example, the *Bundesgeschäftsstelle* had ensured that each of the 195 district

organizations had a party chairman, who was to be paid DM 400 a month, to oversee and direct the upcoming campaign. In addition, the *Bundesgeschäftsstelle* established a press section to more effectively coordinate publicity for the CDU/CSU at the national level, while the regional party headquarters created press bureaus to provide neutral journalists with press releases, news conferences, and contacts with the important regional-level CDU/CSU politicians. The so-called *Heimatzeitungen*, local papers friendly to the CDU/CSU, were supplied weekly with a variety of interviews, reports, and candidate portraits; they printed much of what was provided word for word. More importantly, by the autumn of 1952 a survey of the sociological makeup and political development of each of the individual election districts was conducted and made available to all levels of the party. The party was carefully monitoring the “mass-psychological situation” within the electorate as well through public opinion polling.⁸¹ In fact, during the campaign, *Bundesgeschäftsstelle* manager Bruno Heck regularly sent to regional party leaders updates drawn from public opinion surveys in order to keep them abreast of the developing political situation.⁸² Throughout the campaign the *Bundesgeschäftsstelle* had at its disposal a wide variety of public opinion polling from the Institut für Demoskopie, along with survey data from EMNID analyzing party support as a function of sociological background.⁸³

Public opinion surveys clarified a number of key points regarding the election campaign. The *Bundesgeschäftsstelle* reported that surveys indicated the CDU/CSU as a whole must secure the trust of the electorate through the trust that was given to the party’s leading personalities. The party’s propaganda must not make promises that would lack credibility. Instead, party propaganda had to concretely communicate to the electorate the party’s great successes over the last four years. Particularly important in shaping public opinion, the report argued, was the stabilization of prices since the Korean Crisis and the drop in unemployment to under 1 million. Clashes with political opponents, particularly the SPD, had to demonstrate that the SPD’s ideological approach to political problems accounted for its sterility and weakness. In addition, the CDU/CSU had to convince the electorate that the SPD had single-mindedly followed a program of negation in regard to the government’s successful policies.⁸⁴

Overall, the CDU/CSU should play down any notion that the election revolved around ideological conflict between the CDU/CSU and the SPD. In fact, the CDU/CSU consciously sought to deemphasize what were called “cultural-political questions”—religious issues in other words—for fear of scaring away potential voters by appearing solely as the “Christian party.”⁸⁵ As in the 1949 campaign, the CDU/CSU could count on the churches, especially the Catholic Church, to urge their flocks to vote for the “Christian party.”⁸⁶ Instead of engaging in ideological conflict, the CDU/CSU wanted to sell the party image that was embodied by its leadership, particularly Adenauer or even Erhard, and its accomplishments, especially in the diplomatic and economic realms. In this respect, the party’s approach utilized the advertising technique of selling not the product itself, that is, the party and its leadership, but rather a benefit of the product, such as in-

creased living standards or an enhanced sense of security, that would subjectively appeal to the consumer/voter.

In the course of the 1953 campaign, the CDU/CSU had acquired the tools to understand and reach out to the broadest constituencies, thereby facilitating its emergence as a *Volkspartei*. Its approach tending toward issue- and mood-based campaigning reflected the growing American influence on the West German political culture. Dr. Robert Tillmanns, chairman of the Berlin CDU, clearly voiced this philosophy of politics when he commented at a CDU executive committee meeting that only a quite limited group of people could be reached through clumsy political slogans. People no longer wanted to hear mere party squabbling. Instead, Tillmanns suggested, “We must take into consideration totally different social strata and different attitudes. . . . For the Bundestag election we don’t need an extensive, vague program for all our economic and social policies, but instead we need clearly worked out and impressive goals and points for the present situation of our nation.”⁸⁷ Taking this approach, the CDU/CSU propaganda continually hammered away about the SPD as a danger to the future security of West Germany, while at the same time it trumpeted the CDU/CSU’s diplomatic and economic achievements since 1949.

This political propaganda utilized some of the approaches the party exploited in the 1949 Bundestag election. During that election the CDU/CSU had emphasized economics as an ideological “wedge” between itself and the SPD. The underlying message of its campaign was that the two economic systems presented a choice: the organic, antimaterialist, Christian society of the CDU/CSU versus the atomized, materialist, godless society of the SPD. As previously mentioned, in 1953 the CDU/CSU was consciously trying to broaden its constituency—especially among nonreligious, antisocialist voters. As a result, instead of associating the social market economy with pulling West Germany out of total despair and fostering the regeneration of “natural” gender roles, familial life, and a Christian community, the CDU/CSU began emphasizing more consumerist visions of its economic policy. In addition, the party exploited developments in East Germany, especially the Soviets’ use of brutal force to suppress the 17 June 1953 worker uprising in East Berlin, to bolster its image as the party of strength. Throughout its propaganda, the CDU/CSU defined the SPD as unreliable by blurring the distinctions between the SPD in West Germany and the SED in East Germany. In this way, the issue of economics was combined with the Cold War threat of communism—albeit in a different vein from the antimaterialist message of 1949. Instead, West Germany’s economic vitality, along with the rise of consumerism, was what made the new state dynamic and legitimate in comparison with its eastern counterpart.

Although its continued emphasis on traditional propaganda materials—posters, leaflets, and rallies—ate up 28, 14, and 9 percent of the federal-level campaign budget respectively, the CDU/CSU also began employing new forms of political advertising that were clearly influenced by decidedly American forms of advertising. One of the most important propaganda pieces distributed by the

Bundesgeschäftsstelle was an illustrated magazine, *Die Entscheidung* (The Decision), which boasted a circulation of 5 million copies and consumed 21 percent of the campaign budget.⁸⁸ The magazine's tone echoed the advertising techniques developed in the United States during the 1920s and 1930s—especially the creation of “human-interest” stories in which the reader is invited to share a story or experience with the ad's characters. In clear contrast to the “hard-sell” approach taken with most leaflets and posters by projecting an over-the-top mood, the cover depicted an attractive, young-looking, smiling woman holding a pen against her forehead—apparently about to cast her ballot. Much of the election magazine dealt with the division of Germany, the 17 June uprising, and the economic and social advances achieved by the CDU/CSU, but these issues were couched in very human terms. Chancellor Adenauer was featured prominently in the magazine. He was depicted, for example, involved in meetings with foreign leaders (one picture showed him on the U.S. Capitol steps), addressing a crowd in West Berlin after the 17 June uprising, and engaged in personal activities such as tending his beloved rose garden. Erhard was portrayed lighting a cigar with the caption, “Always calm, with a good cigar, and the right economic policy, Economics Minister Erhard tore up the ration cards.”

Intermingled among the depictions of Adenauer and his accomplishments, the magazine portrayed West Germany's economic advancement since the currency reform, and more importantly illustrated how these achievements improved the conditions of individual West Germans. The message of economic reconstruction was particularly geared toward female voters, who were the central pillar of CDU/CSU support. One example of this pitch to female voters recounts the “diary” of the woman on the front of the magazine from the summer of 1945 to the summer of 1953 (Illustration 5.1 and Illustration 5.2). The text and photos depicted experiences common to many Germans after the end of the war: flight from the Russians, internment camps, death and destruction in the cities, squalid living conditions, hunger, and the black market. This woman had to work as a rubble woman clearing the mounds of debris from the streets of Schweinfurt in order to earn ration cards to eat. As with other conservative propaganda, the narrative started after the defeat of the Third Reich. The story placed Germans into the role of victims of terrible hardships following the war and thereby distanced them from any responsibility for the crimes of the Third Reich. In addition, it highlighted the fear this woman had of the Russians in 1945, making an implicit parallel to the contemporary threat from the East in 1953. The ad also echoed the popular narrative of the currency reform: West Germans now suddenly earned money worth something and were able to buy previously unavailable food and goods. Women had been transformed from powerless victims of shortages to now active consumers. The narrator, apparently a single, working woman, vowed to herself, “I will never be disheartened and never forget this dreadful time. And I will also never forget, when I am full, how much hunger hurts.” Then, in late spring of 1953, the narrator gushed about the new material goods that she was enjoying. She had acquired a new typewriter at work, a bicycle for traveling around the city,

SCHICKSAL

BILDER AUS

3. August 1945

Jetzt sind wir genau acht Tage hier am Main. 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 um 3. Mai, wieder Flucht zu den Amerikanern — und dann zwei Monate Internierungslager, Hunger, Demütigungen, Angst — vor den Tschechen, vor der Roten Armee, die nur sechs Kilometer entfernt lag. Plötzlich setzte man uns auf LKWs und lud uns nach zwei Tagen in Schönbuchfurt aus. Wir hatten nichts mehr. Oma erinnerte sich an Verwandte, die hier wohnten. Also machten wir uns auf den Weg. Jetzt bin ich losbewide, Oma hat eine ganz tolle Chose den kleinen Max, den ich im Treck aufgelassen habe, hätten wir es nicht geschafft. Zu essen gibt es hier ganz offenbar überhaupt nichts ... Die Stadt liegt in Trümmern — ein Talkessel voll Ruinen. Das ist selbst für uns nach all der Versichtung, dem Tod und der Not ein grauenvoller Anblick. In der Hitze wirbelt der kleinste Wind den Staub hoch auf, zum Erstickten. Es ist ein rotgelber, fetter Staub, der noch nach Brand riecht. Ich trinke manchmal daraus. Dann wache ich auf und rebriere ...




21. Januar 1946

Ich spiele Diesendmädchen, bin geputzt und habe Lebensmittelkarten. „Wir haben wenig, aber das haben wir mehr ...“ Gestern ließ der OB eine „Ehrenkarte“ für Schultriumph verteilen. Wer sich drückt, beim Ehrendienst!, der bekommt keine Lebensmittelkarten. Peng! Wer liebt im Monat pro Nase 128 Gramm Fett. Ein Pfund Butter kostet im Schwarzhandel 250 bis 300 Mark, eine Dose Claudiusen 75 Mark. Mandelvat verhöre ich ein Schmeckstück — schäbige Rente — und kaufe was für Oma. Sinst nicht die alte Frau der nicht durch.



15. November 1946

Dieser Winter ist furchtbar. Wir werden alle so rasch dünner, daß man direkt zwischen kann. Kackeln sind überhaupt nicht anzutreiben, und zu essen gibt es fast nichts. Von Mutt und meinen Brüdern habe Levit. Meine Cheffa hat mir eine Eude-Clodopa-Flasche voll Tron verschert. Die Dajmischung ist superhaft — aber es ist doch wenigstens Fett. Hin und wieder fahre ich jetzt nach Amstere — einfach weil ich weiß. Jedermal ein lebensspendliches Unterwehen. So von vollen Zügen hat es noch nicht gegeben. Dad stein ist man auch glücklich, ein paar Pfund Kartoffeln, Eber oder, Gott behüte, sogar ein Stück Speck zu erwischen. Ich stiere vor jedem mal netter Kontrolle. Das sieht auszusafen, wenn wir die Ansa oder die deutsche Polizei wieder alles abschmecken würden.

16.

Illustration 5.1 Snapshots out of a German diary (a)

and a pair of stylish (*todschicke*) shoes from a store with so wide a selection that it was hard to decide which pair to buy . In the last entry, dated 7 June 1953, the narrator was even planning a long vacation and trying to stick to her plan of reading a book a week. But it had been difficult to select the books “[s]ince the selection is enormous—and there is so much that one simply must have.” The lesson

DIE ENTSCHIEDUNG

1945 - 1953

EINEM DEUTSCHEN TAGEBUCH



23. August 1948

Ich kann es gar nicht glauben, endlich ist unser Geld wieder etwas wert. Das Tag der Währungsreform werde ich nie vergessen! Davor geriet wurde ja schon genug — aber er kam nicht! Wir standen weiter bei jedem Wetter und stundenlang Schlangen für 100 Gramm Weizen oder ähnliche Konsumwaren. Und dann war es endlich doch soweit! Die Schwarzschänder, wie die 'Reisenden' mit den dünnen Brieftaschen voller R-Mark. Die wurden sie doch so rasch nicht los, und einstecken auf eine Bank, das ging auch nicht. Mir kamen sie vor wie Ratten, die ein stinkendes Schiff verlassen wollen. Aber das verrotte Land war weit... Und dann haben wir unsere neunzig Mark pro Was abgelöst, die andere Hälfte war den vierzig gut es noch nicht selbst. Das waren für Oma, Nica und mich sechzig Mark.

Wie herrlich! Jetzt habe ich neues Mat. Mutti schrieb aus der französischen Zone, alle sind gesund. Die Jürene schreit. Meine Arbeit bringt wieder richtiges Geld, für das man auch noch kaufen kann. Ich verspreche mir selber, ich werde nie wieder das gleiche sein und diese grauenerbliche Zeit nie vergessen. Und auch nie vergessen, wenn ich selber mit bin, wie hoch Hanger tut. Dieser Tage habe ich mir sogar einen kleinen Hut gekauft. Ist das nicht ein tolles Bild, wie die anderen zum Schauspielern stehen und die Auslagen beobachten? 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 davon geglaubt, daß der Markwuchst und der Schwarzmarkt und die Hunger-entzüge vorbei sein sollen. Aber sie ich gestern bei Frau Müller — das ist unsere Metzgerei-Frau gegenüber — erhascht war, die hat sie mich angesprochen und gefragt: „Ach, darf es nicht von der Jagdmutter für 'den Zetteln' mehr sein?“ Ich habe gedacht, ich fülle um. Für das Stückchen Wurst bin ich noch vor vier paar Minuten ohne anzuhören zehn Körner wert gewesen und habe womöglich meine letzte Wöchenspartie gegeben. Und dieselbe Frau Müller hat damals so gut geglaubt, daß sie selber mit der Metzgerei, Zetteln immer auf ein Milligramm fertig wurde. Jetzt glaube ich es wirklich, wenn wir wieder unter neunzig oder noch mehr Wurstsorten wählen können und so viel kaufen, wie wir wollen — denn wird alles gut. Oh ich jemals ganz vergessen haben, daß mir Essen das Wichtigste auf der Welt war!

24. Mai 1953

Meine Güte, da habe ich doch mein alter Tagebuch richtig vergessen. Merk-würdig, wenn man wieder liest, was damals los war und was für jeden von uns Lebenserwartung schien. Die gemeinsame Not macht doch alle wirklich gleich. Heute hat sich das wirklich geändert. Da sind meine Kollegen aus vertrieben, und unser Chef sich einen neuen Wagen kauft. Ich finde das wunderbar — daß es Leute gibt, die sich das leisten können — und daß man einfach manchen 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 Wellmann auch auf eine Probefabrik mitgenommen. Warum soll ich da mitmachen? Dafür haben wir auch im Büro alle neue Schreib-maschinen bekommen, leuchten. Es ist ein Spaß, darauf zu arbeiten. Und einen Durchschnitt gibt es noch, und wenn es nicht ganz geschickte sind, dann sollen wir nächsten Jahr sogar ein eigenes Schwimmbad für den Betrieb bekommen. Eherausgut könnte ich mich ärgern, daß die Frau Hauptwirth einen Prinzen geheiratet hat. Ich habe dafür mein Fahrrad abgeben können. Und ich dann die ganze Stadt noch mit einem Fahrrad abgeben können. Ein Paar tolle kleine Schuhe habe ich mir einige Wochen auch gekauft. Die Auslagen war so groß, daß ich noch überhaupt nicht einschätzen konnte. Wenn man hat mich dabei gehandelt, das Ehe? Aber das Bild ist eigentlich recht toll geworden.



FORTSETZUNG AUF SEITE 22

Illustration 5.2 Snapshots out of a German diary (b)

of the whole article was clear: West German living conditions had improved incredibly in the last eight years and ensured the end of the deprivations of the postwar years. Both this individual woman's and West Germany's prospects had been dramatically transformed. To continue this upward trajectory West Germans must vote CDU/CSU.

The technical layout of the advertisement was decidedly more advanced than the brochures and leaflets from the 1949 campaign. *Die Entscheidung* had the feel of a real magazine and interspersed actual advertisements for consumer goods among the articles and photographs—both giving it an aura of legitimacy and helping defray some its costs.⁸⁹ This was not a dry announcement of the CDU/CSU policies and a list of figures describing West Germany's economic growth, nor was it a provocative visual image meant to shock or scare the audience. Instead, the reader was invited to share very personally in the story of a young refugee who was rebuilding her life in West Germany. It was selling a political message in a way that did not seem overtly political or heavy-handed. Clearly the CDU/CSU was responding to certain polling that indicated women were even less likely than men to talk about politics. One spring 1952 poll indicated that 64 percent of women never spoke about politics, in comparison to 23 percent of men.⁹⁰ In addition, the diary of this young woman placed economic developments since the end of the Second World War in a much more individualistic context than propaganda from 1949. Economic reconstruction as a means of satisfying consumerist, individual desires was clearly stressed, while the more antimaterialist conceptions of the social market economy were subdued, if not completely absent. The idea of a reconstructed family life was muted, as this woman continued to “stand alone” eight years after the end of the war but had found fulfillment in pursuing new opportunities for consumerism. Clearly this ad was aimed more toward voters outside the CDU/CSU's base of religious-minded citizens.

The “German miracle,” as the CDU/CSU termed it, also had overtones that placed West German economic reconstruction within a larger geopolitical context. Even before the 17 June uprising in East Berlin, it was clear that foreign policy and the threat of communism would continue to play a central role in the campaign. A poll from July 1953 indicated that West Germans were deeply concerned with issues such reunification, preservation of peace between the East and West, and rearmament (34, 16, and 15 percent of respondents respectively saw these as West Germany's most important issues), while the issue of economics had declined in importance since the middle of the Korean Crisis (from 45 percent in October 1951 to 25 percent).⁹¹

The issues of German reunification and West German foreign policy had heated up since the 1949 election. In November 1949 Adenauer signed the Petersberg Agreement which allowed West Germany to reenter international organizations and establish consulates in other countries among other things. Within the context of the demands of the Korean War, French Minister President René Pleven proposed in October 1950 to combine Western military forces, including elements from West Germany, in the so-called European Defense Community (EDC). In May 1952 West Germany and the three Western powers of the United States, Great Britain, and France signed the General Treaty that recognized the sovereignty of the Federal Republic, pledged to work toward a unified Germany modeled on the existing Federal Republic, and anchored the Federal Republic within the growing framework of Western international institutions. Adenauer pushed

through acceptance of the EDC and the General Treaty in the Bundestag, and the treaties were passed by March 1953. The General Treaty was developed in conjunction with West German contributions to the EDC. Therefore, when the French parliament refused to ratify the EDC treaty in August 1954, new talks ensued with the three Western powers, producing a new General Treaty in October 1954 and granting final West German sovereignty in May 1955. All the while, the Soviet Union tried to block, or at least slow down, Adenauer's policy of Western integration. Between March and May 1952 Stalin issued a series of three "notes" calling for the unification of a sovereign, neutral Germany with free national elections supervised by the four powers. Although some, particularly on the left, interpreted Stalin's overtures as potentially genuine, Adenauer saw these actions as mere propaganda on Stalin's part and demanded that unification be achieved through Germany's integration into the West.

In the early 1950s the SPD under both Schumacher's and Ollenhauer's leadership had vigorously attacked Adenauer and the CDU/CSU as pawns of the occupational forces working for West Germany's integration into the West. They particularly pointed to, for example, the drive for rearmament initiated by Adenauer in the spring of 1950, talks about Western economic integration with the European Coal and Steel Community, and the ultimately unsuccessful plan to create the EDC. To the SPD, Adenauer's Western policy ensured the continued division of Germany and heightened the risk of another catastrophic war. Instead, the SPD argued, West Germany must remain free of commitments on either side of the Iron Curtain and continue negotiations among the four Allied powers and Germany. With the death of Stalin in March 1953 and Winston Churchill's call for renewed four-power discussions, the issue of reunification once again came to the fore. The SPD made use of these developments; one of the main points of its 1953 campaign platform proclaimed, "Peace and security through communication—not danger of war through an arms race."⁹²

The CDU/CSU zeroed in on what might come across in a heated election campaign as a weak and indecisive SPD position. It 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. 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.

They [the SPD leaders] want to fish widely for votes in the "bourgeois" waters, in order to pursue a socialist economic policy with the help of these votes. 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 labor policies.⁹³

Articles in the *Union in Deutschland* published closer to the election were not so subtle. One simply announced the conclusion of a refugee from the Soviet Zone, "Socialism leads to communism."⁹⁴

The 17 June revolt in East Berlin only heightened this sense of contrast between the two Germanies and the threat of communism. In the Bundestag debate that followed 17 June the SPD proclaimed that the brutal suppression of the uprising proved the failure of Adenauer's foreign and German policy and called for more negotiations among the four powers. In mid August, just weeks before the election, Adenauer claimed that two SPD functionaries had received funds from the Soviet Zone. The accused pair initiated court proceedings against Adenauer, and the chancellor withdrew his statements months later before a court. But nevertheless his attacks hit their mark, coming as they did just before the election. The CDU/CSU put pressure on the SPD by leadingly releasing to the press "Four Questions on Reunification" in an attempt to force the SPD to clarify its foreign policy position. In response on 28 August the SPD issued a paper entitled "The European Policy of the Social Democrats." It reaffirmed the SPD's position that the various efforts for European cooperation sought "to make [Germany] into an instrument of the Cold War." German policy must be directed toward German unification in freedom, an advancement that "required an agreement among the four occupying powers." Willie Eichler explained in an ill-conceived press conference that negotiations among the four powers were preferable to a victorious nuclear war. Although privately Adenauer desired a four-power conference on the German question at some future date, he wanted it to convene after the 6 September elections, for fear of the Soviets exploiting the talks as propaganda to defeat the CDU/CSU. In fact, in July 1953, Adenauer successfully appealed to the United States to postpone such a conference.⁹⁵ However, not wanting to lose an opportunity to make political hay, the CDU/CSU pounced on the SPD's pronouncement. The SPD foreign policy, Adenauer proclaimed, "would be a betrayal of the German people." According to a CDU/CSU press release, the SPD advocated "that the four powers, just as it was demanded by Moscow at the Potsdam Agreement, would negotiate with each other over the position of the future Germany." Therefore the SPD's policy would sell out Germany's political self-determination. The release concluded that "[t]he SPD appears to be ready to take on the political conceptions of Moscow on one of the most crucial issues and incur risks that no responsibly minded government could ever accept."⁹⁶ Overall, the CDU/CSU sought to convince the electorate that the SPD was at best incapable of governing or at worst untrustworthy, treasonous, and "un-German." Simultaneously the CDU/CSU touted itself as the only true defender of the West German state and society against a red tide poised to engulf the nation.⁹⁷

This sentiment that the SPD could not be trusted was expressed quite clearly in the most widely distributed CDU/CSU propaganda: leaflets, speeches, and posters—and especially in the campaign's most infamous poster, "All roads of Marxism lead to Moscow" (Illustration 5.3). With a landscape of lines all drawing the viewer's eyes to a half seen, half unseen Bolshevik lurking in the background, this poster exemplified the anticommunist tone of the CDU/CSU campaign as a whole. Like some of the posters from the 1949 election, this poster offered multiple readings to the electorate, although each evoked a sense of fear of alien forces

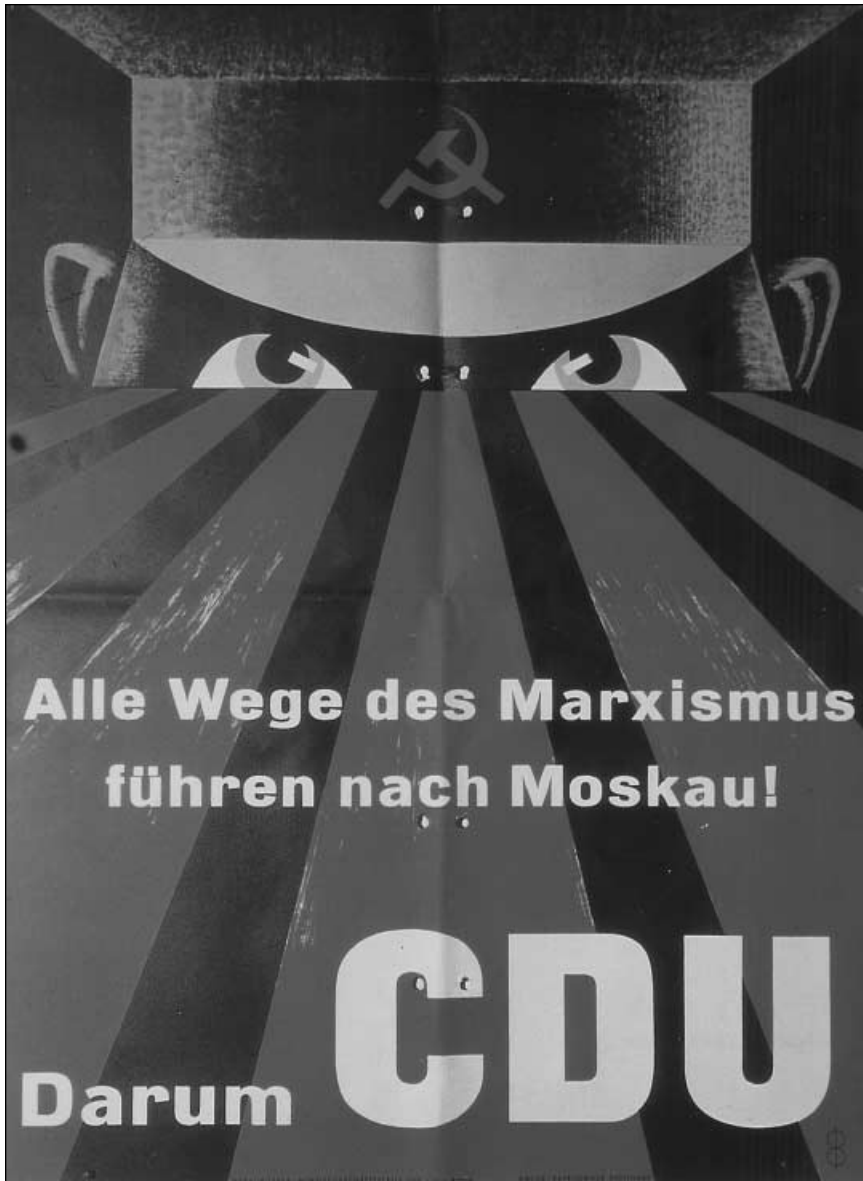


Illustration 5.3 All of roads of Marxism lead to Moscow

from within and from without West Germany. Fundamentally the poster erased any distinctions between the SPD and communism and implicitly defined the Social Democrats as a dangerous internal political element whose ultimate loyalties lay outside the Federal Republic. The poster's title, suggesting the well-known saying "All roads lead to Rome," played off the common sentiment that a glori-

ous element of Germany's cultural heritage lay in its ability to resist and remain outside the ancient empire—just as West Germany was now resisting the incursion of the totalitarian Soviet regime. Clearly, the 17 June uprising gave the poster special potency. Even though it was probably designed before the revolt, West Germans, especially refugees from the East, could interpret the poster as an affirmation of Adenauer's policy of West German security being tied to the West. To social conservatives it represented the danger to the "natural" order of gender and family roles in the face of the "*Gleichmacherei*" (leveling) of East Germany. From the perspective of economics, it illustrated the CDU/CSU's charge against the SPD that a policy of socialization led to the controlled economy of the communist states to the East.

The CDU/CSU's leaflets, aimed at the electorate's most impressionable and least educated segments, launched strong attacks against the SPD. In many ways the CDU/CSU's leaflets heeded the lesson from the Institut für Demoskopie survey: a political leaflet's principal task was to attract notice. Most of their leaflets incorporated eye-catching illustrations on the front and back pages, while the middle two pages offered more factual arguments. But compared to the illustrated magazine, they clearly represented a relatively crude "hard sell" approach filled with exaggeration, personal attacks, and innuendo.

One leaflet opened with the words, "Attention, Swindler!" above a drawing of grotesque-looking figures whispering into the unsuspecting voters' ears. It tainted the political reliability of the SPD by urgently warning the population "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 provided statistics as evidence of the government's increased social spending, showing how the CDU/CSU was a "social" party. The final page evoked Biblical images by depicting an apple labeled "SPD" dangling 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 could not be trusted. The accusatory references to "swindlers" and "red agents" portrayed the SPD as a sinister, insidious force. The party represented the infiltration of dangerous elements that would lead to West Germany being cast out from economic and social security, while in contrast the CDU/CSU sold itself as reconstructing a whole, prosperous West German "Eden."

The leaflet that perhaps made the clearest link between the SPD of West Germany and the Communists in East Germany was one that blasted the Deutsche Gewerkschaftsbund (German Federation of Labor Unions, DGB), the West German trade union, for disseminating political propaganda prior to the election, a move of questionable legality since unions were required by law to remain politically neutral in election campaigns (Illustration 5.4). In the summer of 1953 the DGB's leadership called on West Germans to "Vote for a better Bundestag." Besides leaflets, the DGB produced glossy magazines with an estimated circulation of 14.5 million copies, explaining the DGB's unfulfilled demands, the increase in



Illustration 5.4 The CDU has said for years:

prices, and what it claimed was the government's inadequate social policy. Just before the election the organization placed an ad in newspapers playing off Die Waage's advertisements in which two workers concluded they would vote for a better Bundestag. The CDU/CSU leaflet exploited the DGB's call to "Vote for a better Bundestag" with a list of accusations against the DGB and the SPD. Beneath the text, a drawing depicted Olenhauer and a DGB representative blowing

a trumpet labeled “SPD.” Meanwhile, a Soviet officer claps his hands in approval in the background. Again, as in other examples of the CDU/CSU propaganda, the boundaries between the SPD, the DGB, and the Communists in East Germany were blurred. This leaflet was even more effective, given the accusations of the left’s connections to the SED that were flying around before the election. In fact, at a political rally in August, Adenauer claimed that the DGB’s appeal “reeked suspiciously of communist infiltration” and that the DGB’s board of directors was contaminated by communism.⁹⁸

The CDU/CSU leaflet concentrating on economics built upon this motif by utilizing the slogan “Whoops Comrade!” and citing examples of the SPD’s “false prophecies,” such as their dire predictions of Germany’s not becoming “viable” because of its economic policy. As in other leaflets, its middle pages provided statistics tracing the rise of production in West Germany and the increased buying power of workers’ wages. The back page depicted Erich Ollenhauer and Carlo Schmid as bloated SPD “functionaries” sitting at a table gorging themselves (Illustration 5.5). The text below, written as a satirical poem, portrayed 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, even though they enjoyed the very benefits of that policy.

The CDU/CSU’s attacks on the SPD proved effective. After the election, the *Bundesgeschäftsstelle* sent out questionnaires to all of the district party organizations inquiring about their propaganda’s effectiveness and the how well organized the campaign had been. This leaflet, along with the poster “All roads of Marxism lead to Moscow,” were reported by district-level CDU/CSU organizations to be extremely effective, resonating deeply with the population.⁹⁹ Taken as a whole, the CDU/CSU’s propaganda captured the spirit of the times and the overall mood and fears of the electorate. The events of the summer of 1953 heightened 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 the Soviet Union. Although there are no surveys that pursue this question into the summer of 1953, undoubtedly this sentiment remained high, especially after the 17 June uprising. In September 1955, 56 percent of West Germans believed that the Russians still wanted to make Germany communist.¹⁰⁰ But perhaps more importantly, the CDU/CSU had created a coherent theme for their campaign. Economic reconstruction, the SPD’s unreliability, and the threat of communism were fused together to demonstrate to West Germans the need to stay the course.

In the 1953 election campaign not only did the CDU/CSU take credit for West Germany’s economic upswing and link it to the party’s foreign policy, but economic propaganda increasingly focused upon the idea that reconstruction and economic success were 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 only as satisfying individual needs or desires, but also as an essential element in the creation of the new West German state. As the CDU/CSU politician who spoke for the con-



Illustration 5.5 Conversations on the left

sumer, Ludwig Erhard took center stage in marketing this ideology to West Germans—particularly to women voters. A year prior to the election, in a 28 June 1952 speech opening the exhibition of “Die Wirtschaft im Dienst der Hausfrau” (The Economy in Service of the Housewife), in Frankfurt, Erhard clearly articulated

the importance of economics in a free society. Addressing a mostly female crowd, Erhard proclaimed that “[t]he 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.”¹⁰¹ From Erhard’s perspective, women controlled the crucial element in democracy—the freedom to consume—and were consequently positioned as the key upholders of the newly formed Federal Republic. For Erhard, consumer choice not only defined the West German democracy, it set West Germany apart from both its eastern counterpart and the Nazi past.¹⁰²

This conception of economic gender roles played itself out in the political arena as revealed by the CDU/CSU’s electoral propaganda. In the last days before the election, the CDU/CSU distributed a letter from Erhard addressed to housewives all over West Germany—a distribution totaling 5,280,000.¹⁰³ 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.” Erhard went on to explain that housewives’ challenges, such as making ends meet, taking care of purchases, and keeping the house in order, resembled the problems the economics minister faced. The letter finally connected the public and political implications of women’s private role as the “economics ministers of the household.” Erhard outlined the substantial material improvements achieved in West Germany since the 1948 currency reform and warned women that the gains from the previous five years could be lost by failing to vote 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 [a clever pun since *Stimme* can also mean “vote”] other than your conscience as the economics minister of your family.”

As he had done on other occasions, Erhard spoke in the letter not as a political representative of the CDU/CSU, but rather as a Federal Republic cabinet member. Erhard’s appeal helped create a gendered sense of the government and civic duty by suggesting that women possessed a special insight into political and economic developments. With their experience and knowledge in making daily economic decisions within the private sphere, women had a role that paralleled Erhard’s public role in the federal government. By making the correct decisions in consumption, women were strengthening the newly founded West German democracy. This knowledge demanded that they exert what was defined as their civic duty of voting for the CDU/CSU. Yet in no way did the letter hint that women should extend their political influence beyond their very clearly delineated realm within the home and at the ballot box.

Economic production and consumerist prosperity were means by which West Germany’s Cold War rivalry with East Germany was carried out, and propaganda regarding this issue was also constructed in a specifically gendered context. In Erhard’s letter to housewives, one means of legitimizing the Federal Republic of

Germany was to compare its economic development with that of East Germany. Erhard asserted that those who had doubted the social market economy in 1948/49 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 sisters and brothers in the East” to appreciate that West Germany had pursued the correct path and constituted, in fact, the legitimate Germany.¹⁰⁴

In contrast to the 1949 campaign, in 1953 the CDU/CSU enjoyed the luxury of propaganda campaigns running parallel to its own. Perhaps having a wider reach than the propaganda generated by organizations affiliated with the Federal Press Agency, *Die Waage*, the business-funded organization advertising the social market economy, geared up its efforts for the upcoming Bundestag election.¹⁰⁵ While much of the CDU/CSU’s 1953 propaganda concentrated on foreign policy issues, *Die Waage* exploited the growth of the West German economy to lend support to the “bourgeois” parties, with Economic Minister Ludwig Erhard assuming a pivotal role in the campaign. *Die Waage*’s advertisements echoed and reaffirmed the CDU/CSU’s vision of the social market economy and the economic miracle—both with regard to the SPD’s dangerous connection to developments in the East and in a gendered understanding of economic reconstruction. In addition, by extensively utilizing public opinion surveys and contracting a professional advertising agent to shape its campaign, *Die Waage*, if anything, was even out ahead of the CDU/CSU in the application of modern public relations techniques.

As an organization representing private business, rather than any particular political party, *Die Waage* had a difficult time formulating its advertisements in a way the contributors found acceptable. In non-election years its campaigns focused on strengthening support for the social market economy, improving labor-management relations, and promoting social tranquility in West Germany. In election years, however, the circumstances were decidedly different. Early in 1953 *Die Waage*’s executive board decided its advertisements should emphasize “Erhard’s social market economy” rather than merely the “social market economy,” because surveys from the Institut für Demoskopie had indicated the 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.¹⁰⁶

But this route created more problems. Most of *Die Waage*’s earlier advertising had stressed more abstract economic ideas or promoted peaceful industrial relations by depicting 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 bourgeois parties. *Die Waage*’s advertising agent, Hanns Brose, suggested that one of its pre-election posters 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.”¹⁰⁷ *Die Waage*’s executive board vehemently rejected this in favor of focusing upon Erhard and not mentioning any particular political party. This controversy illustrated a fundamental problem facing *Die Waage*. Its contributors were a varied group of indus-

trialists 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 explicitly. At the same time the organization was closely aligned with Economics Minister Erhard—a leading political figure in the party. In non-election years this conflict could be avoided because Erhard's party allegiance was secondary to his support of the social market economy. But this dilemma came to the fore in 1953.

Leading up to the election, Die Waage geared up its fundraising efforts in order to support its public relations efforts for the campaign. In March 1953, Die Waage's executive board sent out 30,000 letters across the Federal Republic asking for donations. They also planned for Erhard to contact the leadership of larger firms, such as Volkswagen and Siemens, more directly through personal letters.¹⁰⁸ The letters sent to prospective donors explained that DM 2.5 million was needed for Die Waage's upcoming action.¹⁰⁹ Overall, Die Waage expended about DM 3.78 million in the 1952/53 campaigns, including about DM 3 million on magazine and newspaper advertisements, a considerable sum given that the entire SPD, including local, regional and national level organizations, spent about DM 3.5 million on its 1953 campaign.¹¹⁰ With this sum, Die Waage produced four major advertising series between November 1952 and September 1953, two of which ran during the summer runup to the election. These two series featured eight different ads that appeared in over 450 magazines and newspapers with a total circulation of almost 20 million. In addition, Die Waage distributed two different posters and three films—which were generally short enactments of the ads.¹¹¹

On 5 September 1953, the day before the election, Die Waage published its final campaign advertisement. It presented a stereotypical view of Erhard, with a slight smile and his trademark cigar in his mouth (Illustration 5.6) and a slogan that read “Wohlstand Aus Eigener Kraft” (Prosperity from one's own efforts). Erhard figured prominently in the text: “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 with 1953. On the day of the currency reform, it was Erhard who did away with the ration cards of the controlled economy. The end of the text proclaimed: “Not all of the wounds from the war have healed. Not all of the dangers threatening our economic health have been averted. 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.” Although giving the credit for West Germany's economic boom to the social market economy, and not the CDU/CSU, the advertisement clearly dovetailed tidily with the party's emphasis on personalities and achievements. In addition, without mentioning the SPD it implicitly castigated that party as a danger to the progress West Germany had achieved. The advertisement built upon earlier campaigns that identified Erhard as the linchpin in West Germany's economic success. In many respects Die Waage was at the forefront of public relations efforts directly associating the economic miracle with the personality of Ludwig Erhard, despite some



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 zerrüttete Währung. Ehrliche Arbeit hatte ihren Sinn verloren.

Mit schnellem Entschluß zerriß 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 verkündet: 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 dauerndem Wohlstand entgegengehen.

1953 Fünf Jahre harter Arbeit liegen hinter uns, aber sie waren nicht vergeblich.

Das graue Gespenst der Arbeitslosigkeit wurde gebannt. Fast drei Millionen neue Arbeitsplätze wurden geschaffen.

Wohnungen für über 5 Millionen Menschen wurden gebaut. Unerbittlich wacht 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 Staat 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 er längst 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 Gesundung bedrohen. Deshalb gilt es, unseren friedlichen Wiederaufbau zu sichern und morgen unsere Stimme einer der Parteien zu geben, die sich bekennen zu

Illustration 5.6 Prosperity from one's own efforts

contributors' objections to supporting a political figure. His appearance on the cover of *Der Spiegel*, accompanied by a six-page article published just prior to the election, attested to Erhard's growing popularity.

The article typified the image that industrialists, journalists, and politicians had built around Erhard. Like Die Waage's advertisements, the cover depicted Erhard smoking his trademark cigar with the caption "There is no German miracle." Economic prosperity, the article explained, was based upon good ideas, proper policies, and hard work. The article identified Erhard with the qualities that many West Germans envisioned him possessing: optimism, decisiveness, a belief in his policies, and a connectedness with the common citizen. The article recounted many of Erhard's actions that had become almost legendary in West Germany—especially the story of how he had "audaciously" ended many of the economic controls and the rationing of many consumer goods after the currency reform of June 1948. He stuck to his guns by retorting to General Clay's and the American military government's accusations that the rationing regulations had been changed without the proper authority, that "I have not changed them. I have rescinded them." Erhard, the article explained, possessed an uncanny ability to predict the future course of the economy, such as when he proclaimed that consumer goods prices would fall after the initial wave of post-currency reform inflation. As 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 importantly, Erhard was portrayed as the consumer's main defender. As the article opened, Erhard was becoming irate with a waiter, accusing him of unfair profiteering when he informed Erhard that the price of a cup of coffee would sink only 5 pfennig after an upcoming Erhard-engineered tax reduction. The article also related how Erhard was always quizzing his secretary about the availability and price of goods for ordinary consumers.¹¹² This rising popularity was reflected in the polls. Back in May 1951, in the midst of the Korean Crisis, only 14 percent of respondents held a good opinion of Erhard, against 49 percent who recorded a poor opinion. By May 1953, 37 percent had a good opinion of him. This figure had grown to 50 percent by May 1956.¹¹³

In addition, although they were planned independently of the CDU/CSU, Die Waage's advertisements not only jibed well with the party's blurring of the boundaries separating socialist planning in East Germany and the SPD in West Germany, but also they used the social market economy as a means of defining West German legitimacy itself. One advertisement appearing before the election asked, "Would we earn more if . . ." (Illustration 5.7). The advertisement depicted Fritz and Otto, the two working-class characters who had been developed in early 1953, lounging on a hill smoking cigarettes; standing in the background is a motorbike, symbolizing West Germany's rising prosperity. Creating a scene in which the reader is invited to share in what appears to be personal discussion, Fritz and Otto debated the advantages of the free market versus the planned economy. When the puzzled Otto, representing the undecided voter, suggested to the "wise"



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.
Vorsitzler: Franz Greiss - Köln am Rhein - Unter Sachsenhausen 14-26

Illustration 5.7 Would we earn more if ...

Fritz that workers and employees would be better off in a 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?” Every aspect of the economy would be planned from above and the availability of goods would be limited. One would get only “a standardized German suit, for your wife, a standardized dress, color gray.” No explanation was needed

as to which country he meant. From a Cold War perspective, the advertisement clearly blended the distinction between the SPD's policies in West Germany and the SED in communist East Germany. The two were identified as seeking the same policies, and the advertisement implied that the West German worker would secure the same results. Only weeks after the Soviet tanks crushed the 17 June worker protest calling for more consumer goods, this advertisement provided a strong message. The advertisement, playing off the West German sense of anxiety regarding both geopolitics and economics, 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 its last advertisements before the election, *Die Waage* declared that "The people have the last word" in another dialogue advertisement featuring Fritz and Otto (Illustration 5.8). The advertisement, based on the original Fritz and Otto test ad, depicted the characters in a "*Stammkneipe*," or their local bar, listening to Erhard on the radio—creating the sense, as in other Fritz and Otto ads, that the reader was invited into the characters' inner circle of space. All eyes in the bar looked intently at the radio, as if hanging on the minister's every word. Clearly the context of the advertisement suggested that they were listening to one of his campaign broadcasts, thereby injecting Erhard's spirit into the advertisement, despite his physical absence. By stressing that the "people have the last word," the association of radio with that Nazi propaganda that had spewed out of Goebbels' "*Volksempfänger*" (people's receiver) in the Third Reich was replaced with the idea that Fritz and Otto (and implicitly the readers) were participating in another episode of Erhard's and the voters' ongoing "discussion."¹¹⁴ In the ad's opening, Erhard proclaimed that one of his tasks was to give the German people courage and confidence. By claiming that certain unnamed elements desired to push the German people into doubt and worry, Erhard was clearly referring to the SPD campaign propaganda and the DGB's recent denunciations of the social market economy. "They want these hard-working people never to become satisfied in their lives," Erhard argued. At this point Erhard's speech trailed off to Fritz and Otto's dialogue.

In this context, Otto, who throughout the series represented the undecided voter, now agreed with Erhard. Both Fritz and Otto were convinced that much had been accomplished since the war, both by workers and industrialists. "But we are not over the hump, and the troublemakers are stirring things up," Otto explained. It was easy for such "troublemakers" to talk, since they did not have to shoulder any responsibility. Moreover, as Fritz added, they can promise "everything under the sun" (*Blaue von Himmel*)—an attempt to undermine the SPD's attacks against the Adenauer government. The text led the reader to two choices: "State controlled 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." The message was the same: the SPD was composed of "functionaries" who were more interested in ideology than the welfare of Germans. The bourgeois interests were send-



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.
 Vorsitzter: Franz Greiss · Köln am Rhein · Unter Sachsenhausen 14-26

Illustration 5.8 The people have the last word

ing a clear message: they were beyond ideology and concerned only with concrete results.

The advertisements identified the 1948 currency reform and the introduction of the social market economy as crucial turning points in the fates of both char-

acters and West Germany itself. Fritz and Otto could reassert their proper roles as men because the new economic order gave back to them their ability to earn a wage. In one advertisement celebrating the five-year anniversary of the introduction of the Deutsche Mark, Otto dismissed the whole currency reform as a mere “fraud.” Fritz responded incredulously, “Would you rather return to the time of the controlled and planned economy when we worked only for calories, home-grown tobacco [*Siedlerstolz*], and shoddy goods?” The social market economy had pulled Fritz and Otto out of the bad times. It was Erhard who “brought production and buying power back into balance and helped us all to work again, to buy, and to consume.” The return of a stable currency had restored meaning back to these men’s lives by giving them the ability to work and produce. Thus the advertisements aimed to show how workers such as Fritz and Otto had benefited concretely from the introduction of the free market, and in fact, become more middle class, as seen by the portrayal of Fritz in more middle-class clothing, by his efforts to buy a house in subsequent advertisements, and by Fritz and Otto’s more management-friendly views of labor relations. The underlying message was that their hard work and Erhard’s social market economy had ensured “progress and social peace.”

Not surprisingly, an initial test survey showed the Fritz and Otto series as less effective with female than male readers. Women, for instance, were more likely to believe either that the doubting Otto was correct or that each character was right in his own way—a perception *Die Waage* did not want to create. In addition, women were less likely to grasp the main point of the advertisement. In general, the survey indicated that women were not interested in abstract ideas about the economy.¹¹⁵ In response, *Die Waage* began developing new advertisements geared to a female audience, with an early example appearing just prior to the second Bundestag election in the fall of 1953 (Illustration 5.9). The advertisement’s slogan proclaimed, “We women have forgotten nothing, and furthermore have learned a thing or two.” By addressing the reader in the first person plural, *Die Waage* hoped to get women to identify with a common female experience—similar to what been achieved in the text of the CDU/CSU’s illustrated magazine, *Die Entscheidung*. The ad opened with, “Really, is it already five years ago that we began to lead an existence worthy of humanity?” It continued with recollections from the immediate postwar years, most notably women’s experience as “continually overtired, undernourished, perpetually standing in lines,” along with treks to the countryside in search of food to feed their families.

As in the Fritz and Otto series, this advertisement pointed to the currency reform of 1948 as the turning point for women’s experience. With the currency reform women could now become “normal housewives.” Suddenly they had been transformed from “ration card holders” into valued customers. Once the shelves were suddenly filled with goods, the pain of the early postwar years was swept away: “Can a man at all understand, what this change immediately meant for us women, who had 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

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 fraarigen, ständig übermüdeten, unterernährten, ewig hinter etwas herjagenden Schlangensteherinnen 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 armselige, planmäßig gelenkte -Normalverbraucher. Ein herrlicher Zustand war das!

Ermühen Sie sich noch? Das war die Zeit, in der die Kalorien auf 800 angekommen waren und unser Lebensmittel 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 -Anstehensbestand. Und dann gab es noch die nichtlichen 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. Betnahe nicht zu fassen für uns körperlich und seelisch zermürbte Hausfrauen! Über Nacht sozusagen wurden wir plötzlich von den demütigen -Bezugsberechtigten- zu geschätzten Kundinnen. Sehr geschätzten, unworbe-



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 zers-



brochen, sondern der uns auch angesichts der bettelnden 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 wegschmeißen lassen. Wir wissen heute, wald 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 - Planswirtschaft und Soziale Marktwirtschaft. Wir Frauen haben uns entschieden - für

ERHARDS
SOZIALE MARKTWIRTSCHAFT

DIE WAAGE



Gemeinschaft zur Förderung
des Sozialen Ausgleichs e.V.

Vorsitzer: Franz Greiss

Köln am Rhein - Unter Sachsenhausen 14-26

Illustration 5.9 We women have forgotten nothing, and furthermore have learned a thing or two

having to view the begging eyes of our children?" The advertisement linked economic development with what was portrayed as a fundamental source of identity for a woman: the role of housewife, mother and nurturer of children, and consumer. Harking back to some of the themes of the CDU/CSU campaign, especially Erhard's letter to housewives, the availability of consumer goods did not just satisfy personal needs or desires but allowed women to perform their "nat-

ural” domestic roles. The economic dislocations of the postwar years had cast 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 women became more feminine when they regained their domestic duties. As with the Fritz and Otto advertisements, the underlying message was that difficult times were associated with the “planned economy” when ration cards were used, while economic rebirth and reconstruction of a properly functioning society were connected with the introduction of the social market economy. It was thus in defense of this conception of femininity that: “We women have decided—for ERHARD’S SOCIAL MARKET ECONOMY.”

In using varied strategies tailored to women and men, Die Waage constructed different meanings of the social market economy and the economic miracle. Although the Fritz and Otto advertisements did not incorporate many abstract ideas on the economy because Die Waage’s board sought concrete examples of improvements resulting from the social market economy, they did try to impart to men some sort of basic knowledge of how the economy works, including discussions on inflation, the determination of a currency’s value, and the importance of exports for West Germany. Despite using more slang, the Fritz and Otto advertisements also were somewhat preachy and didactic. In contrast, advertisements directed toward a female audience tended to go directly to personal experiences particular to women, as opposed to more general and abstract ideas about economics. However, advertisements for both men and women clearly linked their private actions as producers and consumers to public conceptions of the legitimacy and strength of the Federal Republic itself and the effectiveness of the social market economy. Indeed, the advertisements defined their economic roles as their primary civic duties: to produce and to consume was to take part in creating the new Federal Republic and to erase all vestiges of the recent past.

These strategies for male and female readers were perhaps best illustrated through a set of brochures available by mail to readers of Die Waage’s advertisements. The most widely circulated booklet appealing to men, “Steigende Produktivität, wachsender Wohlstand” (Increasing Productivity, Growing Prosperity), gave a short lesson on free market economics. It addressed the importance of raising production so that prosperity for all could be achieved. Increased production, the pamphlet proclaimed, meant “the end of class struggle,” and would “make life worth living.” The brochure for women, entitled *Lieber Leserin . . .* (Dear [female] Reader . . .), took a different tack. It explained that “[i]n 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 large part by women.” Again, women’s importance in the economy was not defined by their function in the economy through production, but rather through their role as consumers in what were considered their natural domestic duties of child rearing and purchasing consumer goods for the family.

Taken together, during the 1953 campaign Die Waage and the CDU/CSU effectively portrayed the rising level of consumption in West Germany to get Ade-

nauer's government reelected. They both utilized Cold War tensions to raise doubts about the SPD's capacity to govern. In addition, they expressed the civic values of economic reconstruction in clearly gendered terms. For men, the strong West German economy reaffirmed their masculine role as strong producers able to provide for their families. Their nation's and their own fates were interlinked. For women, economic growth and the ability to take care of the consumption needs in the private sphere underscored the legitimacy of West Germany as a whole. The CDU/CSU and Die Waage thus offered a sense of personal and national identity rooted in a gendered understanding of the economy that proved highly effective with the electorate.

There are undoubtedly parallels between the CDU/CSU's campaign techniques and those used in the Weimar Republic, particularly by the Nazis during their rise to power.¹¹⁶ First, like the Nazis, the CDU/CSU sought to become a *Volkspartei* that crossed the traditional social, religious, and regional divisions that plagued German politics from the middle of the nineteenth century through the demise of the Weimar Republic. Both parties' propaganda evoked the idea of regenerating a sense of Germanness, be it a racial *Volksgemeinschaft* in the Third Reich or a productive/consumerist community in West Germany, meant to unify the nation across traditional social and cultural divisions. At the same time they both created a polarizing wedge between themselves and those outside their vision of the German community—especially against Marxists—and they portrayed themselves as protecting the nation from the Marxist threat from within and without. Second, Nazi and often times early CDU/CSU propaganda was characterized by over-the-top accusations, slander, and emotional appeals in attempts to move the amorphous masses by psychological means. This was accomplished within the context of a highly organized and effective propaganda machine that was centrally directed but allowed for more grassroots initiatives according to the prerogatives of the local population.¹¹⁷

Adolf Hitler wrote in *Mein Kampf* (*My Struggle*) that the rational abilities of the masses were quite lacking and that all effective propaganda must “be limited to a few points and must harp on these in slogans, until the last member of the public understands what you want him to understand.” Josef Goebbels, the Nazi Party's propaganda leader beginning in 1930 and the minister of public enlightenment within the Third Reich, echoed Hitler's views in his notion that propaganda had to be simple, repetitive, and often symbolic.¹¹⁸ Although the CDU/CSU's propaganda was clearly more muted than the Nazis', Adenauer reflected a similar philosophy in 1949 when he spoke of reaching the “primitive” levels of society and argued that propaganda “must speak simply to the public, not too much, few thoughts, large ideas simply represented”—an approach most notably illustrated by CDU/CSU posters such as the hovering Mongol face from the 1949 campaign and the “All roads of Marxism lead to Moscow” from 1953.¹¹⁹ Ultimately, their propaganda did not attempt to rationally engage the public about specific ideas, but sought to attract attention emotionally and to pound the public with the parties' ideological views.

Third, in order to reach the broadest markets, both parties borrowed heavily from commercial advertising to modernize their political propaganda. They both saw themselves as selling a political product to the electorate on a mass market scale. Josef Goebbels commented in a 1930 essay on National Socialism and modern political propaganda that “we shall utilize the most modern advertising means in service of our movement” and wanted local Nazi propaganda offices to study commercial advertising methods and apply them in the party’s electoral campaigns.¹²⁰ Clearly all political parties during the Weimar Republic were influenced by commercial advertising, but by virtue of their extensive use of symbols and logos, such as the swastika, continuously repeated slogans, and attempts to influence “opinion makers” in society, the Nazi propaganda methods were the most up-to-date. As Sabine Behrenbeck has suggested, after 1930 the focus on the “*Führerkult*” around Hitler could be seen as a key aspect of creating a brand name reflecting the “corporate identity” of the Nazi Party through the same means used in commercial advertising. A strikingly similar phenomenon was emerging in 1953, as the CDU/CSU emphasized its leadership, and in particular Adenauer, who functioned as a brand name for the party symbolizing its character and themes of stability, security, and reconstruction.¹²¹ This approach would only be intensified in the 1957 campaign.

There were, however, important differences in the experiences of the two parties. By 1953 the CDU/CSU campaign was lessening the importance in its propaganda, especially its graphic media, of appeals characterized solely by emotional, evocative, and symbolic associations that sought to release inner psychological desires of the masses. In this regard, the Nazi and earlier CDU/CSU posters reflected longer-term traditions in European poster art.¹²² During the 1953 campaign, armed with more precise public opinion and sociological data, tools that the Nazis lacked, the CDU/CSU began to transform its propaganda techniques based upon more American-style public relations and advertising—especially in print advertisements and party-illustrated magazines. European advertising traditions dictated a focus upon selling the aesthetic and emotive qualities of the “*Ding an sich*” (thing in itself), such as Hitler in the case of the Nazis. But now, the CDU/CSU’s propaganda efforts, and those of like-minded groups such as Die Waage, became concerned with the views of the individual voter and sought to enter into a discussion with that voter on what benefits the party offered within a clear social context. Both approaches are ultimately manipulative, but the method centered more upon the “two-way concept” resulted in less heavy-handed and more sophisticated propaganda that sought to work on the reader both rationally and emotionally.

Both Goebbels and Hans Domizlaff, the German advertising giant of the first half of the twentieth century, drew heavily from the work of the French sociologist Gustave Le Bon on the irrationality, gullibility, and unconscious malleability of the crowd as a guide for influencing the amorphous masses in political and advertising campaigns.¹²³ In contrast, a CDU/CSU after-report on the 1953 campaign commented that Le Bon’s view of the masses no longer had validity because

he viewed public opinion as simply too irrational. Instead, from the CDU/CSU's perspective, public opinion was more complicated, yet also more knowable using the right tools. It was a function of religious beliefs, worldviews, family and national circumstances, and historical development intersecting with a particular, present social situation. Therefore, within this complicated social situation, the report concluded, the executive committee of the CDU/CSU and the Federal Press Agency used public opinion surveys to determine which issues possessed particular importance for voters in the campaign. It was upon these responses that the party based its campaign.¹²⁴ The CDU/CSU increasingly took into account a pluralistic society whose individual members had to be understood and more carefully spoken to, resulting in more receiver-oriented rather than sender-oriented electoral appeals. As shown by the "All roads of Marxism lead to Moscow" poster, the CDU/CSU did not completely abandon the older style of electioneering, but retained a mix of styles in its campaigning during the 1950s. By the time of the 1957 campaign, however, American-style public relations and advertising that included a more "two-way concept" of communication was coming to the fore.

The serious preparations for the SPD election campaign began in early 1952. The SPD yearbook 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." Compared with the CDU/CSU's efforts to centralize its own campaign, the SPD campaign was even more centralized than its rivals, due in large part to a developed party organization with a clear chain of command under the *Parteivorstand* (executive committee) consisting of *Bezirk* organizations (district), *Unterbezirk* organizations (subdistrict), and *Ortsvereine* (local associations).¹²⁵ In the autumn of 1952, the press and propaganda committee under the leadership of executive committee member Fritz Heine began to put together drafts of posters and leaflets in preparation for the election. During late 1952 and early 1953 the executive committee and the various *Arbeitsgemeinschaften* (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 pored over the propaganda material with the press and propaganda committee, in order to familiarize the party organization with the conceptual plans of the party leadership and to solicit suggestions for further refinement of the material. In preparation for the campaign, Heine visited a number of regional party organizations to instruct them regarding the technical and organizational planning of the campaign. In comparison to the CDU/CSU, the SPD made little use of polling or professional publicists to produce campaign material, and in many cases the party leadership involved itself in some of the most technical campaigning details. As a consequence of the involvement at the various levels of the party's organization, the propaganda was planned well in advance of the election and unmistakably reflected the sentiments of the party's leaders, membership, and core constituents, although not necessarily those of potential voters.¹²⁶

With the death of Kurt Schumacher in August 1952, the SPD entered a period of transition, particularly in terms of its economic policy as it moved away from

its support of a planned economy. At its September 1952 *Parteitag* (party conference) in Dortmund, the SPD issued an *Aktionsprogramm* (action program) that called for socialization of basic industries alone, increased living standards for everyone in society, and a more just distribution of the economic wealth. Most importantly, the program endorsed economic planning of the political economy, but competition within individual industries. Following the announcement of the Dortmund program, Karl Schiller, a leading SPD economics expert, summed up the party's position with the phrase: "Competition as much as possible, planning as much as necessary."¹²⁷ Clearly, the SPD was not yet endorsing the free market, but in 1952 the party had already begun the long and painful road to the 1959 Bad Godesberg Program whereby it gave up its Marxist ideology.

The party's leadership reiterated these positions at the SPD's official opening of the campaign in a May 1953 *Wahlkongreß* (election congress), held in a Frankfurt hall decked out in a sea of red flags and banners. In the culminating speech of the congress, Erich Ollenhauer, the SPD's leading candidate for chancellor and chairman of the executive committee, laid out the major themes of the campaign. As Ollenhauer explained, because the SPD had been in opposition for the last four years, the party could not base its propaganda upon its record in government. Accordingly, Ollenhauer concentrated on pointing out the deficiencies of the government and at the same time highlighting the party's corresponding goals in the next years. Much of Ollenhauer's speech critiqued the government's foreign policy, including its support of the European Defense Community and its inability to achieve unification. In the economic realm, Ollenhauer lashed out at the government as pursuing "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."¹²⁸ In many respects the speech set the tone for the SPD campaign by situating the party as negating CDU/CSU policies—a natural position for a party in opposition, but never really fully articulating a constructive and positive platform to be offered as an alternative. This problematic approach surfaced in the SPD's economics propaganda that concentrated on negative developments of the economy, especially the rise in prices.

One of the challenges confronting the SPD was that in contrast to the federal government, and by extension the CDU/CSU, the party in the 1950s did not fully utilize public opinion surveys to conceptualize and formulate its campaigns strategies. 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 public opinion research. Although not showing exactly how, Von Stackelberg stressed that EMNID could tailor surveys for the SPD's specific use. It does not appear, however, that Schumacher responded to the letter.¹²⁹ According to Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, Carlo Schmid, one of the leading Social Democrats, tried in 1949 to persuade Schumacher to work with the Institut für Demoskopie, but to no avail.¹³⁰

It was not until after its defeat in the 1953 Bundestag election that the SPD began retaining polling institutes to supply polling data used particularly for

preparation of its election campaigns.¹³¹ In October 1955, Fritz Heine, who headed the SPD election campaigns, approached von Stackelberg of EMNID to request a public opinion survey for Baden-Württemberg in preparation for the 1956 state election.¹³² Stackelberg regretted to inform Heine that EMNID was already under contract to conduct two surveys before the election.¹³³ At this point, it appears, the SPD contacted the opinion research group DIVO (Deutsches Institut für Volksumfragen, German Institute for Public Opinion) to conduct its surveys for the 1957 Bundestag election campaign, along with subscribing to the general surveys from EMNID. In any case, in 1953 the SPD subscribed to the EMNID Institut's regularly conducted polls on public opinion trends, but it did not yet receive specialized surveys on specific topics such as those the CDU/CSU contracted from the Institut für Demoskopie. Although leery of the validity of these surveys because they were not sufficiently representative and their questions were rather limited, the SPD's leadership regarded the surveys as somewhat useful for guiding their campaign in the most general way.

In a June 1953 meeting with the party secretaries, the press and propaganda committee was particularly struck by the survey's findings that, as of April, 33 percent of the population was still undecided and therefore represented potential SPD voters. Yet to their chagrin, it also showed that a higher percentage of voters were already committed to the CDU/CSU compared to the party's results in the 1949 election, and that their rival's popularity had been growing since July 1952. Also alarming was the committee's discovery that workers were more likely to be still undecided than were core elements of the CDU/CSU's support, such as the independently employed, farmers, white-collar workers, and bureaucrats. Thus, the committee concluded, the SPD had to redouble its efforts "to lift the haze of government propaganda lies" for all to see the present situation clearly.¹³⁴ Undoubtedly this message had a potential audience, for EMNID surveys did show that West Germans were concerned about such issues as increased prices and a shortage in home construction.¹³⁵ It was the issue of prices that the SPD would use to go on the attack, but as the party secretaries' meeting revealed, the working class was still the party's principal target audience.

Not only did the campaign's target audience reflect traditional SPD concerns, its propaganda material reflected older approaches. Although the SPD expressed a desire "to test and apply new advertising and propaganda methods," the bulk of campaign materials were of the traditional sort. The organization leaned most heavily upon posters, leaflets, and election newspapers, which had a circulation of 6.6, 8.2, and 8.5 million copies respectively. However, the SPD did utilize new audio recordings and films. The recordings included relatively short political talks intermixed with musical cabaret. But the results proved disappointing due to the recordings' poor sound quality and the inadequate sound equipment for projecting the recordings. The films, on the other hand, were regarded as particularly effective. The party distributed three films, one of which was a short cartoon under two minutes long. The 35-minute-long *Jahre der Entscheidung* (Year of Decision) depicted West Germany's post-1945 developments interspersed with Schu-

macher's protests and demands on the particular issues of the day. The twelve-minute *Für Deutschland und Europe* (For Germany and Europe) contained excerpts of Ollenhauer's address at the Frankfurt election congress. An after-report of the campaign concluded that although the films were effective at certain events, their cost might have outweighed their usefulness.¹³⁶ Special election newspapers in four different issues played an especially important role in the election campaign for no other reason than their mass circulation of about 1 million copies each.¹³⁷ One of them, *Das deutsche Wunder* (The German Miracle) dealt particularly with economics.

The newspaper was typical of the SPD's attacks against the CDU/CSU: it depicted the stress caused by the rise in prices, questioned the social security of West Germans, and portrayed Adenauer's leading economics experts, especially Erhard, as merely serving the interests of large industry. *Das deutsche Wunder* supplemented other SPD attacks against the CDU/CSU in regard to industry's contributions to its campaigns. One such example was *Unternehmermillionen kaufen politische Macht* (Industrial Millions Buy Political Power). This rather lengthy pamphlet published for the 1953 campaign supplied 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 form more accessible to the public.

A prominent feature of *Das deutsche Wunder* was that it took direct aim at Die Waage's advertisements with a weakly constructed satire of Fritz and Otto. Employing a tone that was decidedly reminiscent of Die Waage's advertisements, a questioning Otto, crafted to represent the average West German who believed Erhard was responsible for the German miracle, asked Fritz what was the source of the production increase in West Germany. Fritz informed Otto that the effort of West Germany's workers, not Erhard's, had brought about this economic reconstruction. The myth of the currency reform was bunk, Fritz claimed, because the subsequent rise in prices had directly hurt consumers. Finally, Fritz asked Otto whether "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 converted, agreeing with Fritz that a new economic policy must be found. This dialogue, like much of the SPD's propaganda as whole, aimed to show the negative side of the economic miracle, including the government's responsibility for the growth in economic inequality.¹³⁸

If this article demonstrates anything, it is the SPD's acute awareness of Die Waage's effective campaigns and the party's conviction that it had to provide some sort of response. Seizing upon Fritz and Otto from the dialogue advertisements, the party concluded that the characters were so well known that they could use their actual names when satirizing them. With the growth in the economy and the West Germans' perception that their conditions were improving, the SPD was clearly on the defensive in terms of the issue of economics. Although West Germany's ongoing economic reconstruction and expansion could not be denied, the SPD tried to demonstrate in *Das deutsche Wunder* that this process was benefiting

only a few. This special campaign newspaper underscored the fact that the SPD was still attempting to appeal only to the core of its traditional support. The figures depicted throughout *Das deutsche Wunder* tended to be working-class types positioned at the lower end of the economic ladder. Accordingly, the messages in this campaign newspaper were attractive only to this segment of the electorate.

But it was doubtful that this message achieved much resonance among the general West German populace. As one CDU/CSU report commented after the election, with the increased economic growth, ever expanding segments of the population were accepting the government's market policies and becoming increasingly skeptical of the SPD's planned economy slogans.¹³⁹ Evidence of economic improvement abounded. Income increased at an average annual rate of 9.7 percent between 1950 and 1959. Between 1950 and 1954, employees' gross income grew 40 percent. In the 1950s the Federal Statistics Office conducted an ongoing study of an "average consumer group" 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, thereby allowing these families to spend more on consumer and luxury goods. Critics of these surveys, mostly from research institutes supported by the trade unions, doubted whether these groups were truly representative. Clearly budgets remained tight and luxury spending was limited in the first half of the 1950s, but the trends in the figures did reflect an expanding living standard for a substantial group of West Germans.¹⁴⁰ Although it was true that a few in West Germany were becoming very rich from economic reconstruction, the overall improvement of most people's conditions was hard to deny. Pre-election polling indicated that the vast majority of West German perceived their economic conditions as either improving or remaining the same since the year before.¹⁴¹ Undoubtedly, pensioners and women "standing alone," groups left out of the Federal Statistics Office's study, continued to struggle, but for most the trend was clearly upwards.

The SPD also played into the hands of the CDU/CSU through its focus in the campaign upon personalities. Early on in the campaign Fritz Heine stressed the necessity of highlighting the SPD's leadership with slogans such as "No to Adenauer—Yes to Ollenhauer" and "Out with Adenauer—We vote Ollenhauer."¹⁴² Eventually the slogan "Ollenhauer instead of Adenauer" was featured on one of the SPD's main posters.¹⁴³ Adenauer's popularity, evidenced by public opinion polls, doomed this strategy to failure. A June 1953 Institut für Demoskopie poll indicated that 51 percent of respondents believed Adenauer was the most capable German politician, compared to only 6 percent endorsing Ollenhauer.¹⁴⁴ Ollenhauer could not match Adenauer's charisma on the stump or his forceful personality that projected through the media, not to mention Adenauer's advantage of a huge publicity machine geared to generate his positive image. Even at the time, the SPD's strategy appeared fatally flawed to anyone familiar with the polling results, and the CDU/CSU's success in the election confirmed the folly of placing Ollenhauer as Adenauer's main antagonist.¹⁴⁵

The SPD's share of the vote fell short of expectations, with the party securing 28.8 percent compared to the CDU/CSU's 45.2 percent. At the first postelection executive committee meeting, Ollenhauer expressed disappointment, although he optimistically pointed out that the SPD's votes had increased by 1 million. He indicated a sense of SPD isolation by comparing the current political situation with the threat of the Harzburg Front, the amalgamation of right-wing groups including the Nazis that had formed in 1931 in opposition to a centrist government and contributed to the collapse of the Weimar government. He feared that a "coordination process" (*Gleichschaltungprozess*) of the right's control of the radio and press would ensue in West Germany. Perhaps most despairingly, Fritz Heine, the press and propaganda committee chairperson, commented that he did not believe there would be another free election in four years and that this marked the beginning of the end for democracy in West Germany. The SPD had to become more aggressive, he said—in many respects reflecting the old guard's conception of harsh ideological warfare with political opponents that had prevailed in the Weimar era.

However, other voices were raised at the meeting. Fritz Henßler, an executive committee member from North Rhine–Westphalia, sharply attacked Heine by stating that in the future a man under such psychological pressure should not be the party's press chief. Others commented that the party's organization was weak, and it had made mistakes in its propaganda. Ernst Reuter, the reforming mayor of West Berlin, observed that "[t]he people haven't responded to our anti-Erhard propaganda. We must now lead our campaign positively and Hamburg [the site of the next local elections] is the first test. Perhaps the electorate heard too much of our 'no' and not our positive efforts." Waldemar von Knöringen concurred that "during the campaign the SPD was too much on the defensive, its attacks on Erhard economic policy were not convincing, and its policies were too much about negation" (*Nein-Parole*).¹⁴⁶

After the SPD's defeat in the election, this dissatisfaction pervaded not only the executive committee, but the entire party apparatus as well, especially among the party's reformers. A combined session of the executive committee, party committee, control commission, district secretaries, parliamentary fraction, and state ministers on 17 September analyzed the mistakes and lessons of the 1953 campaign. Some of the reformers of the party, such as Willy Brandt, complained that "[o]ur slogans did not always draw any enthusiasm. We must become a catch-all party [*Volkspartei*] without giving up being a workers' party." Other reformers also voiced dissatisfaction with the way the campaign had been run. Karl Schiller, one of the main reformers in the area of economics, commented that "[s]ocialization 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 conducted a fair election campaign and added that a campaign of the type led by Adenauer was out of

the question.¹⁴⁷ Clearly the party was not ready to revamp its propaganda approach. Nevertheless, in other quarters of the SPD, party members began criticizing the orientation of the party's "vocabulary of agitation." The social minister of Lower Saxony, Heinrich Albertz, commented in the SPD organ *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 so that it could jump the 30 percent hurdle.¹⁴⁸ The process of reforming the SPD's propaganda was underway, but the effects of this undertaking would not be noticeably apparent in the 1957 election. In many respects, the SPD was operating within a vastly different paradigm from that of the CDU/CSU, which clearly supported Noelle-Neumann's view that public opinion surveys were a form of social control. Instead, the SPD subscribed to a method that sought to rationally engage the electorate in order to convince it of the benefits of the party's political vision. Unfortunately for the SPD this vision spoke only to the working class.

The CDU/CSU tallied huge gains in the Bundestag election on 6 September 1953, snaring 45.2 percent of the vote, up from 31 percent in 1949. International issues such as the reunification of Germany, West Germany's rearmament, and the political fallout from the Soviet suppression of the 17 June uprising played crucial roles in the campaign. Nevertheless, some postelection surveys did suggest the importance of other issues—including economics.¹⁴⁹ One question asked CDU/CSU voters why they had cast their ballot for the CDU/CSU. Their answers were varied. The leading reply, with 30 percent, was Adenauer's personality and his prestige in the world—reflecting to a certain extent the importance of geopolitical issues in the campaign. The second-ranking response was religious reasons, with 21 percent. Economic progress came in third at 19 percent, while satisfaction with the CDU's successes, which could include economic development, ranked fourth with 17 percent. By contrast, when the same question was posed to SPD voters, 69 percent expressed their belief that the SPD represented the interests of the worker.¹⁵⁰ What is striking is the difference in the diversity of responses. While CDU/CSU voters cited a number of reasons for casting their ballot for the CDU/CSU, SPD voters were attracted to the party predominately for one reason: it defended the interests of the worker. This response reflected the fact that the SPD was a party limited to a single issue that could attract voters. In many respects, the SPD propaganda reaffirmed the narrow basis of the party's appeal. It could be seen as inspiring its core constituents to get out and cast their ballots rather than attracting new supporters.

This greater diversity of reasons for voting for the CDU/CSU was also reflected in the party's sociological support. Given the background of the CDU/CSU, Catholics constituted a large part of the party's vote, reflecting 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 about 52 percent of all Catholics voted for the CDU/CSU. In other words, the CDU/CSU won over the base of the Weimar-era Center Party. But it was significant that the CDU/CSU was able to branch out to new

groups without losing support from its core group of Catholics. In the 1953 election a little over 35 percent of the CDU/CSU's vote came from Protestants, by no means an insignificant figure. The CDU/CSU was still the "Christian party" in the Federal Republic's party system, with 58 per cent of its voters regularly attending church.¹⁵¹ However, most of the party's propaganda ignored or played down religious or cultural issues in favor of highlighting international or economic issues so as not to alienate less devout, often times Protestant voters. It was the churches, especially the Catholic Church, that made the preferred party and candidate clear to their congregations.

The CDU/CSU's ability to reach out to groups outside its core also came into play with regard to electoral support and social class. Although the SPD was clearly the workers' party, surveys indicated that the CDU/CSU was able to garner 24 percent of the workers' vote. This still ranked below the 36 percent enjoyed by the SPD, but nevertheless the figure was a significant factor in the CDU/CSU's victory.¹⁵² This translated into 26 percent of the CDU/CSU's ballots coming from the working class, who formed the largest single group supporting the CDU/CSU. The next largest groups were pensioners (19 percent), farmers (17 percent), and civil servants and white collar workers (15 percent).¹⁵³ One interpretation of this voting behavior was that the religious loyalty of the Catholic working class toward the CDU/CSU was greater than class loyalty toward the SPD. Particularly decisive for the CDU/CSU was its advantage in the female vote—a clear target of much of its propaganda. In the election, 47.2 per cent of women voted for the CDU/CSU compared to 38.9 per cent of men. Considering that women cast 53.7 percent of the valid second ballots, this difference was significant.¹⁵⁴ With its relative diversity of support, by 1953 the CDU/CSU was becoming a *Volks-partei* in a way that the SPD could not.

Although economics does not appear to be as crucial a factor as Adenauer's personality in gaining votes for CDU/CSU, it was nevertheless an important element in many voters' minds. 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 party. In comparison, 59 percent listed Adenauer's improvement of West Germany's standing in the world and 47 percent cited Adenauer's leadership qualities as within the top three reasons for supporting the CDU/CSU.¹⁵⁵ In light of these figures, the strategy of mixing the issue of economic success with geopolitical issues was an effective means of selling the party. The CDU/CSU molded economics to accentuate both the threat of communism and the idea that Adenauer and the CDU/CSU represented the legitimacy of the West German state itself. Planned and controlled economics, whose distinctions were regularly blurred by the CDU/CSU, offered an example of what a socialist alternative would mean. West Germany's economic success proved that it constituted the "real" Germany. Therefore, economic reconstruction not only directly lent support to the CDU/CSU, but also could be blended with other issues that were important in voters' support of the party. As seen from the variety of its economic propaganda, the CDU/CSU successfully employed economics as a multidimensional issue that possessed

the potential to attract voters from across religious, class, and gender divisions. In this important regard, the CDU/CSU enjoyed a significant advantage over the SPD. As a party created in the rubble of Germany's defeat, the CDU/CSU was not beholden to a particular class or group of core supporters, as was the SPD to a large extent, and as a consequence it had the flexibility to position itself in a number of different ways.

Although the CDU/CSU targeted the SPD in most of its attacks, most of the CDU/CSU gains did not stem from losses in SPD votes. In fact, although the SPD's share of the vote dropped from 29.2 percent in 1949 to 28.8 percent in 1953, the party collected a greater total number of votes (6.9 million versus 7.9 million).¹⁵⁶ The West German electorate was growing, from 24.5 million in 1949 to 28.5 million in 1953, through young voters coming of age and the flow of refugees from the East. The CDU/CSU was outdistancing the SPD in capturing these new voters. 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 increase in votes was not necessarily due to former SPD voters, but instead to voters who had previously voted for bourgeois splinter parties. The FDP, DP, and Center parties all declined in 1953, along with several splinter bourgeois/conservative parties that had met the 5 percent threshold for entering into Bundestag.¹⁵⁷ In this perspective, the CDU/CSU's propaganda against the SPD did not win over former SPD voters. Instead, the propaganda won over the splinter-party vote by portraying the CDU/CSU as a party strong enough to protect West Germany against a Marxist threat at home and abroad. Therefore, Die Waage's ads, which were often criticized by the organization's contributors because they appeared in the bourgeois press and would not reach the working class, might have had a stronger impact on potential CDU/CSU voters than if they had been placed in more working-class oriented media.

Finally, the 1953 election campaign also demonstrated that the CDU/CSU's electoral techniques were in transition. Faced with the imminent threat of a socialist victory in the 1953 election, the CDU/CSU built up not only a network of propaganda organizations that allowed the party to promote itself more effectively, but it also consciously made the decision to increasingly center the campaign upon the party's self-image as reflected by its leadership and their achievements. In conjunction with this development, the 1953 election saw the first widespread use of public opinion polling in election campaigns, thereby allowing the construction of a party image that was pitched more carefully at the West German population. This desire for a broad-based constituency also was reflected in the decreased emphasis upon the antimaterialist conceptions of the party's economic policy that had figured so prominently in the 1949 election. Instead, the party adapted to larger socioeconomic trends and began to trumpet the more individualist pleasures of consumerism. Clearly, the 1953 election was a transitional step both in the transformation of the West German political culture and in how the economic miracle was sold. This transformation emerged fully in what would be the greatest triumph of Adenauer and CDU/CSU: the 1957 Bundestag election.

Notes

1. Rohe, *Wahlen und Wählertradition in Deutschland: Kulturelle Grundlagen deutscher Parteien und Parteiensysteme im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, 164; and Falter, "Kontinuität und Neubeginn: Die Bundestagswahl 1949 zwischen Weimar und Bonn," 236–263.
2. Werner Kaltefleiter, "Die Entwicklung des deutschen Parteiensystems in der Ära Adenauer," 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, Hans-Peter Schwarz (Stuttgart, 1976), 285–287.
3. Die Bundestagswahlen vom 6 September 1953, December 1953, VII-003-002/1, ACDP.
4. Schmidtchen, *Die befragte Nation*, 160. These figures represent the percentage of respondents who named a party preference, which was on average about 65 percent of all questioned.
5. See the polling figures in Schmidtchen, *Die befragte Nation*, 163.
6. See election results in Ritter, ed., *Wahlen und Wahlkämpfe in Deutschland*, 266; and Gerhard A. Ritter and Merith Niehuss, *Wahlen in Deutschland, 1946–1991* (Munich, 1991), 158–181.
7. 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, 1982), 80.
8. Werner G. Krueger, "Das Bundespresseamt: Es begann in der Jugendstilvilla Drachenfelsstraße 8," in *Kinderjahre der Bundesrepublik: Von der Trümmerzeit zum Wirtschaftswunder*, ed. Rudolf Pörtner (Düsseldorf, 1989), 167.
9. Frank Andreas Buchwald, "Adenauers Informationspolitik und das Bundespresseamt" (Ph.D. diss., University of Mainz, 1991), 47–48.
10. *Ibid.*, 49–51.
11. *Ibid.*, 30.
12. Walker, *Presse und Informationsamt*, 107–109.
13. *Ibid.*, 48.
14. Buchwald, "Adenauers Informationspolitik," 58.
15. Klaus Gotto, Hans-Otto Kleinmann, Reinhard Schreiner, eds, *Im Zentrum der Macht: Das Tagebuch von Staatssekretär Lenz, 1951–1953* (Düsseldorf, 1989), vii–xxviii and 2.
16. Letter from Lenz to Adenauer, 4 August 1952, I-172-58/2 (NL Lenz), ACDP.
17. Gotto, *Im Zentrum der Macht*, 84 and 154.
18. Letter from Lenz to Heilmann, 6 November 1951, I-172-59 (NL Lenz), ACDP. See also Han Edgar Jahn, *An Adenauers Seite: Sein Berater erinnert sich* (Munich, 1987), 93.
19. Gerhard Schmidtchen and Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, "Die Bedeutung Repräsentativer Bevölkerungsumfragen für die Offene Gesellschaft," 168–169.
20. Schmidtchen, *Die befragte Nation*, 108–109.
21. Mervin D. Field, "Political Opinion Polling in the United States of America," in *Political Opinion Polling: An International Review*, ed. Robert M. Worcester (London, 1983), 198–206; and Herbert F. Weisberg et al., *An Introduction to Survey Research and Data Analysis* (Glenview, IL, 1989), 34–35.
22. Simpson, "Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann's 'Spiral of Silence' and the Historical Context of Communication Theory," 148–171. Although he possesses no concrete evidence, Simpson suggests that Noelle-Neumann might have participated in the secret polling as a number of internal SD reports and Noelle-Neumann's *Das Reich* articles closely paralleled one other in both timing and subject matter.
23. Richard L. Merritt, *Democracy Imposed: U.S. Occupation Policy and the German Public, 1945–1949* (New Haven, 1995), 74–83; and Noelle-Neumann, "Political Opinion Polling in Germany," 44.
24. Schindelbeck and Ilgen, "Haste Was, Biste Was!" *Werbung für die Soziale Marktwirtschaft*, 231.
25. Letter from E. P. Neumann to Chancellor Adenauer, 26 September 1949, B145/1566, BA Koblenz.

26. Letter to from Chancellery to E. P. Neumann, 20 October 1949, B145/1566, BA Koblenz.
27. Erich Peter Neumann, "Politische und soziale Meinungsforschung in Deutschland," in *Empirische Sozialforschung: Meinungs- und Marktforschung Methode und Probleme*, ed. Institut zur Förderung öffentlicher Angelegenheiten e.V. (Frankfurt am Main, 1952), 44.
28. Schmidtchen and Noelle-Neumann, "Die Bedeutung Repräsentativer Bevölkerungsumfragen für die Offene Gesellschaft," 170 and 186–195. See also Simpson's "Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann's 'Spiral of Silence' and the Historical Context of Communication Theory," which traces Noelle-Neumann's thoughts on democracy and society from her 1940 dissertation to her important work on public opinion, *The Spiral of Silence: Public Opinion—Our Social Skin*, (Chicago, 1984).
29. Quoted from Hans-Peter Schwarz, *Konrad Adenauer: A German Politician and Statesman in a Period of War, Revolution, and Reconstruction*, vol. 2 (Providence, 1997), 71.
30. Letter from E. P. Neumann to Chancellor Adenauer, 8 May 1950, BA Koblenz, B 145/1566.
31. For results of polling on rearmament, see Michael Geyer, "Cold War Angst: The Case of West-German Opposition to Rearmament and Nuclear Weapons," in Schissler, *The Miracle Years: A Cultural History of West Germany, 1949–1968*, 376–408.
32. 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, 1995), 141.
33. Aufzeichnung, 6 March 1957, BA 145/1566, BA Koblenz.
34. Jahn, *An Adenauers Seite*, 70.
35. Noelle and Neumann, *The Germans: Public Opinion Polls, 1947–1966*, 209.
36. Almond and Verba, *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations*, 312–313.
37. Jahn, *An Adenauers Seite*, 72–73, 100–102.
38. Scott M. Cutlip *The Unseen Power: Public Relations. A History* (Hillsdale, NJ, 1994), 1–72; and Richard S. Tedlow, *Keeping the Corporate Image: Public Relations and Business, 1900–1950* (Greenwich, CT, 1979), 36–37.
39. Cutlip, *The Unseen Power*, 143–154.
40. Stuart Ewen, *PR! A Social History of Spin* (New York, 1996), 102–127.
41. Tedlow, *Keeping the Corporate Image*, 39–45; and Cutlip, *The Unseen Power*, 159–212.
42. S. Jonathan Wiesen, *West German Industry and the Challenge of the Nazi Past, 1945–1955*, 107–108; and Schindelbeck and Ilgen, "Haste Was, Biste Was!" *Werbung für die Soziale Marktwirtschaft*, 18–25.
43. Jahn, *An Adenauers Seite*, 72–77. For Jahn's view on American public relations, see Jahn, *Lebendige Demokratie: Die Praxis der politischen Meinungspflege in Deutschland*.
44. Jahn, *An Adenauers Seite*, 93–95.
45. Jahn, *Lebendige Demokratie: Die Praxis der politischen Meinungspflege in Deutschland*, 11–70.
46. Bericht über die ADK für die Zeit von der Gründung bis 31.8.1956, I-172-51 (NL Lenz), ACDP.
47. Hoffmann, *Adenauer: "Vorsicht und keine Indiskretion!" Zur Informationspolitik und Öffentlichkeitsarbeit der Bundesregierung, 1949–1955*, 270–272.
48. Eventually the Deutsches Institut, the public relations arm of the BDI, provided the ADK with literature to be distributed at meetings. Letter from Jahn to Lenz, 17 February 1954, I-172-051 (NL Lenz), ACDP.
49. Letter from von Eckardt to Adenauer, 27 August 1952, I-010-019/4 (NL von Eckardt), ACDP.
50. Letter from von Eckardt to Adenauer, 3 July 1953, and the included report *Aktionen des Bundespresseamtes zur Vorbereitung der Bundestagswahlen 1953*, BA Koblenz 145/0853.
51. Vor dem Wahlen: Ein Querschnitt durch die öffentliche Meinung, Institut für Demoskopie, ZSg 132/594, BA Koblenz.
52. Schmidtchen, *Die befragte Nation*, 197.
53. Die Bundestagswahlen vom 6 September 1953, December 1953, VII-003-002/1, ACDP.

54. Schmidtchen, *Die befragte Nation*, 160.
55. Noelle and Neumann, *The Germans: Public Opinion Polls, 1947–1966*, 256–257.
56. For a discussion of the Federal Press Agency's film documenting Adenauer's trip, see Buchwald, "Adenauer's Informationspolitik," 144–148.
57. Schwarz, *Adenauer*, vol. 2, 71–78.
58. Günter Buchstab, ed., *Adenauer: "Es mußte alles neu gemacht werden": Die Protokolle des CDU-Bundesvorstandes, 1950–1953* (Stuttgart, 1986), 97.
59. *Ibid.*, 117; and Schwarz, *Adenauer*, vol. 2, 61.
60. Schwarz, *Adenauer*, vol. 2, 58–60 and 74–75.
61. Wünsche, *Die Korea-Krise als ordnungspolitische Herausforderung der deutschen Wirtschaftspolitik: Texte und Dokumente*, 77.
62. Noelle and Neumann, *The Germans: Public Opinion Polls, 1947–1966*, 214.
63. Die Stimmung im Bundesgebiet, Was an Adenauer kritisiert wird, Institut für Demoskopie, September 1953, I-172-35/2, ACDP.
64. Vermerk für Staatssekretär Lenz, 1 December, 1951, B 145/878 BA Koblenz. Pamphlets found in the library of the Bundespresse- und Informationsamt, Bonn.
65. Die Bundestagswahlen vom 6 September 1953, December 1953, VII-003-002/1, ACDP.
66. Noelle and Neuman, *Jahrbuch der öffentlichen Meinung, 1947–1955*, 233.
67. Schmidtchen, *Die befragte Nation*, 163.
68. Kramer, *The West German Economy, 1945–1955*, 164–165.
69. Die Bundestagswahlen vom 6 September 1953, December 1953, VII-003-002/1, ACDP; and Schmidtchen, *Die befragte Nation*, 160.
70. Wähler und Parteien: Die Wirksamkeit von Flugblättern, 1952, Institut für Demoskopie, ZSg 132/181, BA Koblenz.
71. Volker Hetterich, *Von Adenauer zu Schröder: Der Kampf um Stimmen. Eine Längsschnittanalyse der Wahlkampagnen von CDU und SPD bei den Bundestagswahlen 1949 bis 1998* (Opladen, 2000), 139–140.
72. Pridham, *Christian Democracy in Western Germany: The CDU/CSU in Government and Opposition, 1945–1976*, 59–69 and 241–267.
73. Wahlhelfer für die Bundestagswahl 1953, 3 August 1953, III-002-256/2 (LV Westfalen Lippe), ACDP.
74. Wulf Schönbohm, *Die CDU wird moderne Volkspartei: Selbstverständnis, Mitglieder, Organisation und Apparat, 1950–1980*, 45–46.
75. Buchstab, *Adenauer: "Es mußte alles neu gemacht werden,"* 401–404.
76. Schönbohm, *Die CDU wird moderne Volkspartei*, 51–53.
77. Buchstab, *Adenauer: "Es mußte alles neu gemacht werden,"* 433.
78. *Ibid.*, 642–643.
79. Günter Buchstab, ed. *Adenauer: "Wir haben wirklich etwas geschaffen": Die Protokolle des CDU-Bundesvorstandes, 1953–1957* (Düsseldorf, 1990), 86–87.
80. Hetterich, *Von Adenauer zu Schröder*, 138–139.
81. Die Bundestagswahlen vom 6 September 1953, December 1953, VII-003-002/1, ACDP.
82. Heck an die Mitglieder des Bundesparteivorstandes, an die Herren Votsitzenden und Landesgeschäftsführer, 1 April 1953, III-002-256/2 (LV Westfalen-Lippe), ACDP.
83. See for example the ongoing report from the Institut für Demoskopie, Die Meinung über Bonn, 1951–1954 in I-172-35/1 (NL Lenz), ACDP.
84. Die Bundestagswahlen vom 6 September 1953, December 1953, VII-003-002/1, ACDP.
85. An exception to this was the poster "Our daily bread in peace," which clearly utilized Biblical connotations. However, the bulk of CDU/CSU propaganda did not deal with such matters. See the list of propaganda materials in Die Bundestagswahlen vom 6 September 1953, December 1953, VII-003-002/1, ACDP.
86. Wolfgang Hirsch-Weber and Klaus Schütz, *Wähler und Gewählte: Eine Untersuchung der Bundestagswahl 1953* (Frankfurt am Main, 1957), 68–73.

87. Buchstab, *Adenauer: "Es mußte alles neu gemacht werden,"* 225.
88. Heck an allen Landesverbände, 29 July 1953, III-002-259/2 (IV Westfalen-Lippe), ACDP. Figures on campaign spending are from estimates made in March 1953. See Buchstab, *Adenauer: "Es mußte alles neu gemacht werden,"* 436. Copy of *Die Entscheidung* found in III-009-030/2 (IV Württemberg-Hollernzollern), ACDP.
89. The Nazi Party newspaper, the *Völkischer Beobachter*, also ran advertisements during the party's rise to power. See De Grazia, *Irresistible Empire*, 270.
90. Wachler und Parteien: Bericht ueber die politischen Lage, Spring 1952, Institut für Demoskopie, ZSg 132/187, BA Koblenz.
91. Noelle and Neumann, *The Germans: Public Opinion Polls, 1947–1966*, 214.
92. Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands, *Protokoll vom Sozialdemokratischen Wahlkongreß 1953* (Bonn, 1953).
93. "Sie bleiben Marxists, *Union in Deutschland* 27 (10 April 1953): 5.
94. "Sozialismus führt zum Kommunismus," *Union in Deutschland* 68 (2 September 1953): 3.
95. See Schwarz, *Adenauer*, vol. 2, 64–69.
96. Hirsch-Weber and Schütz, *Wähler und Gewählte*, 114–145.
97. For more on communism as the "other" defining West Germany, see Eric D. Weitz, "The Ever-Present Other: Communism in the Making of West Germany," in Schissler, *The Miracle Years*, 219–232.
98. Hirsch-Weber and Schütz, *Wähler und Gewählte*, 95–96 and 107–112.
99. See Fragebogen zum Bundestag-Wahlkampf RWV 48/261, NWHStA. The Kreisverband Aachen reported that the combination of "factual text, caricatures, and satirical verse as effective." Fragebogen zum Bundestagwahlkampf. Bericht der Kreispartei Aachen-Stadt, 20 October 1953, RWV 48/194, NWHStA.
100. Noelle and Neumann, *The Germans: Public Opinion Polls, 1947–1966*, 553.
101. "Die Wirtschaft im Dienst der Hausfrau," 28 June 1952, B 102/9086, BA Koblenz.
102. This echoes Erica Carter's discussion of women as "consumer citizens" within the social market economy. See Carter, *How German Is She?* 19–75.
103. Abrechnung über Erhard-Briefe, I-083-213/2 (NL Fritz Hellwig), ACDP.
104. "Liebe Hausfrau!" Professor Dr. Ludwig Erhard, 1 September 1953, RWV 48 (CDU Kreisverband Dinslaken), NWHStA.
105. For a discussion of Die Waage's advertisements in the 1953 election campaign, see Schindelbeck and Ilgen, "*Haste Was, Biste Was!*" *Werbung für die Soziale Marktwirtschaft*, 109–129.
106. Protokoll von Vorstand und Beirat, 19 January 1953, Die Waage, Zugang 127, LES.
107. Sitzung des Vorstands, 19 June 1953, Die Waage, Zugang 127, LES.
108. Vorstand Protokolle, 9 March 1953, Die Waage, Zugang 127, LES.
109. Letter from Erhard to Dr. Ulrich Haberland, 16 June 1953, Die Waage, Zugang 124, LES.
110. Letter to Dr. Haberland, 18 February 1954, Die Waage, Zugang 124, LES; and Hirsch-Weber and Schütz, *Wähler und Gewählte*, 16.
111. Schindelbeck and Ilgen, "*Haste Was, Biste Was!*" *Werbung für die Soziale Marktwirtschaft*, 270–271.
112. "Die Flucht nach vorn," *Der Spiegel* 37 (9 September 1953): 11–17.
113. Elisabeth Noelle and Erich Peter Neumann, *Jahrbuch der Öffentlichen Meinung, 1957* (Allensbach am Bodensee, 1957), 193.
114. See the discussion of the advertisement in Schindelbeck and Ilgen, "*Haste Was, Biste Was!*" *Werbung für die Soziale Marktwirtschaft*, 126–128.
115. Eine Untersuchung über die voraussichtlich Werbung eines Aufklärungs-Feldzuges, March 1953, Institut für Demoskopie, Abt. 16, Nr. 4, Fasz. 11, RWVA.
116. For a good analysis of the Nazis' campaign techniques and sociological support on a national scale, see Childers, *The Nazi Voter*. For a view of the Nazi rise to power on the local level, see the outstanding book by William Sheridan Allen, *The Nazi Seizure of Power: The Experience of a Single Town, 1922–1945*, 2nd ed. (New York, 1984).

117. In addition to Allen's *The Nazi Seizure of Power*, among the many works examining the propaganda techniques of the Nazi Party at the local level see Jeremy Noakes, *The Nazi Party in Lower Saxony, 1921–1933* (Oxford, 1971) and Detlef Mühlberger, "Central Control versus Regional Authority: A Case Study of Nazi Propaganda in Westphalia, 1925–1932" in *The Formation of the Nazi Constituency, 1919–1933*, ed. Thomas Childers (Totowa, 1986), 64–103.
118. Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, trans. Ralph Manheim, (Boston, 1971), 180–181. See also David Welch, *The Third Reich: Politics and Propaganda* (New York, 1993), 22–27.
119. Kaff, *Die Unionsparteien, 1946–1950*, 456–457.
120. Josef Goebbels, ed., *Moderne politische Propaganda* (Berlin, 1930), 4 and 17.
121. Behrenbeck, "Der Führer Die Einführung eines politischen Markenartikels," 51–78; and Westphal, *Werbung im Dritten Reich*, 21–22 and 78–90.
122. See De Grazia's discussion of the transformation of European poster making techniques in *Irresistible Empire*, 250–262.
123. See Welch, *The Third Reich: Politics and Propaganda*, 25–26 and Gries, Ilgen, and Schindelbeck, *Ins Gehirn der Masse kriechen!: Werbung und Mentalitätsgeschichte*, 45–74.
124. Die Bundestagwahlen vom 6 September 1953, December 1953, VII-003-002/1, ACDP.
125. Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (SPD), *Jahrbuch der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands 1952/53* (Bielefeld, 1954), 233.
126. Hirsch-Weber and Schütz, *Wähler und Gewählte*, 15–18; Hetterich, *Von Adenauer zu Schröder*, 122–123 and 167–168; and *Werbung und Propaganda der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands in Bundestagswahl 1953*, SPD Parteivorstand-03011, AdsD.
127. Klotzbach, *Der Weg zur Staatspartei*, 243–264.
128. See Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (SPD), *1953: Das Jahr der Entscheidung* (Bonn, 1953) and *Das Wahlprogramm der SPD* (Bonn, 1953), two pamphlets published by the executive committee of the SPD and held in the library of the AdsD.
129. Letter from von Stackelberg to Kurt Schumacher, 30 June 1948, SPD Parteivorstand-2AJ0000024, AdsD.
130. Noelle-Neumann, "Political Polling in Germany," 47–48.
131. Schmidtchen, *Die befragte Nation*, 108–109.
132. Letter from Fritz Heine to Stackelberg, 5 November 1955, SPD Parteivorstand-2AJ0000024, AdsD.
133. Letter from Stackelberg to Fritz Heine, 18 November 1955, SPD Parteivorstand-2AJ0000024, AdsD.
134. Sekretärkonferenz, June 1953, SPD Parteivorstand-02559, AdsD.
135. Die Wünsche der Öffentlichkeit an die Bundesregierung in Wirtschafts und Sozialpolitischer Beziehung, EMNID, B 145/4261, BA Koblenz.
136. SPD, *Jahrbuch der Sozialdemokraten, 1952/1953*, 244–245; Hirsch-Weber and Schütz, *Wähler und Gewählte*, 77–82; and *Werbung und Propaganda der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands in Bundestagswahl 1953*, SPD Parteivorstand-03011, AdsD.
137. *Werbung und Propaganda der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands im Bundestagswahlkampf 1953*, SPD Parteivorstand-03011, AdsD.
138. *Das deutsche Wunder*, ZSg 1/90/63, BA Koblenz. "Unternehmermillionen kaufen politische Macht" is held in the library of the AdsD.
139. Die Bundestagwahlen vom 6 September 1953, December 1953, VII-003-002/1, ACDP.
140. Wildt, *Am Beginn der "Konsumgesellschaft": Mangelerfahrung, Lebenshaltung, Wohlstandshoffnung in Westdeutschland in den fünfziger Jahren*, 60, 378.
141. Schmidtchen, *Die befragte Nation*, 163.
142. Protokoll der PV-Sitzung, 6 January 1953, SPD Parteivorstand Protokolle 1953, AdsD.
143. The SPD's three main posters were "Das wollen wir Sozialdemokraten" (1.8 million distributed), "Deutschland Zukunft SPD" (1.2 million distributed), and "Olenhauer statt Adenauer" (1 million distributed). *Werbung und Propaganda der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands im Bundestagswahlkampf 1953*, SPD Parteivorstand-03011, AdsD.

144. Noelle and Neuman, *Jahrbuch der öffentlichen Meinung, 1947–1955*, 192.
145. Die Bundestagwahlen vom 6 September 1953, December 1953, VII-003-002/1, ACDP.
146. Protokoll der PV-Sitzung, 9 September 1953, SPD Parteivorstand Protokolle 1953, AdsD.
147. Petra Weber, ed., *Die SPD-Fraktion im Deutschen Bundestag: Sitzungsprotokolle, 1949–1957* (Düsseldorf, 1993), 3–12.
148. Klotzbach, *Der Weg zur Staatspartei*, 292–294.
149. For a study of the public opinion polls dealing with the 1953 election, see Richard L. Merritt, “The 1953 Bundestag Election: Evidence from West German Public Opinion,” *Historical Social Research/Historische Sozialforschung* 16 (October 1980): 3–38.
150. Hirsch-Weber and Schütz, *Wähler und Gewählte*, 340–343.
151. Karl Schmitt, “Religious Cleavages in the West German Party System: Persistence and Change, 1949–1987,” in Rohe, *Elections, Parties and Political Traditions*, 179–201.
152. This is drawn from an 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 per cent of workers had decided to vote for the FDP, GB/BHE, or other parties. Hirsch-Weber and Schütz, *Wähler und Gewählte*, 247.
153. *Ibid.*, 249.
154. *Ibid.*, 205 and 216–217. The figures for male/female voting do not include data from Bavaria and the Rhineland-Palatinate.
155. *Ibid.*, 341.
156. Ritter and Niehuss, *Wahlen in Deutschland: Ein Handbuch*, 100.
157. Hirsch-Weber and Schütz, *Wähler und Gewählte*, 163–182. See results in Ritter and Niehuss, *Wahlen in Deutschland*, 100.

THE TRIUMPH OF THE ECONOMIC MIRACLE: THE CDU/CSU AND THE 1957 BUNDESTAG ELECTION



On 16 September 1957, the day after the CDU/CSU's historic victory in the election to the third Bundestag, Chancellor Adenauer spent part of his day "re-viewing" a triumphant victory parade before the Chancellery in Bonn. This victory parade, however, was a bit out of the ordinary: it was not made up of adoring West German citizens celebrating the reelection of their chancellor. Instead, with military music blaring, Adenauer reviewed a procession of thirty-six blue Volkswagen buses belonging to the advertising firm Mobilwerbung. These buses, equipped with the latest film projection and audio equipment, had spent the summer crisscrossing West Germany, in cities and towns both big and small, screening campaign films and organizing public relations activities on the behalf of Adenauer and the CDU/CSU. This ceremony was arranged, *Der Spiegel* commented, because Adenauer wanted to officially acknowledge and honor what had earned his election victory: party propaganda. As Adenauer approached the Chancellery, one of the VW buses sped through the streets of Bad Godesberg and Bonn announcing "The chancellor is coming!"—as it had done so often in preparation for Adenauer's rallies during the campaign. During the ceremony Adenauer was in such a jubilant mood that he even raised a glass of champagne in celebration, a most uncommon occurrence for the chancellor, who rarely drank. The chancellor then solemnly presented the firm with a medal engraved with his profile in relief and the inscription: "In deep gratitude for your service." However in the midst of the festivities, the dour chancellor quickly turned serious, declaring

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that “the celebration is over” since the state elections in North Rhine–Westphalia were the following year and the party must commence its preparations.¹

Adenauer had every reason to celebrate after the election. The 15 September 1957 Bundestag election was unquestionably the high point of the CDU/CSU’s electoral success during Adenauer’s government.² The CDU/CSU’s winning of 50.2 percent of the vote marked the first and only time in the Federal Republic of Germany that a political party gained a majority. In many ways, the trend begun in 1953 of transferring votes from splinter parties to the main parties of the CDU/CSU, SPD, and FDP continued in the 1957 election, although the FDP’s share of the vote did decline slightly to 7.7 percent. In 1949, splinter parties had captured almost 28 percent of the vote. By the 1957 election this figure had dropped to just over 10 percent. The CDU/CSU picked up most of these votes, ensuring the party its greatest electoral victory.³ Without a doubt, the 1957 election was the zenith of what has been termed the “Adenauer Chancellery.”

This election also proved to be a crucial juncture in the SPD’s painful and difficult road to reform that led to the Bad Godesberg Program in 1959, in which it finally abandoned any form of socialism as part of its economic platform. Since the 1949 election, the SPD had gained in terms of overall votes (6.9 million vs. 9.4 million in 1957) and the percentage of the vote (29.2 vs. 31.8 percent). Nevertheless, the party fell further behind its main competitor, the CDU/CSU, whose share of the vote skyrocketed from 31.0 to 50.2 percent during that same period. The SPD could not break out of its “thirty percent ghetto” made up primarily of the working-class vote, and the resulting defeat spelled dramatic changes in the party’s platform and personnel.

The 1957 election was also a landmark in terms of the evolution of West Germany’s political culture and the project of selling the economic miracle. Over the course of the campaign, the CDU/CSU’s application of public opinion surveys and advertising principles developed in the transitional 1953 campaign came to full fruition. In 1953 the CDU/CSU had used polling that sketched out the broad contours of West German public opinion to shape its campaign. In the 1957 campaign the party utilized polling far more intensely in both the planning and execution of the campaign. The CDU/CSU now precisely researched the sociological structure of the supporters of the various parties. In addition, the CDU/CSU began to research particular pieces of prospective propaganda to ascertain their exact resonance with the West German population—thereby allowing the party to tailor its propaganda to speak to specific sociological groups and maximize its campaign’s effectiveness. In this way, the CDU/CSU fully embraced techniques, borrowed from commercial advertising, of carefully investigating the “target” consumer of its product, in this case a party image. This approach to political ideas traces back to the growth of organizations such as Die Waage, the Institut für Demoskopie, and the Federal Press Agency, which all looked to practices in the United States for guidance, resulting in what could be termed as the “Americanization” of West German campaigning. Although only eight years removed, the crude propaganda instruments of the 1949 campaign that spoke primarily to

the party's base were long gone. With the new propaganda tools, Adenauer and the CDU/CSU masterfully crafted a campaign centered around the themes of security, stability, and prosperity.

The CDU/CSU initiated planning for the 1957 election almost immediately following the 1953 victory. The so-called Wednesday circle of leading national party leaders began meeting over a year in advance of the election to begin hashing out strategy. In order to coordinate the national election strategy with the CSU, Adenauer asked the CSU chairman Hans Seidel to send CSU representatives to the meetings.⁴ By January 1956, the CDU's leadership realized that the party's organization must be revamped to succeed in the upcoming election. Adenauer voiced concern at an executive committee meeting that the 1953 victory might negatively affect party members' motivation to strengthen their party because all appeared to be going well.

North Rhine–Westphalia Interior Minister Franz Meyer was named the CDU's campaign manager and undertook, along with the CDU party manager Bruno Heck, to strengthen the party's organization during 1956. Their efforts to increase the party membership from its 1956 level of about 230,000 proved somewhat disappointing as party membership remained under 250,000 at the time of the campaign. A considerable number of the 1953 *Kreisgeschäftsführer* (district party managers) hired in preparation for the 1953 campaign had been let go because the district, regional, and federal party organizations could not afford to pay them. With increased financial contributions from industry in election years, the party was able to ensure that every district party organization had a manager back in place to prepare for the 1957 campaign, and in fact, each manager was provided with an auto to facilitate campaign activities. Meyer spent much of the summer of 1956 traveling through West Germany, working to build up district party organizations. With considerable success, in November 1956 he pushed the CDU's executive committee to install election leaders (*Wahlleiter*) in each voting district to help organize and direct campaigns. Also months before the election Meyer worked to educate and train local party leadership in how to distribute campaign materials, including leaflets and posters, and how to maintain party membership lists.⁵

Not only did the CDU want to strengthen its organization, it sought to coordinate the campaign more effectively with lower echelons of the party, and especially with its individual Bundestag representatives. In late 1956, Bruno Heck sent out a number of polling and sociological surveys to the state and local organizations to help them formulate a campaign strategy for their own regions and districts. Also, starting in January 1956 the central party headquarters began an extensive sociological and statistical study of the West German electorate. This study included a sociological analysis of the West German population in terms of gender, religion, education, class, and size of hometown/city; a statistical analysis of the previous Bundestag and Landestag elections; and finally a sociological and political analysis of each election district to be given to the respective Bundestag representative or candidate.⁶ The reports generally reaffirmed what the

party already knew in terms of its voters' background: the party's strongest support came from smaller towns, rural areas, Catholics, women, and older West Germans.⁷ Nevertheless, this systematically quantified analysis of each voting district endowed the CDU/CSU candidates with a wealth of data to campaign effectively at the local level. In addition, it gave the central leadership a broad view of the general characteristics of the electorate so that it could begin to formulate strategies for making inroads into groups less likely to support the CDU/CSU.

In late winter 1957 the CDU/CSU commissioned the Institut für Demoskopie to research the sociological structure of the CDU/CSU's, SPD's, and FDP's support. The organization's analysis, *"Parteien unter der Lupe"* (Parties under the Microscope), broke down the supporters of the various parties into three groups of "strong," "middle," and "weak" according to age, sex, education, income, religion, and occupation, among other categories. Overall, it indicated that both the CDU/CSU and the SPD enjoyed support from about 29 percent of the population, respectively, with the FDP coming in at 5 percent. Fifty-nine percent of the CDU/CSU's supporters described themselves as "weak" or "middle" supporters while 34 percent were self-described as "strong" supporters and 7 percent provided no answer. The survey discovered a few tendencies in the sociological makeup of CDU/CSU supporters: its Protestant followers were more likely to fall into the "middle" or "weak" category, while 68 percent of the "strong" supporters were Catholic (58 percent total of CDU/CSU supporters were Catholic). The report echoed the earlier reports that the strongest CDU/CSU supporters, those least likely to change their votes, tended to be Catholics, especially Catholic women from rural areas. In addition, a majority (67 percent) of the CDU/CSU's strong supporters attended church frequently. Interestingly, this survey did not categorize supporters of the parties according to their possible background as refugees from East Germany or other areas of Central or Eastern Europe.⁸

In addition, the survey identified the voters who appeared to be solidly in the SPD's camp. The typical "strong" supporter tended to be male (57 percent), not highly educated (91 percent *Volkschule* only, that is education up to about age 14), and from the working class (78 percent). This group of "strong" SPD voters constituted, by the Institut für Demoskopie's estimates, about 11 percent of the West German population. The survey indicated that along with these "strong" voters, the "middle" and "weak" SPD supporters were probably not going to drift into the bourgeois parties' camp.⁹

Perhaps most importantly, the survey analyzed the sociological makeup of undecided voters. Sixty-nine percent of these respondents self-identified with the CDU/CSU, SPD, FDP, and other parties. In addition, 21 percent of respondents did not identify with any specific party yet were still planning to vote, while 10 percent were not planning to vote. This group of undecided voters was generally heterogeneous, but nevertheless a few characteristics did emerge. The CDU/CSU's weakest supporters and those who were undecided were heavily weighted toward women (56 percent vs. 54 percent of the total population), Protestants (68 percent vs. 59 percent of the total population), the better educated (28 per-

cent with higher education vs. 22 per cent of the total population), and persons not attending church regularly (49 percent seldom or never vs. 43 percent of the total population).

It was to this undecided segment of the population that the CDU/CSU had to gear its message. It constituted the key “swing vote” that would determine success or failure in the election—in which the message of economic success along with the Adenauer’s leadership would be crucial issues. The survey clearly showed that the CDU/CSU had strong support from Catholic voters, but this was not sufficient to get elected. Besides, since the 1949 Bundestag election the Catholic churches in West Germany had left no doubt about which party they wanted their flocks to vote for. Such insight into the makeup and views of the electorate clearly explains why the CDU/CSU did not emphasize its religious roots in its national-level propaganda. A strong showing from the Catholic and religious Protestant vote was almost guaranteed to the party. Thus, propaganda on economics was directed toward the decisive “undecided” segment of the population, especially women, that would act as the swing vote. While surveys indicated that 43 percent of the general population saw reunification as the most important issue in West Germany, economic issues (economic conditions, prices, wages, and currency) was a clear second (30 percent of the general population vs. 21 percent of CDU/CSU supporters).¹⁰

In the 1957 election the work of professional advertising agencies, together with the application of ever more precise sociological and polling analyses of the electorate, contributed to a more exact, deliberate construction of the CDU/CSU’s image. Although the advertisers’ impact might have been relatively limited in the 1957 campaign in comparison to their role in the 1960s elections and beyond, their presence was quite significant for the very first time.¹¹ In the 1957 campaign two advertising agents, Dr. Hegemann of Düsseldorf and Die Werbe of Essen, designed and distributed two important components of the CDU/CSU’s propaganda: posters and magazine advertisements that profiled CDU/CSU leaders and highlighted West German consumerist prosperity.¹² Their role was clearly defined and significant: the advertising agents did not help provide the basic conceptualization of the campaign, but instead transformed the party’s ideas into effective propaganda.

In addition, although political parties, governmental organizations, and various interest groups had utilized public opinion surveys since 1948, the 1957 election was the first one in which the exploitation of the surveys became extensive. The CDU/CSU had been tracking 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. The *Bundesgeschäftsstelle* also contracted with EMNID to conduct specific surveys in preparation for the 1957 election.¹³ But compared to the 1953 campaign, in 1957 public opinion surveys were used far more precisely to test even particular pieces of propaganda. The CDU/CSU researched its main campaign slogans, including “*Keine Experimente*” (No experiments) and “*Wohlstand für Alle*” (Prosperity for

all), through polling surveys conducted by the Institut für Demoskopie.¹⁴ In fact, “no experiments” was formulated by the commercial advertising agent Hubert Strauf, who had masterminded Coca-Cola’s famous “*Mach mal Pause!*” (Take a break!) advertising campaign of the 1950s.¹⁵ Heidrun Abromeit, in his analysis of campaigning practices in West Germany, commented that a good slogan must “focus a campaign. It should express what the impending election is really about and in the best case provide the motive for electing a party or person.”¹⁶ With the aid of advertising agents and polling, the CDU/CSU’s slogans accomplished this goal by powerfully expressing the themes of security and prosperity. In her defense of the use of polling 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/CSU increasingly used public opinion surveys not only to monitor the mood of the nation, but to better sell its political product by means of pretesting the party’s propaganda to determine how it resonated with the public. The surveys were used not so much to understand public opinion so that the party could engage in a true dialogue with it, but rather in order to manage, direct, and exploit it.

Undoubtedly, the use of polling surveys and modern advertising techniques had a significant impact on the campaign’s tone and focus. As in the 1953 campaign, in 1957 the CDU/CSU concentrated its election focus upon the persona of Chancellor Adenauer. Particularly important was the CDU/CSU’s emphasis on its leading personalities as “brand names” of the party representing the party image, a break from older German electoral traditions of emphasizing a party’s program. In large part, this was a lesson learned from the American-style election campaigns, such as the “We like Ike” slogans in Dwight D. Eisenhower’s 1952 and 1956 presidential campaigns.¹⁷ In fact, the CDU campaign chief Bruno Heck made two six-week trips to the United States to observe the 1952 and 1956 presidential campaigns and drew heavily from these experiences in shaping the CDU/CSU’s campaigns.¹⁸ There he would have observed campaigns’ emphasis on the creation of a presidential candidate’s image, a characteristic of American campaigns since the early nineteenth century. In addition, by the 1952 campaign, the two main American political parties were utilizing professional advertising agents to shape their campaigns, a technique that the CDU/CSU picked up 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.¹⁹ Clearly, one thing that Heck had brought from America was the focus placed upon personalities in political campaigns.²⁰ By drawing upon a more American approach to campaigning, the CDU/CSU led the shift taking place in West Germany in the 1950s from an overtly ideological politics to one increasingly based on personalities and the party image. In large measure to reach out to different sociological groups of voters, the CDU/CSU in 1957 concentrated upon West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer and his cabinet with one of the campaign’s main slogans, “*Adenauer und seine Mannschaft*” (Adenauer and his team). In the realm of economics, the

CDU/CSU no longer espoused, as it had in 1949, the more ideological position of the social market economy and its relation to the creation of an organic, Christian community. Instead, the party focused more upon newly gained opportunities for individualistic consumption, a sentiment personified by Economics Minister Ludwig Erhard and likely to attract key undecided voters. In contrast, the SPD's campaigns were still based on narrow ideological positions focused on its base—mostly male, Protestant workers and failed to attract a broad range of interests.

But by early 1957 it appeared that Adenauer's popularity had somewhat waned since the 1953 election. For example, polls in April 1953 and January/February 1957 asked whether Adenauer should remain as chancellor or relinquish the position to someone else. In April 1953, 48 per cent thought Adenauer should remain, against 26 per cent who thought someone else would be better. In contrast, by January/February 1957 only 36 per cent of respondents believed that Adenauer should remain chancellor, while 41 per cent preferred that someone else take up the position. It seemed that most of the respondents who wanted a new chancellor regarded Adenauer's age as a liability.²¹ Nevertheless, Adenauer still possessed a powerful resonance with the public opinion, a point of which the party was quite conscious, having monitored the party's and the chancellor's popularity with a battery of ongoing polls since the Federal Press Agency had contracted the Institut für Demoskopie in 1951.

In conjunction with the swing in Adenauer's popularity, the CDU/CSU's support dipped from the second half of 1956 through about late spring 1957. In fact, the SPD's support surpassed the CDU/CSU's between August 1956 and January 1957. It then remained about even until April 1957, when the CDU/CSU began pulling ahead.²² Nevertheless, Adenauer's reputation drew support exceeding 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 per cent of West Germans agreed with Adenauer's policies versus 23 per cent who disagreed and 31 per cent who were undecided.²³ In December 1956, 56 per cent of West Germans believed that Konrad Adenauer was West Germany's most capable contemporary politician, in comparison to the 6 per cent of support garnered by Erich Ollenhauer. Adenauer commanded a clearly defined image among the West German population. According to a December 1956 Institut für Demoskopie survey, West Germans were most likely to describe Adenauer as "clever," "diplomatic," and "persistent, tough." In the election campaign the CDU/CSU played off Chancellor Adenauer's image among the West German people.²⁴ Adenauer represented an authoritative, patriarchal figure, someone who brought legitimacy to the West German state—qualities that the public felt no other West German politician could match. As Hans-Peter Schwarz has commented, the voters demanded "a successful, hard-boiled, bewitchingly entertaining, fully self-assured patriarch, who promised them all would be well if only they voted for the CDU."²⁵

The CDU/CSU realized that for the West German population, Adenauer represented a sense of security that could be translated into electoral success. One

report from the CDU's *Bundesgeschäftsstelle* commented that in Adenauer the CDU/CSU possessed a figure representing experience, authority, and the establishment of the Federal Republic of Germany. The key to the campaign was to develop and exploit the personalities of "Adenauer and his team," who exemplified "independent men" and "not functionaries and pawns of the party apparatus." This image of the CDU/CSU being composed of capable men with genuine accomplishments was built to directly contrast with the CDU/CSU's portrayal of the SPD leadership as party hacks and ideological apparatchiks. The CDU/CSU 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!)," one campaign strategy report commented.²⁶

Until his death in May 1957 from an infection contracted in Africa, Otto Lenz proved critical in the formation of the CDU/CSU campaign, much as he had been in the 1953 election. In preparation for the election, he activated the numerous parallel propaganda efforts that had been developed for the previous 1953 campaign. In early January 1957, at a low point in the party's popularity, Lenz reported to Adenauer that an immediate "advertising action" was necessary since it would be impossible to achieve such a steep climb in the party's popularity in the final months before the election. Lenz outlined the challenges and tasks of propaganda, including various brochures to be published by the Federal Press Agency, a poster campaign backing NATO and the support of Hungary, and a decrease in import taxes on tobacco—all to be enacted in order to boost Adenauer and his government's popularity. As in the 1953 campaign, Mobilwerbung, the organization outfitted with equipment-laden VW buses, roamed the Federal Republic screening pro-government films—especially ones dealing with West Germany's NATO membership. But the main thrust of Lenz's activities was to elevate the popularity of Chancellor Adenauer, including strategies such as sending a letter from the chancellor to all West German households asking for their vote and launching a campaign train that carried Adenauer across West Germany to give speeches in each town and city where the train stopped.²⁷

In terms of economics, the CDU/CSU feared that the favorable public opinion toward economic progress had dulled. A February 1957 report indicated that although the party's economic policy was no less successful between 1953 and 1957 than it had been between 1949 and 1953, the public's confidence had somewhat decreased. The report commented that "[t]he memory of the years between 1945 and 1948 has faded and the fulfillment of material needs has led the population decreasingly to a corresponding contentment. Instead, what is detected is a continual extension of what are considered needs."²⁸ In other words, expectations grew even more quickly than the rise in living standards. The campaign must give a "representation of the economic successes since 1949 through 1953 with the help of graphic and numerical examples."²⁹ The key to the campaign was convincing West Germans of the material improvement they had enjoyed since 1948.

As in the 1953 election campaign, the issue of prices played a crucial role in the formation of public opinion on the economy. The Institut für Demoskopie

saw this as perhaps the chief problematic issue for reelecting the Adenauer government. Leading up to the election, public opinion surveys revealed great anxiety over the rise of prices. In March 1957 the Institut für Demoskopie produced a report, "Das Zentrum der Krise" (Center of the Crisis), that analyzed public opinion regarding prices. The majority of West Germans (72 per cent) believed that prices would rise in the ensuing quarter year. The report posited that prices were a critical issue in voter attitudes. "One must," the Institut's report commented, "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." The West German population feared that the economic gains of the past years would be lost. In addition, only 18 percent of West Germans regarded their economic conditions as being better than the year before, despite the fact that real wages had been rising throughout the 1950s. To a certain extent, the CDU/CSU was facing attitudes that had been present since the Korean Crisis of 1950–1952, so the report merely reiterated the importance of the West German public's view of prices. Overall, the report concluded that although living standards were rising with the improvement of the West German economy since 1948, the public's expectations had correspondingly risen.³⁰

Nevertheless West Germans were not completely pessimistic. Thirty-three percent of respondents to an Institut für Demoskopie survey believed that economic conditions were good, while another 48 percent believed they were middling. That left only about 10 percent who thought conditions were bad.³¹ 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 than the year before, compared to 56 percent in 1951. By 1956 the vast majority of respondents (84 percent) perceived either no difference or an improvement in their condition from the year before. By the summer of 1957 this figure had climbed to 90 percent.³²

Part of the guarded optimism was perhaps the result of strategic policies instituted by Economics Minister Erhard that helped keep the rise in prices in check. From late 1956 into the summer of 1957, consumer prices remained relatively stable, especially for such goods such as food, beverages and tobacco, and housing.³³ Erhard, who was fully familiar with the latest polling data, perceived the danger of higher prices in an election year. In a March 1957 letter, Erhard explained to Adenauer that the opposition and trade unions were pushing for higher wages, driving the rise in 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 the chancellor. First, Erhard wanted to assemble 1,500 to 2,000 leaders of industry, crafts, wholesale trade, and retail to inform them of the dangers currently threatening the free market system. He hoped to obtain their promises not to contribute to inflation by raising wages prior to the election. Second, Erhard wished to assemble representatives from

forty to fifty firms “whose products every housewife knows” and persuade them to not raise prices, then proclaim their intent through advertisements appearing in leading newspapers.³⁴ Over the spring of 1957, retailers embarked on a publicity campaign explaining that their goods were cheaper or no more expensive than in 1955. In addition, leading brand-name manufacturers’ advertisements in West German newspapers declared that their prices would not rise before the year’s end. Then other manufacturers and retailers fell into line and announced similar efforts. In addition, the government lowered import duties on coffee and tobacco, a measure suggested by Otto Lenz that provided a visible example of the decrease in prices.³⁵ With these actions, West German consumers, especially women, saw prices stabilize in the decisive period prior to the election.

Furthermore, in January 1957 the Bundestag passed a reform of pension laws, a piece of legislation that contributed to creating favorable conditions for the CDU/CSU. Despite Erhard’s objections that it would spur inflation and ultimately create a welfare state, the reform instituted what has been called a “dynamic” or “productivity pension” system. Pension payments were linked to the productivity of the economy and the per capita income of those employed. This meant that pensions would rise with increases in the real social product. With this measure, pensions were immediately increased by 60 to 90 per cent for West Germany’s 7 million pensioners, allowing them to actually live on their payments. The change was calculated back to 1 January, so many pensioners received a monetary lump sum in the spring of 1957. Undoubtedly, this pension increase and the additional money in pensioners’ pockets meant stronger support for the CDU/CSU. Institut für Demoskopie surveys demonstrated that this was a hugely popular action, and not merely for the pensioners themselves. In general, a large percentage of the West German population supported generous pensions. One February 1957 survey indicated that 79 percent of respondents supported a “good pension” coupled with high taxes over low taxes and a poor pension.³⁶ In other words, West Germans valued the long-term security of solid pensions over more money in their pockets in the short term. This support for the pension system, which continued through the end of the 1950s and into 1960s, became a cornerstone in the CDU/CSU’s social policy. But in early 1957, the CDU/CSU pushed the reform forward chiefly with an eye to the upcoming election.³⁷

Perhaps more than in any of its previous Bundestag campaigns, the CDU/CSU framed its campaign message around a highly developed and clearly articulated metaphor of “Adenauer and his team” as protective parents who provided security, stability, and prosperity to the West German family.³⁸ They were to be portrayed as capable leaders and experts who offered a protective insulation to West Germans in the face of a painful past and a dangerous present, all the while enabling West Germans to avail themselves of the pleasures of a rising consumerism. As one CDU report on the main campaign themes suggested, the party must present itself as the one with “experienced, expert statesmen.” This idea ran through all aspects of the campaign. The party was to represent security in foreign policy by touting its ability to overcome the burden of the Nazi and war past

through its European policy and relationships with the West, while still acting as a “speaking partner” (*Gesprächspartner*) with the Soviet Union—as seen by Adenauer’s 1955 trip to Moscow to negotiate the release of German POWs. Unsettling issues, such as the possibility of arming West German troops with tactical nuclear weapons, were muted and pushed off stage. Although Adenauer secretly thought that the West German *Bundeswehr* would need to equip itself with such weapons in the future, West Germans were disturbed by this prospect, as polls clearly indicated when the issue entered into public and political debate in the early part of 1957.³⁹ Social security was represented by the creation of new jobs, strengthening of pensions, and improvement of health insurance. This approach dovetailed with the emphasis upon Chancellor Adenauer as a symbol of the nation’s—and not least, the party’s—security and stability.⁴⁰ Overall this metaphorical approach to campaigning not only attracted voters by inviting them to share the party’s worldview; also, through the creation of a coherent image of the party, it helped shape voter perception of the CDU/CSU itself, while at the same time directing voter perceptions of the SPD and the Federal Republic.

Central to this metaphor of the party’s leadership representing paternalistic security was the exploitation of West Germany’s economic expansion as one of the party’s main achievements. In essence, the CDU/CSU did not treat economic prosperity and the accompanying rise in GNP and consumption levels as merely positive developments in and of themselves. Instead they linked economic expansion with deeper, cultural currents—as West Germans’ desire for security and stability. As one outline of campaign themes explained, the idea of economic security had to be stressed using the slogans, “Prosperity for all—Stability—No Experiments—Continue Upwards—All should live better!”⁴¹

Since Economics Minister Erhard possessed a powerful and positive resonance with the West German public, he became, next to Adenauer, the most important symbol in the campaign. In July 1957, 51 per cent of respondents in a poll expressed a good opinion of him while he was unknown to only 12 per cent, making him the most consistently well-known minister in Adenauer’s cabinet.⁴² Erhard was described by the CDU/CSU “as the Minister of the consumer, the first German Economics Minister with wide popularity.”⁴³ The CDU/CSU saw that one of its chief tasks for the election was to shape and exploit Erhard’s popularity and his image as the father of the economic miracle, an image that he had cultivated since his days as head of the Economics Administration of the Bizone in 1948. This campaign emphasis on Erhard as representing not just economic reconstruction but a growing prosperity and consumerism signalled a clear shift in terms of the meaning of economics to West Germans. Not so much was economic reconstruction or the social market economy represented as part of the reconstruction of an organic, Christian community, as in the 1949 campaign, or as part of the legitimacy of the Federal Republic, as had been the case in the 1953 campaign. Instead, open consumerism was highlighted more extensively and portrayed as not only the satisfaction of individual desires, but as manifestation of an overall sense of national and personal security. As the CDU report con-

cluded, propaganda should highlight “ownership for everyone as additional protection of the general prosperity and the independence of the individual and his family.”⁴⁴

In many respects, the CDU/CSU was borrowing the commercial advertising approach that one sells not the product itself, in this case Adenauer and the party, but instead some sort of individual benefit, both rational and emotional, that the prospective consumer, in this instance the voter, gains from the product. In the case of 1957 the party was selling the idea of security and stability as represented by its “brand names” of the party leadership, who clearly articulated the identity of the party. Commercial advertising’s influence is revealed not only by the fact that the party retained two advertising firms to develop its propaganda, but also by the way the party allocated its resources. Central to the CDU/CSU’s undertaking was a massive advertising campaign in popular magazines and newspapers aimed at popularizing Adenauer’s cabinet. Out of the DM 6.5 million budget for the central party, DM 1.9 million (30 percent) was expended on the ad campaign and another DM 1.6 million (25 percent) went to its poster campaign—which was organized and run by the advertising firm of Dr. Hegemann.⁴⁵ *Die Werbe*, the CDU/CSU’s advertising agent in charge of the magazine and newspaper campaign, commented early on in the campaign that, “It is continually to be kept in mind, that propaganda for these personalities must also be propaganda for Konrad Adenauer.” The initial advertisements portrayed Adenauer with the leading cabinet personalities who had spoken at the party’s May 1957 convention in Hamburg. Later advertisements depicted the cabinet members themselves, especially the best-known ones, creating a sense of each as a capable individual.⁴⁶ Prior to launching the campaign, the *Die Werbe* provided a detailed analysis of the readership of the various popular magazines, including the total circulation, gender, and size of the cities of the readership. The circulation of the proposed magazines was quite large, totaling 10.8 million copies. Through the summer of 1957 the CDU/CSU placed the heaviest concentration of their advertisements in illustrated magazines, such as *Der Stern*, *Quick*, and *Hör zu*, which were noted for their colored photos and easily-read articles of general interest. In the two weeks before the election, the ad campaign’s focus shifted to local, regional, and national newspapers, including *Die Welt am Sonntag* and *Bild-Zeitung*, with a total circulation of over 11 million copies.⁴⁷ In all, the party generated twenty-three different advertisements that appeared in a total of over 21 million newspapers and over 80 million magazines. Meanwhile the overall number of leaflets distributed actually declined—from over 22 million in 1953 to 20 million in 1957.⁴⁸ By comparison with these magazine advertisements, the leaflets were blunt instruments. Armed with comprehensive information on each magazine’s readership, the CDU/CSU was able to precisely direct its message to targeted potential voters—much as commercial advertising targets potential consumers.

The application of commercial advertising techniques represented an important step in the “Americanization” of West Germany’s political culture, a process in which the CDU/CSU conducted more issue- and personality-based campaigns

to attract broad-based support. One of the party's slogans from the campaign succinctly summed up the overall spirit of the campaign: "Our Performance Is Our Program." Eschewing inflexible, ideological program statements in favor of many different, image-centered advertisements gave the party the ability to modify its message slightly for each prospective group of readers, thereby calculatedly reaching key groups of undecided swing voters. An Erich Peter Neumann report to the *Bundesgeschäftsstelle* of the CDU clearly reflected this use of commercial advertising in the political realm. Neumann's Institut für Demoskopie maintained many connections to the advertising industry through its surveys, which were often commissioned by advertising agents. In this report for the CDU/CSU he filled in the details involved in a full-blown advertising campaign. Neumann suggested that the CDU/CSU prepare upwards of thirty different advertisements for the campaign. That strategy contrasted sharply with campaigns for commercial products that repeated a given advertisement over and over again. Since there was so much overlap in the magazines' readership, Neumann believed that continually republishing the same advertisements during a concentrated period prior to the election would bore the readers and lessen the effectiveness of the advertisements. New advertisements that resembled one another in layout and conceptualization would continually attract the public's interest as well as maintain coherence in regard to the campaign's major themes. In addition, Neumann urged the CDU to test the resonance of many of the advertisements through test surveys before adopting them for the campaign.⁴⁹

In fact, the Institut für Demoskopie conducted a series of surveys to test the effectiveness of some of the particular pieces of CDU/CSU's propaganda. Although undertaken after the CDU/CSU had formulated its advertising campaign, one survey clearly demonstrated that propaganda incorporating the name "Adenauer" achieved more resonance than material merely bearing the label "CDU," or at least was less likely to trigger a negative reaction. This survey, conducted in July 1957, showed that respondents were more likely to agree with statements such as "Adenauer has brought Germany back onto its feet" than ads replacing "Adenauer" with "CDU/CSU."⁵⁰ In addition, advertisements depicting the various cabinet members were tested to ensure that readers went away with the desired image. Other aspects of the advertisements were tested as well, such as their clarity and whether they generated interest.⁵¹ Generally speaking, what the CDU/CSU learned from these surveys was that personalities sold the party better than the party could sell itself—an insight that clearly played itself out in the campaign, much as it had in 1953. In 1957 Adenauer's extensive campaigning machine once again traversed the country—replete with his special election train, dramatic processions escorting his black Mercedes into villages, rallies accompanied by martial music, and posters proclaiming in anticipation, "HE comes!" before his arrival at a rally.⁵²

This personification of the CDU/CSU was carried out largely in gendered terms. The CDU/CSU played off the resonance that Chancellor Adenauer commanded as an authoritative, patriarchal figure who provided legitimacy to the

West German state. In contrast, Erhard, the most popular member of Adenauer's cabinet, was portrayed as the approachable and amiable, yet capable economics minister who had secured West Germany's economic miracle. Clearly, CDU/CSU campaign managers wanted to take advantage of Erhard's image as a minister of the people who represented the interests of average West German consumers, and not merely industry.⁵³ No longer, as it had done in the 1949 campaign, did the CDU/CSU attempt to attract the "Christian housewife" by evoking an organic, humanist West German society achieved through economic reconstruction. This group was already solidly in the CDU/CSU camp. Instead, the CDU/CSU appealed to the female swing voters, who were more likely Protestant and nonreligious, by illustrating the opportunities for consuming newly available products, such as fashionable clothing, more varied foods, washing machines, and refrigerators, that satisfied the desires of individual women and their families. Back in the 1953 election, public opinion surveys had taught the CDU/CSU to avoid "cultural-political issues" in the campaign for fear of alienating the nonreligious members of the electorate; instead the party stressed its leadership's achievements in bringing economic prosperity and security to West Germany.⁵⁴ Most effectively, perhaps, the CDU/CSU created and exploited Erhard's image through an advertising campaign entitled "*Männer um Adenauer*" (Men surrounding Adenauer) that highlighted Adenauer's leadership and the support of his capable cabinet.

Since Erhard was the focal point of the CDU/CSU's pitch to female voters, particularly the undecided female voters, the party's advertising agent suggested that Erhard be portrayed "as the defender of the consumer, optimally in a scene with housewives"; thus one advertisement depicted Erhard at an outdoor market among women doing their shopping (Illustration 6.1).⁵⁵ The text, like that of many other CDU/CSU advertisements, evoked the memory of the currency reform as the turning point in the narrative of West Germany's economic resur-



Illustration 6.1 Men around Adenauer: Professor Ludwig Erhard

gence. It recalled how Erhard had reassured the West German public with convincing calls for reason in the face of uncertainty. This advertisement gave Erhard masculine attributes by linking him to Adenauer and the CDU/CSU-led government. As it pointed out, “Adenauer named the bold [*mutagen*] professor in 1949 as the Economics Minister in the first, freely elected government of the Federal Republic.” Erhard was referred to by both of his titles—“Professor” and “Federal Economics Minister”—thereby giving him an aura of authority and expertise that helped legitimate his policies. Voicing Erhard’s concern for the consumer, the advertisement noted that “[t]he good and sufficient care [*Versorgung*] of consumers, according to Erhard, is the basis of a healthy economy.”

The text also forged a connection between Erhard and housewives, softening his image and even giving it feminine characteristics. “Eighty percent of the wages and income,” it commented, “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”—unmistakably evoking the stories, retold in magazines such as *Der Spiegel* in 1953, of how he would visit the local markets in Bonn and converse with the throngs of customers there. He was described as one of them, but simultaneously a figure who moved within the halls of power defending women’s interests as consumers. From this vantage point, Erhard’s image was slightly androgynous. The advertisement’s illustration encouraged this sense by placing Erhard among women in the feminine space of the marketplace as he listened to their concerns, but meanwhile dressed him in a formal suit and tie, indicating his involvement in the masculine world of politics.

The Institut für Demoskopie ran a survey that tested the public’s reaction to the advertisement—including whether readers found the ad interesting, visually attractive, and informative, and how it affected their opinions. The final version appeared with two changes from the draft. The title was changed to “Männer neben Adenauer” (Men beside Adenauer), thereby suggesting a stronger connection to “Adenauer and his team” than the draft title of “Men around Adenauer.” In addition, Erhard was without his trademark cigar in the final version because, as the test survey indicated, readers were disturbed by Erhard’s speaking with housewives with a cigar in his mouth—another example of the softening of Erhard’s image. Forty percent of the respondents who had seen the advertisement remembered Erhard’s connection with the housewife and the consumer, the main image that the CDU/CSU leadership wanted people to retain.⁵⁶

An alternate advertisement portrayed Erhard in a more masculine light with a stronger-looking profile of the economics minister looking over a scene of trucks, cars, and foot traffic crossing the West German border and a text that explained Erhard’s accomplishment of establishing West Germany’s position in the world economy. Test surveys indicated that this advertisement possessed more resonance with the public than the first Erhard advertisement, especially among men.⁵⁷ Apparently, however, the CDU/CSU more widely published the advertisement depicting the “softer,” more approachable Erhard with housewives—particularly in the leading women’s magazines with a clearly consumerist bent, such as *Brigitte*, *Con-*

stanze, and *Ihre Freundin*. Not only did these magazines have a predominantly female readership, they also tended to have a heavier readership in larger cities and in more Protestant areas such as Lower Saxony—where the CDU/CSU hoped to peel away votes from the bourgeois parties of the FDP and DP.⁵⁸ Evidently the party realized that the undecided female vote was key to its success and sought to construct an image of Erhard with which women could identify and, given the background of the magazines' readership, deliver its message directly to a targeted audience. Together, the campaign created a gendered sense of stability within the CDU/CSU family, or as the slogan expressed it, "team." Each member had his specific responsibility. Adenauer provided the political strength to lead West Germany's diplomatic relations in turbulent times, while Erhard's policies enabled West Germans to enjoy enhanced living standards at home.

Another example of the "Men beside Adenauer" series, which was published following the CDU's May 1957 party conference, portrayed Erhard and Adenauer in the midst of what appears to be an intense policy discussion (Illustration 6.2). The visual depiction of Erhard's working so closely with Adenauer lent itself to the CDU/CSU's idea of building "Adenauer and his team." Through his association with Adenauer, Erhard assumed 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 subordinate role with Erhard positioned behind Adenauer and looking slightly up to him. The text emphasized the visual impression. It made sure to point out that Adenauer had specifically selected Erhard for the position of economics minister. Although the advertisement clearly stressed the Erhard-Adenauer connection and put Adenauer in the position of authority, Erhard did take center stage, with the viewer seeing the economics minister's face straight on, contrasted to the profile of Adenauer.

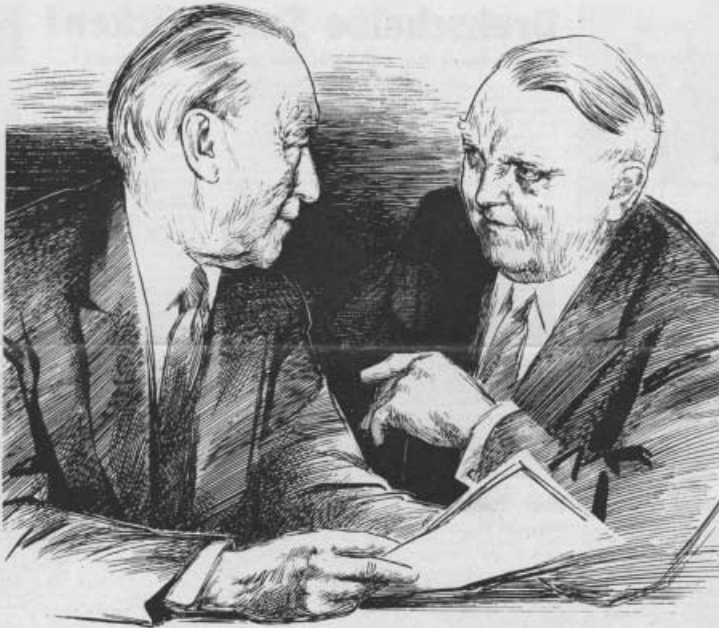
Like much of the contemporary conservative propaganda that drew upon and helped create the mythology surrounding the 1948 currency reform, the advertisement recounted the massive change in economic fortunes since 1948. But instead of merely talking about economic policies, the advertisement was crafted to give the reader an impression of personalities. As in other ads, the text was devised to portray Erhard as a man of action, a "bold" man. "He freed us from the guardianship of ration cards," the ad exulted: "He produced room in which healthy competition could operate. He made the Deutsche Mark into one of the hardest currencies in the world." The beneficiaries of his labors are identified not as individuals, but as all Germans. Economic reconstruction helped establish West Germany as the legitimate German state within the German nation. The text claimed that "[n]ow and in the future we can help all Germans only if we continue undeterred on our path. Only this way will we achieve reunification." Via the advertisement's text, Erhard and economic reconstruction are linked to Adenauer's statesmanship and stability. Although polling data are unavailable for this particular advertisement, data from similar advertisements suggest that male voters were the target audience of this appeal, especially given its placement of economic issues in the context of the more masculine world of foreign affairs.

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 Bezugscheine und des Schwarzen Marktes erinnern? Sagen wir uns nicht leichtthin, 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 Kartenstellen. 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

Illustration 6.2 Men beside Adenauer: Professor Ludwig Erhard

The magazine and newspaper advertising campaign was not the only approach to creating the party's image. With the help of the professional advertising firm of Dr. Hegemann, the CDU/CSU launched an extremely effective poster campaign in the months leading up to the election featuring painted portraits of Adenauer and his cabinet. Like the whole campaign, the posters reaffirmed a sense of security and stability under strong leadership. Adenauer's portrait, painted by the Austrian artist Professor Aigner, dramatically depicted a tanned, vibrant, and young-looking 81-year-old chancellor whose piercing blue eyes locked in the viewer. In the bottom left-hand corner the slogan "No Experiments!" was boldly inscribed over Adenauer's name. A poster of the same series proclaiming "Prosperity for All!" portrayed Erhard as a determined and serious member of Adenauer's team. All the politicians' portraits were placed on a blank, white background, drawing the viewers' attention to the serious faces themselves. In this important respect, the poster campaign reflected the "*Ding an Sich*" (thing in itself) traditions of European poster art and advertising in which the focus of the ad was on the inner qualities of a product, expressed through an evocative, aesthetic sensibility. This approach contrasted with the CDU/CSU's American-style magazine ads, which created a meaning of the party's political products—Adenauer and his team—in a clear, social context.

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."⁵⁹ In contrast to the SPD, which relied on party members to place its posters, the CDU/CSU farmed this time-consuming task out to a professional advertising firm. Indeed, the firm was contracted so early that it was able to reserve the desirable locations in cities and towns; then, during the first week of August, it began placing the posters. The mass saturation of posters was unprecedented. The advertising agency that orchestrated the CDU/CSU's poster campaign boasted in its after-report that "[o]n 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, over ten million posters were mounted in towns and cities that were home to 90.8 per cent of the West German population. In fact, 53 per cent of those queried in October 1957 remembered seeing the CDU/CSU's handiwork.⁶⁰

This report illustrated the model arrangement of the posters for the campaign (Illustration 6.3). Adenauer was positioned at the top left of any row of posters. Interspersed among portraits of Adenauer's cabinet were the main campaign slogans: "No Experiments," "Actions count," "On the 15th of September," and "Vote CDU/CSU." Since the economics minister was the second most important figure in the campaign, Erhard's portrait was invariably placed to the right of Adenauer above the slogan "*Wohlstand für Alle*" (Prosperity for All). Taken as a whole, the poster campaign constituted a striking visual statement of the campaign's central concepts. The portraits themselves depicted serious, take-charge men, an effect intensified by the coloration of the portraits. The lining up of the multiple

*This image is not available in the open access edition due to rights restrictions.
It is accessible in the print edition on page 223.*

Illustration 6.3 Posters from the 1957 Bundestag election campaign, Source: VII-001-5023, ACDP

portraits, punctuated by the key campaign slogans, communicated to the nation an image of a unified team of responsible leaders. The SPD's poster campaign contrasted sharply with the CDU/CSU's. In this decidedly more understated campaign, with portraits often half the size of Adenauer's, the SPD's Ollenhauer looked inconspicuous and ineffectual in comparison to the towering chancellor.⁶¹

In addition to linking Erhard with Adenauer to symbolize West German prosperity and security, the CDU/CSU propaganda stressed the rising consumerism enjoyed by many individual West Germans. The link between economics-related propaganda and Adenauer was designed to convey a sense of security for the nation as a whole. Economics helped underscore the legitimacy of the Adenauer government, and by association the whole West German state, in the eyes of the electorate. Yet much of the CDU/CSU's propaganda did not allude only to security and stability in the public sphere, but also to the enhanced fulfillment of individual desires for consumer goods and with that the creation of a sense of security within the private sphere. In this respect, the 1957 campaign fully developed the approach begun in the 1953 campaign of portraying the private action of consumption as the actualization of Adenauer and Erhard's public policies. The sense of private economic security engendered by consumption paralleled an overall sense of public security created by the CDU/CSU's leadership and its policies. The CDU/CSU propaganda linked these two spheres by showing how its policies created the opportunity for individual West German citizens to pursue new levels of consumption—thereby achieving their sense of private security. In turn, by pursuing consumption, West Germans were proving and strengthening the

validity of CDU/CSU policies. By making this connection, the CDU/CSU obliterated any distinction or difference between what might be considered private decisions of consumption and more public acts of civic participation. To consume passively was tantamount to civic participation in the newly formed West German democracy, and other than casting votes all that was asked for by the Adenauer government.

In preparation for the campaign, the CDU sought to investigate public perceptions of consumption, prosperity, and security. It arranged in March 1957 for the Institut für Demoskopie to conduct what amounted to a focus-group testing of the slogan “Prosperity for all.” That slogan was already closely associated with the CDU/CSU’s main economic spokesman, Ludwig Erhard, who earlier that year had published a book by the same title that recounted the social market economy’s principles and successes. The Institut’s survey interviewed 50 men and women who were considered to be working-class with the primary goal of comparing the relative effectiveness of the slogans “Prosperity for all” and “Property for all.”⁶²

The survey initially explored what “prosperity” meant to the respondents. Generally speaking, they conceived of prosperity 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 involved going to the theater or movies, pursuing a hobby, and taking a vacation. For them, the concept of “prosperity” very seldom extended to luxuries or higher-end articles such as automobiles and homes. According to the survey, the slogan “Prosperity for all” strongly resonated with this group. Most of the respondents (27 out of 50) had a positive reaction to a poster bearing that slogan. Perhaps most significantly for the CDU/CSU campaign, 30 out of 50 respondents regarded the slogan as attainable. In other words, the majority believed that economic security was at hand for West Germans. In addition, the respondents favored the slogan “Prosperity for all” over “Property for all” (29 vs. 6, with 15 no opinion).⁶³ Opinion surveys translated directly into campaign strategy. One campaign planning report commented that “Prosperity for All” should be favored over other slogans because the Institut für Demoskopie survey deemed it “not as annoying or provocative” as “Property for all.” Informed by this survey, the CDU/CSU went forward with “Prosperity for all” as one of its core slogans of the campaign.⁶⁴

Beginning in August and through the duration of the campaign, the CDU/CSU capitalized on the survey’s insights by running a barrage of advertisements in newspapers and illustrated TV, radio, and women’s magazines. Designed by the Dr. Hegemann advertising firm, the same outfit that had planned and conducted the CDU/CSU’s poster campaign, the advertising series proclaimed “It’s going better for all of us.”⁶⁵ With their combination of illustrations, slogans, and text, the ads had the feel of commercial advertising common in newspapers and magazines. Each ad invited the reader into a shared experience of consumerism, one supposedly common to all West Germans with the three variations proclaiming that, “The clothing closet attests:” “The paycheck attests:” and “The shopping bag attests:” (Illustration 6.4, Illustration 6.5, and Illustration 6.6). The telling



Der Kleiderschrank bestätigt es:

Uns allen geht es besser!

Und doch sind es noch keine 10 Jahre her, als man in Deutschland errechnete, daß auf jeden Deutschen nur alle 5 Jahre ein Teller komme, alle 12 Jahre ein Paar Schuhe, nur alle 50 Jahre ein Kleid, daß nur jeder fünfte Säugling in eigenen Windeln 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 Haushalt um, öffnen Sie einmal Ihren 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

Illustration 6.4 The clothing closet attests: It's going better for all of us!



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



Illustration 6.5 The paycheck attests: It's going better for all of us!



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: 9500 g Brot, 2250 g Nahrungsmittel, 500 g Zucker, 137,5 g Fett, 400 g Fleisch, 125 g Käse, keine Kartoffeln... Wir begingen das traurige Jubiläum der 100. Zuteilungsperiode, wir standen Schlange vor Geschäften, die keine Ware hatten – hungrig, frierend, 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 Erhard eine Wirtschaftsverfassung, die immer breitere Schichten unseres Volkes zu Wohlstand führen würde. Ludwig Erhard 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**

Illustration 6.6 The shopping bag attests: It's going better for all of us!

illustrations depicted scenes of the new prosperity, consumerism, and familial security: a woman clothes shopping on a busy street packed with cars and pedestrian traffic, a man returning home to his family bearing a gift for his child, and a woman shopping for food with her baby in front of a market overflowing with goods. In contrast to the 1949 campaign, the 1957 election propaganda featured no “women standing alone.” Instead, the advertisements suggested each figure was part of a stable, “complete” family enjoying the material benefits and comforts of the economic miracle.

The text of each advertisement recounted the increased availability of consumer goods and the establishment of a stable, hard Deutsche Mark. Linking these developments together were Erhard’s economic policies. The ads asked the reader to look back to the days of the immediate postwar period when there were shortages of food, clothing, and jobs; then it contrasted the situation at the present. The last paragraph of the text was identical in all three variations of the advertisements. Building upon the results of the Institut für Demoskopie’s focus group, the advertisements 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 by step, if we avoid all experiments.” These advertisements packaged economic expansion as fulfilling individual materialistic desires. Economic prosperity was not about achieving reunification or the reconstruction of a new organic, Christian German community, but instead about increasing personal consumption. All one had to do was “Look around your household. Open your closet. That attests: It’s going better for us, much much better for all of us.” However, this individualistic consumption did have more public ramifications: by participating in consumption and supporting the party that had brought it about, the advertisement implied, the individual consumer/voter was encouraging improvement in conditions for West Germans of all social classes—thereby bringing all citizens together in the West German community. In this respect, much as had been done in the 1953 campaign, individual consumerism was defined not only as a private act of choice, but also as one with more public and civic dimensions. Individual prosperity was, in fact, “prosperity for all.”

Not only did the ads simultaneously emphasize the new consumerism emerging in West Germany as a goal in itself and also as a practice having more public implications, but they also played off the mythology and image that had emerged around Erhard as part of “Adenauer and his team.” As two of the ads commented, Erhard had kept the promise he made, back in the darkest days following the war, of better times ahead. The party was not selling any economic policy or ideology but personalities. In fact, at this point the CDU/CSU made no real mention in the campaign of the social market economy or its sociopolitical implications. This economic policy was now merely personified in the figure of Ludwig Erhard and manifested by the consumer goods themselves.

In many respects the CDU/CSU’s advertisements reflected some of the sentiments created and disseminated through Erhard’s various public relations efforts.

Ever since his work in the 1930s with Wilhelm Vershofen at the Society for Consumer Research, Erhard had clearly grasped the importance of public opinion and sentiment not only in patterns of consumption but also in politics and public policy. Throughout the 1950s Erhard had been very active in managing public opinion. Clearly, Adenauer and the CDU/CSU sometimes resented Erhard's public relations machine, since it did not always adhere to the party policy positions (especially on the issue of antitrust legislation) and could potentially divert financial contributions from the party.

However, by the 1957 election the CDU/CSU was clearly tapping into the image that had been created around Erhard. On the level of influencing the opinion of politicians, journalists, and educators, Erhard benefited from the work of the Aktionsgemeinschaft Soziale Marktwirtschaft (Action Group for the Social Market Economy) that had been active since 1953. In addition, he enjoyed the support of the so-called Erhard Brigade, a group of journalists and Bundestag representatives working to spread Erhard's ideas of the social market economy. Named after the "Brigade Ehrhardt," a *Freikorps* unit involved in the failed Kapp Putsch of 1920, this group acted as a pressure group supporting Erhard's ongoing efforts for increased economic liberalization and effective antitrust legislation.⁶⁶ In early 1957 Erhard published his book *Wohlstand für Alle* (published in English as *Prosperity through Competition*), which recounted the development of the social market economy in West Germany and its successes. In terms of more immediate impact on the 1957 election campaign, industrial and commercial interests distributed 12 million copies of the illustrated magazine *Wir Alle* (All of Us). This visually attractive publication contained accounts of "average" West Germans reflecting on advances in wages and opportunities in consumerism that West Germany had enjoyed. Like other pro-Erhard propaganda it stressed his deep concern for average consumers in a highly personal way—for example through his answering letters with questions from individual West Germans. Meanwhile, SPD leaders were connected to crass Marxism—perhaps most crudely by including a photo of Ollenhauer sitting in front of a portrait of Karl Marx and allowing the readers to reach their own conclusions.

At the forefront of efforts to construct a mythology around Erhard was, of course, Die Waage's advertising. Since 1953 it had conducted publicity campaigns with advertising series handling issues such as prices, work hours, and the relationship of productivity and living standards. These efforts were considerable as the organization spent DM 1.1 million, DM 1.6 million, and DM 900,000 in 1954, 1955, and 1956 respectively. Although in non-election years Die Waage concentrated on more purely economic issues or labor relations, in many respects the organization helped prepare the ground for the CDU/CSU to reap the harvest in the 1957 election. One of the Die Waage campaigns starting in 1955 centered on ads depicting Erhard making appeals directly to the West German people or segments of the citizenry—such as housewives, small savers, workers, and industrialists—while also responding to current developments in the economy. Die Waage's executive committee hesitated to undertake such a campaign, since the

organization wanted to focus on the advantages of the social market economy rather than generate publicity for a single political figure. However, given the insistence and financial support from Erhard's camps, Die Waage assisted in the technical development of the "Erhard Column." There were clearly advantages to focusing on Erhard. One of Die Waage's reports on the campaign 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 his unique temperament, his occasional inclination toward impulsiveness and not least because of his Bonhomie."⁶⁷ However, as the election neared, Erhard exerted more pressure on Die Waage to change their tactics. In an April 1956 meeting with Die Waage's executive committee, he argued that the Fritz and Otto ads should be ended.⁶⁸ He later pushed for the "Erhard Column" ads to come to the fore in preparation for the election campaign and for Die Waage's financial resources to be directed to such an effort.⁶⁹

Despite this conflict in the 1957 campaign, the CDU/CSU and Die Waage worked much more closely than in 1953 to coordinate the themes developed in their propaganda. A letter from Erich Peter Neumann, the political liaison for the Institut für Demoskopie, to Die Waage's treasurer, Alphons Horten, highlighted some of these 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 agreed with the Chancellor that close collaboration is something to aim for."⁷⁰ Here Die Waage's public pronouncements that it was not aligned with any particular party were brought into serious question. Undoubtedly, Die Waage hoped for a victory by the "bourgeois" parties when it solicited funds, but it appears that in more private moments, Die Waage's leadership sought to lend direct support to the CDU/CSU.⁷¹

With this cooperation, Die Waage's advertisements harmonized well with the CDU/CSU's vision of the main themes of the campaign: security, stability, and prosperity. In fact, several of the Die Waage advertisements appearing before the election echoed the CDU/CSU's slogans with "No experiments" and "We know what we have." As one proposal within the organization suggested, the main theme of the ads for the election year was "freedom from fear." The report saw West Germans as being gripped by 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 upon demonstrating the tangible benefits of Erhard's economic policies that all West Germans enjoyed and showing that the alternatives would jeopardize the economic benefits they had secured. An important component of this advertising campaign was to stress that reliance upon the state through a planned economy would not alleviate the fears of rising prices. The only sure way to safeguard the economic achievements made since the currency reform was to stay the course, an unsurprising position to take in support of a party in power. This message of "freedom from fear" was to reach both the middle classes—whose bour-

geois values had to be reconstructed after previous governments had wiped out their savings—and the working class. The working class, the report warned, had reached new income levels, but had not yet taken on middle-class practices and attitudes, such as savings and home ownership, and was still potentially under the influence of the “old slogans.”⁷²

Throughout all of Die Waage’s ad campaigns, there were concerns that Die Waage’s advertisements were not reaching their targeted working-class audience because they were not being placed in the newspapers most read by workers.⁷³ As a result, in the 1957 election 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. 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 speak to a less-educated readership that was harder to reach through purely textual advertisements.⁷⁴ In addition, Die Waage produced a cartoon film entitled “Behalte deinen klaren Blick” (Retain your clear view) that recounted the achievements of the social market economy and reminded viewers of conditions only twelve years before. Throughout the film, when things were “seen through the wrong lens,” the screen turned red and showed the plight of the gaunt-looking workers laboring under the planned economy with its shortages and poor conditions. In addition to the cartoon film, Die Waage produced eighteen different ads appearing in newspapers and magazines with a total circulation of 22 million copies in preparation for the election.⁷⁵

The format of the Fritz and Otto series had evolved a bit from its earlier manifestations. Instead of a dialogue in which Fritz finally reaches a “clearer” understanding of the economy after a bit of persuasion from Otto, in this series both Fritz and Otto agreed right from the start. In addition, Fritz and Otto appeared decidedly more middle-class as they were dressed in jackets and ties in all the illustrations, giving the impression that somehow the two characters had risen out of the working class. To a large extent, Die Waage’s advertisements underscored the idea that West Germany society had undergone a “deproletariatization.” The message was that the social market economy had not merely facilitated material betterment of the rich, but had improved the conditions of all West Germans. With this belief in the social market economy, Die Waage hoped, the working class would not only vote for the CDU/CSU, but also could be weaned from its more radical demands for wage raises or codetermination.

From this perspective the message of the advertisement with the banner “Everyone has a part of it!” was clear: the time had arrived when broad sections of West German society had achieved true prosperity (Illustration 6.7). Standing with his pal Otto before a prominently featured refrigerator, Fritz gushed that he could afford a motor-scooter, that Brigitte, his wife, had a washing machine, and that refrigerators had been twice the price only four years before. But he regarded the new pension program as the most important result of Erhard’s economic policies because it spread the wealth to everyone. Made possible by the success of



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 wir seit 1948 doch 'n ganz schönes Stückchen vorangekommen . . .«



**Deshalb bleiben wir auch in Zukunft
bei Erhards Sozialer Marktwirtschaft**

Die Waage · Gemeinschaft zur Förderung des Sozialen Ausgleichs e.V. · Vorsitzter Franz Greiss · Köln am Rhein · Schildergasse 32-34

Erscheint in der Tagespresse und in der BILD-Zeitung

Illustration 6.7 Everyone has a part of it!

Erhard's economic principles, he explained, it was a true example of the social market economy, ignoring that Erhard, in fact, was opposed to the new pension system. As Fritz put it, "From nothing comes nothing!" The advertisement concluded, as did all of Die Waage's appeals in the 1957 campaign, "We therefore are sticking with Erhard's social market economy in the future."

Clearly, the ad was making use of the symbolic capital that the refrigerator had acquired in West Germany. Polling indicated by the second half of the 1950s that the refrigerator had become the focus of West Germans' consumerist aspirations. Debates between left and right had raged upon the availability and meaning of the refrigerator. In the summer of 1953 Erhard and trade unionists had exchanged barbs in a series of articles appearing in *Welt der Arbeit*. One article attacked Erhard's economic policy as benefiting only capital and demanded higher wages and more equitable income distribution so that everyone could enjoy the products of modern technology. In a 16 June 1953 article entitled "A Refrigerator in Every Household," Erhard responded that initially any luxury good, which a refrigerator was in 1953, was consumed by the rich. Holding the line on possible inflation, Erhard argued that merely granting consumer credit would not sustain a rising living standard. Rather, increased productivity was ultimately the only way to increase real purchasing power. This was the way, Erhard noted, that the automobile had been transformed from a luxury good to a common article in the United States.⁷⁶ Evoking such earlier discussions, Die Waage made it clear that this time of prosperity was now at hand.

Not only the Otto and Fritz series, but all of Die Waage's advertisements projected the same view: West Germany's material conditions had markedly improved since the 1948 currency reform, wealth was being equally distributed through society, and all sections of society were enjoying a consumerist sense of comfort and security—echoing some of the organization's 1956 ads that the "class war has come to an end." The comics series (Illustration 6.8) portrayed West Germans as taking part in a new consumerism that many were already actually enjoying, or



Illustration 6.8 When one is not blind ...

hoped to enjoy in the near future. The characters were depicted buying autos, building their own homes, going to the movies, and talking about purchasing 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 by depicting various people within West Germany—the elderly, women, children, or apprentices. The social market economy took these different segments of society and reconstructed a new West German community based upon consumerism. One advertisement bearing the slogan "A new life obtained!" pictured a refugee woman who, as the text explained, had fled to West Germany with her children when her prisoner-of-war husband failed to return home (Illustration 6.9). No mention appeared of the psychological hardships stemming from her life during the Third Reich or experiences of flight, distancing her from any disconcerting connections to the old regime. Instead, her story begins during the occupation period in 1947. With her husband absent, she and her children were expelled from Upper Silesia and suddenly "left with nothing." The advertisement explained that the social market economy had made possible a new life, a solid income, and a secure future for this woman "standing alone." In this way the achievement of material well-being was privileged over and insulated against any psychological or spiritual rehabilitation. In Die Waage's view material security made any psychological insecurity practically irrelevant, thereby creating a feeling of "freedom from fear."

Through these various advertisements, the CDU/CSU and Die Waage identified and adapted to an evolving trend in West German consumerism and succeeded in attaching a political meaning to it. Indeed, given their access to a wealth of public opinion data, they were exceptionally well informed of the changes occurring in West German society. As Otto Lenz commented in a forward to a 1956 Institut für Demoskopie study on the "Social Reality": "We live in an age of social upheaval. The fact that this change proceeds silently and its effect is barely perceived, does not change its evolutionary character." Increased



Das Leben neu gewonnen!

Diese Frau ist eine von vielen, die es nach der Flucht wieder geschafft haben. Ihr Mann kehrte 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 haben die Bundesrepublik rund 11,3 Millionen Vertriebene und Flüchtlinge auf sich gebürdet. geschlagenen, besitzlosen Menschen nicht nur eine Unterkunft, sondern auch die Möglichkeit, sich eine neue Existenz zu schaffen. Unsere freie Wirtschaft hat ihnen neue Arbeitsplätze. Sie bewilligte damit – natürlich nicht zufällig – eine ihrer schwierigsten Aufgaben.

11,3 Millionen Flüchtlinge machen rund ein Viertel unserer Bevölkerung aus, beinahe jeder Vierte also gehört zu ihnen. Aber man kennt sie kaum, noch besser: fast alle haben einen gut besetzten Arbeitsplatz gefunden, sie sind gut eingearbeitet und gut gebildet – 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 Erhards Sozialer Marktwirtschaft



DIE WAAGE

Die Waage – Gemeinschaft zur Förderung des Sozialen Ausgleichs e. V. – Vorstand: Franz Gross – Köln am Rhein – Schillergraben 32–34

Illustration 6.9 A new life obtained!

free time and new consumer goods, particularly the refrigerator had become “symbols of the aspirations of civilization of the broadest social masses.” Market research and public opinion polling clearly revealed the rising expectations of West German consumers in the midst of the economic miracle. In a summer 1955 survey, 49 percent of respondents indicated their belief that an electric refrigerator was an essential part of a proper living standard, although very few West Germans stated that they actually owned such an appliance. Despite their growing aspirations, most West Germans viewed their financial circumstances as quite favorable: 27 percent of respondents regarded their income as “good” and another 42 percent as “sufficient.”⁷⁷

Michael Wildt has argued that there were two phases of consumption in West Germany during the 1950s. In the years immediately following the 1948 currency reform, West Germans spent most of their incomes trying to replace basic goods lost during the war, such as food, shelter, and clothing. This changed dramatically during the 1950s. In 1950, 46.4 percent of the income of an average four-person working household went for food. By 1960 this had decreased to 36.2 percent. To be sure, most West Germans’ budgets continued to be tight, but beginning around 1957 the demand for luxury goods started to increase. More money was spent at first on luxury goods such as coffee, tea, alcohol, and tobacco, fashionable clothing, and movie tickets. In fact, 1956 was a high point in the number of movie-goers in the Federal Republic, tallied at 818 million in that year. A few years later this rise in luxury consumption was followed by increased spending on vacations, travel, beauty products, and electrical appliances such as refrigerators, televisions, and electric ovens.⁷⁸ Throughout their advertisements, Die Waage portrayed these consumer goods that were still not affordable for most West Germans as the norm, thereby strengthening the impression of West Germany’s material progress. For example, Die Waage’s advertisement “Everyone has a part of it!” prominently featured the refrigerator as a normal consumer good, although official statistics showed that in 1955 only 11 percent of West Germans actually owned the product. By 1958 this figure had grown to 21 percent and to almost 52 percent by 1962.⁷⁹ The CDU/CSU and Die Waage exploited this growing realization of consumerism and ever increasing expectations and associated them with specific political conceptions. Consumerism was not merely concerned with fulfilling needs or desires, but was connected to ideas of West German legitimacy as a whole, overall social harmony, and a sense of individual security provided by the Adenauer-led government. There is no hint in the advertisements about the moral and social hazards of increased materialism—concerns so often articulated by the CDU/CSU immediately following the war, in the 1949 campaign, and by social conservatives throughout the 1950s.⁸⁰

In fact, Erhard defended the implications of consumerism in a chapter of *Wohlstand für Alle* entitled “Does Prosperity Lead to Materialism?” He explained that despite objections that the social market economy had led society toward a “corrupting materialism,” all economic activity and increased productivity in fact had the goal of “opening up improved and freer ways of living for the whole peo-

ple.” This economic progress would “liberate man from material want and stress” and indeed, with increasing prosperity would decrease materialism since “an increase in prosperity created the environment in which man is lifted from a purely primitive materialistic way of thinking.” Erhard redefined consumerism, once a force that shackled the German people to materialistic drives that manifested themselves in Nazism or communism, as one that liberated them to form a more harmonious, just, and free society. Whether true social conservatives were buying such a message is questionable at best, but in any case the party was clearly trying to adapt its consumerist vision to the electorate.⁸¹

The advertisements of Die Waage and the CDU/CSU mirrored sociological developments taking place in West Germany as perceived by Helmut Schelsky, a prominent 1950s sociologist who strongly advocated a social policy that supported domestic roles for women. In his book, *Wandlungen der deutschen Familie in der Gegenwart* (The Transformation of the German Family at the Present Time), Schelsky argued that although the upheaval of war and the immediate postwar years had been extremely dangerous for the family, the 1950s were seeing 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. 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.⁸² Other studies supported Schelsky’s view. One 1956 sociological study conducted in West Berlin investigated the attitudes of working mothers. The majority of interviewees living in “complete” families, which were defined as a family with a husband, wife, and children, desired higher wages and job security for men so that “mothers won’t be forced to take up employment.”⁸³

Undoubtedly, the economic depression of the early 1930s, the war years of the first half of the 1940s, and the so-called hunger years of second half of that decade had a critical impact upon West Germans’ search for familial security in the 1950s.⁸⁴ Schelsky argued that hand in hand with the reconstruction of the family within an ever expanding, open economy went the decline of the importance of class stratification, identity, and tensions during the 1950s as a “leveled middle-class society” (*nivellierte Mittelstandsgesellschaft*) was created. The destruction of the Second World War and the ensuing flight of refugees brought down the social levels of some, while new economic, professional, and living opportunities in postwar West Germany permitted others to rise—resulting in an ever increasingly middle-class and less ideological society. To Schelsky, the rise of consumerism was an essential feature in this transformation of West German society.⁸⁵

Undoubtedly, as Robert Moeller has argued, Schelsky figured in the creation of a conservative social policy, spearheaded by the CDU/CSU, that sought to construct an idealized “complete” family of working father and stay-at-home mother that did not often correspond to reality as rates of women working outside the home rose during the 1950s. In the early 1960s, two thirds of working-class families needed women to work in order to maintain their standard of living. In addition, as Elizabeth Heineman has shown, marriage rates of women in-

creased dramatically during the 1950s, resulting in relatively historic levels of marriage despite the continuing “surplus of women” of about 3 million. However, single women after the war tended increasingly to be ones who were widowed or divorced and supporting a household with dependents, as compared to single women who had never married—as was the case for most single women before the war. Others have argued that although income levels continually rose during the 1950s, Schelsky’s view of a “leveled-out middle class society” did not reflect West Germany’s social conditions as class differences continued and the concentration of wealth remained relatively uneven.⁸⁶

Although conservative visions of society did not correspond to an empirical reality, they did have great political utility. With their access to public opinion polling, Die Waage and the CDU/CSU were able to create a coherent and attractive picture of a reconstructed West German political, social, and family life that resonated with the West German public. It was a portrayal that echoed Schelsky’s vision of a passive, consumerist, middle-class, and non-ideological West German society. The 1957 campaign successfully made use of the West Germans’ desire for stability—be it political, economic, social, or familial—while at the same time it exploited their fear that all gains might be lost. The different gendered images surrounding the national political figures of Adenauer and Erhard created a sense of public stability within the family of the CDU/CSU and also of West Germany that ran parallel to the scenes of private familial security in conservative propaganda. While Adenauer looked after West Germany’s standing in the world, Erhard concentrated on the domestic issues of economics and improvement of West German living standards. From this perspective, the CDU/CSU and its parallel propaganda projected an image of itself imbued with the values that the sociologist Schelsky described as vital to West Germans: wholeness, completeness, stability, and security. The CDU/CSU promised these values, in large measure, through the passive consumerism of the economic miracle and by avoiding any risky “experiments.”

Compared to earlier campaigns, the CDU/CSU did not often attack the SPD directly—in part because it did not want to hand the party any free publicity. The campaign followed the commercial advertising motto that “Persil [a West German laundry detergent] talks only of Persil.”⁸⁷ The party took this approach knowing that it was unlikely to lure voters from the SPD. This was a campaign in which the CDU/CSU presented itself as beyond mere party ideology and as working in the interests of all parts of this mythical “leveled middle-class society.” The messages of security and prosperity were ones that could appeal to supporters of the smaller parties within the bourgeois camp. If anything, the CDU/CSU’s attacks on the SPD could be seen less as a way of wooing prospective voters from the SPD than as a portrayal of the CDU/CSU as the only party strong and stable enough to thwart the SPD threat. On the occasions when the CDU/CSU actually attacked the SPD directly, it was Adenauer who led the charge. Perhaps the most famous of these attacks was a 7 July 1957 speech in Nuremberg in which Adenauer claimed that a SPD victory would be “the ruin [*Untergang*] of Ger-

many”—especially in regard to the SPD’s position against Adenauer’s policy of Western alignment. Hans-Peter Schwarz has suggested that this was Adenauer’s calculated attempt to answer the SPD’s stirring up of fear within the electorate—particularly in regard to possible nuclear rearmament—by kindling an even greater countervailing fear. To be sure, the government-supported ADK spent much of the summer of 1957 convening hundreds of rallies and meetings that clearly delineated the threat of the Soviet Union to not only West Germany, but to the West in general.⁸⁸ In most cases, the CDU/CSU defined the SPD more indirectly—especially by using the “No experiments” slogan. If the CDU/CSU’s overriding metaphor was that Adenauer and his team were the protective, capable parents providing all forms of security for the West German people, the entailment of “no experiments” was that the SPD represented something dangerous, unproven, and alien to the West German family—a sentiment that despite the postwar evolution of the SPD ran deep in the psyche of bourgeois Germany and was particularly acute within the context of the Cold War.

In contrast to the CDU/CSU campaign that relied so heavily on polling and advertising consultants, from a technical viewpoint the SPD approached the election campaign in a much different manner. The party was in the process of modernizing its campaigning in hopes of reaching out to new segments of West German society, but there was clearly hesitation and division within the party regarding what these new campaigning techniques meant in terms of its policies and its relationship to the working class, its political base. In preparation for the campaign, the party’s executive committee commissioned various opinion surveys to provide a basis for its campaign strategy, with an eye particularly toward developing propaganda for groups of what it called “soft voters” whom the committee felt might be swayed to the Social Democratic camp.⁸⁹ Their surveys were useful in painting broad trends in public opinion; however, the party did not carefully test the resonance of particular pieces of propaganda within the public. As a result, the SPD’s propaganda appealed primarily to the party’s main working-class constituents, despite the new use of polling and advertising techniques.

For several years the SPD had been commissioning polls from EMNID to track general public opinion trends. Leading up to the election, the SPD retained DIVO to conduct various surveys that dealt specifically with election issues. Very early on in the election preparations, the surveys indicated that the rise in 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 chief concern among the population. In addition, 75 percent of respondents believed that the federal government could do much more to help control the rise in prices.⁹⁰ Overall, the attack on price increases was part of the larger campaign theme that the SPD represented security for all West Germans, a campaigning approach supported by Fritz Heine, the chairperson of the Werbung und Propaganda Ausschuss (Advertising and Propaganda Committee) and the party’s campaign manager.⁹¹

As the SPD realized, its financial limitations required that it concentrate efforts upon a number of specific target groups in order to expand its share of the vote in the upcoming Bundestag election. Coming out of the 1953 election, the SPD had sought to profit from some “lessons learned.” One report analyzing political attitudes through 1955 commented that the SPD tended to appeal to its traditional voters at the expense of trying to attract new ones. The report divided voters into categories of “soft” or “hard” party supporters. As it observed, “The ‘soft’ 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 “soft” voter supported the CDU/CSU because he saw his own economic situation improving. The report saw that the traditional German electoral milieu and subcultures were loosening in the postwar society, in part because of the growth of an increasingly middle-class society, and that the SPD must find ways to seize advantage of such larger social changes. The report concluded that for the SPD to overcome the “30 percent hurdle,” it must do a better job of targeting the “soft” voters. The party should not change its fundamental policies, but the “soft” voters and “hard” voters who were the traditional SPD supporter had to be attracted to the party through different appeals. The “soft” voter capable of being won over tended to be better educated and younger, have a higher income, and inhabit larger population centers.⁹² This conceptualization of “soft” and “hard” supporters became fundamental to formulating the SPD’s strategy in the upcoming election and highlighted a crucial challenge for the SPD leadership: How could the party attract new supporters without alienating its base?

As the 1957 election approached, the SPD’s public opinion surveys indicated that there was a substantial group that could be won over to the SPD, and prospects looked good for the SPD in late 1956. The popularity of the CDU/CSU had fallen through the year, and in fact had dropped behind that of the SPD by November 1956. In addition, there were about 4 million new voters as compared to the 1953 election. In January 1957 Fritz Heine figured that there were still 10 million undecided voters, of which about half were going to vote. Ollenhauer, however, commented at a meeting of the executive committee that “[w]e 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.”⁹³ Polling reports from the autumn of 1956 repeated earlier results and indicated the specific target groups, making up 37 percent of all eligible voters, that the SPD felt it could potentially win over. These groups consisted of “soft” SPD voters, “soft” CDU voters, “soft” voters of the smaller parties, undecided voters with SPD inclinations, and undecided voters with CDU inclinations. The undecided voters and the “soft” voters of the CDU and smaller parties tended to be from the middle class and have a professional background. The report recommended that the SPD test the effectiveness of its appeals to the “soft” voters through public opinion polling, in addition to continually tracking the fluctuations of these groups between the two main parties.⁹⁴ Despite these recommendations, in the end the SPD failed to utilize public opinion polling to track the effectiveness of

its propaganda, and the party's central strategy of targeting the "soft" and undecided voters ultimately fell flat.⁹⁵

The SPD began formulating its technical approach for the campaign well in advance of the 1957 election. At the 1956 *Parteitag* (party congress) Bruno Gleitze, a polling expert within the party, spoke to the assembly about revamping the SPD's political advertising. He stressed that political propaganda must be sold as if it were a "brand name product." Although such a campaigning philosophy was critical for success, Gleitze argued that the party's propaganda should not be too loud or contain exaggerated phrasing, thereby echoing common condemnations of older advertising styles. His comments reflected some of the changing attitudes within the party toward a potential clash between substance and image in party propaganda. He observed that "[t]he simple person does not make the effort to take apart sentences or sort through ideas. What is not immediately picked up by him and does not elicit a positive reaction, has already evaporated."⁹⁶ A 1956 article by Klaus Besser in *Die Neue Gesellschaft*, a Social Democratic magazine founded by some of the party reformers, supported Gleitze's position. The article explained that in order for the SPD to reach out to new social groups, the party must devise new ways to speak to these potential voters. The SPD's election campaigns, the article claimed, had been run too much by politicians rather than advertising and publicity experts. The relation between the party and voter should be similar to that of producer and consumer. Echoing CDU/CSU strategies, an election campaign should not be based upon factual arguments or a good program, the article explained, but rather upon personalities that embody the party. These personalities of party must somehow respond to the "primitive demands" that lay within the electorate.⁹⁷ Besser's position was quickly attacked by the political scientist Klaus Schültz, who argued that such an approach to politics was bound to fail. He argued that many of the "soft" voters fell within the bourgeois camp. The only way to break into this group of voters, bring them out of their traditional decision-making mold, and attract them to the SPD was to center the campaign upon concrete, positive arguments and not upon personalities and image. Despite his concerns, Schültz did agree that the party must do a better job of directing its advertisements to the correct voting groups and not merely speak to party leaders and members.⁹⁸

This divided approach to the campaign was reflected within the party's leading circles. Overall, the Advertising and Propaganda Committee advocated a SPD campaign that differed from the CDU/CSU's. Well over a year before the election, the committee began debating whether the SPD should run a relatively more negative campaign, or concentrate on a factual, positive campaign. The committee decided at the time that before a decision could be made the executive committee should authorize some polling to provide some sense of the public sentiments.⁹⁹ At a January 1957 meeting of the Advertising and Propaganda Committee, Fritz Heine identified three options for the upcoming campaign: an aggressive, negative campaign, one that was factual and positive, or one in which the SPD would represent itself as the party of national unity that stood above the

interparty conflicts. He regarded the third option as intriguing, feeling that it would constitute the best defense against the CDU/CSU attacks, yet overall unfeasible because the SPD's position up to this point was that of an opposition party. Against Heine, and in face of the realization in early 1957 that the CDU/CSU was going to run a campaign less with "argumentation than with atmosphere" and really "throw down the gauntlet" with an aggressive campaign, the *Bezirkssekretär* (regional party leaders) pushed for a more "factual" campaign.¹⁰⁰ This tone for the election campaign, centered upon the slogan "Security for all" was confirmed a few days later by Ollenhauer and the executive committee.¹⁰¹

Meanwhile, the ongoing reform of the SPD economic program had been growing since the early 1950s. It was becoming increasingly clear among many of the party reformers that the SPD's program must be adjusted to changing economic and social conditions—especially the apparent success of the social market economy. By 1957 the SPD was not calling for the socialization of the economy on a broad scale. Instead, its official program had been transforming since Schumacher's death in 1952. The Dortmund Action Program of September 1952 revealed shifts in the party's ideological positions to ward competition, market mechanisms, and consumer choice, while at the same time retaining the party's social and humane concerns. The program called for improved living standards, increased production, full employment, and the just distribution of the social product. Although the party still identified as one of its goals limited socialization and planning of elements of the economy—such as the nationalization of the coal and steel industries, some governmental direction of investments, and the introduction of codetermination in industry—there were now rumblings of "*echter Leistungswettbewerb*" (true competition) where suitable. By no means did the program accept Erhard's social market economy, describing it as the "capitalist law of the jungle," but it did acknowledge the need for competition within a Social Democratic economy.¹⁰² This evolving and more pragmatic position was exemplified by the slogan of the leading SPD economist, Karl Schiller: "Competition as much as possible, planning as much as necessary."¹⁰³ Pointing out that as consumers, workers had a substantial interest in true competition among business firms resulting in lower prices, he became the strongest advocate for reforming the SPD's economic program toward a more market-oriented position.

Reformers had been expanding their voice in the party since the SPD's defeat in the 1953 election, especially on local and regional levels. The reformers realized that because anything smacking of state and bureaucratic controls had been discredited by the experience of the postwar years and developments in the East, the party should formulate new ideas about how to regulate the free market. There were many disagreements, however, as to what type of market-oriented socialism the party should advocate and how that might alienate some of their core supporters who were attuned to more class-warfare rhetoric. Some reformers felt uneasy about accepting elements of the free market, fearing the party was losing touch with its fundamental principles. They stressed that the social considerations of the economy must remain the focus and that the party had to retain subtle

means of steering the economy and redistributing wealth. In addition, the party found itself facing the risk that any of its critiques of the free market would be painted by the CDU/CSU as the SPD's dredging up old concepts of the controlled economy. In addition, some of the party's older guard, such as Ernst Nöltling and Victor Agartz, continued to push the SPD's 1953 campaign plans for socialization of heavy industry.¹⁰⁴

Despite intraparty discord, the elements of reform were incorporated into the election campaign. The party's platform for the 1957 election, put forth at the 16 June "election congress" held at Dortmund, recognized the existence of a "German economic miracle," but stated that it had benefited only a small section of society. The rise in prices had undermined the advances made by the bulk of society. Nevertheless, the SPD attacked the idea of price ceilings as means of controlling prices. Instead, the importation of goods should be balanced with the exports so that prices could stabilize. In addition, it renounced state controls of the economy and supported a form of the free market by proclaiming:

We Social Democrats demand 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 controlled economy measures.¹⁰⁵

Yet, the SPD sometimes still gave the impression that it saw socialization as a party objective—for instance in a pamphlet published by Willi Eichler in April 1957 that stated that socialization remained a goal of the SPD. The confusion was exacerbated by the fact that Eichler actually was one of the party's leading reformers and chaired the committee that had produced the 1952 Dortmund Action Program.¹⁰⁶ Overall, the SPD tried to downplay its Marxist roots in the campaign. In his analysis of the 1957 campaign, the political scientist U.W. Kitzinger has pointed out that the party wished to cleanse itself of any ideological taint and portray itself as an unrevolutionary, trustworthy, and respectable organization. However, the perceived revolutionary legacy of the party's past was not easy to overcome. To most of the public, the party did not represent a political force that had struggled for social justice or resisted the Nazis with much of the party leadership having spent the years of the Third Reich in exile or languishing in concentration camps. Rather, to much of the electorate the party was seen as speaking only for the working class, organized by functionaries and bureaucrats, and acting as a dangerous and unreliable element in the midst of Cold War tensions. This assessment was due in no small part to the harsh invective directed against the party since 1945 by the CDU/CSU.¹⁰⁷

Because much of the electorate divided itself between the socialist and bourgeois camps, the group that the SPD identified as a potential "swing" vote was relatively small. Since the SPD's polling research indicated that in this group was mainly members of the middle-class, most of the propaganda on economics attempted to refer to more middle-class prerogatives. But this was a group that the

party had no means of attracting because of the indeterminate and unsettled state of the party's ideology. From this perspective, the party program was still an important factor 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 and attractive to the segment of the population it wooed.

Undoubtedly, the SPD updated much of its propaganda by using more visually appealing illustrated magazines developed by professional advertisers to supplement traditional materials. For example, the party distributed 9.2 million copies of the magazine *Illus*.¹⁰⁸ Each of the publication's four editions displayed a cover depicting happy children or attractive young women and incorporated articles and pictures attacking the CDU/CSU for armament, the threat of atomic war, and failure to achieve unification. All the magazines sought to construct a more statesmanlike image around Ollenhauer by portraying him with Eisenhower, to promote SPD proposals for constructing more social housing, and generally to showcase the successes of SPD leadership in some of the individual states. 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 characters portrayed in the ads' pictures were clearly middle-class, or the text spoke to the dangers facing economic gains made in the recent years. Rather than merely harping on the rising costs of basic goods, such as food, the SPD also now accused the CDU/CSU of maintaining the high prices of luxury goods such as refrigerators by forbearing to break up monopolies that controlled their prices. (Illustration 6.10)

In a series of pamphlets meant to exploit West German fears of economic developments, the SPD again portrayed people who were clearly from the 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 (Illustration 6.11). According to the brochure, the CDU/CSU had allowed prices to rise and large industry to garner more and more power. Like in the magazine *Illus*, this brochure attacked the CDU/CSU for increasing prices by taxing relative luxury goods such as cigarettes, coffee, and liquor. By 1957 the SPD was so much on the defensive that it had to admit that living standards had risen considerably since the currency reform, but it attempted to attribute this economic success to sources other than Erhard and the CDU/CSU. The brochure commented, "Thanks to the willingness to work and the skill of our workers, white collar employees, technicians, and salesmen many people in the Federal Republic have welcomed a high standard of living." In the SPD's view the CDU/CSU was not helping the consumer with its seemingly weak actions against cartels.¹⁰⁹ But this was a difficult position to defend, especially considering the resonance that Erhard possessed as the "minister of the consumer." Given the increased prosperity enjoyed by many West Germans, one has to wonder if the SPD's message was really hitting the mark.

MIT ÜBERLEGUNG WÄHLEN — das muß die Hausfrau Tag für Tag, nicht nur am 18. September bei der Bundestagswahl. Fliegend pilgert sie von Geschäft zu Geschäft, um die günstigsten Angebote anständig zu machen. Vom Bundeswirtschaftsminister allerdings hörte man jetzt verächtlich den Tadel, daß die Hausfrauen sich nicht genügend gegen die Preisforderungen zur Wehr setzen. Wer den Schaden hat... Nein, die Hausfrau ist wahrhaftig nicht schuld daran, wenn alles ständig teurer wird. Sie sollte sich jedoch überlegen, wo die Schuldigen sitzen und danach ihre Wahl richtig treffen — am 18. September.

SCHNELLER als die Rentenreform, waren die Preisen. Bevor die Zulage gezahlt wurde, hatte die Teuerung einen Teil davon verschlungen. Auch als die Regierung auf Drängen der Opposition endlich die Renten aufheuerte, verhinderte nur der SPD-Protest, daß — wie geplant — zwei Millionen Klebrentner leer ausgehen.

RECHNEN, RECHNEN, RECHNEN. und es langt doch nie. Man muß sich noch mehr einschenken. Die Folge: Der Verbrauch an Butter ist um 13 % und der an Fleisch um 10 % geringer als 1938 — als die Nazis Kanonen statt Butter produzierten. Fotos: „Telegraf“-Archiv

Die Lücke im Kostgeld

Alles spricht nur von Preiserhöhungen, keiner denkt jedoch an die Preisensenkungen, die es in letzter Zeit auch gegeben hat, erklärt man in Bonn gern. Das stimmt und stimmt sich wieder nicht. Schließlich ist es nicht von ungefähr, wenn man zumeist nur die Preissteigerungen erwähnt. Sie waren in den letzten Jahren — leider — die Regel.

Wichtiger noch ist jedoch die Tatsache, daß gerade bei dem lebensnotwendigen Bedarf (Ernährung, Kleidung, Wohnung) die Preise am stärksten geklettert sind. Die Preisensenkungen betreffen dagegen meist Artikel, die man nicht unbedingt haben muß.

Sicherlich ist es erfreulich, daß beispielsweise Kühltruhen erheblich billiger geworden sind. Aber sehr viele Familien können sich trotzdem noch keinen Kühlschrank leisten. Wenn jedoch Brot, Kartoffeln und Milch teuer werden, dann gibt es vor dieser Preiswelle kein Entrinnen, denn man kann sich das Essen nun mal nicht abgewöhnen.

Auf den Seiten 470/471 des „Statistischen Jahrbuches 1956“ steht eine bemerkenswerte Untersuchung über die Lebenshaltungskosten. Für die Gutverdiener hat sich danach der Haushalt von 1950 um 10 Prozent verteuert, für die Besitzer kleiner Einkommen dagegen um 15 Prozent!

Die Teuerung trifft also den kleinen Mann am härtesten, von den Preisensenkungen dagegen profitiert meist aus, wer ohnehin besser gestellt ist. Doch darüber spricht man in Bonn nicht gern.

Illustration 6.10 A shortage in the budget

Overall, Kitzinger was correct in his analysis of the 1957 election campaign: the political product the SPD had to sell put the party between a rock and a hard place. It needed to please both its party membership and the electorate as a whole, even as financial constraints and the party's organizational structure limited the SPD even further in the type of campaign it could run. The CDU/CSU was not dependent upon its party membership for the vast majority of the contributions

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 Verbraucher wurde mit Zeitungsanzeigen abgespeist, die noch dazu aus unseren Steuern 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



Offsetdruck: DRUCKHAUS DEUTZ

Illustration 6.11 We have accomplished a lot!

to fund the party. Therefore, the party leadership was free to devise its own campaign strategy, attempting to corral the undecided voters instead of just speaking to groups that made up the rock-solid CDU/CSU support. In contrast, the SPD could not abandon its mostly working-class membership because much of its

funding was drawn from party contributions by its members, people who were close to the party's Marxist roots.¹¹⁰ The tone of the campaign resembled the party itself: sterile, a bit confused, divided, and filled with half measures—an image of the party that the CDU/CSU itself was trying to create.

With these failings in campaigning the party opened itself to the onslaughts of the CDU/CSU. Since the party was beholden to its working class members, its propaganda did not effectively appeal to the crucial “swing vote” by coming out clearly and strongly in favor of the free market. Although the electorate might have harbored a sense of insecurity about its economic future, the SPD was unable to project itself strongly enough to shift people from the bourgeois to the socialist camp, especially when the party image seemed confused or incoherent. This comparative weakness of the SPD was further exploited by the CDU/CSU, with its emphasis upon security and stability as personified by Adenauer and his team. Overall, the SPD, unlike the CDU/CSU, failed to frame and define the issues of the campaign to its own advantage, especially in regard to security and economics, and was constantly kept on the defensive by the CDU/CSU. The Social Democrats had not yet come to grips with the reality that political campaigns revolve around the image and mood surrounding the campaign, as much as rationally based appeals to the electorate—an aspect of campaigning that the CDU/CSU had mastered.

Clearly, the matter of funding was also central to this issue of campaigning styles. The CDU/CSU and its parallel campaigns had financial resources far exceeding what the SPD could contribute to the campaign. While the SPD was mostly supported by party membership, income from business enterprises, especially newspapers, and special election contributions from individuals and firms, the CDU/CSU enjoyed a much larger income stream. The CDU/CSU's money was funneled in from primarily business sources through the system of *Fördergesellschaften* (promotional associations) developed for the 1953 campaign and through civic associations developed after the 1954 tax-law change that allowed firms to deduct party contributions from their taxable income. Unlike the earlier *Fördergesellschaften*, the civic associations could devote all of their income to political parties and were used particularly to support bourgeois parties' federal headquarters. Although firms did not gain any tax advantage by using these organizations since businesses could now make direct, tax-deductible contributions to parties, they decided to continue channeling funds through the promotional and civic associations in part because they helped to shield their books from probing eyes trying to detect any contributions going to particular parties.¹¹¹

It is almost impossible to say exactly how much was spent in favor of the CDU/CSU, especially in light of the vast amount expended on parallel campaigns. Nevertheless, a few comparisons can be made to convey an idea of the differences in expenditures. For example, Kitzinger estimated that the central party headquarters of the CDU spent about DM 6.7 to 7 million specifically on propaganda materials for the 1957 election.¹¹² This appears about right in light of archival sources. In addition, the central party spent about another DM 7 to 9 million on

related expenses and upkeep of the national-level party.¹¹³ In comparison, the SPD executive committee expended a little over DM 4 million. But costs incurred by the executive committee constituted only about half of the SPD's expenses. Kitzinger estimated that about another DM 4 million was spent by the SPD's local and regional organizations, raising the SPD's total outlay to a grand total of about DM 8 million. In comparison, the CDU/CSU's national-level costs were only the tip of the iceberg compared to its campaign's total expenses. Kitzinger estimated that the CDU/CSU spent, in addition to the approximate DM 13 to 16 million at the national level, about DM 12 million at the regional and district party levels—which, as money generated by the state promotional and civic associations, often represented direct contributions to individual candidates from local businesses (estimates are that the CDU/CSU at its various levels received in total DM 15 million from the civic and promotional associations). Altogether, Kitzinger calculated, the CDU/CSU itself spent about DM 25–30 million on the campaign, much of it in an intense rush of advertising in the final weeks before the election. This figure exceeds by a factor of three or four what the SPD spent.¹¹⁴

Beyond the union parties, a vast web of propaganda campaigns worked 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 combined costs of the CDU/CSU and parallel campaigns, outside of the government's propaganda work for the first nine months of 1957 and its normal public relations activities, at about DM 30–35 million.¹¹⁵ Overall, in areas where we can check, Kitzinger's numbers appear to be roughly correct. In terms of Die Waage's costs, Kitzinger estimated that they should have amounted to approximately DM 1.5 million, which was about Die Waage's internal estimation of its costs.¹¹⁶ It might not be cavalier to take Kitzinger's overall estimates of the parallel campaigns 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. Also important is not only that the CDU/CSU had far more money to spend on the campaign in comparison to the SPD, but that it benefited from a web of organizations that could share information among themselves. Public opinion survey results could be transferred among the CDU/CSU, the Federal Press Agency, and the ADK, and moreover many of the surveys were commissioned for by the Federal Press Agency in the first place. As a consequence of the coordination of these organizations, their propaganda was mutually supportive and generated a coherent picture of Adenauer and the CDU/CSU.

The SPD's failure in the 1957 Bundestag election resulted in a reform of the party's propaganda efforts that paralleled the programmatic reform leading to the historic Bad Godesberg Program.¹¹⁷ In the autumn of 1957, after the party's crushing electoral defeat, voices at various levels within the SPD put forth proposals calling for the improvement of the party's propaganda efforts. One report discussing possible advertising strategies suggested a dramatic change in the tone and style of the SPD's campaign. As it noted: "The last election has clearly shown with the reshuffling and changing of opinion before the election how little the politi-

cal attitudes and decisions of the voters are influenced by real political developments and common ideas on these developments.¹¹⁸ Clearly the SPD's attitude toward the electorate was in the process of evolving, at least within certain circles. The task of the party was elaborated, "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."¹¹⁹ 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 achieve success.

Part of this change in the SPD's attitude toward the electorate was an effort to popularize the party itself. One report admitted that the SPD faced tough new challenges: "The party must find new ways and means to talk clearly about the ideas of social democracy to groups alienated from the party." An important element in this popularization of the SPD, the report concluded, was the use of "modern social science." This included more intensive use of public opinion polling, particularly research on the "motives" of the voters.¹²⁰ Other post-election reports called for the modernization of the party's advertising methods. The SPD leadership went on to call for the more effective use of advertising professionals along with the application of public opinion research.¹²¹ Some letters sent to the campaign manager, Fritz Heine, even suggested that the SPD borrow advertising techniques from Die Waage. In order to achieve "good will" with the electorate, SPD party leaders were clamoring to revamp the technical aspects of the party's campaigning.

Like the road to reforming the party's platform, this transition was not easy. The conflict between the party's old and new elements clearly surfaced in a 31 January 1958 meeting of the Advertising and Propaganda Committee. Committee members complained that not enough had been done in the previous twelve years to update the party's campaigning techniques with an eye toward advertising, collecting polling data, and tracking the psychology of the voters. The intense competition among the parties, argued one committee member, demanded that the methods of commercial advertising be applied to political advertising. In fact, he argued, the techniques of commercial advertising and political advertising were not so different. He asked: "What do we want with our propaganda? We want to sell ideas, a program, not to bring tangible things to people. We must familiarize ourselves with it [commercial advertising]. We must build trust for our program, for our ideas, and for our people."¹²²

In contrast, Fritz Heine, the old campaign leader from the Weimar Republic, appeared resistant to such changes. He was fearful of the influence that the "economy" would have on the politics of the party. He commented, "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 Advertising and Propaganda

Committee could exert a greater influence upon the party's executive committee in the future if it formulated a clear concept for the party's propaganda for the next election.¹²³ This was one salvo between the party's old and new guards in a battle that continued to rage in the future.

Over the next few years much of the SPD's older leadership was jettisoned in favor of more vibrant, energetic personalities. The 1957 election would be Heine's last national election as the party's campaign manager. To many reformers within the party, Heine as head of the Advertising and Propaganda Committee represented the inflexibility of the party's encrusted leadership in Bonn that kept new ideas from percolating through the organization and guaranteed defeat at the ballot box. After the crushing 1957 defeat, local party organizations complained that the election propaganda was inadequate and began calling for the removal of Heine from his position.¹²⁴ One resolution from the district of Weser Ems stated that the SPD's propaganda no longer spoke to the working population because it was too academic, and that advertising professionals must revamp the party's appeals.¹²⁵ The SPD organization of Baden-Württemberg complained that the party had to work harder to change voters' perceptions of the party. It presented a litany of complaints, including the campaign's focus on Ollenhauer at the expense of other party leaders, the party leaders' scaring away of bourgeois voters by using the term "comrade" (*Genosse*), and the party's inability to defend itself against charges that it favored socialization throughout the economy.¹²⁶

At the next SPD party congress in 1958 in Stuttgart, Heine was not reelected to the party's executive committee.¹²⁷ In May 1959, Waldemar von Knöringen, a reformer who had acted as the Advertising and Propaganda Committee's public-opinion polling expert, was named to head the 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 vibrant personalities to represent the party. In fact, the emphasis upon party personalities began as early as the 1958 city elections in West Berlin. In this campaign, Willy Brandt was placed in the "center of the entire campaign" and depicted as independent of the SPD party machine. Because Brandt sent his main campaign manager, Klaus Schültz, to the United States to observe the Kennedy/Nixon campaign, Brandt's autumn 1961 campaign for chancellor almost exactly duplicated Kennedy's presidential campaign.¹²⁸ This rising political star would become vice-chancellor in the grand coalition of the CDU/CSU and SPD between 1966 and 1969 and finally would lead the SPD into forming a government in 1969.

With 50.2 percent of the vote, the 1957 election the CDU/CSU reached the apex of its power. For its broad success, the party relied upon appeals that drew heavily upon the image of the economic miracle. West Germany's maturing economic reconstruction and expansion were integral aspects of the party's image which was centered on security, stability, and capable leadership that provided West Germans with new levels of consumerism. At the same time the cultural and

religious elements featured more prominently in earlier campaigns became increasingly muted. Polls after the election bear out this view. A DIVO poll indicated 23 percent of those who voted for the CDU/CSU viewed “satisfaction with material prosperity and the economic upswing” as the most important reason to vote for the party—up from 19 percent in 1953. Economic success was at the top of the list, while 22 percent of CDU/CSU voters were satisfied with the party’s policies overall and 9 percent expressed trust in Adenauer. Meanwhile, the “Christian character” of the party as the most important reason voters chose the CDU/CSU decreased from 21 percent in 1953 to 16 percent of respondents in 1957.¹²⁹ The party successfully targeted women: 54 percent of women voted for the CDU/CSU in 1957, up from 47.2 percent in 1953. In addition, this election’s high turnout of 87.8 percent of eligible voters compared to earlier Bundestag elections and especially state elections benefited the CDU/CSU, particularly at the expense of the smaller parties.

As this chapter has shown, a well-oiled publicity machine employing modern political advertising and polling techniques gave the CDU/CSU an enormous advantage over its rivals, motivating voters to get out and cast their ballots for the CDU/CSU. With the apparent diplomatic and economic successes of Adenauer’s government, the party successfully created and sold an image of itself focused on the party’s leadership, especially Adenauer’s, and of West Germany prosperity. In contrast, defeat in the 1957 campaign forced the transformation of both the SPD’s propaganda techniques and its platform, demonstrating that in its most bitter defeat the seeds of the party’s later successes were planted. In addition, the SPD’s reform pushed the West German party system along its inexorable path toward the middle, where consensus now emerged in regard to the fundamental form of the West German political economy.

Notes

1. “Wer will was?” *Der Spiegel* 39 (25 September 1957): 13.
2. For a good treatment of the 1957 Bundestag election, see Kitzinger, *German Electoral Politics: A Study of the 1957 Campaign*.
3. Partch, “The Transformation of the West German Party System: Patterns of Electoral Change and Consistency,” 85–90.
4. Letter from Adenauer to Seidel, date unreadable, I/11.06, 288, Stiftung Bundeskanzler-Adenauer-Haus (hereafter StBKAH).
5. Kitzinger, *German Electoral Politics: A Study of the 1957 Campaign*, 100–103 and 203; Schönbohm, *Die CDU wird moderne Volkspartei*, 46–51; Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands, *Gegnerische Kräfte und Einflüsse im Bundestagswahlkampf 1957* (Bonn, 1958), 2–3, located in the library of the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung; and Günter Buchstab, *Adenauer: “Wir haben wirklich etwas geschaffen,”* 1168–1169 and 1198.

6. Letter from Heck to Lenz, 13 September 1956, I-172-32/4 (NL Lenz), ACDP.
7. Wahlanalyse für das Gebiet der Länder der Bundesrepublik, I-172-32/4 (NL Lenz), ACDP.
8. "Parteien unter der Lupe," Eine Analyse der Wähler, spring 1957, Institut für Demoskopie, ZSg 132/555, BA Koblenz.
9. 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 bourgeois parties. *Wähler und Gewählte: Eine Untersuchung der Bundestagswahlen 1953*, 163–182.
10. Hirsch-Weber and Schütz, *Wähler und Gewählte: Eine Untersuchung der Bundestagswahlen 1953*, 163–182; and "Parteien unter der Lupe."
11. See Volker Hetterich, *Von Adenauer zu Schröder: Der Kampf um Stimmen. Eine Längsschnittanalyse der Wahlkampagnen von CDU und SPD bei den Bundestagswahlen 1949 bis 1998* for an overview of West Germany's election campaigns.
12. For an overview of the CDU/CSU's newspaper and advertising campaigns, see the SPD report *Gegnerische Kräfte und Einflüsse im Bundestagswahlkampf 1957*, 48–52.
13. Hetterich, *Von Adenauer zu Schröder*, 142.
14. Schmidtchen, *Die befragte Nation*, 155–156.
15. Gries, Ilgen, and Schindelbeck, "Ins Gehirn der Masse Kriechen!" *Werbung und Mentalitätsgeschichte*, 94–104.
16. Abromeit, *Das Politisch in der Werbung: Wahlwerbung und Wirtschaftswerbung in der Bundesrepublik*, 63.
17. For a discussion of Eisenhower's campaigns, see Robert J. Dinkin, *Campaigning in America: A History of Election Practices* (New York, 1989).
18. See Walter Henkels, *111 Bonner Köpfe* (Düsseldorf, 1963), 138.
19. Kathleen Hall Jamieson, *Packaging the Presidency: A History and Criticism of Presidential Advertising* (Oxford, 1996), 3–121.
20. As Franz Meyers commented: "Mr. Heck has brought the experience from America that the election campaign plays out in large part in front of the TV screen and the radio receiver. But the nearer the election approaches, the more the personal presentation and contact of the candidates with the voters comes to the fore, and especially in political rallies." Buchstab, *Adenauer: "Wir haben wirklich etwas geschaffen,"* 1221.
21. Schmidtchen, *Die befragte Nation*, 154–155.
22. Ibid., 160.
23. Erich Peter Neumann and Elisabeth Noelle, eds., *Statistics on Adenauer. Portrait of a Statesman* (Allensbach, 1962), 42.
24. The survey 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 of 55 percent, 54 percent, and 51 percent respectively. Respondents could select more than one characteristic. Noelle and Neumann, *The Germans: Public Opinion Polls, 1947–1966*, 242.
25. Schwarz, *Adenauer*, vol. 2, 276.
26. Leitlinien für den Bundestagswahlkampf: Argumente und Tendenzen, VII-003-003/3, ACDP.
27. Letter from Lenz to Adenauer, 3 January 1957, I-172-32/4 (NL Lenz), ACDP; and Kitzinger, *German Electoral Politics: A Study of the 1957 Campaign*, 107–109 and 119–122.
28. Sitzung, 12 February 1957, I-172-32/4, ACDP.
29. Leitlinien für den Bundestagswahlkampf, VII-003-003/3, ACDP.
30. Das Zentrum der Krise, March 1957, Institut für Demoskopie, I-172-37/5 (NL Lenz), ACDP.
31. Ibid.
32. Noelle and Neumann, *The Germans: Public Opinion Polls, 1947–1966*, 374; and Schmidtchen, *Die befragte Nation*, 163.
33. Statistisches Bundesamt, *Statistisches Jahrbuch für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Stuttgart, 1958), 427.

34. Letter from Erhard to Adenauer, 12 March 1957, III/23, StBKAH.
35. Kitzinger, *German Electoral Politics*, 84; and Letter from Lenz to Adenauer, 3 January 1957, I-172-32/4 (NL Lenz).
36. Noelle and Neumann, *The Germans: Public Opinion Polls, 1947–1966*, 388.
37. *Ibid.*, 82–83; Peter J. Katzenstein, *Policy and Politics in West Germany: The Growth of a Semi-sovereign State* (Philadelphia, 1987), 180–182. See also Volker Hentschel, *Geschichte der deutschen Sozialpolitik (1880–1980): Soziale Sicherung und kollektives Arbeitsrecht* (Frankfurt am Main, 1983); and Hans Günter Hockerts, “Sicherung im Alter: Kontinuität und Wandel der gesetzlichen Rentenversicherung 1889–1979,” in *Sozialgeschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Beiträge zum Kontinuitätsproblem*, ed. Werner Conze and M. Rainer Lepsius (Stuttgart, 1983), 296–323.
38. For more on metaphors and political discourse in the American context, see George Lakoff, *Moral Politics: What Conservatives Know That Liberals Don't* (Chicago, 1996). For more on how metaphors affect the way we think and view the world, see George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago, 1980).
39. Schwarz, *Adenauer*. vol. 2, 263–275.
40. Leitlinien für den Bundestagswahlkampf, VII-003-003/3, ACDP.
41. *Ibid.*
42. Noelle and Neumann, *The Germans: Public Opinion Polls, 1947–1966*, 283. Franz-Josef Strauss was unknown by 11 percent of respondents (compared to 40 percent in November 1956), but also enjoyed the favorable opinion of only 29 percent. The only other ministers as well known as Erhard were Foreign Minister von Brentano and Finance Minister Fritz Schäffer, who were unknown to 14 percent of the population. Other ministers were unknown by at least 30 percent of respondents, and as many as 80 percent did not know the Post and Telecommunications Minister, Siegfried Balke.
43. Leitlinien für den Bundestagswahlkampf, VII-003-003/3, ACDP.
44. *Ibid.*
45. Hetterich, *Von Adenauer zu Schröder*, 224–225. The expense on leaflets had declined from 14 percent of the budget in 1953 (DM 360,000) to 2 percent (DM 150,000).
46. 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.
47. See the analysis of the magazines' readership provided by the advertising firm, Die Werbe, in reports dated 17 April 1957 and 12 July 1957. VII-003-003/3, ACDP.
48. Bundesgeschäftsstelle der CDU, *Die Bundestagswahl 1961: Vorbereitung, Ergebnis, Folgerungen. Eine Analyse im Auftrag des Bundesvorstandes der CDU* (Bonn, January 1962), 39 and 43. Report located in the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung Library, Sankt Augustin.
49. Letter from Neumann to Bundesgeschäftsstelle der Christlich Demokratischen Union, 2 April 1957, I-172-30/5 (NL Lenz), ACDP.
50. Propaganda mit Adenauer, July 1957, Institut für Demoskopie, ZSg 132/585, BA Koblenz.
51. Männer neben Adenauer: Eine Serie von Anzeigen Tests (II), Institut für Demoskopie, ZSg 132/556/III, BA Koblenz.
52. Kitzinger, *German Electoral Politics: A Study of the 1957 Campaign*, 119–122.
53. Leitlinien für den Bundestagswahlkampf, VII-003-003/3 ACDP.
54. Die Bundestagswahlen vom 6 September 1953, December 1953, VII-003-002/1, ACDP.
55. Leitsätze für die Besprechung über Wahlpropaganda der CDU 1957, VII-003-003/3, ACDP.
56. Männer neben Adenauer: Eine Serie von Anzeigen Tests (II), ZSg 132/556/III, BA Koblenz.
57. Männer neben Adenauer: Eine Serie von Anzeigen Tests (V), ZSg 132/556/VI, BA Koblenz.
58. Figures given in the report by Die Werbe, VII-003-003/3, ACDP, compared to statistics in Statistisches Bundesamt, *Statistisches Jahrbuch für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, 28 and 36.
59. Kitzinger, *German Electoral Politics: A Study of the 1957 Campaign*, 112–113.

60. Werbeagentur Dr. Hegemann GmbH, Der Plakatanschlag zur Bundestagswahl 1957, (Düsseldorf, 1957). Report located in the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung Library, Sankt Augustin.
61. Ibid.; and Kitzinger, *German Electoral Politics: A Study of the 1957 Campaign*, 112–114.
62. Wohlstand für Alle, March 1957, Institut für Demoskopie, I-172-37/5 (NL Lenz), ACDP.
63. Ibid.
64. Leitsätze für die B esprechung über die Wahlpropaganda der CDU 1957, VII-003-003/3, ACDP.
65. Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands, *Gegnerische Kräfte und Einflüsse im Bundestagswahlkampf 1957*, 50–51.
66. Koerfer, *Kampf ums Kanzleramt*, 147–150.
67. Die Prinzipien der Erhard-Columne, 20 May 1957, NE 1159, LES.
68. Akennotiz über die Zusammenkunft, 24 April 1956, Die Waage, Zugang 121, LES.
69. Notiz über Besprechung mit Erhard, 21 January 1957, Die Waage, Zugang 137, LES.
70. Letter from Neumann to Horten, 19 January 1957, I-172-32/4 (NL Lenz), ACDP.
71. At the annual meeting of Die Waage in February 1952, Greiß stressed that Die Waage “is not an organ of the government, a party, or instrument to assist in elections.” Die Waage Jahresversammlung, 8 February 1957, Die Waage, Zugang 137, LES.
72. Anregungen zur Waage—Campagne bis zur B undestagswahl 1957, Die Waage, Zugang 78, LES.
73. This was a concern expressed by the Federal Press Agency. See letter from Dr. P. M. Weber to Dr. Hohmann, 14 February 1957, B145/1630, BA Koblenz.
74. Protokolle, Die Waage Vorstandssitzung, 13 March 1957, Die Waage, Zugang 136, LES.
75. Schindelbeck and I lgen, “Haste Was, Biste Was!” *Werbung für die Soziale Marktwirtschaft*, 271–275.
76. Ludwig Erhard, *Gedanken aus fünf Jahrzehnten, Reden und Schriften*, ed. Karl Hohmann (Düsseldorf, 1988), 369–372.
77. Institut für Demoskopie, *Die soziale Wirklichkeit: Aus einer Untersuchung des Instituts für Demoskopie* (Allensbach am Bodensee, 1956), 12–13 and 44–45.
78. Wildt, *Am Beginn der “Konsumgesellschaft,”* 59–75. See also Schildt, *Moderne Zeiten: Freizeit, Massenmedien und “Zeitgeist” in der Bundesrepublik der 50er Jahre.*
79. Wildt, *Am Beginn der “Konsumgesellschaft,”* 146.
80. See Mitchell, “Materialism and Secularism: CDU Politicians and National Socialism, 1945–1949,” 278–308.
81. Erhard, *Prosperity through Competition*, 168–170.
82. Helmut Schelsky, *Wandlungen der deutschen Familie in der Gegenwart*, 63–87. For more on Schelsky and his view on family policy, see Moeller, *Protecting Motherhood*, 117–120.
83. Edith Hinze, *Lage und Leistung erwerbstätiger Mütter: Ergebnisse einer Untersuchung in Westberlin* (Berlin, 1980), 44, 95–96, 224, 228, 234, 236, 239, 242, quoted in Moeller, *Protecting Motherhood*, 176–177.
84. 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. Noelle and Neumann, *The Germans: Public Opinion Polls, 1947–1966*, 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. Merritt and Merritt, *Public Opinion in Occupied Germany: The OMGUS Surveys, 1945–1949*, 294.
85. Schildt and Sywottek, “‘Reconstruction’ and ‘Modernization’: West German Social History during the 1950s,” in Moeller, *West Germany Under Construction*, 413–440.
86. Ibid., 413–440; Moeller, *Protecting Motherhood*, 217; Heineman, “What Difference Does a Husband Make?” 310–311; and Kramer, *The West German Economy, 1945–1955*, 214–217.
87. Kitzinger, *German Electoral Politics: A Study of the 1957 Campaign*, 104.

88. Konrad Repgen, "Finis Germaniae: Untergang Deutschlands durch einen SPD-Wahlsieg 1957?" in Blumenwitz et al., *Konrad Adenauer und seine Zeit: Politik und Persönlichkeit des ersten Bundeskanzlers, Band II: Beiträge der Wissenschaft*, 294–315 and Schwarz, Adenauer, vol. 2, 272–274.
89. SPD, *Jahrbuch der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands, 1956/1957* (Bielefeld, 1958), 298.
90. Protokoll der Sitzung des Werbung und Propaganda Ausschuß, 3 May 1956, SPD Parteivorstand-0594, AdsD.
91. Protokoll der Sitzung des Werbung und Propaganda Ausschuß, 18 January 1957, SPD Parteivorstand-0595, AdsD. See also the Sitzung des Parteivorstandes, 22 and 23 January 1957, SPD Parteivorstand Protokolle 1957, AdsD, in which this position then was affirmed by Ollenhauer.
92. Neue SPD Wähler: Woher?, SPD Parteivorstand-02595, AdsD.
93. Sitzung des Parteivorstandes, 22 and 23 January 1957, SPD Parteivorstand Protokolle 1957, AdsD.
94. See a polling report written by the SPD (some its wording is identical 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.
95. Reports from late in the campaign echoed this conclusion. See, for example, Die Arbeiterschaft vor der Bundestagwahl. Eine Studie, 7/57. This report is located in the library of the AdsD. See also Kitzinger, *German Electoral Politics: A Study of the 1957 Campaign*, 136–137.
96. Parolen und Propaganda, Vorschau auf den Bundestagwahl 1957, SPD Parteivorstand-02559, AdsD.
97. Klaus Besser, "Politik und Werbung im Wahlkampf," *Die Neue Gesellschaft* 3 (1956): 433–438.
98. Klaus Schültz, "Politik und politische Werbung," *Die Neue Gesellschaft* 4 (1957): 54–57.
99. Protokoll der Sitzung des Werbung und Propaganda Ausschuß, 3 February 1956, SPD Parteivorstand-0594, AdsD.
100. 15 Sitzung des Werbung und Propaganda Ausschuß, 18 January 1957, SPD Parteivorstand-0595, AdsD.
101. Sitzung des Parteivorstandes, 22 and 23 January 1957, SPD Parteivorstand Protokolle 1957, AdsD.
102. Nicholls, *Freedom with Responsibility*, 302–305.
103. Klotzbach, *Der Weg zur Staatspartei*, 243.
104. See Nicholls, *Freedom with Responsibility*, 367–389.
105. SPD, *Jahrbuch der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands, 1956/1957*, 345.
106. Kitzinger, *German Electoral Politics: A Study of the 1957 Campaign*, 133.
107. *Ibid.*, 126–138.
108. SPD, *Jahrbuch der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands, 1956/1957*, 300–301.
109. Sie stehen im Mittelpunkt, RWV 2/132, NWHStA.
110. Kitzinger, *German Electoral Politics: A Study of the 1957 Campaign*, 150.
111. *Ibid.*, 202–221; and Heidenheimer and Langdon, *Business Associations and the Financing of Political Parties*, 52–54.
112. Kitzinger, *German Electoral Politics: A Study of the 1957 Campaign*, 309.
113. An estimate generated by the Bundesgeschäftsstelle of the CDU from April 1957 saw the costs at DM 6.5 million. Bundestagwahl, Kostenvoranschlag, VII-003-003/3, ACDP.
114. Kitzinger, *German Electoral Politics: A Study of the 1957 Campaign*, 309–310; and Heidenheimer and Langdon, *Business Associations and the Financing of Political Parties*, 55.
115. Kitzinger, *German Electoral Politics: A Study of the 1957 Campaign*, 312.
116. Letter from Horten to Greiß and Jacobi, 5 February 1958, Die Waage, Zugang 117, LES.
117. For a discussion of the SPD's road to reform, see Klotzbach, *Der Weg zur Staatspartei*; Harold Kent Schellenger, Jr., *The SPD in the Bonn Republic: A Socialist Party Modernizes* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1968); and Diane L. Parness, *The SPD and the Challenge of Mass Politics. The Dilemma of the German Volkspartei* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991).

118. Die grundsätzlichen Werbeaufgabe der nächsten 4 Jahre, SPD Parteivorstand-0592, AdsD.
119. Ibid.
120. Vorschlag zur Einrichtung einer parteiinternen Forschungsstelle, SPD Parteivorstand-0592, AdsD.
121. Anmerkungen und Vorschläge für SPD-Propaganda, SPD Parteivorstand-0592, AdsD.
122. Werbung und Propaganda Ausschuß Protokolle, 31 January 1958, SPD Parteivorstand-0595, AdsD.
123. Ibid.
124. Klotzbach, *Der Weg zur Staatspartei*, 413–417.
125. Resolution der Bezirks Weser Ems, 24 April 1958, SPD Parteivorstand-02595, AdsD.
126. Kritische Erfahrungen bei der Bundestagswahl (Baden-Württemberg), SPD-LO Baden-Württemberg, 725, AdsD.
127. Klotzbach, *Der Weg zur Staatspartei*, 428.
128. Schellenger, *The SPD in the Bonn Republic*, 164 and 177–178.
129. See results in DIVO Wahluntersuchung, SPD Parteivorstand-02543, AdsD

CONCLUSION



Their decisive victory in the 1957 Bundestag election catapulted Adenauer and the CDU/CSU to the zenith of their power. Neither before nor since has a single party in the Federal Republic of Germany achieved a majority of the vote. Yet, almost immediately after their greatest triumph, Adenauer and his party began experiencing a slow decline. Adenauer's failed bid for West Germany's presidency in late spring 1959, undermined in part by his reluctance to allow Erhard to succeed him in the chancellorship, underscored the growing divisions within the CDU/CSU. The party had grown overly dependent upon Adenauer, who was now weakening politically, as both a focal point in election campaigns and as leader within the party. The autumn 1962 *Der Spiegel* affair, in which Adenauer had the members of the magazine's editorial staff arrested after they published an article critical of the government's defense policy, spelled the beginning of the end for Adenauer. Ludwig Erhard, assuming Adenauer's mantle in 1963, was charismatic and popular as the so-called father of the economic miracle, but he did not possess Adenauer's aura of authority and political ability to maintain discipline within his party and the parliamentary system. His chancellorship lasted until only 1966—to be replaced by something unthinkable during the Adenauer era, a grand coalition between the CDU/CSU and SPD that lasted until 1969. Adding to the party's problems, the consolidation of the West German political system during the 1960s did not exclusively favor the CDU/CSU. By 1961, the SPD had altered its campaigning and platform strategies, succeeded in picking up votes from the smaller parties, and begun to gain on the CDU/CSU—resulting in Willy Brandt's ascendancy to the chancellorship in 1969.¹

After its crushing 1957 electoral defeat, the SPD hastened the pace of its often painful reform. Following the election, the party leadership came under sharp

Notes for this section begin on page 261.

attack from local party leaders. Within the next few years much of the older leadership was voted down in favor of younger, charismatic, and more regionally based politicians who were not beholden to the party apparatus and sought to reform the party—including Willy Brandt, Fritz Erler, Helmut Schmidt, and Herbert Wehner. At the 1958 party congress in Stuttgart, several representatives of the party's old guard were not reelected to the executive board, signaling some of the larger changes that were in the offing.

On 13 November 1959 a special party congress was convened in the Bonn suburb of Bad Godesberg to adopt the SPD's new basic program. Perhaps most striking about the program statement was what it did not contain, most notably any mention of Marx or a hard and fast ideological commitment. The section discussing economics made no mention of socialization, although it included some reference to "public ownership" as "appropriate and necessary" when "sound economic power relations cannot be guaranteed by other means." The Bad Godesberg Program accepted many basic elements of the free market, including free competition, consumer choice, and free initiative on the part of entrepreneurs. Overall, the document signified the SPD's retreat from ideological battle with the bourgeois parties; now it advocated a more just and equitable distribution of the nation's wealth instead of class conflict. Most importantly perhaps, the Bad Godesberg Program altered the public image of the SPD and helped transform the party into a *Volkspartei* (catch-all party).² Clearly, the program reacted to an ongoing shift in public opinion toward the free market. One July 1960 survey indicated that 61 percent of respondents favored the free market over some form of socialization (7 percent) or combination of the two systems (8 percent).³ The SPD's niche "sub-culture" of primarily working-class constituents began dissolving, and in the 1960s the party succeeded in attracting support from a broader range of West German society, particularly from members of the middle class.

The combined growth of the CDU/CSU and the SPD in the 1950s and 1960s signaled the emergence of the party system that would dominate the Federal Republic until the growth of the Green Party in the late 1970s and early 1980s and the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. In this system, the parties of the middle, consisting of the CDU/CSU, SPD, and FDP, controlled the political landscape as the extremist and splinter parties disappeared.⁴ This volume 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. Utilizing economics as a major issue, the party formed and projected a party image that effectively attracted votes from varied sociological groups within West Germany. As a consequence, the CDU/CSU became the Federal Republic's first "catch-all" party, crossing cultural, regional, and class lines. The creation of a party that broke down Weimar voting patterns—an approach copied by the SPD in the 1960s—was crucial to the development of West Germany's political party system. The construction of broader "catch-all" parties proved to be a crucial difference between Weimar's unstable party system and the stable democracy of the Federal Republic of Germany.

This more stable party system, anchored by broad-based parties, was in no small part the product of the adoption and implementation of American political campaigning styles, advertising techniques, and public opinion polling. Throughout the 1950s, the SPD consistently fared better in *Land* (state) elections than at the national level. The SPD's large membership played an important role in this success, as the party could mobilize its faithful to go to the polls in *Land* elections, where turnout tended to be lower than in federal elections. In contrast, the CDU/CSU achieved relatively more success on the national stage than in *Land* elections. With its new propaganda techniques, the CDU/CSU was able to construct and sell the image of its political products, namely Adenauer, Erhard, and the economic miracle, to specific sociological groups within the Federal Republic and draw these groups to the polls, thereby maximizing the party's success at the ballot box. In conjunction with the utilization of these new techniques, there emerged an orchestrated network of pro-Adenauer and pro-government propaganda organizations that helped produce a coherent conservative message. While adopting the most up-to-date advertising and polling techniques available, the CDU/CSU eschewed issuing merely dogmatic, ideological program statements that appealed to the party's most faithful members and a narrow segment of society. Rather, the CDU/CSU carefully modified and directed its appeals to key groups of swing voters—especially women and less religious voters. Without their support, Adenauer's goal of molding the CDU/CSU into a true *Volkspartei* would not have been achieved. With their emphasis upon the creation and transmission of an appealing party image, West German election campaigns revolved less and less around ideological conflict. In many respects, this change constituted a "consumerization" of West German politics during the 1950s as politics and parties were increasingly viewed as products to be sold to consumers whose tastes were carefully researched.

By minimizing cultural and religious issues in the 1950s campaign and espousing a clear conception of a West German society increasingly based upon rising consumerism and materialism, the CDU/CSU's campaigning appeared, on the surface, less ideological, particularly in comparison to the 1949 campaign. During the 1950s campaigns, the party no longer pushed an ideological conception of a morally and physically reconstructed Christian community, as it had done in 1949. Instead, the party offered a harmonious vision of West German society that appeared to be above class party politics and promised to supplant older cultural, regional, and class conflicts that had traditionally beset German politics. Consumerism was portrayed not only as satisfying individualistic desires but also as representing the very legitimacy of this new state. However, the selling of the economic miracle possessed an underlying ideological component that lent considerable political power to conservative forces in West Germany. A mythological narrative of a materially abundant West Germany allowed Adenauer, Erhard, and the CDU/CSU to claim that they were creating something new without pushing the electorate to confront Germany's recent past. The beginning of their story was not the Nazi era, but rather the aftermath of war, the destruction and despair of

the immediate postwar years, and the miraculous rebirth engendered by the legendary 1948 currency reform. The vision of a “phoenix rising out of the ashes” and the ensuing prosperity did not generate uncomfortable memories or doubts regarding who the West Germans were or what their nation was built upon—sentiments election campaigners would in no way want to evoke. Instead, this positive vision encouraged West Germans to silence painful and disconcerting memories of the Third Reich and the immediate postwar years while also helping them to create new memories of economic reconstruction for concrete political purposes. In the process of glorifying the economic miracle, conservative propaganda efforts refashioned the concept of consumerism from something previously seen as alien and un-German into a fundamental aspect of the West German sense of nationhood.

Inherent in Adenauer’s and the CDU/CSU’s political messages were conceptions of how the West German democracy was to work and how its society should be organized. “Adenauer and his team” were to watch paternalistically over the West German electorate, while, implicitly, the electorate should passively enjoy the physical and mental security of the chancellor’s leadership and the material comforts of consumerism. In many respects, Adenauer’s vision jibed well with the views of the party’s main pollster, Elisabeth Noelle Neumann, regarding the appropriate role that polling should play in a democracy. It constituted a tool to help leaders monitor, control, and dampen the dangerous impulses of the masses. The party’s propaganda reinforced this passive conception of politics and social harmony. Despite the change in ideological underpinnings—from Christian anti-materialism based upon the social market economy to the embrace of individualistic consumerism—the party’s conceptions of men and women assuming prescribed roles as female consumers and male producers within a well-ordered, tranquil society remained constant throughout the 1950s. The same could be said of Die Waage’s conception of a harmonious relationship between employees and employers that created and distributed the fruits of the social market economy.

During these years, Die Waage and the CDU/CSU successfully sold this vision of economic and social reconstruction to an electorate exhausted and alienated by the upheaval of a repressive regime, total war, and utter defeat. Economic propaganda not only molded the West Germans’ conceptions of themselves and their society, but also was crucial in the construction of a passive, if not stable, democracy that was based in consensus where, apart from duly casting votes, economic productivity and consumer choice were the paramount obligations of civic participation. Many studies from the late 1950s and early 1960s demonstrated all too well that West German citizens were more than willing to take on a passive role in their new republic.⁵ Clearly it would take the social and cultural movements of the 1960s and 1970s to generate a citizenship that more actively engaged in the political process and fully embraced individual civil liberties.⁶

In light of Germany’s Nazi past, Adenauer and the CDU/CSU’s top-down, somewhat authoritarian view of a controlled, submissive electorate is clearly troubling, but in some important respects their vision did help establish the structures

of the Federal Republic's democracy. Diethelm Prowe has argued that the real "miracle" of the 1950s was not economic, but instead political—especially in light of West Germany's establishment of a democratic society within a generation after the war. He identified the conservative Adenauer-Erhard era as laying the foundation of a democratic West Germany, despite the claims of the "New Left" of the 1968 generation that West Germany did not experience a revolutionary period immediately following the war that transformed its society and institutions. Prowe suggested that the synthesis between the influence of Americanization and the conservatives' reintegration into West German society helped create a new stable environment that allowed this democratic society to take root and grow. American economic and diplomatic policies, such as military protection against communism and Marshall Plan aid, fostered security, economic growth, and social stability, while simultaneously American demands for democratization curtailed the resurgence of more strident and dangerous authoritarian traditions in West Germany. This synthesis of Americanization and conservative reintegration, Prowe argued, allowed West Germans "to distance themselves from their past without facing questions over the culpability of traditional German society for the Nazi crimes. They could don the dress of Western democratic institutions and American-style free enterprise without disturbing familiar German social structures. Germans could take ownership of democracy without the memory of an antidemocratic past when Germanness had been defined in opposition to Western Enlightenment individualism."⁷

As this work has shown, the Americanization of West Germany manifested itself not only in formal political and economic relations and the importation of American mass culture. In addition, its influence revealed itself in very subtle ways, many times beyond the conscious purview of the West German public. The introduction of an American conception of electoral politics played a vital role in the conservative creation of a democratic West Germany. Confronted with new political conditions, conservative forces quickly adapted themselves to a campaigning style that was increasingly focused on the opinions and attitudes of the electorate in order to construct a broad-based anti-Marxist party. The American influence in politics did not necessarily completely clear away the debris of older German political attitudes and practices, although it undoubtedly helped transform Weimar traditions into a more viable political system. Instead, the importation of American campaigning techniques blended with older German practices during the 1950s to produce a uniquely West German, democratic political culture that both looked to the past and searched overseas for its models.

In postwar democracies public opinion and modern political advertising proved to be effective means for sounding out the electorate and projecting the image of a political party that adopted these techniques. The CDU/CSU was the party most successful in adopting polling and advertising efficiencies, allowing its campaigns to target specific segments of the electorate. But fundamentally, the party had to possess a product to sell. In West Germany, as in the United States, the most successful campaign tactic was to sell a figure who personified a party's

image rather than a party platform or program. In the marketplace of political personalities, the CDU/CSU possessed two powerful products in Adenauer and Erhard, figures who by the second half of the 1950s had come to represent stability and economic prosperity to the West German electorate. Until the 1961 campaign, the SPD possessed no such political assets. It would take the SPD a decade to realize its situation, abandon its commitment to a rigid party program, and craft a product of such quality in the form of Willy Brandt. Only then would the real challenge to Bonn's political stability be posed and successfully met—namely, the peaceful transfer of power.

Notes

1. Geoffrey Pridham, *Christian Democracy in Western Germany*, 113–187.
2. Susanne Miller and Heinrich Potthoff, *A History of German Social Democracy: From 1848 to the Present* (New York, 1983), 176–177; and Nicholls, *Freedom with Responsibility*, 366–367.
3. Hans Wellman, “Die Soziale Marktwirtschaft im Spiegel vom Meinungsfragen (Ph.D. diss., University of Cologne, 1962), 91–94.
4. For a discussion of the West German political party system, see Partch, “The Transformation of the West German Party System: Patterns of Electoral Change and Consistency,” 85–120.
5. See Dahrendorf, *Society and Democracy in Germany*; and Almond and Verba, *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations*.
6. See David P. Conradt, “From Output Orientation to Regime Support: Changing German Political Culture,” in Ursula Hoffmann-Lange, ed., *Social and Political Structures in West Germany: From Authoritarianism to Postindustrial Democracy* (Boulder, 1991), 127–142.
7. Diethelm Prowe, “The ‘Miracle’ of the Political-Culture Shift: Democratization between Americanization and Conservative Reintegration,” 451–458.

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I-351 Nachlass Hermann Gottaut

I-242 Nachlass Bruno Heck

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 Aktionsgemeinschaft Soziale Marktwirtschaft

VII-001 Bundespartei/Bundesvorstand, Bundesausschuß, Präsidium

VII-002 Bundespartei/Vorsitzende

VII-003 Bundespartei/Wahlen

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