

**THE CATHOLIC CONUNDRUM:
THE ROLE OF THE GERMAN AND AMERICAN CATHOLIC COMMUNITIES IN
CREATING THE COLD WAR WORLD, 1945-1955**

by

Stephanie Rene Makin

Bachelor of Arts, Canisius College, 2011

Master of Arts, University of Pittsburgh, 2014

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This dissertation was presented

by

Stephanie Rene Makin

It was defended on

March 30, 2018

and approved by

Diego Holstein, Associate Professor, Department of History

Irina Livezeanu, Associate Professor, Department of History

Philipp Stelzel, Assistant Professor, Department of History, Duquesne University

Committee Chair: Gregor Thum, Associate Professor, Department of History

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In the decade following the Second World War, Central Europe was fast becoming an ideological battleground of the emerging Cold War, and Germany was the focal point. American officials at home and abroad wanted West Germany firmly situated in the American-led camp, and for West Germans to identify with the budding western transatlantic community. Long-standing anti-Americanism and lingering resentments from the war, however, made it unclear if West Germans would align their country with the emerging western world. It was during this moment of ambivalence that Catholic organizations in the United States and Germany began to build alliances with one another, providing crucial scaffolding for forging the postwar transatlantic community. A partnership between the United States and German Catholics in the 1940s and early 1950s, however, was far from a predetermined or obvious development. Many German Catholics tended to perceive the United States as a dangerous cultural influence and the epitome of materialism, a value system fundamentally at odds with church teachings.

My dissertation argues that Catholic institutions in the U.S. and West Germany played a key role in forging a transatlantic community during the transformative period from 1945 to 1955. Encouraged by the American occupation officials, American and German Catholic labor leaders, youth leaders, and publishers embarked on a mission – sometimes cooperating, sometimes acting independently – to foster transatlantic Catholic solidarity. Through conferences, workshops, and

print media, they countered negative perceptions of excessive consumerism, exploitative capitalism, delinquent youth, and extreme secularism that Germans often projected onto the U.S. With their activities, they hoped to foster personal connections among Catholics from American and western European countries and to cultivate a Catholic front that could deter what they saw as the dangerous influence of atheistic communism from the East. This “West” was both created by and catered to the more religious and conservative segments of the German population, and served an important building block in what would become the West in the emerging Cold War.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- BDKJ – Bund der Deutschen Katholischen Jugend (League of German Catholic Youth)
- CDU – Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands (Christian Democratic Union of Germany)
- DFD – *Demokratischer Frauenbund Deutschlands* (Democratic Women’s League of Germany)
- HICOG – High Commission for Occupied Germany
- KDFB – *Katholischer Deutscher Frauenbund* (German Catholic Women’s League)
- KFD – *Katholische Frauengemeinschaft Deutschlands* (Catholic Women’s Society of Germany)
- KPD – *Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands* (Communist Party of Germany)
- NCWC – National Catholic Welfare Conference
- NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organization
- OMGUS – Office of Military Government, US
- RAB – Religious Affairs Branch of the Occupation of Germany
- SPD – *Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands* (Social Democratic Party of Germany)

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

While mingling at a gathering of Catholic intellectuals in Cologne, Urban Fleege, the head of the Religious Affairs Branch of the American Occupation of Germany, heard a worrying opinion from no less than “20 individual members, not to mention the Cardinal and other clergy.” He hesitantly informed occupation headquarters: “They stated that many Germans, even members of intellectual circles, regard the Americans as a materialistic nation, different from Russia only in that Russia believes in state capitalism whereas the U.S. believes in personal capitalism.”¹ In short, the Germans he encountered clearly rejected Soviet-style communism, but were, at the same time, cautious of accepting what they identified as an equally problematic American ideology of consumer capitalism. This was not reassuring news to the American occupation officials in Germany, who would have preferred to have sharp distinctions made between the two ideologies. The year was 1949, and Cold War tensions were mounting between the Soviet Union and the United States. Central Europe was fast becoming an ideological battleground, and Germany was the focal point. American officials at home and abroad wanted West Germany firmly situated in the American-led camp, and for West Germans to identify with a transatlantic community.²

¹ Letter, Urban Fleege to Mr. Olsen, October, 1949, Records of U.S. Occupation Headquarters, World War II, Office of the Military Government for Germany, (U.S), Record Group 260, National Archives at College Park, MD (hereafter cited as NARA II), box 176, folder 27.

² As the time period of this dissertation (1945-1955), saw Germany go from four ostensibly still united zones to two separate German states, some clarification of terminology is needed. “Germany” refers to all four zones, before it was divided into East and West in 1949. “West Germany” refers to the three western zones of occupation – the American, British, and French. After 1945, I will refer to West Germany as the Federal Republic of Germany.

That these reservations were expressed by Catholic leaders was further cause for concern for the American officials. In the tumultuous aftermath of the Second World War, religion emerged as a critical factor in German society. In the Allied zones of the occupation in Germany, Christian churches resurfaced as an influential political, social, and cultural force. The churches aspired to fill the spiritual vacuum left after the collapse of the Nazi state by promoting the “re-christianization” of German society.³ The churches believed that in the 20th century, Germany had deviated from its Christian values and fallen prey to “materialism,” by which they meant modernization and secularization. This deviation was what had allowed Nazism to flourish, and reinvigorating Christianity would lead to Germany’s “salvation” after the war. Catholics quickly assumed leading roles within West Germany’s political development, symbolized by Konrad Adenauer, who was a devout Catholic, chairman of the Christian Democratic Union, the largest West German political party, and Chancellor of West Germany from 1949 to 1963. Many of these political and religious leaders had already come to see the Cold War conflict in religious terms – a Christian “West” in battle with an atheistic “East.”⁴ Any American attempt to win German support during the emerging Cold War had to take the country’s Christian churches and lay organizations into account.

A partnership between the United States and German Catholics in the 1940s and early 1950s was far from a predetermined or obvious development. As evinced by the sentiments heard by Urban Fleege in 1949, German Catholics still tended to perceive the United States as the epitome of materialism, a value system fundamentally at odds with church teachings. Fleege, in

³ See Maria D. Mitchell, *The Origins of Christian Democracy: Politics and Confession in Modern German* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2012), especially Chapter 4 “Secularism, Materialism, and Re-christianization: The Construction of Christian Democratic Ideology,” 76-104.

⁴ For the most thorough analysis of Christianity and the Cold War, see Diane Kirby, ed., *Religion and the Cold War* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003). The chapters in this volume which address Catholicism focus on governmental policies of the United States and their relation to the Vatican, while I focus on connections between American, German, and Austrian lay Catholics.

his correspondence to American occupation officials, offered an encouraging observation about how these reservations could be overcome. He noted that upon voicing their concerns over the United States, the German Catholics then “stated that the appearance of an American speaking on a religious topic and manifesting interest in the religious projects ... was most encouraging and did more than anything else to convince the Germans of the soundness of America's point of view.” In other words, Christian connections offered Americans an opportunity to mold German public opinion of the United States into something more palatable to German tastes.

My dissertation argues that Catholic institutions in both the U.S. and West Germany played a key role in forging a transatlantic community during the transformative period from 1945 to 1955.⁵ Encouraged by the American occupation officials, American and German Catholic labor leaders, youth leaders, and publishers embarked on a mission – sometimes cooperating, sometimes acting independently– to foster transatlantic Catholic solidarity. Through conferences, workshops, and print media, they sought to counter negative perceptions of excessive consumerism, exploitative capitalism, delinquent youth, and extreme secularism that Germans often projected onto the United States. With their activities, they also hoped to foster personal connections among Catholics from American and western European countries and to cultivate a Catholic community that could present a united front against atheistic communism from the East. This budding transatlantic community was an important building block in what would become the West in the emerging Cold War.

⁵ The topic of Germany and the West is a growing field. Most recently, the volume edited by Bavaj Riccardo and Martina Steber provides a sweeping history from the experts in the field of what the West meant to German politicians, intellectuals, and cultural leaders from the 1800s to the present. Riccardo and Steber, eds., *Germany and the West: The History of a Modern Concept* (New York, Oxford: Berghahn, 2015).

1.1 HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Transatlantic Catholic activities offer important insight into how the Western world emerged after the Second World War. While Germany was arguably the United States' closest ally in Europe by the 1960s, the roadblocks to creating close ties between the two countries seemed daunting in 1945. The desire to have Germans and Americans as Western compatriots fit awkwardly into the reality of transatlantic foreign relations after Germany's unconditional surrender in 1945.⁶ Memories of the Second World War were still fresh, with the physical destruction of Germany serving as a daily reminder of the intense American and British aerial bombardment. Germany itself ceased to exist as an independent nation, as the Allied powers had split the country into four occupation zones, respectively administered by the United States, Britain, France, and the Soviet Union. The Allied denazification policies also initially caused much alienation between the occupation officials and the German population. Many Germans saw themselves as victims, focusing on their own plight during the last months and weeks of the war. By the end of 1945, many Germans had survived not only allied bombings and brutal foreign invasions, but mass rape by Soviet soldiers, and expulsion from their homes in territories that were ceded to Poland.⁷ As such, the denazification measures were often viewed as overly harsh and extracting.⁸ Furthermore, deep-seated and widespread anti-American sentiments existed in Germany and throughout Europe

⁶ For a more complete picture of Germany in 1945, see Richard Bessel, *Germany 1945: From War to Peace* (New York: Harper Collins Publisher, 2009).

⁷ Bessel, *1945*, 242-243; 296-297. The expulsion of Germans from eastern Europe will be dealt with extensively in the following chapter.

⁸ Norbert Frei, *Adenauer's Germany and the Nazi Past: The Politics of Amnesty and Integration* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

in the postwar period.⁹ In the postwar turmoil, there was much kept Germans from seeing themselves a members of a western community of nations.

Throughout the occupation, the United States' position as both occupier and newly minted world power caused backlash in German perceptions of it. Take, for example, the rather cheeky rationalization for anti-American sentiments by a young German student in a speech he gave in 1950 while studying on exchange at Carroll College in Montana entitled "Why Europeans dislike Americans":

Nobody likes his succeeding rival, either in private life, business, nor in politics, especially not if he acts like the United States with their proud and nationalistic advertising here and abroad. 'We, the United States, the greatest nation in the world' and their haughty claim for 'world leadership.' Who wants to have his neighbor saying 'I am your leader.' It amounts to saying "you are my follower.' Nations don't like to be classified as followers. But the policy of the 'freest country' was very often that of a tyrant: 'You do this, or else...'"¹⁰

The West German population resented the seeming lack of choice they had in falling in line behind the United States in the newly emerging world order. A survey conducted by the American occupation authorities in 1950 revealed that many Germans felt as though the United States failed to follow the democratic principles they preached.¹¹ The perceived arrogant nature of the

⁹ Research from historians such as Christoph Müller, Venessa Conze, Dan Diner, Phillip Gassert and Dagmar Popping highlight that many Germans harbored negative perceptions of the United States, and decried American influence within Germany. Dan Diner, *Feindbild Amerika. Über die Beständigkeit eines Ressentiments* (München: Propyläen, 2002); Vanessa Conze, "Abendland gegen Amerika! >> Europa << als antiamerikanisches Konzept im westeuropäischen Konservatismus (1950-1070) – Das CEDI und die Idee des Abendlandes" in *Antiamerikanismus im 20. Jahrhundert: Studien zu Ost- und Westeuropa*, eds. Jan C. Behrends, Arpad von Klimó, Patrice G. Poutrus (Bonn: Verlag J.H. W. Deitz Nachf., 2005), 204-224; Dagmar Popping, *Abendland: Christliche Akademiker und die Utopie der Antimoderne 1900-1945* (Berlin: Metropol, 2002); Philipp Gassert, "Amerikanismus, Antiamerikanismus, Amerikanisierung, Neue Literatur zur Sozial-, Wirtschafts- und Kulturgeschichte des amerikanischen Einflusses in Deutschland und Europe," *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 39 (1999): 531-561; Christoph Müller, *West Germans against the West: Anti-Americanism in Media and Public Opinion in the Federal Republic of German, 1949-68* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

¹⁰ Speech, "Why Europeans dislike Americans," Willt Scheef, December, 1951, NCWC/USCCB Department of Education, Catholic University of America Archives (hereafter cited as ACUA), box 10/5, folder 8.

¹¹ Anna J. Merrit and Richard L. Merrit, *Public Opinion in Semisovereign Germany: The HICOG Surveys, 1949-1955* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1980), 61. This sentiment can be seen in the public opinion surveys which the American occupation forces routinely conducted within sections of the German population. In a survey conducted by HICOG in January of 1950, 55 percent of Germans in the American Zone, and 77 percent of Germans in West Berlin believed that American authorities in Germany did not follow democratic principles.

Americans only fueled this antipathy.

Strong economic and political measures were certainly taken by the United States to integrate Germany and the United States into a Western alliance.¹² The Marshall Plan, extended to West Germany in 1948, offered economic aid to European countries with the ultimate motive of bolstering American popularity and staving off communism. West Germany joining NATO in 1955 was an important step towards Western military integration. These measures, however, failed to produce a cohesive cultural community and did little to alter negative perceptions of the United States. One American Catholic traveling through Germany in 1949 observed: ‘It is interesting to note that the same persons who voice resentments about our cultural policies in Germany are mostly fully in accord with American defense arrangements, German participation in NATO, etc.’¹³ Another Catholic involved in the occupation lamented: “Mere material relief, as our experience with the Marshall Plan has tended to demonstrate, is resented, or if not resented is interpreted as a clever imperialistic effort to secure markets for our surplus products masking itself in the guise of generosity.”¹⁴ Thus even strong support of western military or economic integration did not preclude anti-American sentiments among the German population. Even the Marshall Plan was failing to foster good will for America among Germans, as many Germans saw as a thinly veiled attempt to bribe the German population to side with the Americans in anticipated future conflicts.

¹² Patrick Thaddeus Jackson, *Civilizing the Enemy: German Reconstruction and the Invention of the West* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006). Jackson’s work focuses on the public rhetoric surrounding the passage of the Marshall Plan and NATO, in which the concept of ‘Western Civilization’ – that is, that the US, Western Europe and Canada belonged in a cultural community that harkened back to ancient Greece – was integral to the construction of the transnational Western Alliance of the Cold War, which in turn enabled German reconstruction.

¹³ Letter, Aloisius Muench Muench to Fuerst, May 2, 1952, Aloisius Muench Papers, ACUA, box 48, folder 12.

¹⁴ Letter, Patrick Boarman to McManus, April 29, 1951, NCWC/USCCB Department of Education, ACUA, box 10/5, folder 4.

Of course, not all Germans spurned American influence and culture. On the contrary, as American popular culture crossed the Atlantic many Germans, particularly youth, enthusiastically embraced it.¹⁵ This appreciation for American culture predated 1945, as Jazz and Hollywood movies enjoyed widespread popularity during the Weimar period.¹⁶ After 1945, western and gangster dime novels set in the United States captivated young German readers. While most of these novels were written and published by Germans, they glorified a decadent, gun-slinging, authority-bashing, and sexually licentious image of American lifestyles.¹⁷ During the American occupation, the interaction between American GI's stationed in Germany and German citizens was an important site of cultural transfusion during the occupation. Americans brought bebop, jazz, and other popular music from home with them. Germans – stir crazy from over a decade of Nazi censorship and suppression – eagerly listened and swing danced along. Many German women did so in clubs that catered to the American occupation soldiers.¹⁸ These informal personal connections did much to reconcile Germans and Americans immediately after the war.

This transatlantic kinship built on a love for mass popular culture, however, left out a swath of the population that abhorred American imports such as rock 'n' roll, Hollywood movies, and mass consumerism. In the decade preceding 1945, this anti-Americanism was sharpened by Nazi propaganda, in which the debased nature of American mass culture and the superiority of German

¹⁵ Many works deal with the allure of American culture in the 20th century. First and foremost is Uta Poiger's work *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels: Cold War Politics and American Culture in a Divided Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), and Kaspar Maase's *BRAVO Amerika. Erkundungen zur Jugendkultur der Bundesrepublik in den fünfziger Jahren* (Hamburg: Junius, 1992). Other important works include Petra Goedde's *GIs and Germans: Culture, Gender, and Foreign Relations, 1945-1949* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), and Heike Paul and Katja Kanzler eds., *Amerikanische Populärkultur Deutschland: Case Studies in Cultural Transfer Past and Present*, (Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2002).

¹⁶ Sharon L. Jordan, "'The Rhythm of our Time is Jazz': Popular Entertainment during the Weimar Republic," in *Berlin Metropolis 1918-1933*, ed. Olaf Peters (Munich: Prestel, 2015), 246-249; Thomas Saunders, "How American Was It? Popular Culture from Weimar to Hitler," in *German Pop Culture: How "American" Is It?*, ed. Agnes C. Mueller (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004), 55-59.

¹⁷ Poiger, *Jazz*, 40-50.

¹⁸ For a comprehensive overview of relations between American GI's and Germans during the occupation, see Petra Goedde, *GIs and Germans*.

culture had been a central motif. The Nazis portrayed German culture as pure, while American culture was chaotic and, due to the influence of Jews and Blacks, degenerate.¹⁹ After 1945, many conservative groups throughout Europe, of which Catholics comprised a core portion, still aligned themselves against what they believed to be the “hedonistic chaos” of the United States.²⁰ Many Germans not only decried American influence, but saw it as a threat to the German way of life itself. In their eyes, while America had “civilization,” characterized by technological developments and modern material goods, Europe had “culture,” evidenced by long traditions in art, classical music, literature, and philosophy.²¹ One American Catholic in Germany informed the American hierarchy: “Not inconsiderable number of influential thinkers still see no essential difference between the technical behemoth of the U.S.A. and the totalitarian-military behemoth of the U.S.S.R., both regarded as posing a fatal threat to the culture and way of life of “Old Europe.”²² In short, America not only had little of cultural value to offer Germans, it also threatened to subvert Europe’s cultural achievements.

On top of anxieties over anti-Americanism, the United States government also feared the popular idea of a “third way” in which Germans advocated for the existence of their country as a strong power unattached from either the United States or the Soviet Union. This idea was particularly popular among segments of the left, as many German socialists were dissatisfied with communism from the east and social democracy of the West, and hoped to fashion Germany into a mediator between the two systems.²³ With the collapse of the Third Reich, these socialists wanted

¹⁹ Philipp Gassert, *Amerika im Dritten Reich. Ideologie, Propaganda und Volksmeinung 1933 – 1945* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1997).

²⁰ Conze, “Abendland,” 204-224.

²¹ This distinction between “Zivilization” and “Kultur” was a common theme within anti-American sentiments.

²² Report, “NCWC International Conferences – Analysis and Evaluation,” Patrick Boarman, September 1952, NCWC/USCCB Department of Education, ACUA, box 38, folder 18.

²³ Dominik Geppert, “Bridge over Troubled Waters: German Left-Wing Intellectuals between ‘East’ and ‘West,’” in *Germany*, eds. Bavaj and Sterber, 264-267.

to rebuild Germany as a socialized democracy.²⁴ What was more, these socialists also held a place of prestige and influence within the German population, as they had been the sole group to mount a unified protest to Hitler's rise to power in 1933.²⁵ A strong, left-leaning Germany did not fit into American blue prints for the postwar order.

Facing long-standing anti-Americanism and lingering resentments from the war, American officials were justified in their uncertainty as to if West Germans would align their country with the emerging western world. It was during this moment of ambivalence that Catholic organizations both in the United States and in Germany began to build alliances with one another, providing crucial scaffolding for forging the postwar Western transatlantic community. Recognizing the value of this support, the American occupation offered financial aid to those groups within the German Catholic community that were willing to cooperate with the American occupation. The resulting publications, conferences, and study exchanges influenced the way that the Catholic press, Catholic youth organizations, and labor associations in Germany rebuilt after the war. These cultural relationships also worked to rebrand aspects of American culture that had previously been rejected. These postwar Catholic collaborative efforts shaped a specific idea of the West that was separate from that of mass consumerism and popular culture. Instead, this West was both created by and catered to the more religious and conservative segments of the population.

²⁴ Ibid., 263.

²⁵ John M. Cox, *Circles of Resistance: Jewish, Leftist, and Youth Dissidence in Nazi Germany* (New York: Peter Land Publishing, 2009). See in particular his chapter "Neither Hitler nor Stalin: Resistance by Dissident Communists and Left-Wing Socialists," 27-49.

1.2 HISTORIOGRAPHIC SIGNIFICANCE

The question of Germany's path to becoming "western" has featured heavily in the historiography of German history. As August Winkler argued in *The Long Road West*, National Socialism was "the climax of the German rejection of the Western World." After this, many Germans shed their insistence on the uniqueness of Germany from their western neighbors, and came to embrace elements previously considered western and thus un-German, such as parliamentary democracy.²⁶ My dissertation identifies the American and German Catholic communities' roles in transnational postwar German and American history, the advent of the Cold War, and the formation of close identification of Western Germany towards western democracies. The calamity of the Nazi regime indeed convinced many Catholics to conceive of Germany as a member of a larger community of western nations. The transatlantic conception of this western world, as well as its longevity, however, was inextricably intertwined with the growing fear of the Soviet Union. If German Catholics in West Germany had not viewed the increasing power of the USSR with apprehension, it is uncertain that they would have aligned themselves with the United States – a country towards whose culture they harbored serious reservations. Thus, the creation of this transatlantic western community was built not only through an open embracement of the West, but a strong push from the threat of growing communism from the East.

This dissertation examines a specifically Catholic angle within the historiography grappling with ideas of Germany and the West. Mark Ruff, one of the leading historians of the Catholic Church in Germany, often levels the critique that religious and secular histories remain

²⁶ Heinrich August Winkler, *Germany: The Long Road West 1933-1990*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 580.

isolated from each other in the historiography of modern Germany.²⁷ He attributes this in part to the grand narrative of modernization and historians' unquestioned assumption that as secularization increased in the 20th century, the importance of religion decreased.²⁸ As a result, the role of the churches and their organizations is often overlooked in histories that do not specifically focus upon religious topics. Conversely, historians of religion tend to focus on topics insular to the religious sphere. That is, histories of Catholics in Germany tend to concentrate on identifying the reasons for increasing secularization, the loss of influence of the church, the dissolution of the Catholic milieu, or changes in religious dogma.²⁹

Bridging the divide between histories of the secular and religious, this dissertation explores how religiously motivated actions shaped society outside the confines of the church. The immediate postwar period is often referred to as "the hour of the church."³⁰ Both the Catholic and Protestant churches gained heightened influence over the political and cultural development of German society. While this influence would lessen by the start of the 1960s, my work does not seek to understand the erosion of the Catholic milieu after 1945 or the loss of influence of the church.³¹ This process has previously been analyzed by historians, such as Mark Ruff and Wilhelm Damberg.³² Rather, my dissertation attempts to understand the lasting effects of this strong – if

²⁷ This critique is made in Ruff's article, "Integrating Religion into the Historical Mainstream: Recent Literature on Religion in the Federal Republic of Germany," *Central European History* 42 (2009): 307. This article is a sound starting point for those looking to understand the field of postwar religious historiography.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 308-315.

²⁹ For example, Ruff's work, *The Wayward Flock: Catholic Youth in Postwar West Germany, 1945-1965* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2005), is an important work in understanding the role of the Catholic church in postwar German society, but its main thrust is to understand why the Catholic milieu lost its influence by the 1960s. Similarly, Wilhelm Damberg, in his important history of the Catholic church "*Abschied vom Milieu? Katholizismus im Bistum Münster und in den Niederlanden, 1945 – 1980* (Paderborn: Schöningh Verlag, 1997), also seeks to understand the postwar erosion of the Catholic milieu.

³⁰ Mitchell, *Christian Democracy*, 35.

³¹ Ruff, *Wayward Flock*, 10-15.

³² Ruff, *Wayward Flock*; Damberg, *Abschied vom Milieu*.

transitory – influence of the Catholic community on the larger trajectory of German political, economic, and international alignments in the postwar world.

As this period was also one when the relationship between Germany and the United States was redefined, my project also examines how the Church's heightened influence and the development of German-American relations after the Second World War were intertwined. The constructive relationship the American occupation administration developed with the Catholic community, as well as the idea of German Catholics acting as advocates for the creation of "Western World," runs contrary to current scholarship regarding the Catholic Church and the American occupation. Frederic Spotts' *The Churches and Politics in Germany*, the first work that dealt extensively with the German Catholic Church's relationship to the American occupation forces, depicted that relationship as one fraught with disagreement and riddled with strife.³³ Recently, German and English literature, however, has begun to re-examine the relationship between the Catholic Church in the United States occupation, and has identified common agendas between church leaders and occupation officials. Michael Lingk's work on the German Churches and the occupation forces reveal an ambivalent relationship in which the American government distanced itself from the church while simultaneously capitalizing on the churches' anti-Soviet rhetoric for their own propaganda efforts.³⁴ More recently, JonDavid Wyneken's article in *Religion and the Cold War* argues that the German churches influenced international public opinion and thus American policies during the occupation in Germany.³⁵ Both Wyneken and Lingk, however,

³³ Frederic Spotts, *The Churches and Politics in Germany* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1973). While this work is outdated, current scholarship still cites Spotts's work when dealing with the relationship between the Catholic Church and the American Occupation forces.

³⁴ Michael Lingk, *Amerikanische Besatzer und deutsche Kirchen 1944-1948: eine Studie zu Kirchenbild und Kirchenpolitik der amerikanischen Besatzungsmacht unter besonderer Berücksichtigung Württemberg-Badens und Bayerns* (Tübingen: UTV, 1996).

³⁵ Jon Wyneken, "The Western Allies, German Churches, and the Emerging Cold War in Germany," in *Religion and the Cold War: A Global Perspective* (Vanderbilt: Vanderbilt University Press, 2012), 18-43.

focus on the public disagreements between high ranking Church officials and the occupation forces, and characterize the relationship as estranged. By widening the scope of research to include American Catholic activities, my dissertation reveals that American Catholics served as effective mediators between German Catholics and the American occupation. This mediation often resulted in constructive endeavors that did much to foster better relations between Germany and the United States.

The Catholic role in the construction of a transatlantic western community after the Second World War has yet to be fully explored. The latest edited volume on the topic, *Germany and the West: The History of a Modern Concept*, seeks to understand “the process of Western identity shaping.” Edited by Riccardo Bavaj and Martina Steber, the collection provides a thorough overview of the evolving conceptions of “the West” within German society from the 1800s to the present day.³⁶ The chapters demonstrate how German iterations of the West were anything but uniform, and oscillated between opposition to and acceptance of Germany’s place in the community of Western democracies. While Catholic actors, isolated from their larger religious community, appear within the pages, not one of the seventeen chapters deals specifically with either the Catholic or Protestant community.

The omission of religion is not unique for works that analyze the concept of Westernization. Often couched in terms of liberal progress, the history of Westernization often fails to account for alternate visions of the West—ones that are more socially conservative and/or religious – that also that contributed to the emergence of the postwar Western world. The works of Anselm Doering-Manteuffel defines Westernization as the result of a complex multilateral process of transatlantic cultural exchange based on liberal democracy, free market, labor unions,

³⁶ Riccardo Bavaj and Martina Sterber, “Introduction: Germany and ‘The West’: The Vagaries of Modern Relationship” in Bavaj and Sterber, eds., *Germany and the West*, 1-37.

and free press.³⁷ These categories leave little room for an analysis of more conservative projects of transatlantic community building. Such angles deserve attention, as historians such as Philipp Stelzel illustrated that transnational developments are not always “progressive” in nature. In fact, many German and American historians made connections after the Second World War based on a shared reservation of modern culture.³⁸

When scholars have analyzed the Catholic response to Germany’s relationship to the West, they have done so within a larger framework of conservative responses to American influence in Germany. Furthermore, those reactions are often depicted as ones of resistance and rejection. As a result, the anti-American nature of the Catholic demographic in Germany is often overemphasized. Vanessa Conze has written convincingly on the anti-American and anti-liberal aspects of Catholics in Germany. Her work on the discourse surrounding the concept of *Abendland* in the 1950s illustrates that Catholicism, anti-liberalism, antimodernism, and racial sentiments were intertwined. The term *Abendland* referred to a West which was in opposition to an allegedly barbaric and non-Christian East, and harkened back to conceptions of medieval continental Europe. She illustrates that for many conservatives, their view of America was intertwined with anti-Semitism, as Jews and Americans both represented the modern. Rejecting a closer connection between Germany and the United States, conservatives instead created an image of the future which at its core was anti-liberal and anti-modern.³⁹ In a similar strain, Rosario Forlenza argues that Catholic ideas of *Abendland* were integral to the integration of Western Europe, which was

³⁷ Anselm Doering-Manteuffel, *Wie westlich sind die Deutschen? Amerikanisierung und Westernisierung im 20. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999).

³⁸ Philipp Stelzel “Transnationalism and the History of Historiography: A Transatlantic Perspective,” *History Compass* 13 (February 2015): 78-87.

³⁹ V. Conze, “Abendland,” 214-224.

seen as an anti-materialist, anti-socialist, and anti-liberal space between the Soviet Union and the United States.⁴⁰

The Catholic community in Germany, however, was hardly uniform, and should not be treated as such.⁴¹ My dissertation demonstrates that while many Catholics, with a few notable exceptions, did not whole-heartedly embrace mass consumerism and popular culture, they also were separate from the anti-liberal movements described by Conza and Forlenza. Rather than align themselves against the United States, Catholic organizations and publishers described in my dissertation formed connections with those elements of American society that aligned more with their world view.

Finally, the Catholic church offers a unique lens through which to study transatlantic history. As an institution, the Catholic church is supranational, but also works within separate national frameworks. Historians of modern Germany have only started to use the transnational lens that the Catholic church affords. Most notably, Antonius Liedhenger has written a comprehensive comparison of the church in the United States and Germany.⁴² In juxtaposing an analysis of their institutions and structure, he argues that both the American and German Catholic church followed a similar trend of pluralization. Complementing this work is an edited interdisciplinary volume by Liedhenger which further compares the two Catholic communities.⁴³ While an important start, these works are comparative in nature, not transnational, as they merely

⁴⁰ Rosario Forlenza, "The politics of the Abendland: Christian Democracy and the Idea of Europe after the Second World War," *Contemporary European History* 26, No. 2 (2017): 261-286.

⁴¹ Mark Ruff, in his essay "Catholic Elites, Gender, and Unintended Consequences in the 1950s: Toward a Reinterpretation of the Role of Conservatives in the Federal Republic" in *Conflict, Catastrophe and Continuity: Essays on Modern German History*, eds. Frank Biess, Mark Roseman, and Hanna Schissler (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007), 252-272, argues that while the Catholic Church portrayed itself as uniform during the postwar period, in actuality it had many different factions that vied for influence.

⁴² Antonius Liedhenger, *Macht, Moral und Mehrheiten: der politische Katholizismus in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und den USA seit 1960* (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlag, 2006).

⁴³ Wilhelm Damberg and Antonius Liedhenger, eds., *Katholiken in den USA und Deutschland: Kirche, Gesellschaft und Politik* (Münster: Aschendorff Verlag, 2006).

offer comparisons for the political, social, and cultural developments of the Church in the United States and Germany. My approach traces the movement of people and ideas across national boundaries and identifies the creation of a community of Catholics that spanned the Atlantic. Exploring these connections can elucidate the larger effect that Catholics had on the developing postwar order.

1.3 ARGUMENTS: GERMANS, AMERICANS, CATHOLICS, AND THE CREATION OF THE WEST

The influential historian Konrad Jarausch stated in his book *After Hitler: Recivilizing Germans*: “Individual contacts of the isolated populace with the occupation powers offer a largely ignored key to explaining the decision of many postwar Germans to opt for the West.”⁴⁴ Following this suggestion, my dissertation looks at the personal connections between German Catholics, American Catholics, and the occupation forces. The Catholic community, of course, was not the only section of German society to participate in this process. They were not the only group that caught the interest of the occupation, nor the only one to start seeking transatlantic connections. Most obvious in relation to this project were the activities of the German and American Protestant community, about which a similar history could be written. The Catholic connection, however, was a crucial one. In the American zone of occupation, Catholic opinion mattered. Traditionally, northeastern regions of Germany, save for a few Roman Catholic enclaves, were predominantly Protestant. These areas after the division of Germany in 1945 lay within the Soviet zone of occupation, which consisted of the northeastern part of postwar Germany. The southern and

⁴⁴ Konrad Jarausch, *After Hitler, Recivilizing Germans, 1945-1995* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 105.

western areas of Germany, particularly the regions of Bavaria, Baden, and the Rhineland were predominantly Catholic.⁴⁵ As a result, the American zone of occupation, carved out of southern and central Germany, was heavily Catholic. The Catholic demographic, which had hovered around 33% during Weimar Germany, changed once Germany was divided into East and West; the Catholic population of the Federal Republic of Germany in 1949 was 44%.⁴⁶ Recognizing this demographic circumstance, the U.S. State Department, in a comprehensive 1951 report on religious affairs in West Germany, considered the political power of the Protestant Church “neutralized,” and asserted that the political influence of the Catholic Church in Western Germany had increased.⁴⁷

Catholic connections were a “foot in the door” between Germans and Americans. The recent bloody war, lingering resentments harbored by both sides, and German reservations about American culture were overcome by a call for transnational Catholic unity. The idea that Catholics needed to unite not only for the betterment of western civilization but also for its survival spawned a series of collaborations and exchanges which fostered an understanding between the two populations. Of course, other factors such as parliamentary democracy and capitalism also served as important similarities between America, Germany and other western European nations. As this dissertation illustrates, conceptions of the “Western World” were also, in part, predicated on the notion that these Germans and Americans were both Christian, and as such, belonged in the same cultural community.

Both German and American Catholics actively participated in this process. Sometimes they were conscious of their efforts to unite the “West,” spouting bombastic calls for Western or Catholic

⁴⁵ It is important to point out that the influx of refugees from the years 1945-1950 did cause a change in confessional patterns, lessening the amount of predominantly Catholic or predominantly Protestant communities.

⁴⁶ Spotts, *Churches and Politics*, 220-222.

⁴⁷ Beryl Rogers McClaskey, *The History of U.S. Policy and Program in the Field of Religious Affairs Under the Office of the U.S. High Commissioner for Germany* (State Department Historical Division, 1951), 90.

unity in the face of communist dangers. Other times, however, their actions were motivated by more practical concerns, but nevertheless were unwittingly contributing to the creation of a Western community. It is thus important to untangle the distinct yet overlapping motivations and objectives of the three main groups in my dissertation – American Catholics active in postwar Germany, German Catholics, and the American occupation forces. While these three groups maintained similar aspirations – namely the construction of close ties between the United States and Germany - their intentions, rationale, and motivations varied. Understanding these elements is crucial to understanding how the transatlantic community building process unfolded.

The American government's motivations lay in harnessing the influence and relative prestige of the German Catholic Church to combat communist influence in German society. This single-mindedness sometimes showed little respect for Catholic beliefs and turned a blind eye to any incriminating war-time activity by Catholics. Perhaps the most blatant attempt of the American government to use religion as a tool against communism was their "Wooden Church Crusade," which proposed building "pop-up" churches along the border between East and West Berlin.⁴⁸ The idea was to have these churches symbolize the religious freedom of the West. This ill-conceived idea was denounced by both the Protestant and Catholic hierarchy. The Protestant bishop of Berlin called it "foolish, silly, and unrealistic," and Catholics interviewed by the occupation officials stressed that churches were for spiritual needs, not political or propagandistic gain.⁴⁹ Such actions did little to improve the image of Americans in the eyes of German Catholics; on the contrary, it only confirmed that Americans were materialistic and opportunistic, with little respect for faith.

⁴⁸ Letter, W.K.S. to General Smith, September 28, 1953, General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59, NARA II, box 5175, folder 5.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

Had it been solely dependent upon the designs of the occupation forces, fruitful cooperation between the American occupation forces and the German Catholic community might well have floundered from the onset of the occupation. High-profile clashes between top German Catholic bishops and high ranking occupation officials on matters such as denazification and confessional schools caused rifts between the occupation and German Catholic hierarchy.⁵⁰ As the occupation wore on, however, American officials' concerns over the potential spread of communism eclipsed American dedication to denazification. This shifted American policy from one of punishment to one of helping West Germany rebuild and anchoring it in the emerging US alliance system, nullifying many of the tensions between the hierarchy and occupation. However, in the immediate years after the war, the intervention of the American Catholic community played a critical role in building a working relationship between the occupation and German Catholics. American Catholics at first worked under the auspices of the Religious Affairs branch of the American military occupation. While these individuals answered officially to the occupation forces, they unofficially followed the guidance of the American Catholic hierarchy. In 1949, wanting to build a relationship with the German Catholic community outside of the purview of the occupation, the American Catholic Church opened an office of cultural affairs in Germany.

American Catholics were intensely focused on creating a sense of solidarity with German Catholics and with helping Germans rebuild Catholic society. They viewed this as a struggle not only against communism, but against an increasingly changing and secularizing world; like their German counterparts, many of them found aspects of America's culture troubling. An article, "The Two Materialisms" in the American Catholic magazine, *The Commonweal*, reveals the unease

⁵⁰ In general, current historiography paints the relationship between the occupation and the German Catholic hierarchy as fraught and filled with strife. My first chapter will address this characterization, and provide a new analysis that focuses on areas of common interest between the American occupation forces and German Catholic community.

many American Catholics felt towards their own culture. This article warned that Marxist materialism was only one type of materialism rampant in the world. The second was “the individualistic, hedonistic materialism which has great influence in the West ... and motivates personal and corporate efforts to attain great wealth, economic power and the prestige which results.”⁵¹ This materialism, the American bishops believed, was “the real enemy.” What was more, this Western materialism guided the actions of the American government abroad and spawned “an unhappy tendency on the part of technicians and representatives of Western governments to neglect spiritual values.”⁵² It was the duty of American Catholics, therefore, to provide this spiritual element of American foreign policy and fight the spread of the hedonistic materialism of the West.

The German Catholic community, independent from American prompting, sought to build Christian solidarity in the face of eastern communism. Conscious of this shared objective, German Catholics often partnered with the America occupation forces and American Catholics to carry out conferences and programs and rebuild their organizations. This cooperation should also be seen, in part, as a response to larger events in postwar society. The German Catholic community, for the most part, welcomed American aid, both financial and spiritual. Practically speaking, organizations gained much-needed financial and material support by collaborating with the American occupation. What was more, as citizens of an occupied nation being inundated with American influence, Germans had to reconcile the new place of prominence that the United States and American lifestyles now held. Forming working relationships with American Catholics allowed many Germans to have greater control over the direction of German society. Joining

⁵¹ “Two Materialisms,” *The Commonweal*, December 3, 1954.

⁵² *Ibid.*

American Catholics in molding the Western world by focusing on common Catholic principles made Germans active participants in the process, rather than passive receptors.

1.4 SOURCES AND CHAPTER OUTLINES

This project's source base provides three perspectives: that of the American occupation administration, that of German Catholics, and that of American Catholics. Understanding the motivations and actions of each of these groups is integral to uncovering the ways in which conceptions of the postwar order confronted each other and blended together. The records of the Religious Affairs Branch of the American occupation administration, consisting primarily of activity reports, memorandums, and policy statements, document not only the American government's activities, but those of German Catholic groups at the grass-roots level. These records reveal cooperative endeavors taken by the American administration and the German and American Catholic communities to help rebuild German Catholic society, and to connect German Catholics with Americans and western Europeans.

While the archival material of the American occupation administration sheds light on American objectives, they do little in the way of capturing the motivations and interests of German Catholics. In order to understand how German Catholics interacted with and evaluated the activities of American Catholics and the American administration in Germany, this project utilized diocesan archives in Cologne, Munich, Berlin, and Limburg, as well as the rarely used archival holdings of German Catholic lay organizations. These records include correspondences, conferences proceedings, and German Catholic newspapers. Lastly, the archival collection of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, the central Catholic agency in the United States that

organized lay and ecclesiastical affairs, includes extensive documentation on their activities in occupied Germany. These records, which have not previously been analyzed, include detailed activity reports and correspondences. They also include reports made by German students and professionals who participated in cultural exchange programs to the United States. The collections of the National Catholic Welfare Conference offer valuable documentation of the interactions of German and American Catholics that occurred at the grass-roots level.

The following chapters are organized thematically, with each starting in 1945 and ending in the mid-1950s. The second chapter details the activities of American and German Catholics who worked in conjunction with the Religious Affairs Branch of the American occupation forces and the National Catholic Welfare Conference, the central Catholic agency in the United States that organized lay and ecclesiastical affairs. It provides an overview of the mechanisms, programs, and institutions through which transatlantic ties were formed between the German and American Catholic communities. I argue that the development of cooperation between German and American Catholics was supported by the American occupation administration and American Catholic organizations, and for the most part was received positively by the German Catholic community. These actions, in the face of the perceived threat of Soviet communism from the East, worked to promote a sense of solidarity between German and American Catholics. The remaining chapters focus on the growth and nature of the Catholic transatlantic community within a particular sphere of society. These spheres, in order of appearance, are media, workers and labor organizations, women's organizations and publications, and youth groups. While each sphere has its own idiosyncrasies, they illustrate how American and German Catholics cultivated a unified Western identity.

The third chapter details how American and German press agencies and journalists formed transatlantic connections after the Second World War. It explores how Catholics on both

sides of the Atlantic showed an increased interest in their overseas counterparts and how this interest played out in the structure and content of German Catholic media. American Catholic publishers, journalists, and news agencies argued for more open channels of communication between military-occupied Germany and the American public, and provided verbal and material support to German Catholic journalists and press agencies. German Catholic members of the media showed an increasing attentiveness to international affairs and a commitment to developing fruitful relationships with Catholic newspapers and publishers outside of Germany. Once the immediate scarcity and chaos of the mid-1940s came to an end, the late 1940s and early 1950s boasted an unprecedented influx of transnational exchanges and international conferences, the majority of which occurred in 1949—52. These newly formed relationships brought with them two important shifts. The first was a noticeable effort to portray American Catholicism positively in the pages of German Catholic magazines. The second shift was a distinct change in the lay-out of German Catholic magazines, which occurred as a result of contact with American Catholic publishing entities. This increase in transatlantic exchange and coverage, as well as a growing similarity in content and layout, made Catholics in Germany more aware of the Catholic community in the United States and normalized elements previously branded and derided as American imports, such as commercial advertising and comic strips.

The fourth chapter illustrates that both American Catholics and German Catholics saw Catholic Social teaching, guided by the papal encyclicals on labor and social conditions, as the solution both to the problems of capitalism and to the growing threat of communism. The support for Catholic Social teaching by both Americans and Germans created a Western Catholic dialogue on pressing social problems. American Catholics who espoused Catholic social teaching offered a different view of the United States, separate from the cold, industrial, capitalistic behemoth that many Germans criticized and rejected. This contributed to closer ties

between American and German Catholics, and as a result, a unified understanding of what the Western world could be. It was a West, however, that could fight both communism from the East and the rampant materialism of unrestrained capitalism.

The fifth chapter analyses discourse on mass consumerism in Catholic women's magazines. It uncovers how Catholic magazines encouraged women to embrace household consumerism, as well as conspicuous consumption. Household consumerism was additionally marketed as the patriotic duty of women, a necessary obligation to help rebuild the West German economy. These magazines often juxtaposed the life of women under a capitalist democracy to that under a communist regime. Through articles, illustrations, photos, and commodity advertisements, these magazines argued that capitalism and consumption would ease their workload, simplify their lives, and ultimately create happiness. Conversely, these magazines warned women about the harsh life of women under Soviet-style communism. The lack of commodities and household goods and appliances made providing for their families difficult and left women over-worked and dull.

The sixth and final chapter focuses on the activities of American and German Catholics in the field of youth work. In the aftermath of the Second World War, a concern over youth's increased susceptibility to communist influence was a convergence of interest for the American occupation forces, the American Catholic Church, and the German Catholic Church. While these three factions agreed that youth had to be protected from communist influence, Catholic leaders in Germany were equally as wary of the growing influence of American culture on German youth. Nevertheless, American Occupation officials, American Catholics, and German Catholic Youth leaders encouraged German youth to develop a cultural affinity towards the United States. What was more, by cooperating with American Catholics, German Catholics could gain some semblance of control over the tide of American influence that was sweeping through Germany.

The United States that the German and American Catholic leaders wanted to convey, however, was a more sanitized version in which wholesome Disney cartoons replaced Hollywood gangster movies, and American novelists and painters replaced rock n' roll icons. Attempting to divert German youth's fascination with America away from the more controversial elements of pop culture was part of an effort to showcase that American culture was not necessarily something that Catholic youth had to be shielded from. As a result, American pop culture influence on German youth was not necessarily a point of contention in Catholic efforts to create a unified transatlantic Western cultural identity.

2.0 BUILDING AN ALLY: THE MILITARY OCCUPATION AND THE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

The years following the end of the Second World War were tumultuous and uncertain. Much of Germany was devastated, with “all of [the] cities...missing.”⁵³ In the heavily bombed cityscapes, housing was in short supply, and people crowded into the few remaining buildings that had not been requisitioned by the occupation forces. Food, like housing, was scarce, and the economy ran on a cigarette currency.⁵⁴ Millions of refugees and displaced persons flooded into a now smaller Germany, as the Allies had shifted the country’s eastern borders to the Oder and Neisse Rivers, de facto ceding a quarter of Germany’s prewar territory to Poland and the Soviet Union. Alongside the former POWs and concentration camp survivors were Germans from the East, both those who had fled before the advance of the Red Army, and ethnic Germans whom Eastern European countries, with the approval of the Allies, expelled to the Allied zones of occupation in postwar Germany.⁵⁵ Because of the chaos and uncertainty of the postwar years, the American administration desperately needed German institutions that could help them reestablish order in German society. The Catholic Church emerged as a possibility throughout the early years of the occupation.

As the occupation progressed, American officials often walked a thin line in dealing with Germany as both an occupied nation and desired Cold War ally. In the face of growing tensions

⁵³ Julian Bach, *America’s Germany: An Account of the Occupation* (New York: Random House, 1946), 17.

⁵⁴ For a more complete picture of Germany in 1945, see Bessel, *1945*.

⁵⁵ Bessel, *1945*, 214-216. For more information on the forced migration of ethnic Germans after the Second World War see R.M Douglas, *Orderly and Humane: The Expulsion of the German after the Second World War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013); Detlef Brandes, *Der Weg zur Vertreibung 1938-1945: Pläne und Entscheidungen zum “Transfer” der Deutschen aus der Tschechoslowakei und aus Polen* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2005).

with the Soviet Union, American policies regarding Germany increasingly softened – moving away from punitive measures to ones meant to strengthen West Germany. This change was heralded in the American Secretary of State James Brynes’ speech in September of 1946 which announced that American policy in Germany would seek to strengthen Germany’s economy in the face of communism. This policy shift also included cultural elements, perhaps best symbolized by the establishment of a network of America Houses. The American government opened these institutions in 1946 to provide German citizens with the opportunity to become more familiar with American culture. These centers of information, located in cities throughout West Germany, highlighted American cultural achievements, served as libraries of American literature, and routinely organized exhibitions, speeches, children’s programs, and movie showings. In 1946, the American administration established nine America Houses, and opened 17 more the following year. By 1951, the number had grown to 27, indicating that as the occupation wore on and the Cold War escalated, the American administration in Germany viewed these cultural efforts as increasingly important.⁵⁶

Religiously-based efforts within this cultural sphere surfaced as a crucial element of the American administration’s policies in West Germany. As a result, the German and American Catholic communities gradually assumed partnership in these cultural initiatives. Americans and Germans, under the auspices of various Catholic associations, organized and participated in American funded initiatives aimed at rebuilding the German society. These included study exchanges and conferences that included participants from Europe and the United States. The American occupation officials hoped that promoting international cooperation within the religious

⁵⁶ Axel Schildt, “Die USA als ‘Kulturnation’: Zur Bedeutung der Amerikahäuser in den 1950er Jahren,” in *Amerikanisierung: Traum und Alptraum im Deutschland des 20. Jahrhunderts*, eds. Alf Lüdtkke, Inge MarBolek, and Adelheid von Saldern, (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1976), 257-69.

sphere would spill into the secular arena, and thus cultivate closer relations among West Germany, its western European neighbors, and the United States. While subsequent chapters explore these activities within the realms of women's affairs, youth organizations, worker's associations and Catholic print media, this chapter provides the larger context through which these activities can be understood. It also introduces some of the central organizations, individuals, and programs that were at the heart of these transatlantic Catholic relations after 1945. This chapter illustrates how both the American occupation administration and Catholic institutions developed policies and initiatives to strengthen international, and specifically transatlantic, ties.

2.1 RELIGION UNDER OCCUPATION

From the outset of the occupation, religious organizations were granted a high level of autonomy from military oversight. This treatment was decided upon in the summer of 1945 at the Potsdam Conference, where the United States, Soviet Union, and Great Britain met to finalize their decisions regarding the defeated Germany. The resulting Potsdam communique stipulated that "freedom of ... religion shall be permitted, and religious institution shall be respected."⁵⁷ This vague edict was the extent to which Potsdam addressed the Christian institutions in Germany. This treatment of religious organizations was distinctive, as the policies decided upon at Potsdam were predominantly punitive in nature. Germany, carved into four zones of occupation, was put under the direct governance of the American, British, French, and Soviet militaries. The military

⁵⁷ Report, "Summary of the FY – 1949 Program of the Religious Affairs Branch, E and CR Division," June 27, 1949, Records of U.S. Occupation Headquarters, World War II, Office of the Military Government for Germany, (U.S.), Record Group 260, NARA II, box 204, folder 10. While this report is from 1949, the first section lays out the series of directives that guided the activities of the branch from the onset of the occupation.

occupation in the American Zone, officially known as the Office of Military Government, United States (OMGUS), would last until 1949, when the Federal Republic of Germany was formed out of the British, American, and French zones. For the Federal Republic of Germany's first five years of existence, the Western Allies maintained supreme authority through the Allied High Commission of Germany (HICOG), consisting of one High Commissioner each from France, Britain, and the U.S. As the creation of HICOG marked the end of the military occupation, control over German affairs within the American government shifted from military control to the State Department.

It was at Potsdam that Great Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union, the so-called Big Three, moved Germany's eastern border to the Oder and western Neisse Rivers. It was also here that they officially sanctioned the expulsion of ethnic Germans from Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania and the German territories put under Soviet and Polish administration. By the time of the conference in July and August of 1945, the governments in Poland and Czechoslovakia had already started to forcibly remove their ethnically German populations.⁵⁸ The Allied powers stipulated that the forced removal be done in an "orderly and humane" manner, and – reeling from the logistics of accommodating these expellees – ordered that the expulsions be suspended temporarily. However, they did little to ensure the humane aspect of the expulsions, which were already underway in a violent and brutal fashion. Nor were any measures taken to halt the expulsions. Millions of ethnic Germans continued to be forcibly removed from the territories annexed by Poland, the Soviet Union, as well as from Czechoslovakia and other east European countries. When the expulsions finally ebbed by 1950, at least 12 million people had been uprooted from their homes.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Douglas, *Expulsion*, 94-96; Bessel, *1945*, 214-216.

⁵⁹ Douglas, *Expulsion*, 322.

The Potsdam Conference also set out the guidelines for how the occupying powers would handle the defeated Germany's military, economy, and society.⁶⁰ The Allied powers sought not only to obliterate the German military establishment itself, but eradicate what they saw as a German militaristic spirit. The German army, navy, and air force were dissolved, and military activity, propaganda, and training were strictly forbidden. Aiming to debilitate the German economy's ability to wage war, the agreement also sought to redirect Germany's economy toward agriculture and "peaceful industries of the domestic economy." The production of military goods was forbidden, and key industries seen as adjacent to a war-time economy, such as chemicals, metals, and machinery, were to be placed under strict supervision. What was more, industrial equipment was dismantled in all four zones as forms of reparations, with the Soviet Union exacting the harshest measures.⁶¹

Promising to purge the German nation of Nazism, the Allied powers dissolved Nazi organizations, removed Nazi officials from administrative positions, and imprisoned suspected war criminals and high-ranking officials. From the start, the denazification process throughout occupied Germany was varied and inconsistent, with each zone enacting different denazification processes.⁶² While high profile Nazis like Commander-in-chief of the *Luftwaffe* Hermann Göring, and Minister of Foreign Affairs Joachim von Ribbentrop were tried in the jointly administered Nuremberg Trials in 1946, there were still millions of other Nazi party members who required attention. In 1945, German adults wishing to continue working in the public or semi-public sector or in a private enterprise was issued a questionnaire (*Fragebogen*), which asked a series of questions regarding an individual's past history, political affiliations, and wartime activities. These

⁶⁰ Jarausch, *After Hitler*, 19-24.

⁶¹ Bessel, *1945*, 341-342. Jarausch, *After Hitler*, 75.

⁶² Winkler, *Germany*, 110-111.

questionnaires then became the basis on which the individual was judged.⁶³ Within their zone, the Soviets swiftly removed Nazi officials in government bureaucracy, judicial system, schools, and police, and replaced them with reliable communists. Denazification at lower levels, however, were not be dealt with individually, but structurally. In the Soviet's estimation, implementing a communist system would abolish the structures that had allowed fascism to flourish, and allow Germans to transform themselves from Nazis to communists.⁶⁴

The American, British, and French administrations proceeded on a more individual basis.⁶⁵ In the American sector, occupation policy directives stipulated that any individual who held a positions in public office or a position of importance within quasi-public or private enterprises, and who had been more than a “nominal participant” in Nazi activities, would be removed and barred from future such employment.⁶⁶ In March of 1946, the American occupation transferred the denazification process to German-run *Spruchkammern*, or tribunals, which would review those individuals whose questionnaires had raised red flags. The British and French zones would follow suit two months later. These tribunals placed the person under review into one of five categories, which attempted to distinguish between “real” Nazis, and “fellow travelers” who had been merely nominal members.⁶⁷ Individuals would either be exonerated or categorized further. “Major offenders” and “Activists, Militants, Profiteers, or Incriminated Persons” were subject to immediate arrest. The less severe chargers of “Less incriminated” and “Fellow Traveler” resulted in a fine and possible temporary suspension from or restrictions on employment or civil rights. Once placed into German hands, denazification quickly lessened in severity and scope. When the

⁶³ Ibid., 249-250.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Frederick Taylor, *Exorcising Hitler: The Occupation and Denazification of German*, (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2011), 249-253; Winkler, *Germany*, 110; Jarausch, *After Hitler*, 46-55.

⁶⁶ Taylor, *Exorcising Hitler*, 254.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 255.

American administration reviewed the record of one of the tribunals located in Heidelberg, the reviewing officer discerned that 80% of the cases that had been labeled as “Fellow Traveler,” should have been given a more serious classification.⁶⁸

Following the start of the occupation, serious and public disagreements between the German hierarchy and the American occupation forces unfolded, particularly over the expulsions and denazification. Catholic bishops publically denounced the expulsion of millions of ethnic Germans, which had indeed spiraled into a humanitarian crisis.⁶⁹ Women and children made up the clear majority of those expelled, and many were transported to Germany in appalling conditions. Starvation, disease, and ill-treatment claimed the lives of at least 500,000 expellees.⁷⁰ This criticism leveled by Catholic leaders, however, became problematic for the Allied powers. Catholic leaders began conflating the actions of the Allies to the actions of the Nazis. The Catholic Bishop of Limburg, Antonius Hilfrich, declared: “What you are doing is worse than what Hitler and the Nazis did ... now there is peace and these people have no opportunity to fight back.”⁷¹ Many Germans, not just Catholics, felt that while Allied Powers prosecuted Nazi crimes against humanity, they eschewed responsibility for crimes committed by their own people.

While supporting the punishment of top Nazi officials, Catholic Church officials were vocal in their condemnation of what they saw as the American occupation’s overly harsh denazification measures. As a group, German Catholic bishops rejected the notion of collective responsibility for Nazi crimes. This concept, which Germans alleged influenced the American occupation’s denazification policy, held that Germans, regardless if they were active participators or bystanders, bore some level of guilt and responsibility for the atrocities committed by National

⁶⁸ Ibid., 288-291.

⁶⁹ “German Churches Join to Hit Allies,” *New York Times*, April 29, 1946; Douglas, *Expulsion*, 199-120.

⁷⁰ 500,000 is a conservative estimate. Other estimates place the number closer to 1.5 million. See Douglas, *Expulsion*, 1-2.

⁷¹ “German Churches Join to Hit Allies,” *New York Times*, April 29, 1946.

Socialists.⁷² German Catholic bishops, however, vehemently denied any moral responsibility on the part of the German Catholic Church to the rise of Nazism and subsequent atrocities. What was more, they exculpated the Catholic population of Germany. In August 1945, in their first pastoral after the war, the German bishops stated: “We are happy that the godless and inhumane teachings were rejected across the great range of Catholic brethren.”⁷³ This sentiment was widespread throughout the Catholic Church. A report on the Catholic community in Bavaria elaborated:

The priest may welcome elimination of Nazis from public and economic life in a vague, theoretical way, but he visualizes a Nazi as an SS leader or some concentration camp guard. The head of the local post office, the office manager of the bureau of internal revenue, the owner of the corner grocery store they do not appear as Nazis to him, no matter how incriminating their Fragebogen.⁷⁴

Thus, many leaders within the Catholic Church refused to acknowledge the fact that many of their followers were indeed ardent Nazis. This stance stifled any meaningful discussion within Catholic ranks regarding collaboration with the Nazi State on the part of the church, or the widespread acceptance of Nazi ideology among the Catholic flock.

These highly public critiques caused ongoing tensions between the American occupation administration and the Catholic Church. The American administration, aware of the influence of the Catholic Church throughout their zone, attempted to address these clashes between the hierarchy and American administration. In the fall of 1946, the American administration commissioned a study on the Catholic Church in Bavaria, which paid close attention to the

⁷² Michael Phayer, in his work *The Catholic Church and the Holocaust, 1930-1965* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), discusses not only the papal response to the Holocaust, but that of the German clergy and laity. For a more general discussion of how Germans in the postwar period dealt with the Nazi past see: Norbert Frei, “Von deutscher Erfindungskraft oder: Die Kollektivschuldthese in der Nachkriegszeit,” in *Hannah Arendt Revisited: Eichmann in Jerusalem und die Folgen*, ed. Gary Smith (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2000), 163-176; Frei, *Adenauer's Germany and the Nazi Past*; Robert Moeller, *War Stories: The Search for a Usable Past in the Federal Republic of Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996).

⁷³ “Die deutschen Bischöfe: Erster gemeinsamer Hirtenbrief nach dem Krieg, Fulda, 23 August 1945,” in *Hirtenbriefe und Ansprachen zu Gesellschaft und Politik 1945-1949*, ed. Wolfgang Löhr, vol. 1, *Dokumente deutschen Bischöfe* (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1985).

⁷⁴ Report, “The Catholic Church in Bavaria,” Fall 1946, Records of U.S. Occupation Headquarters, World War II, Office of the Military Government for Germany, (U.S), Record Group 260, NARA II, box 15, folder a2.

relationship between the Catholic church and the American occupation forces. The resulting report indicated that throughout the first year and a half of the occupation, the relationship between the Church hierarchy and occupation officials had soured. Luckily, the report continued, this had “not led to any public belief that American policy is hostile to the Churches, presumably because Germans are far too familiar with the American’s positive attitude towards religion.”⁷⁵ Thus, in the estimation of the American occupation administration, tensions between the Church hierarchy and the American occupation forces had not yet trickled down to the general Catholic population.

Attempting to mitigate these tensions, in the summer of 1946, the American administration had reached out to the NCWC to help strengthen their relations with the German Catholic community. Up until then, their program regarding religion had consisted of the formation of the Religious Affairs Branch in 1945, whose early activities mainly comprised of dealing with property disputes, and responding to complaints or issues brought up by church leaders.⁷⁶ In their correspondence with the NCWC, the occupation administration stated that they were “interested in carrying out a positive program” regarding religious affairs, “which would be assured of some success in the areas of the American occupation.”⁷⁷ Specifically, the occupation administration asked the NCWC to appoint an American Catholic to serve as a liaison between the German Catholic church and the military occupation. They explained that: “It is ... highly desired that relations with church leaders in Germany be carried through qualified American churchman of national standing.”⁷⁸ The appointed Catholic representative would also “serve ... as liaison in the

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Beryl Rogers McKlaskey, *The History of the U.S. Policy and Program in the Field of Religious Affairs under the Office of the U.S. High Commissioner for Germany* (Washington D.C.: Historical Division, Office of the Executive Secretary, Office of the U.S. High Commissioner for Germany, 1951), 21.

⁷⁷ Memorandum, Carroll to Hochwalt. May 1, 1946, Records of Office of the General Secretary/ NCWC International Affairs, ACUA, box 38, folder 2.

⁷⁸ Letter, Patterson to Carroll, D.C., March 21, 1946, Records of Office of the General Secretary/ NCWC International Affairs, ACUA, box 38, folder 2.

area of spiritual reconstruction between the churches of Germany and the religious resources in the United States.”⁷⁹ With the appointment of a Catholic liaison in 1947 the military government could circumvent the appearance of meddling with spiritual or religious matters and establish an American voice in the realm of German Catholic affairs.

As a result of this request, the American National Catholic Welfare Conference (NCWC) developed a more active role in the American occupation zone of Germany.⁸⁰ While the NCWC was not the official voice of the American Catholic Church, and had no jurisdiction over dogmatic principles, the American government viewed the NCWC as the highest authoritative body in the American Catholic Church.⁸¹ The history of the NCWC made it particularly suited to help bridge the cultural gap between German and American Catholics. The NCWC was formed in the 1920s in the tradition of a unique brand of American Catholicism. It sought to combat anti-Catholicism in America and assimilate American Catholics, especially Catholic immigrants, into mainstream America.⁸² While certain strands of Catholicism in the United States saw in American culture aspects of modernity that espoused atheism and placed importance on material goods, the so-called “Americanist Catholics” of the NCWC held that Roman Catholicism and American democratic traditions were perfectly compatible.⁸³ This focus on reconciling Catholic life with aspects of

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ The use of the word “Welfare” in the National Catholic Welfare Conference may lead one to assume that this organization was a charity organization. Many Germans, indeed, made this confusion in 1945. In the early years of the occupation, the NCWC spent much effort, through brochures, talks, and newspaper articles, explaining the NCWC as the centralized agency for American Catholic activities.

⁸¹ Lisa Carlucci Moreno, “The NCWC and Catholic Americanism,” (PhD diss., University of Maryland College Park, 1999), 30.

⁸² The NCWC developed out of the National Catholic War Council created by American bishops in 1917 to coordinate American Catholics’ participation in the home front during the First World War. From the War Council, a permanent Catholic committee, renamed as the NCWC, was formed in Washington D.C. in 1919. Its members came from the American ecclesiastical hierarchy, on a voluntary basis, and its purpose was to act as a coordinating agency for Catholic activities and interests in the United States, dealing with issues such as education and social welfare.

⁸³ Moreno, “NCWC,” 30.

American culture such as materialism and secularism made the NCWC a perfect partner for the American occupation in Germany.

In 1946 the NCWC appointed Bishop Aloisius Muench of Fargo, North Dakota, as the Catholic liaison. Muench was to arguably become the most influential American Catholic in German Catholic affairs after the war.⁸⁴ He served not only as the liaison between the American occupation forces and the German Catholic Church from 1946 to 1949, but later as the Vatican nuncio to Germany from 1951 to 1959. Born in America in 1889 to German-immigrant parents, Muench had strong ties to his German heritage. He grew up in Milwaukee in a heavily German-immigrant community, and spoke German fluently. Muench has since become a controversial figure, as recent literature on his tenure in Germany illustrates that he vehemently opposed de-nazification measures, and displayed anti-Semitic sentiments.⁸⁵ Paralleling that of the German hierarchy, his relationship with the occupation forces was plagued with friction and disagreements. While his appointment did little to ease tensions between church leaders and the occupation, Muench himself was very active in the German Catholic community. As such, the collection of his papers at the Catholic University of America provide important insight into German Catholic affairs in the postwar period. He had numerous correspondences with other American Catholics active in postwar Germany, and provided detailed yearly reports on Catholic life in Germany to the National Catholic Welfare Conference. As a result, the members of the NCWC back in the United States were kept apprised of the happenings in Catholic life in Germany.

⁸⁴ For more information on Muench, see Suzanne Brown-Fleming's *The Holocaust and Catholic Conscience: Cardinal Aloisius Muench and the Guilt Question in Germany* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006). Brown-Fleming focuses on Aloisius Muench, the representative liaison between OMGUS and the Catholic Church, as well as a representative of the Vatican in a variety of positions. She asserts that his attitudes and actions in the postwar period epitomized the failure of the Catholic Church to acknowledge its complacency with the Nazi regime.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

These efforts to improve relations between the German Catholic leaders and the American administration coincided with deteriorating relations between the Soviet Union and the Western allies. Once the common enemy had been defeated, the interests of allied powers quickly diverged. This became painfully obvious by the time of the Paris Conference in April to June of 1946. While the focus of this conference was to establish peace settlements between the allies and eastern European countries, discussions over Germany inflamed tensions.⁸⁶ The Soviet Union, knowing full well that their zone offered little in the way of industrial capacity, petitioned for four-power control over the heavily industrialized Ruhr area. This was outright rejected by the British and the United States, who feared that the Soviets would use their influence in the Ruhr to attempt to control the economic development of the western zones. Conversely, the Soviet Union rejected any measures that would require a prolonged American presence in Europe, such as the proposal by the American Secretary of State Brynes to place a united yet demilitarized Germany under four-power oversight for 25 years.⁸⁷ In short, the Soviet Union wanted the United States out of Europe, and the United States wanted to confine Soviet influence as far east as possible.

The conflict between the western powers and the Soviet Union came to a head over currency reform in 1948. By 1947, Germany sorely needed a stable currency to replace the inflated Reichsmark and abolish the black market. Attempts to do so, however, were stifled by disagreements among the four-powers, primarily over who would control the printing of the new currency. Frustrated by failed attempts, in September of 1947, the French, British, and American administrations decided to forge ahead without the Soviet Union, and introduced the Deutschmark (DM) on June 20, 1948. In retaliation for the increasing economic integration of the western zones

⁸⁶ W. R. Smyser, *From Yalta to Berlin: The Cold War Struggle over Germany* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 29.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 25-30.

of Germany and the introduction of the new DM into Berlin, Stalin blockaded the western zones of Berlin. As Berlin was located 100 miles inside the Soviet zone, this blockade rendered it impossible for the western allies to provide supplies to West Berlin via rail or road. Stalin hoped to prompt the western powers to not only abolish the currency reform, but to abandon Berlin. Refusing to relinquish the city, the United States and British forces supplied the western sectors of Berlin by air. 276,926 flights, 2.3 million tons of supplies, and almost one full year later, Stalin would lift the blockade on May 12, 1949.⁸⁸ The Berlin Airlift was a crucial moment in the early Cold War, during which American popular perception of Germans shifted from Nazis needing re-education to Cold War allies.⁸⁹

This shift in perception manifested itself clearly in the shifting occupation strategies. In the fall of 1948, with the Berlin Airlift in full swing, the Religious Affairs Branch convened in the small Alpine town of Berchtesgaden to review their progress and develop future policy aims. Their resulting policies reveal a much more developed strategy regarding the role of religion in the occupation. The conference proceedings praised: “The increasing recognition that religious institutions are a significant element in the social structure of Germany, and are to be given commensurate consideration the program of re-education and reorientation conducted for the building of a peaceful and democratic Germany.”⁹⁰ It set out a series of objectives for the branch, chief among them: “Through program counseling, personal association, and planned motivation to maintain effective public relations with German ecclesiastical organizations in order to enlist their cooperation in the task of reorientation and to offer such assistance as many be possible to

⁸⁸ Ibid., 85-87.

⁸⁹ Gerhard Keiderling, *Rosinenbomber über Berlin: Währungsreform, Blockade, Luftbrücke, Teilung* (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1998).

⁹⁰ Report, "Proceedings of the Berchtesgaden Conference" October, 1948, Records of U.S. Occupation Headquarters, World War II, Office of the Military Government for Germany, (U.S), Record Group 260, NARA II, box 246, folder 10.

make them a positive influence in this regard.”⁹¹ Moreover, the religious affairs branch officers were to “foster and further the establishment of international religious relations which will ... further stimulate the German people to participate in the world community of nations.”

Under these policy objectives, occupation officials were encouraged to reach out to religious organizations, and secure their cooperation in programs developed by the American administration. What was more, they were meant to connect these German Catholic leaders to their international counterparts. This involved helping Germans plan conferences and select individuals to participate in study exchanges. With this, the Religious Affairs Branch moved beyond purely fielding requests from church leaders, and adopted policies which sought to harness the influence and power of Catholic institutions for the purposes of the occupation. Thus, in the five years since the start of the occupation, the American occupation administration in Germany had come to identify the Catholic Church as a partner in the reeducation of Germany.

2.2 CONCEPTIONS OF *ABENDLAND* AND AMERICA AT THE 1948 GERMAN CATHOLIC CONVENTION

German Catholics, of their own accord, eagerly fostered cultural relationships amongst Catholics from other European countries and the United States, and provided fertile ground for international endeavors. This is illustrated by the actions of the Central Committee of German Catholics (Zentralkomitee der deutschen Katholiken), and their Catholic Convention (*Katholikentag*) celebration. The Catholic Convention had a long history in Germany. It first occurred in Mainz in 1848 as an effort to bring together Catholics throughout German-speaking regions, assert their

⁹¹ Ibid.

religious freedom, and develop a coordinated Catholic response to the 1848 revolutions. The Central Committee, consisting of lay Catholics, sought to act as a mediator between German secular society and the church.⁹² The conference was hosted by a different German city every other year, and became an influential gathering where Catholics could discuss their faith. The Catholic Convention after 1945 served as an important forum where the voice of Catholic laity could be heard, and in some instances, influence policy laid out by the German Catholic hierarchy.⁹³ In the postwar years, these conferences brought together hundreds of thousands of Catholics.

The first postwar Catholic Convention was held in September 1948 in Mainz – a nod to the first Catholic Conference that occurred there exactly 100 years prior. Unlike the previous conferences, however, this one hosted an unprecedented number of foreign participants. In total, sixty foreign representatives from the United States and other European countries were invited to give a speech or participate in a workshop.⁹⁴ The conference was organized around the theme “Christ in the Time of Need,” appropriate for a country still rebuilding after the destruction of the war. Twelve workshops formed the core of the conference, with each addressing a carefully chosen topic considered politically and socially important by the Central Committee. Understandably, at the forefront was “the immediate practical concerns and situations... among them the social question and its most urgent problem: the fate of the displaced persons.”⁹⁵ The program contained speeches such as “The position of the people bombed out of their Homes,” and “The Woeful

⁹² For more on the ZDK see Thomas Großman, *Zwischen Kirche und Gesellschaft: Das Zentralkomitee der deutschen Katholiken 1945-1970* (Mainz: Schönningh, 1991).

⁹³ Benjamin Ziemann, “Opinion Polls and the Dynamics of the Public Sphere: The Catholic Church in the Federal Republic after 1968,” *German History* 24, no. 4 (November 2016): 262-586.

⁹⁴ Letter. Dr. Roesen to Mitglieder des Ausschusses für Übernational Zusammenarbeit,” March 1948, Diözesanrat der Katholiken in Erzbistum Köln, Historisches Archiv des Erzbistums Köln (hereafter cited as HAEK), folder 125.

⁹⁵ *Der Christ in der Not der Zeit: Der 72 Deutsche Katholikentag vom 1. Bis 5. September 1948 in Mainz* (Bonn: Generalsekretariat des Zentralkomitees der Katholiken Deutschlands, 1949), (hereafter cited as *Der Christ in der Not der Zeit*). This book is the official published record of the *Katholikentag*, which is published by the Central Committee of German Catholics. Such publications for all the *Katholikentags* after 1945 can be found at the archive of the Zentralkomitee der deutschen Katholiken in Bonn.

Refugee – A Vital Question for our People.” Other speeches merely aimed to take stock of Catholic life and efforts to rebuild after more than a decade of Nazi suppression and war-time troubles. Speeches such as “The Position and Development of Catholic Youth since 1945,” “The Pedagogical Situation of the Present,” and “Catholic Women in the Rebuilding of Germany” sought to evaluate the status of the Catholic community and suggest a path forward.⁹⁶

One of the urgent questions of the time, however, was the relationship between German Catholics and their international counterparts, as evidenced by the workshop titled “International Cooperation.” This workshop sought to encourage German Catholics to deepen their understanding of people from other nations, and to prompt them to increase their efforts to make contacts with Catholics abroad.⁹⁷ The workshop brought together Catholic representatives from twelve European nations, Argentina, Australia, and the United States.⁹⁸ Save for Argentina, the represented countries came from western European and the Anglo-Saxon world.

The committee was hoping to develop a blue print for how German Catholics could establish meaningful international relations with foreign Catholics, and how to strengthen them once they were made. When organizing the workshop, its steering committee wanted to answer the question: “What can the church ... concretely do, in order to assist understandings among different people, particularly the rapprochement of Catholics of different nations.”⁹⁹ Moreover, they wanted the participants to discuss the practical application of how to “move towards personal relationships with foreign Catholics, or how these can be furthered or deepened.”¹⁰⁰ In actuality, the workshop served as a theoretical discussion of the importance of Catholic solidarity, and

⁹⁶ “Inhaltsübersicht,” in *Der Christ in der Not der Zeit*, 333-339.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Memorandum, Anton Rosen to Ausschusses für übernationale Zusammenarbeit, January 15, 1948. Diözesanrat der Katholiken im Erzbistum Köln, HAEK, folder 125.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

familiarized the participants and bystanders with the history of the church in the participating countries. The workshop included “short reports over the basic features of religious life in each non-German country, in particular the spiritual and religious life of the Catholics.”¹⁰¹ Subsequent speeches then voiced the intents and aspirations to form international cooperation in the fields of social work, welfare, youth, school, education, and culture.

Within this workshop, the concept of *Abendland* appeared frequently. This concept of a Catholic west was important to the self-conception of European Catholics, with Western “Christianity serving as the perceived pillar of a unified European civilization.”¹⁰² It had experienced a surge in popularity in Catholic circles after World War One as a way for European nations to reconcile. Catholic intellectuals believed that under the banner of *Abendland*, western European nations could peacefully co-exist. This order, however, was anti-modern at its core, and yearned for a pre-liberal order in which the church reigned unfettered by ideas of secularism. This first *Abendland* project was sunk by the increasing economic woes of the 1930s, and subsequently supplanted by the rise of virulent national ideologies.

The idea of *Abendland* reemerged after 1945, again offering a way for European nations to come together following a vicious war.¹⁰³ The concept was particular popular in Germany, as the discussion about the shared cultural values of the West and Germany’s historical importance to the geographical and cultural configuration of *Abendland* asserted Germany’s place in the community of Western nations.¹⁰⁴ Stressing the Catholic and Christian background of Germany

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Forlenza, “Politics of Abendland,” 261-265. Both Vanessa Conze and Dagmar Popping have written on the concept of *Abendland* in conservative and Catholic thought throughout the 20th century. See Conze, “Abendland,” 204-224; Popping, *Abendland*.

¹⁰³ See Heinz Hürten, “Europa und Abendland: Zwei unterschiedliche Begriffe politischer Orientierung,” in *Vom christlichen Abendland zum christlichen Europa: Perspektiven eines religiös geprägten Europabegriffs für das 21. Jahrhundert*, ed. P.W. Hildmann (Munich: Hanns-Seidel Stiftung, 2009), 9-15.

¹⁰⁴ Vanessa Conze, “Facing the Future Backwards: ‘Abendland’ as an Anti-liberal Idea of Europe between the First World War and the 1960s,” in *Anti-Liberal Europe: A Neglected Story of Europeanization*, ed Dieter Gosewinkel (New York: Berghahn Books, 2014), 72-89.

highlighted commonality rather than difference to their European neighbors, and attempted to recast the moral standing of Germany after the Nazi atrocities. The address given by the Chairman of the Central Committee on the opening night of the Mainz Catholic Convention proclaimed that the number of foreign participants in the conference was a sign of the universality of the church, as well as recognition and confirmation that the largest resistance to National Socialism had existed within the church.¹⁰⁵ This blanket statement blurred over the incriminating actions of many Catholics during the Nazi regime, and even ignored the postwar actions of the Catholic church to help Nazi criminals escape to South America.¹⁰⁶ Nevertheless, this distinction made between Catholics and Nazis, regardless of its validity, eased the path to reconciliation between Germany and its former enemies – or at least among Catholics of different nationalities. This conference, the address claimed, could put the past behind them with the active exchange of ideas which could “foster a new political and spiritual order in life.”¹⁰⁷ By stressing the universal nature of Catholicism, and emphasizing the responsibility of Catholics towards international cooperation, this conference laid important ground work for future activities in international Catholic relations.

While the reconciliatory ability of *Abendland* was a relic from earlier times, in the post 1945 revival of *Abendland*, anti-communism emerged as a central tenet of this Catholic-Christian West.¹⁰⁸ The opening address to the International Cooperation workshop at the Mainz Catholic Convention singled out the importance of *Abendland* in the contemporary world situation:

The Catholics of the world must be conscious of their responsibility for the universal heritage of Christianity in this decisive historical hour.
The spiritual decision for the world falls between the small flock of true Christians

¹⁰⁵ Speech, “Die Eröffnungsfeier,” Dr. Legge, in *Der Christ in der Not der Zeit*, 14-15.

¹⁰⁶ For more information on the Catholic Church and their response to the Nazi regime both during and after the Second world war see Phayer, *Holocaust*. For an impressive overview of the Catholic Church throughout Europe during the Second World War see Jan Bank and Lieve Gevers, *Churches and Religion in the Second World War* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016).

¹⁰⁷ Speech, “Die Eröffnungsfeier,” Dr. Legge, in *Der Christ in der Not der Zeit*, 14-15.

¹⁰⁸ See Vanessa Conze, *Das Europa des Deutschen: Ideen von Europa in Deutschland zwischen Reichstradition und Westorientierung (1920-1970)* (Oldenbourg: Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, 2005), 111-206.

and the small group of conscious atheists, between the universalism of Christianity and the universalism of atheism. The majority of the undecided will join the winner. The decision falls soon and first in the *Abendlandish* culture.¹⁰⁹

In this fight between Christianity and atheism, *Abendland* was on the front. To be successful in this struggle, Catholic Christians believed they needed to reassert Christian values in the West. As this statement was part of the opening speech to the workshop on international cooperation, it was clear that to do so, the unity of Catholics in western Europe was paramount.

While an important concept that postulated European unity, *Abendland* exposed the ideological tensions that divided the United States and Germany, and at its core, encapsulated the negative attitudes towards the United States that American occupation officials feared. While the reference to atheism in the opening speech would have obviously referred to the communistic atheism of the East, it also implied the atheism that plagued Western society itself – that which existed as an element of liberal order. Throughout the first half of the 20th century, Catholic and Protestant academics who expounded the notion of *Abendland* tended to fight against liberalism and modernism, in their eyes epitomized by the United States.¹¹⁰ Indeed, the concept of *Abendland* had always excluded the Anglo-Saxon world, and was distinct from what was seen as materialistic secularism in the West, exemplified by the United States.¹¹¹ During the *Kaiserreich* and the Weimar Republic, the Catholic political agenda supported the idea of building a “conservative bulwark against the excesses of liberal individualism on the one hand, and the growing threat of socialist collectivization on the other.”¹¹² In the 1940s, Catholic Germans seemed to be faced with

¹⁰⁹ Speech, “Die Verantwortung der Katholischen Christen für das Universale Erbe der Christenheit,” Frau-Doktor Maria Schlüter-Hermkes, in *Der Christ in der Not der Zeit*, 214-215.

¹¹⁰ Popping, *Abendland*.

¹¹¹ Ronald J. Granieri, *The Ambivalent Alliance: Konrad Adenauer, the CDU/CSU, and the West, 1949-1966* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2003), 15-16.

¹¹² David Blackbourn, “The Political Alignment of the Centre Party in Wilhelmine Germany: A Study of the Party’s Emergence in Nineteenth-Century Wuerttemberg,” *The Historical Journal* 18:4 (1975), 844. Conze, “*Abendland*” 206-210.

a similar choice – between the cold capitalistic society of the West, and the atheistic communism of the east. In this respect, while *Abendland* was important in unifying western Europe, it threatened to undermine the United States’ goal of fostering a close relationship between the United States and Germany.

Despite this, the United States was represented in the Mainz Catholic Convention’s International Workshop. They were also represented at the conference more generally. George Shuster, an influential American Catholic, was then serving as the president of Hunter College in New York City, and was later appointed to the American administration’s highest post in Bavaria, the Land Commissioner of Bavaria. Giving an address to a large gathering in the Mainz Cathedral, he extended a warm greeting from all American Catholics, and affirmed the strength of a universal Catholic community.¹¹³ The inclusion of Americans in this German gathering suggests that Germans were starting to conceive of a Christian western community that went beyond the borders of Catholic Europe. This community would span the Atlantic, and included the nation that former advocates of *Abendland* so vehemently opposed. American Catholics could become important allies in the emerging East-West divide, even if the United States remained symbolic of all that was wrong with the modern liberal world.

The Mainz Catholic Convention served as an important moment in which the German Catholic community committed to fostering international ties with other western nations. Still under the shadow of the Second World War, German Catholics called on a common Catholic brotherhood to reconstruct international cooperation. This cooperation was not merely to secure peace, but to also build a strong defense against the feared encroachment of communist influence in western Europe. American Catholics, furthermore, were now allies in this emerging struggle.

¹¹³ Speech, “Liebe, die in der Welt Wirkt,” George Shuster, in *Der Christ in der Not der Zeit*, 266.

As evidenced by the International Workshop, developing an understanding with Americans was fast becoming as important as developing a sense of community among Europeans.

2.3 AMERICANS IN WEST GERMANY: “WE REALLY AREN’T HALF SO BAD”

In 1948, the same year as the Catholic Convention in Mainz, the NCWC opened an office in Frankfurt. This office, named the American Catholic Office for Cultural Relations, was established to “safeguard more fully and effectively the interests of the Church in the many ramifications of the United States governmental and voluntary cultural relations programs in Germany.”¹¹⁴ Its main purpose was initially to help German Catholics navigate the American occupation’s bureaucracy and take advantage of the newly arising opportunities to gain funding. This office, however, came to campaign for closer ties between Germans and Americans in the emerging Cold War. According to a brochure the office produced in 1952, its main goals were to promote German and American exchange, foster cultural cooperation, and encourage a mutual understanding among European Catholics.¹¹⁵ Through public speeches and exchange trips, the office wanted to present a more nuanced picture of the United States to their German audience – one that highlighted the religious and spiritual life of Americans.

One of the main motivations behind the NCWC’s increased activities in Germany was the growing tensions with the Soviet Union. This was obvious in the rhetoric of William Edward McManus, later Bishop William Edward McManus, who oversaw many of the American Catholic

¹¹⁴ Letter, Muench to Stritch, June 13, 1950, Records of Office of the General Secretary/ NCWC International Affairs, ACUA, box 38, folder 17.

¹¹⁵ Brochure, “National Catholic Welfare Conference Büro für Kulturelle Beziehungen,” 1952, NCWC/USCCB Department of Education, ACUA, box 5/10, folder 6.

activities in occupied Germany. McManus was an earnest young priest, born in 1914 and newly ordained in 1939. Soon after his ordination, he earned the post of Assistant Director of Education at the NCWC.¹¹⁶ In 1948, he served as a visiting consultant for the American occupation forces regarding religious education in Germany. After this trip, he remained involved in German affairs, providing counsel to the Religious Affairs staff in Germany and helping organize exchange trips.

McManus's opinions were heavily influenced by fears of communist influence leaking beyond the borders of the Soviet Union. To prevent this, he believed that the American Catholic Church needed to provide the German Catholic Church with "spiritual fortification."¹¹⁷ While he praised the American administration's attempts to foster a "cultural friendship" between Germany and the United States, he criticized its secular nature. He believed that the lack of religion or spiritual elements in the reconstruction of Germany did little to win the hearts of Catholic Germans, as the United States was not providing a positive alternative to atheistic communism: "The Germans ... are faced on the one hand with a barrage of Communist Propaganda from the East and on the other hand, a program of secularized cultural relations from the West."¹¹⁸ His views on this importance remained consistent, as in a latter memo to the NCWC, he stated:

The Catholic Church in Germany is in the forefront of the East-West struggle and therefore should be given every conceivable kind of help in her task of building up in the people high ethical principles that will stand them in good stead if they are called upon to make a choice between the values of the West and the alleged values of the East.¹¹⁹

He saw the world as divided into an East and a West, with communism and its accompanying atheism the defining features of the East. In his estimation, the Catholic Church was the strongest

¹¹⁶ Obituary, "William E. McManus: Former Local Bishop, 83, Passes Away," *The News-Sentinel* (Fort-Wayne, IN), March 5, 1997.

¹¹⁷ Memorandum, McManus to Stritch, October 23, 1950, Records of Office of the General Secretary/ NCWC International Affairs, ACUA, Box K21 10/115, Folder: Religious Education in Germany McManus Reports, 4.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

bastion against the East, and West Germany was on the front lines. Americans, furthermore, should do everything in their power to support the Catholic community in Germany, which could in turn could provide its flock with the proper moral and spiritual fortitude. Guided by this idea of fortifying the Catholic community in Germany, Catholics under the support of the NCWC were eager to augment any efforts taken by the American administration to do so.

Thus in 1950, the office the NCWC opened in Frankfurt began to not only assist Catholic Germans with their interactions with the American occupation administration, but also took measures to foster strong international Catholic ties. The office itself was not under the direction of the American government, and ostensibly, not under the direct control of the American hierarchy either. It was deliberately headed by a layman, rather than a priest or a member of the American Catholic hierarchy. The later director of the office, Patrick Boarman, believed that this was an invaluable advantage to the office. From his conversations with the German Catholic community, Boarman gleaned that while Germans were rather hesitant to cooperate with the American troops, they were “quite willing to agree that as Christians and Catholics they have a very definite obligation to find a solution to the moral problems which endangers not only American youth but their own.”¹²⁰ He asserted that the German Catholic community recognized a natural camaraderie with Americans through their common Catholic culture, and “as Catholics ... agree that they have an obligation to help the Catholic GI’s to a better understanding of Germans and vice versa.”¹²¹ In other words, the office, based on Catholic faith, was more likely to be accepted by the German Catholic community. Its activities would less likely be viewed as crass propaganda attempts by the American government, and more as genuine attempts to foster friendship between the two countries.

¹²⁰ Letter, Patrick Boarman to Mr. Thomas Hinton, January 9, 1953, NCWC/USCCB Department of Education, ACUA, box 38, folder 18.

¹²¹ Ibid.

American Catholics involved wanted Germans to view the office as a symbol of Catholic solidarity. An interview of CJ Nuesse, the first head of the office, titled “Brotherhood over the Atlantic,” published in the German youth magazine *Michael* in the summer of 1951, sought to publicize the activities of the NCWC in Germany, and provides insight into the motivations behind them.¹²² Before relaying the interview word for word, the article provided a brief introduction to the office itself. This introduction, affirming Boarman’s evaluation of the importance of the office’s civilian nature, made clear that the NCWC office in Frankfurt was “no official office of the occupation authorities, but rather can be viewed by German Catholics as a sign of friendship of the American Bishops.” Furthermore, this office “since its existence had gained increasing importance to German Catholicism.”¹²³

Nuesse’s answers to the interviewer’s questions highlight that American Catholics wanted German Catholics to see them as allies, rather than occupiers. When asked: “What do you think are the most important tasks that the German Catholics should try to solve in the coming years?” Nuesse responded:

It is not for a foreigner to lay out the tasks of the Church in Germany. The problems of internal and external reconstruction after a war are obvious. In many other respects, the tasks of the Church in Germany are the same as in the whole world. In the midst of the present tensions and the uncertainty of the future, the Church's efforts must focus on the essentials, especially the fulfillment of her apostolic mission in today's world.¹²⁴

Stating that it was not the place of a foreigner to propose what tasks the Church should tackle held implications when spoken to an audience whose country was then under military occupation. Rather than lay out Germany’s road to political, social, and cultural reorientation after the social and moral calamity of the Nazi regime, Nuesse instead chose to refer to a shared responsibility of

¹²² “Bruderschaft über den Atlantik,” *Michael*, July 8, 1951.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

German Catholics towards the mission of the Catholic Church worldwide. Nuesse was thus putting forth a relationship between the Catholic communities characterized not by the power dynamic between the occupier and occupied, but of equal partners in the mission of the Church.

This message of unity and community among Catholics in the United States and Germany was a main point in this interview. When asked: “The occupation of West Germany has led to a closer contact between Germans and Americans and thus also between German and American Catholics. Should this contact be carried out and promoted beyond pure learning?” His answer was resolute:

In today's world, no nation can live alone. For this reason, mere acquaintance is not enough, but rather it is necessary to find ways of constantly informing one another about what is happening in other countries. Closer cooperation across borders to the mutual benefit of the stakeholders should be carefully set up. The Catholic Church has always been international. Their activity without respect for national boundaries is nothing new, and it will awaken in the people the feeling that they are all brethren in Christ.

In his response Nuesse clearly called for Catholic unity that went beyond merely making acquaintances. He was clear in his assertion that the Catholic Church, as a supranational body, offered a unique opportunity for people from different nations to form meaningful connections.

In 1951, when the NCWC opened a more permanent office in Bonn, the new seat of the government for the Federal Republic of Germany, they hoped to build on this message of transnational Catholic unity. The new Office of Cultural Relations was greeted warmly by many German Catholics, and seen as an important step in which Catholics could influence the growing ties between Germany and the United States. The party celebrating the opening of the office in Bonn was attended by important leaders of German Catholic society. Counted among the guests were the heads of important Catholic publishing houses and publications, directors of religious

radio programs, and the minister of culture in North-Rhine Westphalia.¹²⁵ These leaders were happy that American Catholics were offering a way to connect with segments of American society that matched their world view. A student chaplain at the University of Göttingen wrote to Patrick Boarman, the newly appointed director, praising the office's work. The Chaplain expressed his pleasure at the fact that the newly developing relationship between the United States and Germany "Will not be erected on a basis which is compatible only with the ideas of Marxists and Liberals instead of being constructed on a Christian basis."¹²⁶ In other words, the office generated Catholic transatlantic connections. This offered Catholics the ability to promote a more conservative world view in the Western postwar political and cultural arena.

Patrick Boarman was deeply convinced of his mission to unite the American and European Catholic communities, and wanted the activities of the office to convince German Catholics that "American-European civilization is ... essentially one, but if there are any grounds for this unity they are spiritual, religious, and cultural."¹²⁷ In his writings and speeches, he showed an acute understanding of the off-putting stereotypes that Germans and Europeans had about the United States. This is obvious in a series of lectures that Boarman gave throughout Germany in the early 1950s. One such speech "European Integration: An American Point of View" was given at various American Houses, as well at German Catholic gatherings, and published in German Catholic newspapers such as the *Deutsches Tagespost*, a popular German Catholic magazine of politics, economy, and culture.¹²⁸

¹²⁵ Memorandum, "Guests at the Reception Marking the Opening in Bonn of the N.C.W.C. Office for Cultural Relations," 1951, NCWC/USCCB Department of Education, ACUA, box 10/5, folder 6.

¹²⁶ Letter, Paul Bolkovac to Patrick Boarman, Göttingen, May 17, 1952, NCWC/USCCB Department of Education, ACUA, box 10/5, folder 3.

¹²⁷ Patrick Boarman, "Die Europäische Integration in amerikanischer Sicht," *Deutsche Tagespost*, June, 14, 1952. This speech exists in various forms in both English and German in archives in the United States and Germany. For example, it was given at Boarman's speaking tour at the America Houses, at a meeting of German Catholic Youth in Koblenz, and it was published in the *Deutsche Tagespost*.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

The title notwithstanding, Boorman's main argument was not so much about European integration itself, but on the relationship of an integrated Europe to the United States. He protested Europeans who wanted to create an integrated Europe that could stand as a strong third power between the Soviet Union and United States. This desire, he believed, ignored the common Western heritage of America and Europe:

To an American who has spent a number of his formative years in Europe (and the writer is one) it is dismaying to have his European friends constantly reminding him of the differences between America and Europe. The differences exist, to be sure, but pale into insignificance in the light of the primal truth that we are all sons of the West we who live in the Eastern and you who live on the Western shore of the Atlantic, this mare nostrum of the atomic age. As such, Americans and Europeans have an equal stake in the preservation of the mighty spiritual and cultural values of Western civilization. Again, too little account is taken of the fact that America is a Christian nation, and in a sense far more profound, perhaps, than is revealed by its divorce statistics or church membership; as such it is linked by Europe by bonds than which there are none stronger or more enduring.

It was unfair to categorize the United States by its less admirable qualities. America, Boorman asserted, was not the cultural antagonist of Europe, but an equal member in Western civilization.

The remainder of his speech was dedicated to convincing his German audience that they should not only support an integrated Europe, but build one that was culturally tied to the United States. He deplored the negative stereotypes of the United States that hindered such a cultural cohesion, and attempted to illustrate that many of these stereotypes were hypocritical. He argued that the European accusation of America's "dehumanizing technocracy" and "cult of the machine" was hardly an isolated American phenomenon, with the industrial age having "first blossomed in England."¹²⁹ He implored his audience to become familiar with the positive aspect of American culture, arguing that the core of America was in fact the cultivation of democratic virtue, not

¹²⁹ Ibid.

material success. In short, “to those who complain about our Coca Cola civilization, our gangsters, our mani for the technical – I would answer that in the first place we really aren’t half so bad as that when you get to know us.”¹³⁰ In Boarman’s eyes, if Europeans could peel back the less desirable layers, and suspend their reservations, they would see a country with which Europe had more in common than not.

Like many of the other actors involved in building international Catholic solidarity, anti-communism was at the forefront of Boarman’s motivations. His determination to change European perceptions was fueled by the objective of cementing Germans as allies in the emerging Cold War struggle:

It was my thought, in assuming the direction of the NCWC Office of Cultural Affairs in Bonn, Germany (August 1, 1951), to engage as far as possible in direct participation in the cultural life of Germany and in this way to try to get through to those culturally “neutral” Germans who combine abhorrence of Communism with equally profound antipathy to the American way of life.¹³¹

It was Boarman’s duty, as the head of the office, to demonstrate a religious and culturally rich picture of American society, with the hopes of convincing the more conservative segments of German society to support a transatlantic cultural community. If this tactic proved futile, however, Boarman was also willing to use the threat of communism to convince Europeans of the importance of a Western alliance. He exploited the idea that America, while not perfect, was preferable to the other super power: “While Coca Cola may be an awful drink, it isn’t half so awful as a Russian Concentration Camp.”¹³² Thus one way or the other, Boarman was resolved to convince German Catholics that the United States and Europe needed to be tightly tied together against communist Russia.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Memorandum. “NCWC: International Conferences – Analysis and Evaluation” Patrick Boarman, September 1954, Records of Office of the General Secretary/ NCWC International Affairs, ACUA, box 38, folder 19.

¹³² Ibid.

While Boarman's rhetoric was straightforward and forceful in his speeches, he was indeed interested in fostering dialogue among Americans and Europeans. In the early 1950s, Boarman organized three international conference. Rather than focus on the achievements of the United States, these conferences sought to bring together Americans, Germans, and other western Europeans to discuss relevant topics of the time. The first conference, "The Youth of the West," focused on how to increase political, social, and religious participation of the generation who grew up during the Second World War.¹³³ The second conference "The middle Generation and Society," sought to discuss the problems faced by the generation who had spent the formative years of the young adult life under the destruction of the Second World War. The third conference, "Christ and the Social Market Economy," brought together Catholic intellectuals to discuss economic and social questions of the time.

While the conferences were limited in their participation – averaging 50-60 participants – Boarman was sure to invite "persons professionally active in journalism, radio, and publishing." As a result, Boarman believed that "The conferences did indeed have an exceptionally wide echo in the many articles, news reports, and further conferences which followed in its wake." Surrounding evidence does support Boarman's claim of a "wide echo." The third conference in particular reverberated in German society. Most notably, the conference earned a two-page spread in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, one of Germany's leading newspapers, and the proceedings of the conference were published by a reputable publisher with a foreword by Ludwig Erhard, the then Minister of Economics and the architect credited with Germany's social market economy.¹³⁴

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

Boarman believed “the conferences proved to be by far the most effective means of engendering respect and understanding for American intellectual and cultural achievements.”¹³⁵ Ironically, this was perhaps because they were not merely forums for touting American cultural achievements. The focus was not on the United States at all, but on Western society as a whole. They demonstrated that Americans were concerned with the major social and moral questions of the time. Under the auspices of the Office of Cultural Relations, Americans and Europeans came together to discuss the relevant social questions of the time, voicing the same concerns and offering one another insight. The importance of the conference was not necessarily any concrete resolution or tangible step. As reported by one of the German attendees, Dr. Herman Krings, “The aim of the discussions was not to arrive at resolutions, but to exchange and clarify ideas and to stimulate thought.”¹³⁶ The participants were focused on “the generation of a common ‘language’ in which matters vital to Europe could be discussed.”¹³⁷ In Boarman’s words, these conferences illustrated that “the cultural, intellectual and spiritual achievements of Western civilization are as precious to [Americans] as to Europeans.”

The National Catholic Welfare Conference’s undertakings in Western Germany grew from providing advice to the American occupation forces to one of sustained and organized activity within the German Catholic community. Some of these activities were overtly petitioning for a stronger transatlantic relationship, as represented by Boarman’s speech on European integration. These measures unabashedly petitioned for a western alliance and denounced perceptions of American culture that were based on capitalistic or materialistic depictions. Other methods, such as the conferences, were subtler. They asserted that Americans, like Europeans, were invested in

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Report, “Bericht über die Arbeitstagung in Drakenburgh: Mittlere Generation und die Gesellschaft,” Records of Office of the General Secretary/ NCWC International Affairs, ACUA, box 38, folder 17, 41.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 14.

the questions and problems that plagued both sides of the Atlantic. As equal members, they wanted to participate in the dialogue on the future of Western society.

2.4 AMERICAN INVESTMENTS IN CATHOLIC GERMANY

As the previous two sections illustrated, both German and American Catholics were independently interested in forming a larger sense of community among Catholics of different nations. This section and the following demonstrate how the American administration provided much of the institutional infrastructure for these activities. The American administration provided public funding to help rebuild the Catholic community in Germany. One cultural program that Catholic organizations benefited greatly was a funding initiative which was described at the time as a “‘Marshall Plan’ in cultural matters.”¹³⁸ This pool of money was established by HICOG in 1950, and given the moniker “the McCloy Funds,” as it was initiated by John J. McCloy, the American High Commissioner of Germany from 1949-1952. It provided financial support for activities in the areas of education and culture, youth and community activities, and public health and welfare.

¹³⁹ The program established a fund of 54 million DM or around 13 million American dollars, which was a considerable sum of money.¹⁴⁰ For reference, the average monthly income for a four-person

¹³⁸ J.F.J Gillen, *The Special Projects Program of the Office of the U.S. High Commissioner* (Bonn: Historical Division, Office of the U.S. High Commissioner for Germany, 1952), i.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹⁴⁰ The money for the projects came indirectly from American taxpayer dollars. More specifically, tax payer dollars financed the Government and Relief in Occupied Areas program, which purchased American goods that would be sold in Germany at a reduced rate. The resulting DM from the goods were not returned to the United States, but kept in a special account in Germany to be used for reconstruction. It was from this pool of money that the funding for the Special Projects Program came from. The funds were marketed as a “gift from the American taxpayers to the German people,” with no responsibility of paying it back.

family in Western Germany in 1950 was 343 DM.¹⁴¹ The stated goal for these funds was to further “U.S. aims in Germany by assisting the welfare and democratization of the German people.”¹⁴² The projects in general tended to fill important roles in society, such as providing hostels for homeless youth, community centers, and hospitals.

McCloy hoped that funding community and cultural projects in Germany would work as a “democratic, cultural approach which seeks to re-integrate Germany into the West European community of nations.”¹⁴³ German applicants had to submit a detailed statement which outlined the long-range objectives from both the American and German point of view, and convince the readers that their proposed project would further the American occupation goals of re-education and the “democratization of the German people.”¹⁴⁴ The American occupation forces wanted to fund projects that would create *lasting* bonds, and chose projects that were “physical, tangible, capital investment[s],” which would “stand as a reminder to the Germans of American interest.”¹⁴⁵ To ensure that the project would be lasting, the German institution applying for funding had to account for fifty percent of the proposed project budget, and provide evidence that it could provide continuous maintenance of the project.¹⁴⁶ Thus to receive money, the German institutions had to propose a project that would nurture a close friendship between West Germany and America long after the occupation ended.

As discussed earlier in the chapter, both the American administration in Germany and American Catholics argued that supporting the German Catholic community would strengthen the

¹⁴¹ Michael Wildt, “Changes in Consumption as Social Practice in West Germany During the 1950s,” in *West Germany, in Getting and Spending: European and American Consumer Societies in the Twentieth Century*, eds. Susan Strasser, Charles McGovern, and Matthais Judt, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 305.

¹⁴² Gillen, *Special Projects Program*, 1.

¹⁴³ Memorandum, McManus to Carroll, Feb 16, 1950, Records of Office of the General Secretary/ NCWC International Affairs, ACUA, box 7, folder 38.

¹⁴⁴ Gillen, *Special Projects Program*, 7, 11.

¹⁴⁵ Memorandum, “On Special Projects Seeking Support from McCloy’s 50 Million DM Fund,” 1950, Records of Office of the General Secretary/ NCWC International Affairs, ACUA. box 38, folder 38.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

segments of society that were decidedly anti-communist. However, the guidelines for the McCloy Funds specifically stated that the projects needed to benefit German society as a whole, rather than a specific group.¹⁴⁷ As a result, partisan and confessional groups were technically not eligible for McCloy fund grants. In practice, however, this guideline was ignored. In fact, in a letter discussing whether a proposal by the Evangelical Church of Berlin could qualify for McCloy funds to expand one of their academic facilities, the officer in charge of funding requests stated: “I personally am in favor of a grant of this kind, feeling that the Evangelical and Catholic Churches are amongst our strongest allies against Communism.”¹⁴⁸ In other words, breaking the guidelines was acceptable if the project could strengthen the anti-communist resolve of German society.

This motivation is obvious when it came to the funding of Catholic youth centers, which comprised a high proportion of the Catholic projects funded. American occupation officials fretted over the orphaned, homeless, and unemployed youth, seeing them as particularly susceptible to communist influence. A memorandum from McManus to American Cardinal Monsignor John Carroll, recalls McCloy’s thoughts on the importance of Catholic youth work in Germany:

In Mr. McCloy’s opinion, the Church should take a very special interest in the needs of German young people who, more than any other group in Germany, are in need of spiritual counseling and spiritual motivation to resist the Soviet propaganda that is directed at them more than adults.¹⁴⁹

McCloy believed that the Church could provide the proper guidance and structure of German youth. As a result, the occupation had incentive to furnish the Church with the necessary funds to do so.

¹⁴⁷ Gillen, *Special Projects Program*, 10.

¹⁴⁸ Memorandum, “Special Request for the U.S. Funds on the part of Bishop Dibelius,” November 4, 1950, Records of the U.S. High Commissioner for Germany, Record Group 466, NARA II, Box 7.

¹⁴⁹ Memorandum, Father McManus to Monsignor Carroll, “Luncheon for High Commissioner John J. McCloy,” July 18, 1951, Records of Office of the General Secretary/ NCWC International Affairs, ACUA, box 38, folder 1.

For example, the McCloy funds supported the creation of a community for orphaned and unemployed boys. The architect behind the proposal, Walter Adlhoch, was a German priest from Wiesbaden who was active in charity and youth work. His blueprints for the youth community were modeled on a “boy’s town” he visited in 1949 while participating in a study exchange to the States, paid for by the State Department and organized by American Catholics.¹⁵⁰ While there, he was captivated with the work of an Irish-American priest, Father Flannigan, who created a community for troubled and orphaned boys in Nebraska. Later writing an expose entitled “Boy’s Town USA” in the German Catholic Youth magazine, *Michael*, Adlhoch described the town as a microcosm of democracy and civil society:

Flanagan believe that the uprooted ones must lead themselves, without the rod of a rigid authority, but with infinite patience. He found that practical activity, work for oneself and others, was the best way to do it. And so, the city of youth developed slowly, but with impressive stability. The inhabitants, now over 1,000, live in small houses, have jobs according to their abilities, and receive training for a craft or study. They govern themselves through their own mayor, and elect their city parliament from their own ranks. They have their own post office, their own orchestras and choirs, they form youth associations and groups. It is precisely the idea of self-management, a consequent that youth is more than merely a passing stage, that proved viable. The freedom of decision became an element of order.¹⁵¹

Flanagan’s community was a mini-democracy; the previously homeless youths formed their own freely-elected government, and organized a civil service. They also received technical training. Upon leaving this community, the boys would have received guidance in how to be good citizens as well as job training.

It was this exact community, focused on instilling the ideals of a democratic society in its inhabitants, that Adlhoch wanted to replicate in Germany for male youths left orphaned and homeless after the war. The community, which he called Heimstatt Bischof Ferdinand, quickly

¹⁵⁰ These trips will be discussed in detail below.

¹⁵¹ “Boy’s Town USA: Ein großer Erzieher und sein Werk” *Michael*, August 3, 1952.

gained the support of the Hessian Minister of the Interior as well as the Hessian Department of Youth Welfare. To properly complete his vision, Adlhoch applied for 32,000 DM from the McCloy Funds. In his application for funds, Adlhoch stressed the influence of Flannigan's Boy's Town, and the steps already taken towards creating a democratic environment for the boys:

Although the boys had not known one another and had to learn the democratic rules step by step, Herr Howel, as the head of the home, suggested a democratic self-government of the boys as early as ... 1949. Experiences of the German youth work before Hitler and observations I could make in Father Flanagan's Boy's home, Boy's Town, Nebraska, encouraged us to do so. The boys have elected a burgomaster and a Youth Council. They have taken pleasure in that institution, and not infrequently took the initiative.¹⁵²

The youths aged 15-25, elected their own leader and parliament, which convened every three weeks. They also had weekly club meetings, and biweekly open discussion assemblies. Like Father Flannigan's Boy's Town, they also received training in a craft.

The Religious Affairs Branch enthusiastically supported this project. The Religious Affairs officer in Wiesbaden lauded it for its ability to teach democratic principles to the homeless male youth of Weisbaden, and most importantly, provide them with "moral and cultural stability."¹⁵³ This moral and cultural stability referred to a culture that was democratic, and most certainly anti-communist. Convinced of the value of this community for young men, the occupation forced granted Adlhoch a McCloy fund grant of 20,000 DM to complete his project. The home operated for decades, but it is unclear when exactly it fell out of use.

While Heimstatt Bischof Ferdinand shows how these projects could indeed nurture democratic and anti-communist elements in West German society, some of the McCloy funds seem to have been granted for the sole purpose of garnishing favor with the Catholic community

¹⁵² Letter, Rev Walter L. Adlhoch to Resident Officer in Wiesbaden, "Request for Grant-in Aid," May 5, 1950, Records of the U.S. High Commissioner for Germany, Record Group 466, NARA II, Box 1, folder Heimstatt Bischof Ferdinand.

¹⁵³ Application, "Application for Funds for Boy's Home in Weisbaden," Records of the U.S. High Commissioner for Germany, Record Group 466, NARA II, box 202, folder Walter Adlhoch.

and hierarchy. In 1950, the occupation granted 200,000 DM for the reconstruction of St. Gereon, a Roman Catholic Basilica in the heart of Cologne, Germany. Constructed in the Middle Ages and located in the heart of a city known for its beautiful cathedrals, St. Gereon held great cultural importance for Germany. The basilica had been heavily damaged from Allied bombing, and its dome was in danger of collapsing. Hoping to receive help in repairing the church, the parish applied directly to John McCloy, asking for 200,000 DM to repair the cupola's pillars.¹⁵⁴ The application included a letter of support from an influential German Catholic émigré living in the States, Waldemar Gurian.¹⁵⁵ In his letter, Gurian reasoned that:

During my recent travels in both the American and British Zones of Occupation where I gave numerous lectures on the U.S. foreign policy under the auspices of the Amerika Hauser, I found frequently that American actions look 'distant' or appear to be confined to 'material' things. Inasmuch as St. Gereon's church is the oldest, and from the point of view of artistry, is the most famous church in Germany – comparing in the like to the Hagia Sophia in Constantinople and to the cathedral in Florence – I would like to suggest the certainty that an American contribution to the restoration of a historic and artistic Kulturdenkmal would make an enormous and lasting (sic) impression on all Germans because it would be used for the restoration of a unique document of Christian tradition which is regarded as a symbol of occidental civilization. An American contribution would be widely publicized not only now but every time generations of future visitors would visit this ancient church.¹⁵⁶

Gurian's letter was carefully written to strike a chord with the American occupation. He understood the occupation's fear that German Catholics saw Americans as crass materialists. He played to the idea that funding the restoration would illustrate American appreciation for culture and history. In addition, the church would stand as a symbol of Western civilization and provide a physical reminder of America's support for Christian values and traditions.

¹⁵⁴ Letter, Parish priest of Basilica of St. Gereon to Mr. McCloy, March 6, 1950, Pharrarchiv Köln St. Gereon, Generalia, HAEK, folder 328.

¹⁵⁵ Letter, Waldemar Gurian to Mr. G. Whitman, 3 April 1950, Pharrarchiv Köln St. Gereon, Generalia, HAEK, folder 328.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

This tactic was successful, as the American occupation granted the funds, but not without voicing some reservations. Not wanting to set a precedent of providing funds for church reconstruction, in his response to the Bishop of Cologne, McCloy explained: “The general feeling is that we have so few funds, and there are so many needs connected with the youth of Germany and the rehabilitation of distressed groups rather than in the re-erection of churches as such.” Nevertheless, McCloy quickly followed with: “I naturally do not mean to imply by this that the re-erection of churches is not a great need or is not related to the rehabilitation of youth and distressed groups. The restoration of churches is of real importance, but perhaps of a longer-range character than those we have immediately in mind.”¹⁵⁷ With this, McCloy made clear that although the funds were not meant for church restoration, he would make an exception. Thus, the McCloy funds were dispersed to not only strengthen the Catholic community, but to help maintain amicable relations with the Catholic Church.

Overall, Catholic organizations took notable advantage of this funding opportunity to help rebuild Catholic community life. By 1951, the Catholic Church had received over 2.8 million DM, which provided funding for roughly 51 projects.¹⁵⁸ With a total of 473 projects funded by the Special Projects Program, specifically Catholic projects accounted for 10% of the total. Most of the funding went to important community centers, some of which still exist today. For example, the Headquarters of the Catholic Women’s League in Munich was constructed with these funds, and well as the center for the League of German Youth in Düsseldorf. Some of the buildings, such as the Catholic’s Women’s League in Munich, still bear the mark of these funds – a large brass

¹⁵⁷ Letter, McCloy to Cardinal Fringes. May 19, 1950, Pharrarchiv Köln St. Gereon, Generalia, HAEK, folder 328.

¹⁵⁸ Memorandum, “‘McCloy’ Projects” Spring, 1951, Records of Office of the General Secretary/ NCWC International Affairs, box 9, folder 37.

plate that reads: “This building was constructed with the help of the public funds of the United States of America.”¹⁵⁹

2.5 EXCHANGES

On March 31, 1947, the American occupation initiated a program to bring carefully selected West German professionals to the United States to study or work with private or governmental institutions in the fields of education, religion, labor, and, as the *New York Times* put it, the “molding of public opinion.”¹⁶⁰ The exchanges were developed as a cooperative undertaking by the U.S. government and private institutions “interested in furthering democratic reeducation and reconstruction of Germany.”¹⁶¹ The participation of private organizations, such as the NCWC, was necessary for the organization and funding of the exchanges. In 1949, an exchange program for university students was added to the program, with high school teenagers subsequently included in 1950.¹⁶² Funded by the American government, orchestrated by the NCWC Office of Cultural Relations, and enthusiastically participated in by German Catholics, the Catholic portion of these exchange trips were an important site of cultural exchange and transatlantic community building.

¹⁵⁹ A bronze plaque bearing this inscription graces the stairwell entrance of the Katholischer Deutscher Frauenbund Landesverband Bayern e.V. located on 1 Schraudolphstraße 1, 80799 München, Germany.

¹⁶⁰ “Germans to Study Democracy Here,” *New York Times*, April 1, 1947.

¹⁶¹ Report, “Interchange of Persons between the United States and Germany,” March 19, 1947, National Catholic Welfare Conference/USCCB, ACUA, box K20, folder German-Austrian Project Preliminaries, 47-48.

¹⁶² Ellen Latzin, *Lernen von Amerika? Das US-Kulturaustauschprogramm für Bayern und seine Absolventen* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2005), 234-249. Her work details the exchange of German professionals sponsored by the American occupation forces, and argues that the exchanges were a significant aspect of the American occupation’s reorientation program, and provided examples of democracy to the professionals, which they could later emulate. Latzin has a brief section on the exchange of Religious leaders, and does come to similar conclusions about the role of religion in the exchanges. She argues that the exchanges were organized to facilitate the spiritual reinvigoration of Germany, and to showcase American religious achievements to gain support within German Christian circles. Our studies are complimentary, but my dissertation focuses solely on religion, and seeks to understand not only the exchanges, but the effect that the exchanges had in German Catholic society.

While developed in 1947, the majority of the exchanges organized for the NCWC occurred from 1949-1952.

These exchange trips of experts were geared towards stimulating both pre-existing and new “organizational relationships between German church organizations and international bodies.”¹⁶³ This focus was emphasized in the blueprints for the exchange trips, with one trip centering on “the furtherance of international religious exchange through the improvement of international ties among religious organizations.”¹⁶⁴ On one such trip in this category, the American Jesuit Father Edward Rooney spent three months in Bavaria “to discuss with Catholic organizations of every type of method of building up better international relations.” On his trip, he urged the German Catholic groups to establish committees within their organizations that would deal specifically with international relations. In his return report, Rooney exclaimed that he had been greeted warmly and enthusiastically by German Catholics, who were eager to strike up international relationships.¹⁶⁵

On the trips of German experts to the United States, the NCWC and the American occupation administration also wanted to illustrate that the United States had a rich and deep culture that was equal to that of European countries. American officials and the NCWC wanted to counter the German perception, discussed earlier, that Germany and Europe had “culture,” while America had “civilization.”¹⁶⁶ The NCWC wanted the exchange participants to return to Germany with experiences that highlighted American culture. As a result, the NCWC directed hosts to put

¹⁶³ Letter, Paul Bolkovac to Patrick Boarman, Göttingen, May 17, 1952, NCWC/USCCB Department of Education, ACUA, box 10/5, folder 3.

¹⁶⁴ Inter-divisional Reorientation Committee Form for Reporting Cultural Exchange Projects for 1950,” Records of the U.S. High Commissioner for Germany, Record Group 466, NARA II, box 944, folder 88.

¹⁶⁵ Report, “Religious Affairs Bavaria December 1950, Dec 1949- Feb 1951,” Records of the U.S. High Commissioner, Record Group 466, NARA II, box 2, folder, E and CR Monthly Reports.

¹⁶⁶ Memorandum, C.J. Nuesse, “Memorandum to Hosts to German Visitors,” 1950, NCWC/USCCB Department of Education, ACUA, box K21 10/116, folder 24, 5.

special emphasis on what they characterized as cultural experiences, and to organize leisure time around “symphonies, visits to artistic centers and museums, and attendance at some of the best plays.”¹⁶⁷

These trips received much publicity in German Catholic circles. Many of the exchange participants took speaking engagements to relay their experiences. One returning Catholic priest, Dr. Schosser, wrote to the American occupation to inform them of his activities upon returning to Germany. In the several months since his return, he had given approximately 20 lectures or speeches before audiences totaling around 3,500 people. The audience consisted of high school teachers, students, workers, and youth. Upon writing, he had been asked by various German organizations to give 10 more speeches. The demand for such talks illustrates that German Catholics were curious about American society, and wanted to learn more about their Catholic brothers on the other side of the Atlantic. It seems as though the picture Dr. Schosser painted for his audience was a positive one, as he wrote: “The hospitality with which I was met in the United States and the impressions of true freedom and friendliness have had a great effect upon my audience.”¹⁶⁸

On one occasion, the Hans Schroeder press in Munich published a short account of one of the exchanges – Father Willibrord Braunmiller, a Benedictine Monk from St. Boniface Society who studied American Catholic life in the U.S.A. for three months in.¹⁶⁹ The 42 page brochure was meant for both a German and American audience, as the left side of the brochure had the text in German, and the right side, English. The pamphlet itself opened with a full-page hand-drawn picture of a sky scraper (presumably the Empire State Building) – a symbol Germans often

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Report, “Monthly Report: Office of Public Affairs,” March 1951, General Records of the Department of State, Records of the Office of Western European Affairs, 1941-1954, Record Group 59, Box 2438.

¹⁶⁹ Pamphlet, Willibrord Braunmiller, „60 Days in the United States,“ II. Weltkirche, NL Kardinal Faulhaber, Kardinal Faulhaber Archiv, Archiv des Erzbistums München und Freising, Signatur 2003, v.

associated with the United States. Overall, his account of the states was glowing, raving about the full churches on Sundays, the strong Catholic schools funded through voluntary means, and the robust Catholic organizations. His previous notions about religious life in American had “been by far excelled by the Catholic Life I saw in the USA.” He had a heartfelt appreciation for the “wonderful and liberal hospitality,” which founded in him “a true and faithful love to America more than ever.”

Braunmiller’s pamphlet contained more than broad praise for American Catholic life, and worked to correct specific misunderstandings Germans Catholics held towards the American Catholic community. For example, according to Father Braunmiller, Germans saw the American tenet of separation of church and state as a sign of rampant secularism and religious persecution. In Germany the state and the church were much more intertwined; church taxes were collected by the government, and faith-based religious education was taught in schools. American Catholics, on the other hand, paid any dues or donations directly to the church. Religious education was handled by an individual’s respective parish, and not taught in public schools. Germans often took this as an indicator of the extreme secular nature of the United States – the lack of state funding for the church signaled a lack of concern for the church in the eyes of the Germans, or as Willibrord put it: Germans “always identify separation with a persecution of church and an announcement of fight.”¹⁷⁰ In the pamphlet, however, Willibrord made clear that the separation of church and state did not signal the existence of state hostility against religion, and in no terms diminished the quality of spiritual life in the United States.

Catholic newspapers also often published details of the trips. Newspaper articles announcing the trips were often later followed by lengthy articles written by the exchangees about

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

their experience in the United States. The Berlin Parish Magazine, the *Petrusblatt*, dedicated almost a full page to the study trip of one of its parishioners, Dr. Stasiewskis, who had made the trip to study adult education. This article detailed the various Catholic organizations within the United States, and presented American Catholics as a united force that was deeply concerned with the problems of modern society. American diocesan newspapers, Stasiewski assured his readers, educated American Catholics about the church in the States, as well as world-wide, and numerous brochures, pamphlets, and books dealt with the problems of the current times, and offered Christian solutions. Another such article in the November 1952 issue of *Echo der Zeit*, a Catholic newspaper which served the Rhineland, reported on the impression of Catholicism in the United States of another visiting expert. This article proclaimed: “The European, who with the preconception about America, that American Catholicism was superficial, boisterous, and gimmickry, is pleasantly surprised at the devoutness, the humbleness, and obedience of the American Catholics.”¹⁷¹

The trips of German professionals to the United States worked to cultivate a specific image of the United States. Carefully planned to showcase the best that the States had to offer, many of the German participants admittedly returned with a somewhat altered understanding of the United States. Rather than focusing on Hollywood movies with questionable morals, the heartless capitalism of the American economy, or the perceived extreme secularism, these publications provided a picture of a strong and vibrant Catholic society. Moreover, the accounts were coming from Germans themselves, and records show that they were more than willing to pass their newly gained knowledge to their German peers. In the following chapters, many of the individuals involved in the exchange trips will show up as important actors within their sphere of expertise.

¹⁷¹ “Katholische Kirche im Aufstieg: Eindrücke einer Studienreise durch die USA,” *Echo der Zeit*, November 2, 1952.

2.6 CONCLUSION

The late 1940s and early 1950s saw increasing commitment by Catholics on both sides of the Atlantic to foster international contacts amongst Germans, Americans, and other western Europeans. Boarman provides insight into the importance of these Catholics efforts to the development of the Western alliance:

We are Christians and Catholics first (a point, incidentally, which we stress in all our contacts with Germans), and thus have an indissoluble link with millions of Germans of good will. There are many Germans ... who have no firmly fixed political convictions, but who do have deep religious and theological convictions and by appealing to these we (as Americans) will have established an avenue of communication with Germans which will remain long after the occupation is only an unpleasant memory.¹⁷²

Catholicism offered a common denominator for many Germans and Americans. While their language, culture, and lifestyles were different, and they had spent the better half of a decade at war with one another, they at least shared the same religious and theological beliefs. Thus Catholic bonds could serve as an important start in developing a sense of Western community.

A fear of communism lay at the center of these efforts to create international ties among Catholics living in Western countries. In the eyes of the American occupation officials, anti-communism and a strong Catholic community in the West were mutually reinforcing things. Strengthening the latter would reinforce the former. This dynamic created a symbiotic relationship between the occupation and the German Catholic community. The American occupation wanted to strengthen the German Catholic community because they were anti-communist, and Catholics were willing to reimagine the German and American relationship because American strength offered both the means to rebuild and the best protection against Soviet aggression.

¹⁷² Memorandum, "Report of Activities October 1 - December 15," Boarman, 1951, Records of Office of the General Secretary/ NCWC International Affairs, ACUA, box 38, folder 18.

German and American Catholics came to see Catholic solidarity among western European nations and the United States as fundamental to the cultural health of the emerging transatlantic world. In their estimation, if the West was to successfully combat Eastern communist influence, it needed to have a strong spiritual base. What was more, strengthening the Catholic elements would also hopefully provide them with some influence as to how the Western world developed. Failing to create a strong transatlantic Catholic community would let the less desirable aspects of modern culture develop unfettered.

In the first decade after the Second World War, the American government and the German and American Catholic communities worked to engender a sense of Western community. American funding initiatives strengthened the German Catholic community, helping them rebuild and assume an influential role in postwar German society. Conference and study exchanges sought to bring together Americans and Germans and develop a sense of camaraderie. Paramount in this molding the German perception of the United States into an image with which they could see as a Western partner rather than a dangerous symbol of crass materialism and cold capitalism.

3.0 NEWSPAPER NETWORK: AMERICAN AND GERMAN CATHOLIC PRESS AGENCIES

French priest Jean de Rivau, one of the editors of *Dokumente*, a German-French Catholic magazine based in Offenburg, Germany, wrote to Patrick Boarman in 1952 after attending a conference organized by the National Catholic Welfare Conference Office of Cultural Affairs. In his letter de Rivau warned that communists were strengthening their international connections, and Catholics needed to do the same. The Catholic communities of Europe and the United States, he declared, could “no longer cultivate our own gardens.” International Catholic solidarity was necessary if Catholics wanted to hold any influence over the newly emerging postwar order. He then posed the question: “How can this work be done if ... the Catholics of Europe and the Catholics of America do not know each other?”¹⁷³ In other words, knowledge of one another was a prerequisite for strong international bonds between European countries and the United States. Newspapers, de Riveau told Boarman, needed to play an important role in providing this knowledge to their readership.

In the decade after the Second World War, German and American Catholic press agencies indeed provided the scaffolding through which Catholics cultivated knowledge about their co-religionists in other countries. German Catholic members of the media showed an increasing attentiveness to international affairs and a commitment to developing fruitful relationships with Catholic newspapers and publishers outside of Germany. American Catholic publishers, for their

¹⁷³ Letter, Jean de Riveau to Patrick Boarman, spring 1952, NCWC/USCCB Department of Education, ACUA, box 10, folder 10.

part, were eager to provide their German counterparts with material for their papers. As the conditions in Germany made rebuilding press agencies difficult, this support was deeply needed.

This influx of international connections between American and German members of the press brought with them two important shifts in German Catholic print media. First, there was a noticeable upswing in effort to provide German readers with information about Catholic community life in the United States. Second, a distinct change in the lay-out of German Catholic magazines occurred in correlation to contact with American Catholic publishing entities. German Catholic publications adopted a more American-style layout with games, advertisements, and cartoons distributed across pages. Papers added new sections for children that featured crossword puzzles and cartoons with messages of morality. Advertisements –sometimes even for American products such as Coco-Cola and Velveeta cheese – became prevalent in the newspapers. These adoptions and adaptations of American models and structures illustrates that while Catholic circles could be verbally critical of American influence, they readily adopted elements thought of as American.

This postwar increase in communication between German and American press agencies played an important role in making Germans and Americans more familiar with one another. German's knowledge of the United States was no longer dominated by propaganda or filled in with long-standing stereotypes. Rather, information came directly from German publishers and journalists who had either first-hand knowledge of the United States, or American journalists or publishers themselves. These new images were ones of America's devout and vibrant religious life. Members of the Catholic press realized that cultivating this familiarization was an important first step in developing a sense of community that spanned the Atlantic.

3.1 A ROCKY START: CATHOLIC PRESS UNDER THE MILITARY OCCUPATION

The path to international cooperation was not a smooth one, and the American occupation forces and German Catholic community had moments of volatile disagreement. While the previous chapter illustrated how all sides had a vested interest in nurturing a cooperative relationship, the realities of doing so when one country was occupied, and the other the occupier, proved challenging. From 1945 until 1947, relations between members of the Catholic press and the American occupation forces were oftentimes marred by contentious arguments over the licensing of publications, and material and paper shortages. These disagreements highlight the complex nature of the relationship between the German and American Catholic community and the American occupation forces. A symbiotic relationship between the American occupation forces and the Catholic community was not necessarily inevitable, and frustrations had to be swallowed by both sides in order to work together.

A 1947 report by the Information Control Division, charged with the task of vetting and rebuilding the German press in the American occupation zone, summarized the conditions under which they operated in 1945: “It will be hard for those not present at that time to visualize the Alice-in Wonderland setting under which this team had to operate ... Everything was topsy-turvy, or at least in state of flux.”¹⁷⁴ Since publishing agencies were often located in urban centers, which had sustained the most bombing, the infrastructure to support publishing was sorely lacking.¹⁷⁵ Even if there had been functioning facilities, however, publishing capabilities would have been

¹⁷⁴ Report, “Historical Summary: Newspapers in Bavaria under Occupation,” August, 19, 1947 Records of U.S. Occupation Headquarters, World War II, Office of the Military Government for Germany, (U.S), Record Group 260, NARA II, box 110.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

stunted due to the limited availability of and access to paper. Compounding this issue of scarcity was the complicated process of screening and approving Germans who could resume writing and publishing.

Immediately after the war, press and media was subject to intense scrutiny through the American denazification program, as the American military government saw eliminating Nazi influence in the press as vital to eradicating Nazi influence in society. Goebbels's propaganda machine and strict censorship had been an important pillar of the National Socialist state, and the Nazi party enacted measures to seize tight control over mass communication systems after their rise to power in 1933.¹⁷⁶ A series of purges, decrees and legislation throughout 1933 had slowly brought all publishing mediums in line with the Nazi party. Starting in February, the National Socialists prohibited publications that criticized public leaders, and quickly followed with enacting a ban on Communist and Socialist publications. In the fall of that year, the Reich Press Law forced Jewish and liberal editors out of their positions and created new requirements for the publishing profession. From that point on, all active journalists had to be included on the register of the newly formed Reich's Press Chamber. Inclusion on this register required, among other things, German citizenship, "Aryan" bloodlines, and a pledge to not publish material that would "weaken the strength of the German Reich abroad or at home."¹⁷⁷ The occupation forces reasoned that publishers and press agencies that had continued writing and publishing in a state-sanctioned capacity after 1933 showed, at the very least, complacency with Nazi ideology.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁶ For more information on the field of journalism under the Nazi State see Norbert Frei and Johannes Schmitz, *Journalismus im Dritten Reich* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1989) and more recently, Corey Ross, *Media and the Making of Modern Germany: Mass Communications, Society, and Politics from the Empire to the Third Reich* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008). In particular, see the chapter "Part V: Mass Culture in the Third Reich: Propaganda, Entertainment, and National Mobilization," 263-392.

¹⁷⁷ Ross, *Media and the Making of Modern Germany*, 294.

¹⁷⁸ Jessica C.E. Gienow-Hecht, *Transmission Impossible: American Journalism as Cultural Diplomacy in Postwar Germany, 1945-1955* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1999).

The American denazification process for the press in their zone, compared to the other Allied occupation powers, initially established the strictest regulations on German press agencies.¹⁷⁹ The American Military Directive No. 4 stated that only persons who had openly opposed the Nazi State were eligible for employment as a journalist. As the Reich Press Law assured that active publishers in 1945 would be categorized, at least, as “Fellow Travelers” to Nazism, the majority of journalists, publishers and editors were ineligible to resume their work in the press. The strict denazification measures meant that the first German language paper published in the American zone, the *Neue Zeitung*, was run by the American military forces under the direction of a German émigré. Strict licensing restrictions would remain in place until 1949, after which newly established, German-run newspapers flooded the media market. As such, many secular German-run newspapers in the American zone did not begin publishing until the late 1940s. For example, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* did not begin to publish until 1949. By comparison, *Der Spiegel*, which originally was run by the British occupation forces, was rather quickly handed over to German publishers in 1947.¹⁸⁰

The American Military Government allowed Catholic press agencies, however, to resume activities relatively early. This decision was influenced by the American government’s reluctance to enact any regulations that infringed upon the freedom of religion.¹⁸¹ The Catholic Church as an institution was granted a wholesale license to publish in the fall of 1945 and confessional newspapers were among the first to be granted licenses by the military government.¹⁸² In Bavaria,

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 15-30.

¹⁸⁰ “Six Decades of Quality Journalism: The History of Der Spiegel,” *Der Spiegel*, October 5, 2011.

¹⁸¹ This reluctance is dealt with in detail in Chapter 2.

¹⁸² Doris von der Brelie-Lewien, *Katholische Zeitschriften in den Westzonen 1945-1949: Ein Beitrag zur politischen Kultur der Nachkriegszeit* (Göttingen: Muster-Schmidt Verlag, 1986). While this book researches Catholic newspapers in the West Zones during the first five years after the war, it does not discuss the centralizing activities in the first postwar decade that led to the Kristliche Nachrichten Dienst. It also overlooks any cooperation with the American Catholic publishing community or the National Catholic News Service.

two of the three editors first licensed by the American military in October 1945 were influential Catholic. One editor, Franz Schoeningh, had run a prominent Catholic periodical before the war, and had been arrested twice by the Gestapo. Another, Alfred Schwingenstein, was also a Catholic layman who, after 1946, edited a weekly Catholic publication.¹⁸³ By fall of 1946, 76 percent of the 84 licensed publishers in Bavaria were Catholic.¹⁸⁴ As 72 percent of Bavarians were registered as Catholic in 1945, this number is not astonishing.¹⁸⁵ Nevertheless, it illustrates that Catholics were hardly discriminated against.

Regardless of these statistics, the American occupation forces was plagued by complaints from Catholic publishers regarding issues of licensing, and material and paper allotment.¹⁸⁶ Many German Catholic leaders in the initial years after 1945 felt as though the American occupation forces failed to supply Catholic newspapers, magazines, and publishing houses with proper support.¹⁸⁷ A closer look at the situation, however, reveals a Catholic community that not only expected, but demanded preferential treatment. The replies from the Information Control Division regarding these demands reveals an increasingly exasperated response to the special treatment that Catholic circles demanded.

Arguments between Catholics and the American occupation officials regarding Catholic publications could be hot-tempered. A disagreement between a Catholic publisher and the

¹⁸³ Report, "Historical Summary: Newspapers in Bavaria under Occupation," August 19, 1947.

¹⁸⁴ Memorandum, "Catholic Publications," November 5, 1946, Records of U.S. Occupation Headquarters, World War II, Office of the Military Government for Germany, (U.S), Record Group 260, NARA II, box 187, folder 24.

¹⁸⁵ Report, "The Catholic Church in Bavaria" March 15, 1954, General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59, NARA II, Box 4478, folder 10.

¹⁸⁶ Spotts' *Churches and Politics*, makes much of clashes between German bishops and occupation officials regarding paper allotment, licensing, and censorship. The main German-language source on the Catholic press after the war, von der Brellie-Lewien's *Katholische Zeitschriften*, conversely argues that the Western Allies occupation forces gave the church special treatment, citing that the number of confessional newspapers far outnumbered non-confessional newspapers in the late 1940s. The difference can be accounted for in the sources used by each book. Spotts relies mainly on the documents from the American occupation, while von der Brellie-Lewien uses mainly German sources, and does not examine the records of the American occupation. It should be noted that the time of von der Brellie-Lewien's research, the American military documents were not accessible.

¹⁸⁷ Spotts, *The Churches and Politics*, 84-87.

Information Control Division in January 1947 proved particularly volatile. A Catholic author and editor, Mrs. von Schmidt-Pauli, had approached the Information Control Division in Bavaria about publishing a cultural magazine for German youth aged 17-30.”¹⁸⁸ She originally left this meeting pleased, alleging that the head of the Information Control Division in Bavaria had been enthusiastic about the publication, and granted her paper for 5,000 copies along with a promise of more to come. Her magazine, however, never made it to print. Von Paul Schmidt claimed that once she revealed her plans to publish a sermon from Cardinal Faulhaber and a treatise by St. Augustine, the Information Control Division revoked the paper allowance and instructed her to use the paper already allocated to the Catholic hierarchy.

The interaction as recalled by an officer of the Information Control Division, however, tells another story. This officer reported that Von Schmidt-Pauli was never promised any paper. Rather, he had encouraged her to apply for the paper through a special “emergency reserve,” putting her in a pool with seventy other hopeful publishers and editors. As such, the Information Control Division officer had suggested that Von Schmidt-Pauli attempt to receive paper from the Catholic Church itself, which had been granted a license and allocated paper “en mass.” After the meeting, the Information Control Division officer handling Schmidt-Pauli’s case had felt the need to file a report about the interaction. The report stated that Von Schmidt-Pauli had responded indignantly to his suggestions, and “repeated several times that she was being persecuted” because she was not receiving a license and access to the paper immediately. The officer, however, explained that licensing a magazine was a lengthy process and often took over three months.¹⁸⁹ In other words,

¹⁸⁸ Report, “Catholic Church: Religious Press in the American Zone,” February 24, 1947, Records of U.S. Occupation Headquarters, World War II, Office of the Military Government for Germany, (U.S), Record Group 260, NARA II, box 17, folder 8, 1.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid, 2-3.

her Catholic background and the Catholic nature of her publication did not preclude her and those working under her from the same vetting process as other journalists and publishers.

When Bishop Muench heard about this exchange, he was incensed. In his capacity as the liaison between the American military government and the Catholic community, he filed a fiery report with the Information Control Division concerning the “unfair allocation of paper for the religious press – newspapers, books pamphlets, etc.” In it, Muench accused the occupation’s press division of “anti-religious attitudes,” and equated the division’s actions to that of the Nazis who had also “suppressed the religious press, and used as argument shortage of paper.”¹⁹⁰ He accused the military government of favoring the secular press, and in failing to censure press that “caricatures religion.”¹⁹¹ In another statement, Muench even went as far as to state: “If it was made unlawful to vilify democracy and Jews, why should it not be declared unlawful also by MG to vilify religion and Catholics.”¹⁹² Such anti-religious tendencies, Muench claimed, mistreated a branch of the German press that had stood against the Nazi state, and bred resentment in “religious circles who were outspoken against Nazism.”¹⁹³ The church, Muench argued further, could serve the occupation as a double-bladed sword – not only could it stave off the communist threat, but could drive out any lingering Nazi sentiments. Such an ally would be lost if the military government continued their allegedly unfair treatment of the Catholic press. Muench ended his complaint with a series of demands, insisting that paper from the “neutral press” be reallocated to Catholic publication, and a “thorough investigation of the Munich Press Division be made before

¹⁹⁰ Ibid, 2.

¹⁹¹ Ibid, 6.

¹⁹² Report, “A Brief Survey of the Church in Germany,” Aloisius Muench, 1949, Records of U.S. Occupation Headquarters, World War II, Office of the Military Government for Germany, (U.S), Record Group 260, NARA II, box 170, folder 62.

¹⁹³ Report, “Catholic Church: Religious Press in the American Zone,” February 24, 1947.

more damage is done to our program of furthering democracy in Germany.”¹⁹⁴ These demands, as will be explained further down, were not taken seriously by the Information Control Division.

Muench was not the only American Catholic to protest American occupation policies regarding the Catholic press. The National Catholic News Service ran an article in November 1946 titled “Brass Hats Stops Catholic Books.” Echoing many of the claims in Muench’s complaint, the article accused the Publications Control Division of refusing to supply paper to a Catholic publisher because they were “too religious, too Catholic,” and of denying a license to another publisher who wanted to print a religious publication.¹⁹⁵ This suppression, furthermore, happened “at a time when every effort is being made to restore Christian thinking and traditions in a country so long exposed to the influence of Nazi paganism.”¹⁹⁶ The article, to the dismay of the American occupation forces, had been picked up and published by various Catholic newspapers around the United States.¹⁹⁷ With the proliferation of this article, American Catholic newspapers were lobbying on behalf of their German counterparts, arguing that Catholic papers were an important part of rebuilding German society after the calamity of National Socialism.

This illustrates that almost immediately after the end of hostilities, many American Catholics saw their counterparts in Germany as separate from the Nazis against which Americans had fought. Rather than former Nazis in need of rehabilitation, German Catholics were instrumental partners in the reeducation of German society. This response by American Catholics towards the supposed suppression of the German Catholic press suggests an implicit agreement with the official stance of the German Catholic church on Catholic guilt for Nazi crimes. As discussed in the last chapter, German Catholic leaders in the immediate postwar period were vocal

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ Max Jordan, “Brass Hats Stop Catholic Books,” *National Catholic News Service*, November 18, 1946.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Memorandum, “Catholic Publications,” November 5, 1946.

about the innocence of German Catholics in both the rise of the Nazi party and of Nazi atrocities. American Catholic leaders, it seems, were more than willing to lend their voices to this narrative.

In their responses to Catholic complaints, the Information Control Division cast doubt on the narrative that the Catholic Church, and Catholic publishing, had served as a strong bulwark against Nazism. The Information Control Division pointed out that when the Nazi party began restricting the most democratic and liberal aspects of the press, it targeted mostly non-religious newspapers in Bavaria. Many diocesan and Catholic newspapers, however, remained active until 1941, when the Nazis banned all press but their own. Indeed, in the eyes of the Information Control Division, “the party and religious presses of Bavaria proved no bulwark for human rights, individual freedoms, and democracy.”¹⁹⁸ The Information Control Division even went as far as to question the Catholic community as a whole stating: “It is true that Bavaria has many strong traditions, and it is also true that National Socialism developed and expanded in these traditions to such an extent that Munich earned the title ‘Hauptstadt der Bewegung’ (capital of the movement).”¹⁹⁹ These remarks sheds light on how the American occupation officials evaluated the Catholic community’s relationship to National Socialism at that time, as the Information Control Division did not acknowledge Catholicism as an unquestionable marker of resistance against the Nazi regime.²⁰⁰ This stance clearly differed from that of the Catholic hierarchy, which had already proclaimed the innocence of the majority of the German Catholic population.

The Information Control Division further added that “the extent of the paper shortage in Bavaria may not be fully appreciated.”²⁰¹ Catholic publishers who claimed that they were unfairly waiting for their licenses were in fact queued with “more than 200 ... politically acceptable

¹⁹⁸ Report, “Catholic Church: Religious Press in the American Zone,” February 24, 1947.

¹⁹⁹ Indeed, not all Catholic publications had a record of resistance during the Nazi regime. For example, the editor at *Germania*, a popular German Catholic publication, wanted to illustrate “that a good Catholic can, at the same time, be a good Nazi.” Gienow-Hecht, *Transmission Impossible*, 39.

²⁰¹ Memorandum, “Catholic Publications,” November 5, 1946.

individuals who cannot be licensed in view of the extremely critical paper shortage in Bavaria.”²⁰² One Catholic individual, the Information Control Division reported, “was anxious to publish prayer books, hymnals, and a book of biographies of Bavarian Saints.” All the while, the Information Control Division was struggling to provide the necessary paper to print medical books and magazines, which were “so essential to help prevent the spread of epidemics and disease.” An increasingly exasperated Publication Division explained that in a time when paper was scarce and licenses difficult to obtain, providing a license and paper to publish biographies of saints was downright ridiculous. Nevertheless, the Catholic community received more than its fair share of resources. The Catholic Church itself had a license to publish whatever material it saw fit. Additionally, four other “world famous Catholic publishing firms” in Bavaria also had licenses. These licenses were coupled with generous paper allowances, as 23% of all paper used in Bavaria had gone to specifically religious publications.²⁰³

These interactions illustrate the complex dynamics between the American occupation forces and the American and German Catholic community. Catholics – both in the United States and Germany – were vocal about the Catholic community’s alleged resistance to Nazism. This allegation was wielded as a tool to elevate the position of the church in postwar Germany, asserting that the church was an ally of the occupation and thus exempt from denazification measures. The occupation officials, for their part, were unconvinced by the Catholic community’s claims of resistance. Nevertheless, the American administration believed they could depend on Catholics to be firmly anti-communist, something that was becoming increasingly important as the occupation wore on. As will be discussed in the next chapter, this was not something they trusted about other demographics, such as social democrats. As such, they afforded the Catholic press extraordinary

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Report, “Catholic Church: Religious Press in the American Zone,” February 24, 1947.

encouragements.²⁰⁴ Once the American occupation forces shifted their focus from denazification to strengthening Western Germany, American officials became much less critical of the Catholic stance on German Catholic record during the war.

The postwar condition of Germany made rebuilding the press – both secular and religious – a hard task. This placed strain on the budding relationship between the American occupation and Catholic community. These tensions illustrate that cooperation between the Catholic community and American occupation forces was not a given. These disagreements, however, promoted cooperation among American and German Catholics. The paper shortage and denazification measures in the first turmoil-filled years after 1945 acted as a crucible that brought together American and German journalists, publishers, and editors. Protesting military policy concerning paper and publishing restrictions made German and American Catholics comrades against a common antagonist.

3.2 ENDING ISOLATION

In the eyes of many German and American Catholics, fostering an understanding between the two respective communities was crucial to the foundation of a Western Catholic community. Catholic print media could offer an important way to connect these populations, if only information could be consistently and easily exchanged across national boundaries. Catholic press in Germany and the United States needed to establish the infrastructure and networks necessary for steady transatlantic communication – not an easy task, given the conditions of postwar Germany. Under

²⁰⁴ Arguments over paper allotments and publishing numbers was not isolated to the Catholic Press. The *Neue Zeitung*, a newspaper published under the authority off OMGUS had disagreements with the Information Control Division over publishing numbers and paper allotment. Gienow-Hecht, *Transmission Impossible*, 25.

the occupation, German and American publishers worked to open channels of communication between Germany and the United States, and inform their readers about Catholic life on the other side of the Atlantic. American Catholic news agencies distributed international Catholic news to German Catholic press agencies, which lacked the means to gather the news themselves. German Catholics welcomed this assistance, and worked to organize a central news agency which could aid in the smooth transmission of information not only within Germany, but across national borders. These actions paved the way for a more meaningful dialogue among Germans and Americans.

Establishing such a dialogue had proven difficult to foster in the past. Prior efforts, as exemplified by the American National Catholic News Service's attempts to set up a relationship with German press agencies in the first half of the 20th century, had fallen flat. The National Catholic Welfare Conference had established the National Catholic News Service in 1920 as a news agency meant to service Catholic newspapers and magazines throughout the United States. In 1932, Frank Hall, who served as the chief editor from 1932 until 1963, attempted to raise subscription rates by expanding into Europe, and petitioned German news agencies to subscribe. To his dismay, these efforts were unsuccessful, as German publishers were simply uninterested in the service.²⁰⁵ What was more, merely getting news about the happenings in Germany proved difficult in the first half of the 20th century. While the NCWC had a string of correspondents throughout Europe, they had difficulty securing a reliable and suitable German correspondent. As a result, the National Catholic News Service had noticeably less information on Catholic happenings in Germany than in other European countries.²⁰⁶ In short, prior to the Second World

²⁰⁵ Letter, Max Jordan to Frank Hall. August 8th, 1930, Catholic Press Association, Catholic News Service Records, ACUA, Box 10/18 folder 24.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

War, Catholic news agencies in the United States and Germany had very little in the way of systematic exchange of information.

However, after the war, members of the German Catholic press were eager to build more international contacts. A portion of the 1948 Mainz *Katholikentag*'s workshop on international cooperation, discussed in the last chapter for its novelty in its focus on international Catholic relations, discussed the need to establish international connections between publishers, journalists and writers. In this portion, three top editors gave speeches in which they highlighted the importance of international Catholic unity:

Christians stand together in a front of Christian conscience, invoked by Pope Pius XII, 'formed by those sentiments, resolutions and deeds in which the Catholic forces maintain their independence from the political sides and groups of forces.' To bring about and strengthen this front of the Christian conscience is the intrinsic significance of the contact among Christians of the different countries.²⁰⁷

Developing international Catholic contacts could foster a strong community that would remain united and resolute in the face of the emerging political conflict on the world stage. The participants of the workshop encouraged the development of newspapers that would bring together writers from different countries, and stressed the importance of covering international news. Doing this, they argued, would do much to strengthen this international community of Catholics.

While these calls for members of Catholic print media to help foster a sense of Christian solidarity were broad and ideological, there was also a more practical reason why German Catholic publishers wanted to connect with international individuals in the immediate years after the war. A letter by German Catholic publicist Klaus Dohrn to the popular American Catholic magazine, *The Commonweal*, sheds light on the more utilitarian motivations. In his letter, written in the spring

²⁰⁷ "Der Literarische Kontakt mit dem Ausland," in *Der Christ in der Not der Zeit*, 223.

of 1946, Dorn emphasized the innocence of German Catholics in Nazi atrocities, and prompted the Americans to publicize moments of Catholic resistance:

It is not only a question of historical justice and Catholic solidarity to point at such examples of Catholic resistance, but it is of the greatest importance to the actual reconstruction of Germany and the share German Catholics have to be assured in it. There is no doubt that if American Catholics knew more of such instances it would be easier to oppose attempts to impair the position of Catholics in the fields of government, education, and publication on the ground that they were all suspected of 'collaborationism' or that their record was worse than that of any group in Germany, which is not true.²⁰⁸

Germans Catholics, Dohrn asserted, had been resisters of the Nazi regime, not perpetrators. Accusations of collaboration were not only untrue, but hindered the ability of Catholics to assume positions of leadership in the newly forming West German state. American Catholics, he continued, needed to reach out to their German counterparts, for "if these persons are not in contact with their friends abroad, if they cannot make known what they suffered and what they plan and think, how can one expect them to do all they could for the reconstruction of their country?"²⁰⁹

This letter demonstrates that, in part, German Catholics had something to gain from establishing American contacts apart from strengthening a Christian front. Securing the support of American Catholics would lend credence to German Catholic claims of resistance against the Nazi regime. American Catholics, in short, could exculpate their German counterparts by publicizing stories of Catholic resistance. Doing so would paint a picture of a German Catholic community that had stood resolute against the Nazi State. While instances of Catholic resistance indeed existed, these instances could hardly be extrapolated to characterize the actions of the Catholic population in its entirety.²¹⁰ Nevertheless, in his letter, Dohrn emphasized the resistance of German Catholics, and avoided any discussion of collaboration. The support of Catholic Americans would

²⁰⁸ Klaus Dohrn, "Contact with Germany," *The Commonweal*, March 6, 1946.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

²¹⁰ Phayer, *Holocaust*, 5-20.

not only legitimize the narrative of innocence, but hopefully provide German Catholics with an ally in disagreements that emerged between Catholic leaders and the American occupation. As discussed in the last section, Catholic Americans were indeed willing to accept Dahl's narrative and petition the American occupation forces on behalf of their German counterparts.

Regardless of the motivation behind fostering international connections, the task was not an easy one, considering both the conditions in postwar Germany and its status as an occupied nation. One Catholic publisher from Munich, Alfred Schwingenstein, elaborated on these difficulties during the 1948 Catholic Conference in Mainz:

During the Second World War, almost all Catholic news services in Europe were destroyed. Thus, the Catholic press sank automatically into insignificance ... They were cut off from the world and could report only occasionally and under strict censorship on the universal Church. Therefore, immediately after the end of the war, all threads had to be rebuilt and, in all countries, new foundations for communication had to be established. The difficulties in Germany were greater than elsewhere, because even after the war Germany was only slowly and laboriously freed from its isolation, and the construction of a new press took the first two to three years. I remind our foreign guests that to this day telephone traffic to foreign countries is still largely impossible, still no traffic of print material with Austria is allowed, and the direct route to France was only opened a few weeks ago. The isolation surrounding Germany today is - partly because of the currency difficulties - sometimes so impenetrable that it is extremely inhibiting for a normal exchange of information.²¹¹

Thus while members of the German press may have wanted to form international contacts and report on international news, there were significant barriers to overcome. Under the regulations of the military occupation, Germans felt cut off from the rest of the world. Members of the Catholic media had difficulty in gathering news within Germany, let alone report on happenings outside of the German border.

Despite the physical and practical difficulties to developing a communication network, the

²¹¹ "Der Literarische Kontakt mit dem Ausland: Bericht von Alfred Schwingenstein," in *Der Christ in der Not der Zeit*, 223.

ideological justifications of doing so provided a strong incentive to overcome the difficulties. One of the institutions that was instrumental in helping German editors and publishers overcome this isolation was the National Catholic Welfare Conference. Earlier in 1948, the editor of the National Catholic News Service, Frank Hall, had sent a letter to the Bishop of Osnabruck, Bishop Berning, who served as the head bishop for Catholic media. Hall wrote that that the National Catholic Welfare Conference had learned of the difficulty Germans had of receiving news of “the great activities of their fellow Catholics throughout the world.” This difficulty, Hall lamented, created a “hunger for information that is in one sense more poignant than physical hunger, and that this conduces to a feeling of isolation particularly grave for peoples otherwise troubled by so many things.” Hall asked for the blessing of the German bishops to provide the German Catholic community with “fraternal aid” to illustrate that “they are not alone but have a solidarity with all the faithful through the world.”²¹² This aid entailed sending copies of the National Catholic News Service to German Catholic publishers. The service would be financed by the American bishops, and provided free of charge to the German publishers.²¹³

This exchange led to the National Catholic News Service sending their publication to over 20 different German Catholic editors. Different to his previous efforts to expand into the European market, Hall’s desire was not motivated by financial gain. In December 1945, a journalist working the National Catholic News Conference in Germany wrote Frank Hall about servicing Europe and stated bluntly: “There are no riches to be gathered if the NCWC News Service were distributed in Europe.” Nevertheless, they should still service European papers, as “an international exchange

²¹² Letter, Bishop Michael Ready to Bishop Hermann Berning, May 25, 1948, Catholic Press Association, Catholic News Service Records, ACUA, box 10/18, folder Germany 1948-1952. This letter was written by Frank Hall, but as a matter of protocol was sent via the American Bishop Michael Ready to the German Bishop Hermann Berning.

²¹³ Ibid.

which would mean a world-wide flow of Catholic news from which the Church as a whole would benefit.”²¹⁴ In his response, Hall heartily agreed.

The National Catholic News Service was enthusiastically received by German editors. In 1949 when an editor from the German diocesan paper the *Petrusblatt* conducted a study trip in the United States, he spent extended time at the headquarters of the National Catholic News Service. In a later correspondence with Frank Hall, Raymund Greve elaborated on the importance of the National Catholic News Service:

I consider your news organization an excellent organization. By means of its far-flung and (as I have had occasion to convince myself) splendidly organized corps of correspondents, it furnishes information on events in the Catholic World quickly, thoroughly, and, above all, reliably and objectively...Despite the long distance, your News Service reaches me in Berlin within three or four days after its issuance. Because of the miserable German postal conditions, I have received information on some Germany Catholic news events more quickly through your news Service than through our German religious news organizations ... In our editorial work, which has been carried on in Berlin under the most difficult circumstances, N.C.W.C. News Service offers a really valuable help. It is welcome not only for its transmission of news, but equally for its manner of reporting on important events, for its interviews with leading personalities, and for its background information on special occasion.²¹⁵

Greve found the National Catholic News Service so invaluable, that when Hall asked Greve if the *Petrusblatt* would be able to begin paying for the service, Greve stated: “if it were a matter of having to give up the NC service or the two German services for which I now pay, I would rather give up the German services. And I'm not saying this merely out of politeness”²¹⁶ The National Catholic News Service was integral in the *Petrusblatt*'s ability to provide its readers with news outside the borders of Germany.

²¹⁴ Letter, Max Jordan to Frank Hall, December 4, 1945, Catholic Press Association, Catholic News Service Records, ACUA, box 10/18, folder Germany, Correspondence.

²¹⁵ Letter, Raymund Greve to Frank Hall, February 28, 1949, Catholic Press Association, Catholic News Service Records, ACUA, box 10/18, folder German Visitors, 1949.

²¹⁶ Memorandum, “Luncheon Conversation Greve,” Frank Hall, Catholic Press Association, Catholic News Service Records, ACUA, box 10/10, folder German Visitors.

The value of the National Catholic News Service was not only limited to the *Petrusblatt*. The editor of the Church newspapers in Aachen wrote to Frank Hall that the National Catholic News Service “gives us incomparable survey of the news of Catholic life all over the world and has helped us in a decisive way to overcome the lack of information on the Catholic brethren of other Countries.” Furthermore, the Aachen church newspaper also sent the information to other German Catholic associations, “which is equally glad to have these informations [sic].”²¹⁷ The editor of another Catholic publication, *Kirchlicher Nachrischtendienst* wrote to Hall in August of 1948 expressing his gratitude for the editions of the National Catholic News Service.²¹⁸ In 1949, one of the National Catholic News Service’s European correspondents informed Frank Hall: “it seems that slowly we begin to build up a reputation in this territory which augurs well for the future.”²¹⁹

The supply of the National Catholic News Service to German publications was an important start in initiating transatlantic news exchange. Nevertheless, it was a one-way exchange in which German editors received American news without sending any news back. Many German Catholics in publishing wanted to develop their own centralized news agency, which could service not only German Catholic news agencies, but partners abroad. The creation of such a news agency, similar to the National Catholic News Service, would help build international connection among Catholics, and prevent the communities from falling back into pre-war isolationist patterns.

One of the earliest attempts to create such an agency was by Alfred Schwingenstein, a publisher out of Munich who had been active in Catholic youth publications before the war. Guided

²¹⁷ Letter, Kirchenblatt für Bistum Aachen to Frank Hall, October 30, 1950, Catholic Press Association, Catholic News Service Records, ACUA, box 10/18, folder: Germany 1946-1952.

²¹⁸ Letter, Peuler to Frank Hall, August 15, 1948, Catholic Press Association, Catholic News Service Records, ACUA, box 10/18, folder: Germany 1946-1952.

²¹⁹ Letter, Max Jordan to Frank Hall, Jan 11, 1949 NCWC, Catholic Press Association, Catholic News Service Records, ACUA, box 10/18, folder Germany 1946-1952.

by his belief that in the postwar world “contact with all Catholic nations is of crucial importance,” he established a newspaper which focused on news from Catholic and Christian life around the world, which included “notifications of the position of the Church overall and of the activities of Christian religious communities in the world’s public life.”²²⁰ His newspaper, *Der Überblick*, was meant to service the editors of newspapers and magazines, as well as radio broadcasters. His publication proved to be in demand, as *Der Überblick* serviced 83 newspapers across Germany by 1947.²²¹ His news agency, the Christliche Nachrichtendienst, was at first closely tied with the National Catholic News Service, as they had “agreed to cooperate through the personal union of correspondents of the NCWC and the CND in the most important cities.”²²² In a speech at the Mainz Katholikentag, Schwingenstein singled out the National Catholic News Service for its help and assistance in providing German Catholic press agencies with news coverage from foreign countries.²²³

Thus with the aid of the National Catholic News Service, *Der Überblick* was able to seamlessly weave together news from around the world. The pieces were factual in nature and had very little in the way of editorials or opinion pieces. It reported on cultural news from both the Catholic and Protestant churches, including descriptions of church festivals, copies of important pastorals and sermons, details about various charitable activities of Catholics in Germany and abroad. One of its early editions in January of 1947 included, among other things, a dispatch about the Polish parliament, a note on the German Protestant Bishop Dibelius’s trip to London, and an

²²⁰ “Der Literarische Kontakt mit dem Ausland: Bericht von Alfred Schwingenstein,” in *Der Christ in der Not der Zeit*, 223.

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Letter, Schwingenstein to Militar Regierung, May 24, 1946, Nachlass 3, Privatarchiv Schwingenstein, Bayerisches Wirtschaftsarchiv (hereafter cited as BWA).

²²³ “Der Literarische Kontakt mit dem Ausland: Bericht von Alfred Schwingenstein,” in *Der Christ in der Not der Zeit*, 223.

article on the proceedings of the Annual American Bishops' Conference.²²⁴ With the geographically broad coverage provide in *Der Überblick*, Schwingenstein sought to develop a service that could provide Germans with information about Christian and Catholic activities from around the world.²²⁵ He hoped that his newspaper would create a worldlier German Catholic community, albeit one that was focused on Christianity.

Schwingenstein's relationship with the American occupation forces reveals that not all Catholic publishers had a contentious relationship with the occupation officials. The publications of *Der Überblick* garnered the praise of the Information Control Division in January of 1947, which congratulated it for the "thoroughness, impartiality, and tolerance prevailing through every issue of *Der Überblick*."²²⁶ This praise was also backed by the material support; When Schwingenstein requested a paper allotment increase from 5,000 to 10,000 copies, the Information Control Division happily approved.²²⁷ In an interview about his experience with the American military forces, Schwingenstein reflected positively about his interactions, stating that he was given almost a "blank check," to do as he pleased, and that overall the Americans were "certainly very positive."²²⁸ This suggests that the Information Control Division was eager to support Catholic publications if the publication aided in a goal of the occupation. In the case of Schwingenstein's publication, it connected various Catholic and Christian communities.

The CND would be short-lived, however, as in 1952, the German Catholic Church established an official central news agency– the Katholische Nachrichten-Agentur (KNA), which still exists today. This agency subsumed Schwingenstein's CND, and Schwingenstein became

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Letter, Schwingenstein to Publications Control Division, January 3, 1946, Nachlass 3, Privatarchiv Schwingenstein, BWA.

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Interview, "Interview mit D.R. Schwingenstein," March 28, 1997, Nachlass 3, Privatarchiv Schwingenstein, BWA.

head of the Munich branch of the KNA. The KNA would serve as the partner to the NCWC, and the partnership would allow for reliable, consistent, and comprehensive flow of information between the two countries. The two agencies would become closely linked. The chief editor of the KNA, Karl Bringmann, fostered close ties with the National Catholic News Service. The National Catholic News Service's chief correspondent in Europe wrote to Frank Hall upon the set-up of the KNA:

He [Bringmann] is anxious to secure the service of a regular correspondent in the USA ... Personally I am anxious that we make a deal with Bringmann whereby we would continue to 'trade.' To me it is essential to have permanent access to this important news source, and KNA will be equally anxious to use our stuff.²²⁹

The KNA and NC News Service traded services, and Bringmann and Hall developed a working relationship. In 1955, Bringmann came to the States to tour the NC News Service, and in 1955 Bringmann invited Frank Hall to a workshop in West Berlin designed to increase the European contacts of the KNA.²³⁰

Starting in the late 1940s and spanning into the early 1950s, individuals involved in the German and American Catholic Press worked to increase the transmission of information among Germany, western European countries and the United States. Both German and American members of the Catholic press understood that isolated national populations would be of little use to building an international Catholic community. The National Catholic News Service provided the necessary support for German Catholic journalists and press agencies to cover international news. German Catholics worked to bring international Catholic news to their readers, eventually creating a central news agency that could both efficiently service German newspapers and

²²⁹ Letter, Jordan to Hall, March 15, 1952, Catholic Press Association, Catholic News Service Records, ACUA, box 10/18, folder Germany 1946-1952.

²³⁰ "Arbeitstagung, Katholische Nachrichten-Agentur in Berlin vom 12 bis 15 März 1955," Generalia II, HAEK, CR 22.12.1.

exchange with foreign news services. These efforts helped to break the national barriers, and provided the necessary avenues for German and American Catholics to get to know one another.

3.3 THE CHANGING NATURE OF GERMAN CATHOLIC PRINT MEDIA

Alongside the increased attention to international news, the immediate postwar years saw an increased coverage of all things American in German Catholic newspapers. The increased flow of information from the United States was compounded by several study trips made by German Catholic editors and journalists. Brimming with knowledge about American Catholic life, German Catholic journalists and editors relayed this information to their readers. These personal transatlantic interactions, coupled with the growing transatlantic networks, also ushered in tangible American influence. German Catholic papers not only began providing more stories about Catholic life in the United States, but adopted elements and designs they had seen in American papers. Prompted by their American counterparts, they moved away from covering solely religious topics and began adopting new segments like film reviews and cartoons. The newspapers also implemented a system of commercialized advertising to help fund their papers.

American occupation officials were eager to help German Catholic Press agencies connect with their German counterparts. The occupation dedicated slots in their exchange program for German editors to study religious newspapers in the United States. As a result, five Germans who worked for major German Catholic periodicals traveled to the United States to study American religious press agencies. As with all exchange projects concerning Catholics, the National Catholic Welfare Conference served as the trip's main organizer. The National Catholic Welfare Conference planned the trips around two main themes: religious reporting on a national level, and

encouraging religious print media to cover “present day problems,” rather than narrow religious topics. The trips all began with a lengthy stay in Washington D.C. to study the National Catholic News Service. The participants then toured the country and consulted with the editors of both national newspapers, and local publications. The American Catholic participants provided their expertise of the production, circulation, and financing of their periodicals.²³¹

Upon their return, the experts shared their knowledge and experiences. Take, for example, the two-page spread written by one of the exchange experts, Wilhelm Sandfuchs. At the time of the trip, Sandfuchs worked a journalist for a variety of Catholic publications throughout Bavaria. Upon returning, however, he branched out from print media, and in 1950 became the Chief of Religious Programs for the Southwest German Radio Network. He still contributed as a freelance journalist, however, and published articles throughout the 1950s. In 1950, he published a two-page spread titled “The Catholic Press in the USA” in *Paulinus*, the weekly Catholic newspaper for the bishopric of Trier.²³²

These trips provided these editors firsthand knowledge not only of the inner workings of American Catholic press agencies, but of American lifestyles and culture more generally. Starting in the late 1940s, coverage of Catholic life in the United States was an obvious addition to postwar Catholic papers. These articles tended to be factual, and stressed the vitality of Catholic life in the United States. In June 1951, the *Petrusblatt* published a brief article about the number of Catholics in the United States, reporting that there were around 30 million Catholics in the United States, with important cities like New York and Boston boasting large Catholic populations. Catholics, furthermore, had developed an impressive school system with 239 colleges, 21,500 high schools,

²³¹ Report, “Interdivisional Study Exchanges,” 1947, Records of U.S. Occupation Headquarters, World War II, Office of the Military Government for Germany, (U.S), Record Group 260, NARA II, box 944, folder 88.

²³² Wilhelm Sandfuchs, “Die katholische Presse in den USA,” *Paulinus*, May 15, 1955.

and 8,289 elementary schools.²³³ This article was followed two weeks later with a larger article titled “Is America becoming a Catholic Land,” which detailed a rise in conversions to Catholicism in America.²³⁴ This high conversion rate was not a coincidence, but a result of a strong Catholic life: “When one looks for the reasons for this strong conversion movement, one realizes that the Catholic organization is well organized and highly effective. The well-developed news system of American Catholicism plays an important role, capturing the widest circles and providing information about Catholic doctrine.”²³⁵ Thus Catholic life was not only alive and well in the United States, but growing and thriving.

Other articles emphasized the strong influence that Catholics had in all spheres of life. A 1955 July edition of *Echo der Zeit* ran a full page spread on Catholic life in America titled: “America Sheds its Problems.” The article stated that while Germans were aware of America’s political and economic importance on the world stage, they did not know enough about the spiritual life of the country. To begin to correct this, *Echo der Zeit* interviewed three visiting American Catholic laymen. After a lengthy paragraph elaborating on the United State’s numerous Catholic schools, colleges, and universities, the article explained:

What the numbers cannot express is the influence of Catholics in American life and government ... The influence of the Catholic people is first and foremost not on an organizational basis, but on the personality of the clergy as well as on the active lay movement. The 29 archbishops, 166 bishops and 45,000 priests in the United States can rely on a very active lay movement to raise its warning and admonishing voice wherever necessary. While the Catholic population in the United States is not concentrated in one specific geographical areas, but rather live scattered across all provinces, they are nevertheless a firm community that, with its 32 million believers, represents a power of unimaginable importance.²³⁶

²³³ “Katholiken in USA” *Petrusblatt*, February 12, 1951.

²³⁴ “Wird Amerika ein katholisches Land?” March 4, *Petrusblatt*, 1951.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*

²³⁶ “Amerika gibt Probleme auf,” *Echo der Zeit*, July 3, 1955.

This article was doing more than merely relaying facts about American society. It touched upon important differences between German and American Catholic life. The basis of Germany's strong Catholic life was its vibrant associations and organizations. While the United States did not have a similar infrastructure of Catholic organizations, the article assured the reader that American society still boasted an active and faithful laity. Catholic society in Germany was also regionally based, and the Church wielded increased influence in those regions with a majority Catholic population. While the United States did not have a similar geographic density, the article informed the reader that the Catholic population was still a united community that held power over society at large. This article made the structure and nature of American Catholic society more familiar to the German reader. Explaining the variances in the nature between Catholic life in the United States and Germany revealed them as merely difference rather than an deficiency in American Catholic life.

In fact, this increased coverage of the Catholic community in the United States had begun as early as 1950, as it had prompted a commentary in the late fall of that year in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. The newspaper printed a series of three articles on American Catholics, written by a French journalist who had spent a few months in the United States. One of the articles, entitled "Catholics are not Second-rate Citizens Anymore," opened with the following:

It is not easy for Europeans to get a clear idea of the Catholic Church in America. They face two contradictory groups: newspapers and magazines publish enthusiastic articles full of numbers and statistics, so one wonders if the United States is well on its way to becoming the strongest and truest bastion of Christendom, if it isn't already. On the other hand, one finds no less serious essays and books on American life, American culture, which have nothing on the Catholic Church but a few lines over a few fleeting pages.²³⁷

²³⁷ Georges Escoulin, "Der Katholizismus in den Vereinigte Staaten: Die Katholiken sind keine Bürger zweiten Ranges mehr," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, November 1, 1950.

Weighing in on the discussion, the article then gave a brief history of the growth of the Catholic community in the United States. America, the journalist explained, was originally a country of “purely Protestant ground,” and inhospitable to Catholics. Nevertheless, Catholics were able to assimilate into American society, and eventually gain acceptance by the majority. The article ended with the evaluation: “If they represent a minority – twenty-five million to a total population of one hundred and fifty million – it is a powerful, secure, influential and respected minority.”²³⁸ This assimilation, however, did not come without a cost, as American Catholics had to “adopt American habits, customs, and beliefs without first testing them in light of their faith.” While this article did not specify what those American habits, customs, and beliefs were, the tone suggests that these traits were not necessarily compatible with their Catholic faith. This illustrates the anxiety that many Germans still felt towards American culture in general. While willing to recognize the strength and vitality of Catholic life in America, many Germans remained wary of how the increasing cultural presence of the United States might alter their society and culture.

These articles, which examined Catholic life in the United States, evaluated the nature of American society, and Catholicisms’ place within it. They presented an American society in which the Christian elements were vibrant and strong. Stressing the Catholic influence on all elements of society – in Catholic children’s education, in politics, in the press – these articles made clear that American culture was not the product of exclusively secular forces. This United States contradicted the image that existed as the secular foil to the Christian and devout Abendland, discussed in the last chapter. This America was not dangerous, but contained a strong American Catholic community. The America of Hollywood and consumerism could indeed coexist with a vibrant religious life.

²³⁸ Ibid.

German Catholic publications, however, experienced a greater transformation than publishing articles on American Catholic life. Many journalists and editors who studied the Catholic press in the United States adopted elements they saw when visiting. One such editor who completed a three-month study tour on the American Catholic press, Wilhelm Sandfuchs, exclaimed that the content of the newspapers was more interesting than the technical equipment of American Catholic Press agencies. He marveled at the way in which American Catholic papers covered everyday life: “There are no spheres of daily life that are not represented in these papers. We find film and radio, television and sport discussed as much as the reports from the church events in the parish, diocese and the world.” Perusing German Catholic newspapers collections from the 1920s and early 1930s reveals that such topics were indeed in stark contrast with the character of prewar German Catholic print media, which tended to contain solely religious content. The pages of prewar Catholic papers are filled with discussions of catechisms, papal decrees, and bishop’s addresses.

Apart from the content of the articles, entertainment elements within the pages of American Catholic periodicals also caught the attention of the German editors. When two editors of the Berlin Catholic newspaper, the *Petrusblatt*, visited the United States, they noted the use of pictures and cartoons in their return report. In particular, the Catechal Guild in St. Paul Minnesota had left a strong impression, as it produced religious brochures using a comic book format. The editors marveled at the way the Catechal Guild handled complex Catholic catechisms through a light and fun medium. The use of cartoons, illustrations and pictures to capture the attention of the audience was quite new to German Catholic publications. Before the war, many of the papers were still printed in old German script, and pictures and illustrations were rare, save for religious imagery. Wanting to replicate this new style of religious education, the editors of the *Petrusblatt*

implemented new features upon their return to Germany. The layout changes that occurred after 1949 and incorporate exactly the newspaper elements that Sandfuchs and Greve had marveled at.

The 1949 Christmas edition, the *Petrusblatt* tested out a new instalment in their publication- a children's supplement. This edition would have occurred a few months after Raymund Greve's trip to the United States. The section was geared towards children, and opened with: "Yes, you have read it right. You are recognized today. That surprises you, does it not?" The article, signed by "Children's Pastor," addresses the children directly, telling them that the *Petrusblatt* had dedicated a section just for them. The article also encouraged the young readers to contact the newspaper if they liked the section.²³⁹ The page contained a game which instructed children to label a picture of the Holy Lands with the names of the sea, river, and important cities. The section even contained a comic strip with messages about greed. The first comic was accompanied by a small rhyme which reminded children to not be greedy and share their Christmas table, because if they did not, they would surely get a stomachache from all the sweets, fruits, and nuts. This children's supplement had a resounding positive reaction, because in the January 22, 1950 edition the *Petrusblatt* declared that due to popular demand, the children's supplement would be included every four weeks. This turned into an expanded monthly segment called "Our Corner."

The implementation of "Our Corner" led to greater changes, as film review sections, numerous and prominent advertisements, and cartoons began to grace the pages of the *Petrusblatt*. The layout began incorporating more illustrations, and photographs accompanied the articles. More popular forms of entertainment such as cartoons were included, and film reviews and radio schedules gained page space. In a September edition of 1949, the *Petrusblatt* included a small section on film and theater reviews, which provided brief reviews of a German play and French

²³⁹ "Liebe Kinder," *Petrusblatt*, December, 25, 1949.

film.²⁴⁰ In January of the next year, a film review section became a permanent column, and grew in size and scope throughout the year.²⁴¹ In the beginning, the films were mostly European films – mainly German, French, and Italian. Slowly, more and more American titles were added, including announcements for popular American films such as Disney’s Cinderella and popular Westerns.

Perhaps the most glaring change, however, was the addition of advertisements. Large, ostentatious advertisements were non-existent in religious magazines and newspapers before the war. At the most, a paper might have publicized a new book from a Catholic publishing house, or run an advertisement for their own paper. After 1949, however, papers began to boast bold and catchy advertisements for clothing stores, beauty products, and food brands. Under the auspices of the exchange program, American Catholic publishing houses urged their German counterparts to increase advertising, and adopt a rigorous strategy for getting businesses to buy ad space within their pages.

An exchange trip completed in the Spring of 1949 by an American Catholic publisher, Richard Reid, exemplifies this most clearly. Upon writing the report on his study trip, Reid informed the occupation that one of the largest problems of the German Catholic press was the lack advertisements in German Catholic publications. The Catholic press in Germany was still struggling financially, despite having a wide circulation. Reid believed the solution to this struggle was an increase in advertising within the pages of Catholic newspapers. He cited that while religious publications in the United States made use of revenues from advertisements, few, if any, German religious publications took advantage of advertising. Any advertising that did exist, Reid

²⁴⁰ Dr. Selug, editor of *Kirchenzeitung* for Aachen to Frank Hall, no date, Catholic Press Association, Catholic News Service Records, ACUA, box 10, folder German Correspondences. “Berichte,” *Petrusblatt*, September 18, 1949.

²⁴¹ “Filmschau,” *Petrusblatt*, January 15, 1949.

reported, was “handled incidentally and informally, without any consistent effort to promote it.” Reid recommended that religious newspaper be encouraged to seek out advertisers, and be convinced of the financial worth of advertising within their pages.²⁴²

Such changes in advertisements began at the end of 1949, and continued to grow in popularity throughout the 1950s. This change is evident in the *Petrusblatt* – by 1951 its weekly editions included over three pages of advertisements, many of them for department stores like Peek and Cloppenburg, watch manufactures like Bendel, furniture stores, and beauty firms like Nivea. It is worth noting that these changes occurred in 1949, not only after Reid’s visit to Germany, but after the editors also visited the United States.

This change is most glaring, however, in advertisements around the Christmas season. When looking at the editions of the youth magazine, *Michael*, the transformation of the yearly Christmas editions is obvious. By the early 1950s, the editions of *Michael* in late November and throughout December boasted pages filled with advertisements for Christmas presents. As you can see below, the magazine went beyond merely advertisements for products, but created page layouts that highlighted the advertisements. The 1954 Christmas edition even provided an article titled “Good and Meaningful Gifts,” which advised its readers how to choose the best gift for one’s partner. When choosing a gift for your loved, the article stated: “Beyond all considerations of expediency and cheapness, the gift must also be a bit lavish, a sign of what cannot be labeled with everyday words and deeds. Beyond the annual kitchen apron, coffee mill, tableware and silverware, a very personal gift. That’s it.”²⁴³ This article – nestled among advertisements touting a refrigerator as a “festive gift,” and peddling nylons that would make the recipient “always cute”

²⁴² Report, “The Religious Press of Germany and the Relations of the Secular Press with the Churches,” Richard Reid, Records of U.S. Occupation Headquarters, World War II, Office of the Military Government for Germany, (U.S.), Record Group 260, NARA II, box 200, folder Richard Reid.

²⁴³ “Gut und Sinnvoll Schenken,” *Michael*, December 18, 1954.

– was the epitome of commercial advertising. What was more, Christmas was not the only Christian tradition that garnered the attention of advertisers. Children’s formal attire for the sacrament of communion, wedding dresses for the sacrament of marriage, and flower arrangements for a festive Easter table are just a few of the advertisements specifically targeted to Catholics in their newspapers and magazine.

This explosion of advertisements, especially around Christmas, was not without detractors in the Catholic community. Criticism of these practices had begun earlier, as exemplified by an article in *Echo der Zeit* at the beginning of the Christmas season in 1952: “Against the Christmas Hoopla.” It began with the grievance:

Christmas is just around the corner and unfortunately with it, the advertisement hoopla, which in the last few years has run around like false leaves around this holiday. Already in our September 21st issue, under the heading “Super Advertisement,” we had put our finger on the wound of our present business propaganda and, more generally, criticized the extremely questionable commercial advertising practices of company brands in particular. Today, in view of the approaching Advent and Christmas time, above all, a word should be said about the already unfurling Christmas business propaganda.²⁴⁴

Saint Nikolaus, the article bemoaned, was no longer a saint but a symbol of “capitalism” and used to hock commodities. The article railed against the commercial use of the Christmas tree. While admitting that the tree had no religious significance, it was still a symbol of the holiday, and “should be reserved for actual Christmas week.” The article ended with the warning that “Christmas must retain its character as a Christian high and family holiday and must not be degraded to an empty day of gift giving.”²⁴⁵ Thus not all members of Catholic print media were comfortable with the commercialism that now graced the pages of Catholic magazines. This offense, furthermore, was particularly egregious when it denigrated a holy holiday.

²⁴⁴ “Gegen die Weihnachtsrummel,” *Echo der Zeit*, November 23, 1952.

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

Nevertheless, these advertisements continued. Of course, while running advertisements was mainly a financial decision, the ostentatious presentation and the accompanying articles signaled a bigger change was underfoot. The existence and nature of these articles reveals a certain level of acceptance of consumerism on the part of German editors and publishers. Apparently, crass materialism was no longer considered a danger to the morals of German Catholic society, but accepted as a way to fund Catholic institutions such as the press. These advertisements led to Catholic life itself becoming commercialized – presents for holidays and special outfits for sacraments were peddled in the pages of the magazines. This not only sanctioned increased consumerism, but promoted it.

Thus, Catholic print media in the 1950s had changed in both content and character. This change was ushered in by the postwar dedication to increasing Germany's connections to foreign countries, and American publisher's desire to help them. Articles about American life and culture fostered a sense of familiarity for things American among Catholics in Germany. The layout of these newspapers shed their somber approach for a lighter, more appealing character. The excessive advertisements in the newspapers themselves also condoned consumerism that had previously been categorized as an American affliction. Ironically, the networks that Catholic publishers and editors wanted to create to increase Catholic influence in the changing and internationalizing postwar world had the opposite effect. Rather, it brought German Catholic society more in line with the capitalist and consumerist qualities of the Western world.

3.4 CONCLUSION

In the decade after the war, Catholics in Germany who read their weekly Catholic newspaper or monthly magazine would slowly accumulate knowledge about their brethren in the United States. With this knowledge would come a sense of familiarity. The point of reference for an American would no longer be a G.I. stationed in Germany, or a cowboy or gangster in a Hollywood film. Instead, Catholic Germans would be able to conjure up images of families attending Sunday service, or of a child attending their local Catholic elementary school. What was more, the style of the newspapers itself that the German Catholic would be reading would be peppered with flashy advertisements. These changes mimicked the pages of American Catholic magazines, whose editors had already developed a more comprehensive financing scheme that included marketing and advertisements. The inclusion of such advertisements in a German Catholic publication would make accusations of crass materialism against Americans smack of hypocrisy. Suddenly, in the first few years after the end of the Second World War, there was less ideological baggage between German and American Catholic society.

This was not merely coincidence, but a concerted effort on the part of Catholic journalists and publishers to provide their readers with a picture of Catholic life outside the national purview. Catholic journalists, editors and publishers in the immediate few years after the war worked hard to open channels of communication between the American and German Catholic community, and to establish press agencies that could exchange information quickly and accurately. Doing so, they believed, was essential for the two communities to grow close together. Creating this was not only crucial for helping German Catholics overcome the initial isolation brought on by the conditions of postwar Germany, but instrumental in creating a sense of Catholic solidarity that could cross national boundaries.

4.0 WINNING THE WORKERS: BUILDING A CATHOLIC COUNTERWEIGHT TO SOCIALIST INFLUENCE

“As Germany goes, so goes Western Europe; as labor goes, so goes Germany.”²⁴⁶ This statement, found in a Religious Affairs Branch report from 1949, highlights the significance of German workers, and their political leanings, in the future development of West Germany. West Germany’s trade unions and socialist political party, the Social Democratic Party (SPD), could shift political support towards either a market economy or one that featured more measures of a planned economy. The importance of the labor movements reached an apex in 1949, the year of the Federal Republic’s first Bundestag election. Two main political parties, the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), and the Social Democratic Party (SPD) were fighting for the support of the workers in the lead up to the Bundestag election. As Winkler put it: “the electoral campaign was dominated by the question ‘planned economy or social market economy?’” with the former supported by the SPD and the Communist Party of Germany (KPD), and the latter promoted by the CDU.²⁴⁷ It was in the context of this intense political rivalry between the CDU and the SPD that the American occupation forces attempted to shore up support for the Catholic labor movement. Both the American administration and German Catholic labor leaders hoped that doing so would promote a market economy that could promise German workers equality and social rights as convincingly as any socialist or communist system.

²⁴⁶ Report, “Religious Affairs Semi-annual Report, Catholic Affairs Section, July-December 1949,” January 20, 1950, Records of U.S. Occupation Headquarters, World War II, Office of the Military Government for Germany, (U.S.), Record Group 260, NARA II, box 205, folder 26.

²⁴⁷ Winkler, *Germany*, 127.

The SPD was historically the leading party of the working class, and had emerged from the war with heightened prestige and credibility, as the party's leaders had put up one of the strongest resistances to the rise of National Socialism. Many, including its postwar leader Kurt Schumacher, had suffered the tenure of the Nazi regime either in exile or in concentration camps.²⁴⁸ However, Schumacher himself was the cause of much consternation among the American military officials. While he was unquestionably anti-communist, and after 1945 drew a clear distinction between the SPD and the Communist Party of Germany (KPD), he indeed ran on a platform of creating a unified, socialist Germany independent from the Western Allies. As such, the true danger to the United States foreign policy aims was that the SPD, if victorious in the 1949 elections, would take Germany down a path as a neutral power between the East and the West in the emerging Cold War struggle, rather than a firm ally to the West.

Therefore, the American occupation found the political and economic platform of the CDU more palatable, as its leader Konrad Adenauer held strong convictions about the importance of a Western alliance.²⁴⁹ Emerging as a new political party after the Second World War, the CDU brought together both Protestants and Catholics, holding that the confessional divides amongst democratic parties had eased the Nazi Party's path to power. The CDU thus expanded the exclusively Catholic platform of the former Center Party (*Zentrumspartei*). Led by the devout Catholic Konrad Adenauer, the party adopted a strong anti-communist stance. Adenauer made little distinction between the communism of the Soviet Union, and the socialist policies of the SPD, an attitude the American administration would increasingly adopt as the postwar years

²⁴⁸ Cox, *Circles*, 27-49.

²⁴⁹ For a complete picture of Adenauer's stance on the creation of an Atlantic and Western alliance see Ronald J. Granieri, *The Ambivalent Alliance: Konrad Adenauer, the CDU/CSU, and the West, 1949-1966* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2003).

passed.²⁵⁰ What was more, Adenauer and the CDU would increasingly shift the anti-materialist message of *Abendland* to focus exclusively on anti-communism, rather than on the secular materialism of the Anglo-Saxon world.²⁵¹

To win the support of workers, however, the CDU had to gain support for its economic policy, the social market economy. A pillar of the CDU's political platform, the social market economy was adopted as part of its official program in July of 1949 in the Düsseldorf Guidelines. These guidelines supported an economy built on "performance-based competition and independent control of monopolies," and "market driven prices" while explicitly rejecting a command economy.²⁵² At the same time, however, it also asserted the responsibility of the government to create an economy that "serves the welfare and needs of the entire population."²⁵³ The social market economy had all the trappings of free market capitalism, but held the state responsible for regulating fair competition and ensuring social welfare. This was in clear contrast to the GDR's economic development, as private ownership had been all but abolished by 1949, and by 1951, 79 percent of the gross industrial production came from state-owned businesses and industry.²⁵⁴

While the social market economy's most visible architect, Ludwig Erhard, was a Protestant, the policies were nevertheless strongly guided by Catholic Social Teaching.²⁵⁵ Top among these Catholic Social Teaching principles were subsidiary and solidarity. Subsidiary was a clear rejection of a centrally planned and state-owned economy, as it held that state intervention was only allowed once smaller intermediary bodies exhausted their capabilities.²⁵⁶ The Catholic

²⁵⁰ In particular, see the chapter "Christian Democracy and the Confessional Culture in the Federal Republic" in Mitchell, *Christian Democracy*, 180-201.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 182-184.

²⁵² "Düsseldorf Guidelines for Economic Policy, Agricultural Policy, Social Policy, and Housing," July 14, 1949.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁴ Winkler, *Germany*, 143.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁶ See J. Verstraeten "Solidarity and Subsidiarity" in *Principles of Catholic Social Teaching*, by David A. Boileau (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1998), 133.

tenet of solidarity, most visible in the social market economy's assurance of social welfare, upheld the idea that individuals had a responsibility towards the common good. Educating workers on the concepts of Catholic Social Teaching, and convincing them of their merits, was thus a strategy for electoral success.

Most of the American efforts in this respect centered on strengthening the Catholic labor movement that was already in place. In their eyes, Catholic worker's organizations would serve as an important platform through which to emphasize how Catholic Social Teaching was the best way to fight for their rights. Parallel to their activities in other spheres of Catholic life, the American occupation sought to fund Catholic worker's associations, help establish Catholic labor schools for workers, and help organize conferences on workers' rights. These actions, they hoped, would develop a strong Catholic labor movement that would entice followers more effectively than any socialist social action campaigns which petitioned for a higher degree of state intervention and nationalization of industry, or communist propaganda. Focusing on the ideological support of Catholic Social Teaching towards the organization of workers could increase Catholic participation and influence within trade unions. In addition, it could also counteract the development of a strong labor movement dominated by members of the Social Democratic Party (SPD). Examining these activities sheds light on one of the avenues through which Catholic Social Teaching and the social market economy gained widespread support throughout Germany after the Second World War.

4.1 HISTORY OF CATHOLIC LABOR

Catholic labor associations were long-standing institutions that existed in one form or the other in both Germany and the United States. When faced with rebuilding labor relations in Germany, American occupation administration realized that these organizations could be of use:

The leadership necessary to carry out this [social action] program must draw its ultimate power from the spiritual and moral resources present in Western civilization, including Germany. The problem of releasing religiously motivated social action as a creative and guiding force calls for a fusion of German self-help and outside aid. In this task, Germany's church-related social action agencies, in such fields as community organization, women's activities, the church and economic life, labor etc., drawing upon professional and lay leadership both at home and abroad, are in a strategic position to render timely assistance ... Both the Catholic and Evangelical churches have national organizations with social action programs geared to the solution of problems faced by the working man and his family. These organizations are not Christian labor unions. They are church-related agencies supported voluntarily by the people in the interests of social and economic justice for all men. Each of them is organized in every diocese and locally in every major community.²⁵⁷

In the eyes of the Religious Affairs Branch, the blueprints for an effective social action program already existed in Germany.

German Catholic labor organizations dated back the 1840s, when landowning Catholic laymen in the Rhineland began organizing labor associations to tend to the religious and spiritual needs of workers.²⁵⁸ In the late 1880s, to both combat the influence of the secular unions and create a Catholic response to the poor conditions of the workers, the number and purview of these

²⁵⁷ Report, "Semi-Annual Report Religious Affairs Branch," December, 1949, Records of U.S. Occupation Headquarters, World War II, Office of the Military Government for Germany, (U.S), Record Group 260, NARA II, box 203, folder 31.

²⁵⁸ For more on the history of the Catholic labor movement, and Christian trade unions, see Michael Schneider, *Die Christlichen Gewerkschaften 1984-1933* (Bonn: Verlag J.H.W. Dietz Nachf., 1982); Paul Misner, *Catholic Labor Movements in Europe* (Washington D.C., Catholic University of American Press, 2015); Thomas Bredohl, *Class and Religious Identity: The Rhenish Center Party in Wilhelmine Germany* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1998).

organizations grew.²⁵⁹ One of the most prolific association was founded by a young priest, Franz Eduard Cronenberg, who found fertile ground for his work in the working-class slums of Aachen. Cronenberg worked to provide much needed housing for poor Catholics in Aachen, where sometimes 20 to 40 families lived in houses meant for single-family living.²⁶⁰ These associations would do more than alleviate the poor living conditions of workers, however, and would become important institutions in educating workers on the social teachings of the Catholic church. They would hold courses for workers, and run local presses which championed social justice and worker's rights.²⁶¹ By 1914, there were over 280 different associations and 500,000 members.²⁶²

It was not until 1899, with the establishment of the Confederation of Christian Trade Unions, that Catholic workers began to organize under specifically Christian trade unions. This umbrella organization represented independent Christian trade unions based on profession and industry. Its president during the Weimar years, Catholic labor leader Adam Stegerwald, saw one of the Christian Trade Union's fundamental purpose as combatting social democracy.²⁶³ Membership in Christian labor unions in the 1920s numbered over half a million and accounted for eleven to twelve percent of blue collar workers.²⁶⁴ Within these Christian trade unions, Catholics represented the majority. This was in part because these Christian trade unions were centered in the heavily Catholic and industrial Ruhr area in West Germany, and because their Protestant counterparts tended to join the secular Free Trade Unions.²⁶⁵ The number of workers

²⁵⁹ The growth of these associations was possible due to the end of two key features of the Bismarkian era – the *Kulturkampf* and the Socialist Law of 1878, which banned any associations that were guided by social democratic, communist, or socialist ideas.

²⁶⁰ Bredohl, *Religious Identity*, 113

²⁶¹ Misner, *Catholic*, 165.

²⁶² Bredohl, *Religious Identity*, 113.

²⁶³ Bernhard Forster, *Adam Stegerwald (1984-1945): Christlich-nationaler Gewerkschafter, Zentrumspolitiker, Mitbegründer der Unionsparteien* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 2001).

²⁶⁴ Misner, *Catholic Labor*, 165.

²⁶⁵ In particular, see the chapter "Christian Labor in Weimar Germany," Paul Misner, *Catholic Labor*, 161-183; and Michael Schneider, *Kleine Geschichte der Gewerkschaften: Ihre Entwicklung in Deutschland von den Anfängen bis heute* (Bonn: Dietz, 1989), 160-184.

organized under Christian unions, which at their height in the Weimar period embraced 1 million, was much smaller than the Free Trade Unions, which boasted numbers over four million in the Weimar Period. Nevertheless, they exerted much influence within society and politics, as they held sway within the Catholic Center Party.

While the Catholic labor movement in the United States developed differently, it was no less robust. The influx of immigrants into the U.S. throughout the late 19th and the first decades of the 20th century brought hundreds of thousands of working-class Catholics from Ireland, Germany, Poland, and other regions in Eastern Europe. Of the 33 million European immigrants that arrived in the United States between 1830-1920, Catholics made up 40 percent, with German Catholics alone numbering over 1.3 million.²⁶⁶ Many of these Catholic immigrants settled in industrial centers and comprised a hefty proportion of the working class.²⁶⁷ While no specifically Christian labor union developed, early American labor organizations, such as the Knights of Labor, had heavy Catholic followings.²⁶⁸ Not all Catholic circles, however, endorsed labor organizations, and some vehemently opposed it.²⁶⁹ Despite this, the majority of Catholic clergy in the States, directed by the National Catholic Welfare Conference, supported social reform efforts and many became instrumental leaders in labor initiatives.²⁷⁰

Many Catholic leaders would play leading roles in the proliferation of unions that occurred in the 1930s. American workers had joined unions in droves – spurred on by the search for security in the dismal economic conditions of the Great Depression, and given courage by a series of governmental legislation. Chief among this legislation was the Wagner Act in 1935, which

²⁶⁶ Colman J. Barry, *The Catholic Church and German Americans* (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1953), 5-6.

²⁶⁷ Kenneth J. Heineman, *A Catholic New Deal: Religion and Reform in Depression Pittsburgh* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999), 3-7.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 10.

²⁷⁰ Heineman, *Catholic New Deal*, 2-15.

guaranteed the right of workers to organize into unions and bargain collectively. More importantly, it also set up a governmental body, the National Labor Relations Board, that could enforce the act.²⁷¹ The blossoming trade unions were organized under two major labor federations – the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations. These organizations were not trade unions, but rather federations that would settle disputes between its member unions, provide aid and support to local unions, and in some cases, send organizers to help workers form trade unions.²⁷² Catholics would hold important roles within these organizations. The longest tenured president of the Congress of Industrial organizations, serving from 1940-1952, was Phil Murray, a devout Catholic inspired by the church’s social teachings. In the 1930s he had worked closely with Catholic priests and laymen in Pittsburgh to create a union for steel workers, the Steel Workers Organizing Committee.²⁷³

While the Catholic labor movements in Germany and the United States differed in their organization, both communities were guided by the papal encyclicals on labor. Encyclicals, as official letters written and circulated by the pope, clarify specific aspects of Church doctrine, and serve as authoritative documents for Catholic canon. As such, the encyclicals *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno*, published in 1881, formed the basis of Catholic social thought on labor.²⁷⁴ The encyclical *Rerum Novarum* remains a foundational text in Catholic Social Teaching today,

²⁷¹ For more on the American labor movement see Robert H. Zieger, Timothy J. Minchin, and Gilbert J. Gall, eds., *American Workers, American Unions: The 20th and Early 21st Centuries* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014).

²⁷² *Ibid.*, 85-90.

²⁷³ Heineman, *Catholic New Deal*, 132, 144, 147-148.

²⁷⁴ For more on these encyclicals and principles of Catholic Social Teaching see Jean Yves Calvez and Jacques Perrin, *The Church and Social Justice: The Social Teaching of the Popes from Leo XIII to Pius XII, 1978-1958*, trans. J.R. Kirwan (London: Burns and Oates, 1961); Donald Dorr, *Option for the Poor: A Hundred Years of Vatican Social Teaching* (Dublin: Orbis Books, 1992); Roger Aubert and David A. Boileau, *Catholic Social Teaching: An Historical Perspective* (Marquette University Press, 2003); Kenneth R Himes, ed., *Modern Catholic Social Teaching: Commentaries and Interpretations* (Washington D.C.: George Washington University Press, 2005).

and is the first encyclical to deal with social issues.²⁷⁵ Referred to in English as *The Condition of Labor, Rerum Novarum* was written by Pope Leo XIII in response to emerging social problems brought on by the Industrial Revolution. The encyclical, written almost 50 years after the publication of the *The Communist Manifesto*, was also a response to the growing socialist and communist labor movements that were spreading across Europe.²⁷⁶

At its core, the encyclical emphasized the dignity of industrial workers, arguing for a living wage and supporting the right of workers to unionize and strike.²⁷⁷ In equal measure, however, *Rerum Novarum* affirmed the sanctity of private property, disavowed communal ownership, and disparaged class warfare – a clear rejection of Marxism. Socialist methods, the encyclical argued, exploited “the poor man’s envy of the rich,” and “strik[ed] at the interests of every wage owner” by depriving him “of the liberty of disposing his wages, and thereby of all hope and possibility of increasing his resources and of bettering his condition in life.”²⁷⁸ In other words, the reality of a socialist order hindered the ability of the common worker to use or save his wages at his own discretion to better his position in life.

In 1931, forty years later, Pope Pius XI built on the teachings of *Rerum Novarum* in the encyclical, *Quadragesima Anno*. This encyclical condemned the growing inequality between the rich and the poor, and assured downtrodden workers that the Church understood their plight. Written after the October Revolution and the foundation of the Soviet Union, however, *Quadragesimo Anno* even more explicitly condemned not only socialism, but the socialism that had “sunk into communism,” which “teaches and seeks two objectives: Unrelenting class warfare

²⁷⁵ Roger Aubert and David A. Boileau, *Catholic Social Teaching*, 181.

²⁷⁶ In particular, see the chapter “The Rise of the Working Classes: Trade Unions and Socialist, 1871-1914,” in William A. Pelz, *A People’s History of Europe* (New York: Pluto Press, 2016), 83-102.

²⁷⁷ Himes, *Modern Catholic*, 210.

²⁷⁸ Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum: Encyclical of Pope Leo XIII on Capital and Labor*, May 15, 1891, accessed March 8, 2018, https://w2.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_15051891_rerum-novarum.html

and absolute extermination of private ownership.”²⁷⁹ The encyclical bemoaned that the growing inequality had caused some workers who were being “crushed by their hard lot” to become “carried away by the heat of evil counsel” and “seeking to overturn everything.” This “evil council” was communist agitators, who preached that the solution to the workers’ predicament was a complete revolution. Such a revolution and class war-fare, the encyclical admonished, was not the Christian way. Rather, “true Catholic social science provided the road to the reconstruction of the social order.” This Catholic order involved the creation and flourishing of “worker’s associations” which would fight for workers’ rights to establish trade unions. It was with this support for worker’s associations that the concept of subsidiary became an explicit part of Catholic canon.²⁸⁰ Meaning, *Quadragesima Anno* made clear that disputes between workers and their employees should not be addressed through state intervention unless absolutely necessary. Rather, these disputes should first be handled at by smaller, voluntary bodies, like trade unions or workers associations.²⁸¹

It was these characteristics of the Catholic labor movement – long-standing, adamantly anti-communist, and offering the possibility of transatlantic cooperation – that would make the American occupation officials eager to enlist their help. The encyclicals effectively condemned socialism while also providing Catholic workers with a positive message of social justice and venues through which to pursue reforms. This could create a social action program that was anti-communist at its core. What was more, Catholic labor associations had a long history of countering activities of social democrats in Germany. The fact that the heart of these organizations had always been in the heavily industrialized Ruhr area and were firmly rooted within the Western zones of occupation only heightened their utility.

²⁷⁹ Pius XI, *Quadragesimo Anno*, *Encyclical of Pope Pius XI on Reconstruction of the Social Order*, May 15, 1931, accessed March 8, 2018, https://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-xi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_19310515_quadragesimo-anno.html.

²⁸⁰ Verstraeten “Solidarity and Subsidiarity,” 133.

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*

4.2 CATHOLIC LABOR AS A COUNTERWEIGHT TO COMMUNIST AND SOCIALIST INFLUENCE

In 1945, the German labor movement as it had existed before Hitler came to power was in shambles. In May of 1933, Hitler had banned all trade unions and replaced them with the German Labor Front, a national worker's organization whose professed goal was to represent all German workers. This eradication of the independent trade unions and subsequent forced integration of employees and employers into one institution was ostensibly to overcome class struggle. In the fall of 1934, the Labor Front was tasked with securing peace and stability among workers, and all decisions regarding the social life of workers were under its jurisdiction. The Labor movement as it had existed before the Nazi regime was gone.²⁸² When the Allied powers began their military occupation in the spring of 1945, they faced the hard task of rebuilding a labor movement with crumbled institutions and depleted leadership, as many leaders had been killed or exiled.

After 1945 the rival socialist, Christian, and liberal trade unions that had existed before 1933 did not re-emerge.²⁸³ German labor leaders rejected the pre-Nazi structure in which trade unions were split along religious, ideological, and political lines. This, in part, was fueled by the belief that the divisive nature of the trade unions in the Weimar period had made them easy for Hitler to break.²⁸⁴ More likely, however, this commitment to a unified union movement was

²⁸² For an authoritative and comprehensive text on workers and trade unions under National Socialism, see Michael Schneider, *In der Kriegsgesellschaft: Arbeiter und Arbeiterbewegung 1939 bis 1945* (Bonn: J. H. W. Dietz Nachf. Verlag, 2014).

²⁸³ For more on the history of trade unions after 1945, see Klaus Armingeon, *Die Entwicklung der westdeutschen Gewerkschaften 1950-1985* (Frankfurt-New York: Campus, 1988); Detje Richard, *Von der Westzone zum Kalten Krieg. Restauration und Gewerkschaftspolitik im Nachkriegsdeutschland* (Hamburg: VSA Verlag, 1982); Stephen J. Silvia, *Holding the Shop Together: German Industrial Relations in the postwar Era* (Ithica: Cornell University Press, 2013).

²⁸⁴ In particular, see the chapter "Trade Union in Germany: Two Post-war Movements" in Silvia, *Holding the Shop Together*, 109.

adopted for practical reasons, as after over a decade of suppression, unions were too weak to operate effectively on their own.²⁸⁵

The architects of the United States occupation policy believed the stimulation of trade and worker associations could fuel democratic reform in German society.²⁸⁶ The American occupation's policy report from 1945-1946 stated: "United States policy has been directed toward the revival of free trade unions and other types of democratic worker associations as an essential step toward the democratization of German economic and political life."²⁸⁷ To counteract the all-encompassing nationalist workers organization that had existed during the Nazi period, the American occupation forces hoped to encourage the development of labor organizations "at the 'grass roots' level and to work up from this to higher levels."²⁸⁸ This bottom up approach, the occupation hoped, would allow workers "the opportunity for democratic expression in determining the type of organization they wished to have and in selecting their own leaders."²⁸⁹

This "freedom" for Germans to choose their own leaders and types of organizations was only extended if those decisions aligned with the wishes of the Allied military policy makers. In the western zones of occupation, many German labor leaders wanted to build one central labor organization with subdivisions based on trade and industry. This idea, however, sat uneasily with the western Allied powers. This was in part because they worried that one national trade union could easily succumb to lingering Nazi influence. Western allied officials also feared that one

²⁸⁵ Ibid, 113.

²⁸⁶ For more information on Allied policy on trade unions see Michael Fichter, *Besatzungsmacht und Gewerkschaften: Zur Entwicklung und Anwendung der US-Gewerkschaftspolitik in Deutschland 1944-1948* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1982).

²⁸⁷ *Occupation of Germany, Policy and Progress 1945-1946* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1947, 200.

²⁸⁸ F.J Gillen, *Labor Problems in West Germany With Special Reference to the Policies and Programs of the Office of Labor Affairs of the Office of the U.S. High Commissioner for Germany* (Historical Division, Office of the executive Secretary Office of the U.S. High Commissioner for Germany, 1952), 9. This historical monograph was commissioned by the State Department to review and present the policy of the American Occupation regarding labor.

²⁸⁹ Ibid., 109.

strong trade union would make it easier for communists to gain influence over workers and control of labor institutions.²⁹⁰ British and American occupation officials in particular supported a labor federation system in which independent local trade unions would be linked under a single organization. As such, independent trade unions throughout the British and American zones developed at local levels and were then organized into zone-wide federations. In 1949, when the western zones merged, the independent trade unions formed one umbrella trade organization, the German Trade Union Federation (DBG). This organizations was a federation of 16 individual industrial unions.²⁹¹ It was no coincidence that this style of labor association closely resembled that of the United States, with its American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations.

While the American and British forces were able to enact a decentralized industrial relations system, occupation officials continued to fear the threat of communist influence within labor unions:

The importance of labor's support in the process of political, economic and cultural reform has not been overlooked by the Soviet Union. Labor, in fact has become one of the chief targets of Soviet propaganda and Communist infiltration. It is the considered opinion of this Government that German labor must not be surrendered to Soviet aspirations and efforts and that the concerted effort must be made to gain the confidence and the active cooperation of German labor in support of democratic reform patterned on Western tradition"²⁹²

American occupation officials remained suspicious of Soviet influence within labor unions. To quell their unease, American occupation officials wanted to gain the loyalty and support of union leaders and members.

²⁹⁰ Silvia, *Holding the Shop Together*, 110.

²⁹¹ *Ibid*, 113.

²⁹² Memorandum, "American Aid to German Trade Unions," Jan 22, 1949, Office of the Assistance Secretary of State for Occupied Areas 46-49, General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59, NARA II, box 1.

In the years after the Second World War, they were making little headway with social democratic elements. While communist infiltration within the unions remained an elusive threat, by 1947 influence from leaders of the SPD proved to be a very real thorn in the side of military government. During the planning of the military occupation and throughout 1945, many left-leaning Germans had a voice in directing the future of Germany, as they had strong records of resistance against the Nazi State.²⁹³ As the American administration became more concerned over integrating West Germany into a transatlantic alliance, and less concerned with de-nazification measures, many of these leaders proved increasingly troublesome to the American administration. Gustav Schiefer, for example, was the head of the Munich trade unions and a member of the SPD. From 1947 until his death in 1957 he was a member of the Senate for Bavaria, serving as the vice president from 1947 to 1953. He was outspoken against the American military government's economic policies, and denounced the American and British activities in setting up a free market economy, and for placing economic policy-making decisions in the hands of the "propertied classes, industry, and agriculture."²⁹⁴ Schiefer, like many members of the SPD, had been outspoken against the rise of the National Socialism. Once the Nazis seized power, he was first imprisoned in Stadelheim Prison before spending the remainder of the National Socialist regime in Dachau concentration camp. It was social democrats like Schiefer that had the ability to cause the American military government much trouble; as clear resisters and victims of the Nazi regime, they were credible voices for the direction that the reconstruction of German should take.

The tumult surrounding the currency reform of 1948 proved how antagonistic the relationship between SPD members who led unions and the American military government could

²⁹³ Rebecca Boehling, *A Question of Priorities: Democratic Reform and Economic Recovery in Postwar Germany*, (New York: Berghahn Books, 1996), 10-50.

²⁹⁴ Schiefer quoted in Boehling, *Priorities*, 262-264.

be.²⁹⁵ Along with the 1948 currency reform, which introduced the DM, Ludwig Erhard also announced the subsequent removal of price controls on a variety of consumer goods. The policy for exchange stipulated that individuals could exchange their RM for DM at a 1-1 ratio up to 40 DM, followed by another 20 in two months' time. Amounts over this would be converted at a 10-1 ratio of RM to DM. These measures initially caused turmoil and hardship for the average worker. Many saw their savings, made up of the now worthless RM, essentially vanish. While price controls on essential foodstuffs, coal, and clothing remained in place, the prices of goods shot up while wages remained stagnant. Furthermore, instances of profiteering became apparent as stores – after a harsh year of empty shelves, rationing, and supposed scarcity – suddenly and suspiciously became fully stocked.

Hans Stetter, head of the local unions in Stuttgart and SPD city counselor, was an outspoken critic of the currency reform and critical of American attempts to ensure the rebuilding of the West German economy along capitalist lines while seemingly paying little attention to social questions. After the currency reform was passed, he called for a boycott of stores that had clearly stockpiled goods during the time of need and scarcity until pricing had become more lucrative for profits. This led the Württemberg-Baden Trade Union Conference, the American zone precursor to the DBG, in July of 1948 to demand, among other things, a 1-1 exchange of RM to DM for small bank accounts, legal protection for workers against dismissals, and a 15 percent increase in wages to account for inflation.²⁹⁶ When the military government failed to address the issue of a wage increase, Stetter led a half-day work stoppage and a rally in Stuttgart. In addressing the rally, Stetter criticized the direction of West Germany's economic reconstruction, and scorned the

²⁹⁵ Michael Fichter, "Aufbau und Neuordnung: Betriebsräte zwischen Klassensolidarität und Betriebsloyalität," in *Von Stalingrad zur Währungsreform: Zur Sozialgeschichte des Umbruchs in Deutschland*, eds. Martin Broszat, Klaus-Dietmar Henke, and Hans Woller (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1990), 502-504; 544.

²⁹⁶ Boehling, *Priorities*, 263-265.

economic policies of Ludwig Erhard. While this rally dispersed peacefully, events would quickly snowball. Later that day, a group of rowdy men broke the window at a high-end retail store. Although the trade unions quickly distanced themselves from these disturbances of the peace, the military government labeled the rally as instigative and the later destruction of property as an act of defiance against the military government. In response, the American occupation officials punished the city of Stuttgart with a weeklong curfew, and prohibited the right to assemble for two and a half weeks. This, alongside the rumbling discontent over the currency reform, elicited a widespread negative response, and trade unions throughout the American and British zones initiated a 12-hour strike on November 12.²⁹⁷

These events of 1948 illustrated to the American military government that trade unions were powerful institutions that had the ability to curtail American influence and policies on West Germany's economic reconstruction. It did not escape their attention that these critics were usually members of the SPD. Current scholarship on the democratic and political reform in postwar Germany demonstrates how the American occupation forces came to actively hinder socialists and communists from gaining positions of influence in West German society. As tensions with the Soviet Union mounted during the late 1940s, occupation officials increasingly viewed the anti-Nazi communists as "camouflage" for the Soviet Union's communist agenda.²⁹⁸ With this, the American officials showed a growing reluctance to grant positions of authority to vocal communists or socialists, even if the individual in question had a record of resistance against the Nazis.²⁹⁹

²⁹⁷ Ibid.

²⁹⁸ Boehling, *Priorities*, 116-156.

²⁹⁹ Ibid.

To alleviate their unease, American officials sought ways in which to curb socialist influence within the trade unions. Searching for labor institutions with which they could have less friction, they looked to the Catholic labor organizations that had existed since the 1800s. The strategy to strengthen Catholic labor circles to increase their influence in trade unions was laid out succinctly by the head of Religious Affairs Branch, Dr. Eagan, during a 1948 interview with the National Catholic News Service. Eagan lamented that “The Church in Germany lost many of its workers under the Nazi regime. Since 1945 the unions have largely been under control of the socialist elements.” The article continued with how the occupation planned to “counteract this condition:”

‘The social action program of the church has received special consideration ... *The Catholic Worker*, A German publication, is, with Religious Affairs Branch cooperation, endeavoring to revive Catholic interest in labor union activities.’ Another development, Dr. Eagan said, has been the establishment of Catholic labor schools, also with U.S. support, for the training of young men and women for trade union participation. Another type of assistance reported by Dr. Eagan is the encouragement in the seminaries, with Episcopal approval, of courses on the practical application of the teachings of the Papal encyclicals on labor.

As Dr. Eagan explained, the goal was to foster *religiously* motivated social action among workers, rather than *socialist* motivated social action. Ultimately, these efforts would hopefully create a body of workers steeped in Catholic Social teaching who would then pass this influence along to the non-partisan labor unions.

Bishop Muench provided a similar assessment of the role that Catholic labor organizations could play in the rebuilding of industrial relations:

In order to strengthen German catholic workers, however, in their own religious and social ideas, there have been organized ‘Catholic Worker Organizations’ (Katholische Arbeitervereine) which have a purely religious aim. That is, to inform Catholic workers concerning their religious duties and to spread the Christian social principles and religious ideas among the working class. These ‘Arbeitervereine’, which have a certain tradition among German Catholics, especially in the Rhineland, may contribute to a strengthening of the position of Catholic workers.

But it is doubtful whether this organization will be strong enough to assure a safe position for the Catholic worker in the trade union.

Muench thought that the Catholic worker's associations, which had reached impressive numbers before the Second World War, could become influential factors in inspiring Catholics to join trade unions. In addition, they would also provide assurance that once in the unions, the Catholic workers would understand the Christian social principles that they were supposed to abide by. In the uncertain times of the immediate postwar period, however, their strength and ability to operate was anything but certain.

The papal encyclicals *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno*, resolute in their message of anti-communist, were a focus of the American occupation's activities regarding Catholic labor. Such objectives were established in the mission statement of the Religious Affairs Branch of the occupation; a 1949 policy report detailed that one of the Religious Affairs Branch's main activities was to promote "the development of a closer relationship between the Church and the worker along the lines laid down in *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno*."³⁰⁰ Most blatantly, the American occupation provided funds and materials to labor organizations to publicize Catholic social teaching. For example, in May of 1949, the Deacon from Großheubach, a small town in northern Bavaria, contacted the Religious Affairs department about funding for pamphlets to use at worker's gatherings. The Deacon requested and was granted money to print around 3,000 copies of *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno*, to be handed out for free at the local meetings for workers which the church hosted.³⁰¹

Catholic labor organizations that would educate German workers on the message of the encyclicals were ideal partners for the American occupation. Organizations with American

³⁰⁰ Report, "Religious Affairs Semi-annual Report, Catholic Affairs Section, July-December 1949" January 20, 1950, Records of U.S. Occupation Headquarters, World War II, Office of the Military Government for Germany, (U.S.), Record Group 260, NARA II, box 205, folder 26.

³⁰¹ Speech, "Die Überwindung des Kommunismus," Generalia II, HAEK, 22,17.3.

connections easily gained authorization to resume activities. In a brochure commemorating his work in Catholic social action, German Catholic labor leader Alfred Berchtold recalled that when he and other Catholics leaders met with American occupation officials to obtain permission for Catholic labor associations to resume activities, they attempted to lay out each organization's resistance to the Nazi regime. That information, in his estimation, made little difference. "The governor only asked his adviser whether the organization concerned was in America. If the answer was 'yes' everything was in order, if the answer was 'no,' the thing was dead."³⁰² As such, the large number of German Catholic emigres to the United States, and their propensity to bring their organizations with them, worked in favor of German Catholic organizations in the immediate postwar period.

An example of an organization that benefited from this unofficial criterion was the Kolping Society, a labor organization dating back to 1837. These associations were in fact some of the earliest Catholic workers associations to develop. Founded by Adolph Kolping, a priest born near Cologne in 1813, local branches of Kolping were established in the 1800s throughout Germany to protect the interests of skilled workers and small independent artisans. These branches offered their members education and training classes, apprenticeships, and even housing.³⁰³ Like many of the Catholic workers associations, Kolping was in part motivated by the desire to provide German Catholics with a social action program separate from the growing socialist and communist movements. When Catholic Germans emigrated to the United States, they brought the organization

³⁰² Alfred Berchtold, "Mein Weg in der katholischen Sozialbewegung" (Bonn: Verein zur Förderung katholisch-sozialer Bildungswerke, 1984). This brochure can be found at the Institut für Zeitgeschichte, Munich, Berchtold ED 505/2. Hereafter cited as Berchtold, "Mein Weg."

³⁰³ For a history of the Kolping Society and its founder, Adolph Kolping, see Heinz Granvogl, *Adolph Kolping und die christlich-soziale Bewegung: eine regionalgeschichtliche Untersuchung zum Verhältnis zwischen Kirche und Arbeitnehmer in den Jahren 1830-1866* (Augsburg: AV-Verlag, 1987).

with them. The American occupation quickly granted Kolping Society permission to assemble in West Germany after 1945, and by 1947, it had regrown its ranks to about 40,000 members.³⁰⁴

The occupation believed that organizations such as Kolping offered an easily cultivated link between Americans and Germans in the postwar period, and this was an opportunity both Americans and Germans wanted to utilize. The idea that this organization could in fact foster international bonds, however, was somewhat misplaced. Kolping membership in the United States was indeed small – only 900 followers throughout the entire United States. What was more, the organization was established by recent German immigrants. For example, the Rochester Kolping Society was founded in 1926 by German immigrants who had come to America the previous year.³⁰⁵ It was hardly a well-known or influential Catholic organization in the United States. With its membership consisting heavily of recent German immigrants, it was more of a German institution in the United States rather than an American organization.

Nevertheless, the German Kolping Society capitalized on these connections in the immediate years after the war. In 1947, the president of the Kolping Society, Johannes Dahl, who had never traveled to the United States before, made a six-week trip to the United States to visit the various branches of the society and attend the annual North American Kolping celebration.³⁰⁶ In a private letter to Bishop Muench, the German president of the Kolping Society emphasized the importance he placed on such international contacts. Dahl stated:

It seems that the Kolping Society can make a worthy contribution to world peace. Furthermore, in the contemporary world climate, if the non-Catholics (socialists, communists, liberals, protestant youths and others) were to be internationally

³⁰⁴ Speech, “Der Aufstieg des Kolpingwerkes in Deutschland,” Johannes Dahl, Aloisius Muench Papers, ACUA, Folder 7, box 45.

³⁰⁵ “History of Rochester Kolping,” *Kolping Society of the United States*, last modified March 8, 2018, <http://www.kolping.org/rochester/>.

³⁰⁶ Domvikar Karl Schmitz “Tätige Hilfe heilt alle Wunden: Eine Amerikareise” in *Mitteilungen für die Präsidien des Kolpingwerkes, Generalia II*, HAEK.

united, it would be an irresponsible failure of the Catholics to somehow loose such a fixed connection as the Kolping Society.”³⁰⁷

While the reality of Dahl’s statement was questionable – given the small amount of Kolping members in the United States – his sentiment hit every criteria that the American occupation valued. An old and venerable German institution, staunchly anti-communist, and clearly interested in building Catholic solidarity among Americans and Germans.

Occupation reports often cite the Kolping society as an organization with which cooperation was desirable and productive.³⁰⁸ Leaders of local Kolping branches were selected to conduct study exchanges in the United States; one such leader, Joseph Arnold, toured the United States under the project “Revitalization of Religious Life at the Parish Level.”³⁰⁹ The Kolping society itself received various grants from the occupation’s Special Projects program, helping them build a center in Freiburg, and to rebuild their center in Munich.³¹⁰ Upon its construction in 1953, this center in Munich would house over 600 young male workers.³¹¹

While American occupation heartily supported the Kolping Society, this support was problematic. One General Secretary of the Kolping Society, Johannes Natterman, in 1933 publicly declared his willingness to cooperate with the Nazi regime. As a result, the leaders and members of the Kolping Society faced less retaliation from the Nazi state. By the end of the war, 832 groups were still active.³¹² This complacency with the Nazi regime – which may have been a nail in the coffin for other organizations seeking permission to rebuild after the war – was overlooked in the

³⁰⁷ Letter, Dahl to Muench, June 30, 1947, Aloisius Muench Papers, ACUA, box 42, folder 10.

³⁰⁸ McClaskey, *Religious Affairs*, 105.

³⁰⁹ Report “Joseph Arnold,” 1949, Records of U.S. Occupation Headquarters, World War II, Office of the Military Government for Germany, (U.S.), Record Group 260, NARA II, box 200, folder Joseph Arnold.

³¹⁰ Report, “Office of Public Affairs: Highlights of Activities, July 1951,” Records of the Public Affairs Branch, Records of the U.S. High Commissioner for Germany, Record Group 466, NARA II, box 2, folder 3

³¹¹ *Ibid.*

³¹² Heinz A. Raem, *Katholischer Gesellenverein und Deutsche Kolpingsfamilie in der Ära des Nationalsozialismus* (Mainz: Matthias-Grünwald-Verlag, 1982). See also Ruff, *Wayward Flock*, 135-143.

case of the Kolping Society. Indeed, more than overlooked, the Kolping Society's record was seemingly rewritten at times to suggest a stronger opposition to the Nazis. A Religious Affairs Branch report noted that the organization's record against National Socialism was "beyond reproach."³¹³ The awkward truth was that these Catholic leaders and politicians had not collectively been visible in the resistance against the Nazis. This failure became all the more apparent when compared to the resistance of socialists and communists. Unfortunately for these socialists and communists, who risked their life to oppose the Nazis, the American administration found more common ground with Catholics in their vision of Germany's future.

Multiple factors converged which made Catholic labor organizations ideal partners through which to connect with German labor circles. As Catholic labor movements existed on both sides of the Atlantic, American officials and American Catholics were familiar with the message of Catholic Social Teaching, which was anti-communist while also offering a positive message that workers could use to organize their social action. Moreover, the transnational nature of Catholicism, and the pre-existing transatlantic connections between some of these organizations, naturally lent towards fostering transatlantic bonds. In short, Catholic labor organizations offered the possibility to both build transatlantic unity while also effectively curtail communist influence. With these factors in mind, the American occupation forces sought to help rebuild Catholic labor organizations.

³¹³ "Semi-Annual Report Religious Affairs Branch," December, 1949.

4.3 REBUILDING CATHOLIC LABOR ASSOCIATIONS

In the immediate years after the war, the American occupation undertook a series of actions to help Catholic labor organizations build a strong foundation. The American occupation, aided by American Catholic labor leaders, helped to organize and fund conferences, workshops, and discussion groups which focused on Catholic social teaching. The importance of this material aid should not be underestimated, as access to material, printing, and meeting halls was a very real obstacle that hampered the ability of trade unions to resume activity in the first few years after the war.³¹⁴ By promoting Catholic labor activities throughout Germany, the American occupation forces believed it was doing much to “stimulate [the worker] toward assuming responsibility in the solution of his own problems in the light of religious principles.”³¹⁵ These religious principles, they hoped, would increase the influence trade unions and the labor movement in large throughout Germany.

A release by the National Catholic News Service reported that the American administration in Germany sought to “revive Catholic interest in labor union activities,” in part through aiding “the establishment of Catholic Labor schools ... for the training of young men and women for trade union participation” and, “the encouragement of courses on the practical applications of the teachings of the Papal encyclicals on labor.”³¹⁶ More specifically, a Religious Affairs Branch report explained, these schools “train leadership in labor unions, sponsor workshops, seminars, conferences, institutes, discussion clubs which center on the solution of worker’s problems in the

³¹⁴ Berchtold, “Mein Weg.”

³¹⁵ “Semi-Annual Report Religious Affairs Branch,” December, 1949.

³¹⁶ “U.S. Religious Affairs Units and Germans toward Spiritual Democracy,” June 6, 1949, NCWC News Service.

light of Christian principles.”³¹⁷ Essentially, these labor schools would instruct workers in Catholic doctrine, and how to address the problems of workers’ in a Catholic way.

By 1949, Catholic labor leaders had established four of these labor schools in Bavaria, and were developing plans to open two more in Hesse and one in Wuerttemberg-Baden.³¹⁸ The Catholic labor schools in the American zone of occupation were run by the *Katholisches Werkvolk*. Established in 1947, *Werkvolk* replaced the former Southern Association of South German Workers. Its center was in Munich, and was formed specifically to serve Catholic workers in Southern Germany. This organization sought to educate Catholic workers on Catholic Social Teachings, and educate the workers on the message of the encyclicals. To do this, the *Katholisches Werkvolk* not only ran labor schools, but organized conferences, and published a newspaper focused on issues important to working men and women. By 1951, there were 88 active *Werkvolk* groups, organized locally by city or town.³¹⁹ These branches boasted over 200,000 members.³²⁰

The Kochel Labor school in southern Bavaria was one of these labor schools. One of the founders and subsequent leaders of the Kochel School, Alfred Berchtold, worked with the help of the American occupation forces to build this labor school.³²¹ Berchtold was born into a family of school teachers in 1904 in Bayerisch-Gmain, a small Alpine town in southern Bavaria.³²² During the war, he was interned first at the Dachau concentration camp in 1938 before being transported later to Buchenwald in 1939. In 1946, he sought to open a school for Catholic workers to provide them with an education on Catholic social teaching. The American officials were particularly

³¹⁷ Report, “Religious Affairs Semi-annual Report, Catholic Affairs Section, July-December 1949” January 20, 1950, Records of U.S. Occupation Headquarters, World War II, Office of the Military Government for Germany, (U.S), Record Group 260, NARA II, box 205, folder 26.

³¹⁸ Ibid.

³¹⁹ Report, “Highlights: Religious Affairs,” April 19, 1951, Records of the Public Affairs Branch, Records of the U.S. High Commissioner for Germany, Record Group 466, NARA II, Box 1.

³²⁰ “Semi-Annual Report Religious Affairs Branch,” December, 1949.

³²¹ This Alfred Berchtold is not to be confused with the Swiss historian and writer of the same name.

³²² Berchtold, “Mein Weg.”

enthusiastic about his school as Berchtold recalled in his memoir, “especially because a confirmed concentration camp survivor stood at the top of the house. That was a tremendous plus”³²³ The American occupation, which in the past had swept unpleasant truths about Nazism and Catholic complacency under the rug, welcomed the ability to showcase their cooperation with a Catholic victim of the Nazi regime.

In 1948, the school at Kochel “took off,” in the words of Berchtold. Week-long education courses were offered, for which participants paid a small fee. In the first few years, the school benefited heavily from American financial aid. The monetary support for the courses, as well as for furnishings for the rooms, were provided by the American occupation. The occupation forces also provided food to the school, so that the attendees would not have to use any rations while at the course – likely to be a persuasive measure to increase attendance. Berchtold also recalled that oftentimes one or two Americans would sit in on the courses to observe and sometimes participate. This financial support formed the backbone of the schools financing for the first two years.³²⁴

With their courses, the Kochel school sought to influence all levels within the Catholic community. The institute was interested in not only training priests and leaders in the social problems of the day, but also influencing workers directly. During the first week of February 1949, the Catholic Social Institute held a course for priests that focused on topics such as “The development of the modern economy,” “Church and Unions,” and “The work of economy between Private and State Capitalism.” The priests would hopefully use this knowledge gained from the courses to teach Catholic workers. The following two weekends, the Catholic Social Institute held workshops for workers, with 46 participating in the first, and 67 participating in the second.

³²³ Ibid.

³²⁴ Ibid.

One course offered to working youth in the spring of 1949 was “Codetermination Law and its Practical Application.”³²⁵ Codetermination was the practice in which both workers and employees participated in work councils. Management within firms and factories would consult with these councils on a range of issues, including hiring, firing, and payment policies. In theory, the formation of these work councils guaranteed the participation of workers in the decisions of plants and firms.³²⁶ At the core of codetermination was the Catholic concept of subsidiary, which had been laid out in *Quadragesimo Anno*. These work councils would serve as the local advisory body that could handle disputes between workers and employers, and ostensibly circumvent the need for state intervention.³²⁷ Many CDU politicians saw the idea of codetermination, and the participation of workers in company decision making, as a crucial factor in preventing a possible overreach of state power. In their eyes, greater cooperation between employers and employees, not state intervention, would cure the ills of an industrial society. Codetermination would come to be an essential feature of West Germany’s economy, and current scholarship has identified codetermination as an important factor in the success of West Germany’s postwar economic stability.³²⁸ This course topic at the Kochel School illustrates how these courses served as important sites of education, at which Catholic labor leaders could instill workers with a better understanding of the elements of Catholic Social Teaching that informed the CDU’s economic policies.

³²⁵ “Kurzbericht über die Tätigkeit des Katholischen Sozialinstitutes in Kochel im Monat April 1949,” Alfred Berchtold, May 1949, Records of U.S. Occupation Headquarters, World War II, Office of the Military Government for Germany, (U.S), Record Group 260, NARA II, box 205.

³²⁶ Kathleen A. Thelen, *Union of Parts: Labor Politics in Postwar Germany* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University press, 1991), 14-16.

³²⁷ For more on codetermination, see Horst Thum, *Wirtschaftsdemokratie und Mitbestimmung: Von den Anfängen 1916 bis zum Mitbestimmungsgesetz 1976* (Cologne: Bund Verlag, 1991).

³²⁸ This is one of the main arguments put forth by Thelen in *Labor Politics*, 14-16.

Alongside providing funding for labor schools, the American occupation also helped German Catholics to organize larger, zone-wide events. One such event was the Catholic Social Week in Munich, held in 1947 and 1949. This event was the brainchild of Father Prinz, a pastor active in social work, who wanted to bring together the various German Catholic groups which focused on the worker and labor. In a letter to Cardinal Faulhaber of Munich, Prinz wrote: “The purpose of the Catholic Social Week should be to discuss the social ideas of the Catholic Church, as they are in *Rerum Novarum*, *Quadragesimo Anno* and the papal enunciations laid down in earlier times but could be applied to the problems of today.”³²⁹ Such a conference in Bavaria had not taken place before, and as his inspiration, Prinz had drawn heavily from a similar event that had taken place in France a few years earlier.³³⁰ Support for the event gained traction, and in late August of 1947, the diocese of Munich held its first Catholic Social week with much success.³³¹ The overall themes of the convention was “Christianity and Today’s Economy.”

The day consisted of lectures that expounded themes within *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno*.³³² This meeting ended with a press release of a “Social and Economic Program.” The statement had been developed by the attendees of the Catholic Social Week, and summarized the topics discussed during the week. This announcement, in its essence, was a rehashing of the messages of the papal encyclicals. It called for an “economic order... which in all circumstances makes human personality its starting point and its goal.” Such an order would “ensure sustained security and, based on performance, the raising of real workers’ income.” In addition, workers and their family’s “needs must be covered in such a way that people could benefit from the fruits of their work.”

³²⁹ Letter, P. Prinz S.J. to Kardinal Faulhaber, April 9, 1947, Nachlass Faulhaber, Archiv des Erzbistums München und Freising (hereafter cited as AEMF), 6506.

³³⁰ Ibid.

³³¹ Protocol, “Protokoll der Vorarbeiten” Nachlass Faulhaber, AEMF, 6507.

³³² Conference Summary, “Sozial und Wirtschaftsprogramm,” 1947, Nachlass Faulhaber, AEMF, 6507.

Such an economic system, however, would uphold the right of private property: “Private property has important social and economic functions. Socially, it is a valuable pillar for healthy family life.” This commitment to private property, however, was not inalienable. “If the minimum subsistence level is not guaranteed in the domestic economy, the use of private property for socially unacceptable luxury purposes must be reduced to the utmost extent by means of appropriate measures, particularly in tax and commercial policies.”³³³ Such a statement walked the line between fighting for the rights and dignity of workers, while clearly rejecting socialist or communist means to do so.

Following the success of this first social week, Father Prinz and other Catholics attempted a second Catholic Social Week in 1948. This Catholic Social Week was canceled at the last minute due to funding issues. The financial difficulties brought upon by the currency reform had made the conference impossible. In lieu of a large gather, Father Prinz hosted a smaller, more local, conference.³³⁴ Nevertheless, Father Prinz was not deterred, and continued his efforts to hold another Social Week the following year. With the help of American funding, and with the assistance of both the Religious Affairs Branch and the National Catholic Welfare Conference, a large Social Week in Munich would indeed happen the next year. Such an event, whose objective and ability of spreading Catholic Social teaching was clear from the 1947 event, provided the American occupation with an opportunity that fulfilled their desired strategy of meshing German self-help and American support.

The American occupation assisted the event at multiple stages. In the summer of 1949, the American occupation sponsored a conference to plan and coordinate Munich’s Catholic Social

³³³ Ibid.

³³⁴ Letter, Pater Prinz to Eure Eminenz, July 15, 1948. Nachlass Faulhaber, AEMF, Signatur 6507.

Week. This meeting was even attended by an American priest, Father Higgins.³³⁵ A month later, Father Prinz wrote a letter to the Religious Affairs Branch in June of 1949, stating that the planned Catholic Social Week was still “seriously threatened” due to “the lack of money among the workers.” The lack of funds was keeping workers from traveling to Munich in order to participate. The only solution, as Father Prinz saw it, was to provide the workers with funds to travel to Munich.³³⁶ Prinz then petitioned the occupation to provide the funds, which were also granted.³³⁷

The Second Catholic Social week was titled “The Christian New Order of Economy and Society.” The week’s program provides insight into the message of the event, which, like the first Social Week, focused on themes from *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno*. The speeches, concentrated on practical questions as they applied to the German economy. Rather than general theoretical discussions on the basic tenets of Catholic Social teaching, the titles of the talks addressed specific organizational methods and practical workplace organization. For example, many of the discussion groups, such as “The Corporate Work Order” and “The Workers in the Corporate Work Order” would likely have discussed the rights of the worker in the workplace, included the concept of codetermination. Others, such as “Unions and Christian World Order,” presumably discussed Catholic social teaching’s support for unions. Like the first Social Week in 1947, the discussion groups and speeches for the week focused on the importance of forming a new economic order based on Catholic Social Teaching. Supporting unions and fostering cooperation between employers and employees would form the basis of a Christian economic order that would protect the workers.

³³⁵ Report, “Tagung zur Koordinierung von Katholischer sozialer Woche und Katholikentag vom 25. zum 26. Juni 1949,” Records of U.S. Occupation Headquarters, World War II, Office of the Military Government for Germany, (U.S.), Record Group 260, NARA II, box 200, folder 10.

³³⁶ Letter Father Prinz to Dr. Eagan, June 29, 1949, Records of U.S. Occupation Headquarters, World War II, Office of the Military Government for Germany, (U.S.), Record Group 260, NARA II, box 205, folder 34.

³³⁷ Ibid.

With the founding the Federal Republic of Germany in 1949, American funding that had been tied to the occupation dwindled, as the American officials hoped to play a less direct role in German society.³³⁸ A letter in the spring of 1952 shows how dependent such programs had been on American funding. In a letter to the Bishop, Pater Prinz wrote “Now that the American funding has come to an end, I am forced to look for other financing possibilities for my Werkgemeinschaft, retreats, religious exercises, and conferences.” Father Prinz devised a plan to procure funding by setting up a movie theater and charged viewers to raise money to fund a third Catholic social week. His plan to raise money seems to have been successful, as a third Catholic Social Week occurred in Munich in 1952.³³⁹

The Religious Affairs branch was pleased with the outcomes of the increasingly strong Catholic labor organizations. By 1947 Kolping had already regrown to 40,000 members.³⁴⁰ Ever more prolific was the Werkvolk, which by 1951 had over 200,000 members spread among 88 groups throughout Western Germany.³⁴¹ In the second half of 1949, over 60,000 workers had participated in courses at the Kochel labor school.³⁴² In their 1949 semi-annual report, the Religious Affairs Branch reported:

Accompanied by the encouragement and cooperation of U.S. professional personnel, HICOG, Laender, visiting experts, and representatives of voluntary agencies, they [Catholic Organizations] have awakened a sense of community responsibility as is evidenced by a rapid increase in membership of labor unions, founded building cooperatives to assist in housing developments, and established labor schools.³⁴³

³³⁸ Alfred Berchtold, “Mein Weg.”

³³⁹ Pater Prinz to Bishop Faulhaber, January 3, 1952, Nachlass Faulhaber, AEMF, Signatur 6507.

³⁴⁰ Speech, “Der Aufstieg des Kolpingwerkes in Deutschland,” Johannes Dahl, “Aloisius Muench Papers, ACUA, box 5, folder 7.

³⁴¹ “Highlights: Religious Affairs,” April 19, 1951.

³⁴² “Semi-Annual Report Religious Affairs Branch,” December, 1949.

³⁴³ Report, “Religious Affairs Semi-annual Report, Catholic Affairs Section, July-December 1949” January 20, 1950, Records of U.S. Occupation Headquarters, World War II, Office of the Military Government for Germany, (U.S.), Record Group 260, NARA II, box 205, folder 26.

Indeed, by quickly approving of and providing much needed resources for organizations that focused upon educating and organizing workers, the American occupation provided Catholic labor organizations with the means to open schools, offer classes, and hold conferences. These labor schools, institutes, conferences and workshops illustrate that the combination of “German self-help and outside aid” did indeed help to strongly promote movement for Catholic Social Teaching. Deutschland”

4.4 WAKING UP THE CATHOLIC WORKER: THE BOCHUM CATHOLIC CONVENTION

In the immediate decade after the Second World War, the strongest showing of the German Catholic community’s commitment to addressing the concerns of German workers was the Bochum Catholic Convention in the beginning of September 1949. The celebration’s location itself was symbolic – taking place in the heart of the heavily industrialized Ruhr area. This was a stronghold for the German labor movement – Christian, social democratic, and communist alike. Two weeks earlier, the CDU squeaked to victory over the SPD in the 1949 Bundestag elections, gaining 31 percent of the vote to the SPD’s 29.2. While the KPD won only 5.4 percent of the vote, the SPD and KPD together won a larger percentage of the vote than the CDU.³⁴⁴ This indicates a strong showing of support for economic policies that leaned towards a planned economy, rather than the market economy that the CDU advocated for. With the motto “Justice creates Freedom,”

³⁴⁴ Winkler, Germany, 127.

the event orchestrators heralded the day as an important step in pursuing “The reconstruction of the social order according to the laws of Christian justice.”³⁴⁵

Bochum, as the conference was referred to in the Catholic Press, was highly publicized and widely attended, and meant to serve as a call to action in the realm of labor for all Catholics.³⁴⁶ The conference drew in an unprecedented number of participants – 600,000 in total.³⁴⁷ The event required the scheduling of special trains to transport attendees from throughout the four zones of Germany, and 1,800 Bochum Catholics offered their homes free of charge to the visitors.³⁴⁸ The opening meeting alone, which was held in a steel plant, boasted an audience of over 60,000 people. The closing ceremony drew an even more impressive crowd of 400,000.³⁴⁹ This extraordinary participation demonstrates that the theme of the conference resonated with the German people. In 1949, with the economy and social system recovering, and the scarcity of the postwar years still a painful reality for many German workers, a discussion of social welfare and social justice was a timely topic.

This Catholic Conference had two important themes running through it. First was a strong message of anti-socialism and anti-capitalism. Pius XII’s speech made no doubt what this Catholic Conference was all about:

The world of labor must not be permitted to fall into the hands of those who preach godless materialism... When, recently, a line was drawn between the Catholic faith and atheistic communism, which was binding for all Catholics, it was done to build a dam for the sake of rescuing not only the workers, but all men from Godless Marxism. The decree has nothing to do with opposition between rich and poor, between the capitalist and the proletarian, the property owners and the property-

³⁴⁵ Ibid.

³⁴⁶ “Vorbereitung” in *Gerechtigkeit schafft Frieden: Der 73. Deutsche Katholikentag vom 1. bis 5. September 1949 im Bochum* (Paderborn: Verlag Bonifacius, 1949), 11. This is the official publication of the proceedings of the Catholic Convention in Bochum. Hereafter, it will be cited as *Gerechtigkeit schafft Frieden*.

³⁴⁷ Memorandum “Monthly Report: Religious Affairs, Hesse,” September, 1949, Records of U.S. Occupation Headquarters, World War II, Office of the Military Government for Germany, (U.S), Record Group 260, NARA II, box 204.

³⁴⁸ “Baldachin mit Schornsteinzug, *Der Spiegel*, July 28, 1949. This information is also referenced in “Monthly Report: Religious Affairs, Hesse,” September, 1949.

³⁴⁹ “Monthly Report: Religious Affairs, Hesse,” September, 1949.

less. It was about the liberation and preservation of religion and the Christian faith, their free activity, and thus also about the happiness and the dignity, the right and the freedom of the working man.³⁵⁰

Pope Pius XI's opening address, which was given in German and broadcasted via Vatican Radio throughout all of West Germany, made the incompatibility between Catholicism and communism unquestionable. In his address, he reminded Catholics of the papal decree against communism, which had been issued a few months earlier in July of 1949. This decree declared that any Catholic who propagated the teachings of communism would be excommunicated. Officially banning Catholics from becoming communists was not a denial of the plight of the workers, but about the freedom of the Christian faith and the dignity of the workers. This decree, Pope Pius XII told German Catholics, was issued to save the workers, and all others, whose salvation was threatened by communist teachings.

While the first message of the Conference was anti-communism, a second message was one of building unity among Catholic workers. Many American and German Catholics saw Catholic Social Teaching, guided by the papal encyclicals on capital, labor, and social conditions, as the solution both to the problems of capitalism and to the growing threat of communism. The Conference sought to highlight the fact that Catholics in both countries took inspiration from these encyclicals, with the hopes of promoting an image of transatlantic worker's solidarity based on Catholic social teaching. The organizers sought to make this a strong visual message by inviting delegations from other western countries. Bishop Muench, whose help was enlisted by the Bochum organizers to procure foreign guests, wrote: "An international character will be given to this meeting in this that representatives from labor groups in other countries, chiefly of course, from countries of Europe, are expected to attend."³⁵¹ German and American labor leaders also tried hard

³⁵⁰ Address, "Papst Pius XII an den 73. Deutschen Katholikentag" in *Gerechtigkeit schafft Frieden*, 4.

³⁵¹ Letter, Muench to Archbishop Lucey, April 14, 1949, Aloisius Muench Papers, ACUA, box 44, folder 16.

to bring American labor leaders to Germany for the Bochum Catholic Conference. Muench said that “invitations are also being sent to labor groups overseas, especially to American labor unions.”³⁵² To make this goal a reality, in spring of 1949, Muench wrote to several American bishops, and American Catholic labor leaders.³⁵³

The reason behind securing international guests, Bishop Muench stated enthusiastically, was to build a sense of community among these workers:

To bring our Catholic workers together from different nations will give now a sense of solidarity to them, and thus make them aware of their strength in international fields. In these times, characterized as never before by international decision of greatest moment, nothing could be more important than to have Christian workers lock arms for united action in matters that touch their well-being.³⁵⁴

The “international decision of greatest moment” referred to the perceived threat of communism spreading to western Europe. Building international solidarity among Catholic workers was an important counter move to prohibit such influence. Bringing together workers from various nations during the Bochum Catholic Convention was a chance to build such camaraderie. Overall, the initiative for the event to have an “international character” was successful as the convention hosted 160 foreign guests from sixteen different nations.³⁵⁵

When bringing in American labor leaders, however, Muench and the organizers ran into a specific problem. American workers and labor leaders did not have flexible schedules nor the capital to make such a trip. One American priest replied to Muench’s invitation with the following: “The labor men I talked with were unable to see how they could send a special delegation from this country because of cost and time involved.”³⁵⁶ Transatlantic travel was still an expensive and lengthy affair in 1949, requiring a two-week expensive trip by boat just to reach France. Many

³⁵² Ibid.

³⁵³ Ibid.

³⁵⁴ Ibid.

³⁵⁵ “Vorbereitung,” in *Gerechtigkeit schafft Frieden*, 11.

³⁵⁶ Letter, McGowan to Muench, June 19, 1949, Aloisius Muench Papers, ACUA, box 44, folder 16.

organizers showed interest, but ultimately were unable to attend. Nevertheless, the United States sent a sizeable delegation due to the large number of American Catholics already in Germany. Among the Americans were individuals associated with the National Catholic Welfare Conference and the Religious Affairs Branch, such as the journalist Max Jordan, and religious affairs officers Urban Fleege and George Donovan.³⁵⁷

Perhaps the most active American at Bochum was Reverend George G. Higgins, who participated in one of the convention's workshops. Higgins was a leading figure in the Catholic labor movement in the United States. Born in 1916, he had grown up in the American Mid-West in a working-class family. His father was a machinist for the railroad, and an ardent union supporter. Receiving his seminary education in the 1930s, at the height of the Great Depression, Higgins' education was seeped in documents surrounding social teaching.³⁵⁸ Upon graduating from the Catholic University of America in 1944, he took a position with the Social Action Department of the National Catholic Welfare Conference. He would spend the next years developing relationships with union leaders and members, and writing extensively in periodicals on issues of labor, social justice, and Catholic social teaching. In the late summer of 1949, Higgins spent three months in Germany as a visiting labor expert and was familiar to many of the participants of the convention.

The Bochum Catholic Convention also featured a workshop dedicated to fostering a transnational conversation on workers' rights and Catholic Social Teaching. This lecture series was prompted by "the realization that Catholics are often not thoroughly informed about the social situations that exist in different countries." This lack of information caused serious problems in

³⁵⁷ "Monthly Report: Religious Affairs, Hesse," September, 1949.

³⁵⁸ John J. O'Brien, *George G Higgins and the Quest for Worker Justice: The Evolution of Catholic Social Thought in America* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2005), 19-22.

the social work of the church, as “those in other countries could not rightly understand the achievements in social work nor have links to those across borders to prompt a conversation on social work.”³⁵⁹ This workshop, the organizers hoped, would build the necessary relationships to make international Catholic discussions on labor more possible.

Accordingly, a main portion of the workshop, titled “Social Work in and with Foreign Lands,” was dedicated to giving countries the opportunity to share their respective achievements and struggles in the realm of labor. The participating countries – the United States, England, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Italy – were all members of the newly emerging Western community. In the summary of the workshop, the countries were grouped into three categories based on the strength and vigor of the Catholic labor movement: “The first group consists of America and England, which have a relatively calm, steady social development, in which the trade unions are also fertilized by Christian thought, and otherwise truly neutral and co-founded by Catholics.” The second group was Italy and France where “on the other hand, the Catholics are not only concerned with social progress in the spirit of Catholic social doctrine, but also with Marxists and Communists.” The last group was the Benelux countries, where “the Social Program of the Popes are sought in Catholic organizations without any violent dispute with other organizations.”³⁶⁰

The speech on the United States was given by Higgins. He spoke of the strength of the Catholic labor movement in the United States and stressed the importance of an alliance between Europeans and Americans. Higgins detailed a healthy and thriving Catholic labor movement in the United States, and proudly stated that “The Church in the United States ... has earned the respect and the loyalty of the American labor movement by reason of its vigorous leadership in defending

³⁵⁹ “Arbeitsgemeinschaft Soziale Arbeit in und mit dem Ausland,” in *Gerechtigkeit schafft Frieden*, 480-481.

³⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

the rights of organized labor ... and by its courage in proposing a far-reaching program for the reconstruction of the American social order.”³⁶¹ The importance of such a strong movement, furthermore, lay in its ability to counteract communist and socialist influence among the workers:

We in the United States are convinced -- as all of you are, I am sure-- that in the long run the only effective answer to Communism and to doctrinaire Socialism is a democratic economic system which will give to the workingman that status and dignity to which he is entitled as a child of God but for which he has so often been deprived, with grave injustice, under the system of modern capitalism.³⁶²

Higgins ended his speech with a call for more transatlantic cooperation

The movement is growing, thank be to God, and I can assure you that it is willing and anxious to cooperate more closely than ever before with the Catholic social action movements of Germany and other countries. In the homely jargon of the English language, we are all in the same boat together – in more senses than one, but particularly, of course, in the sense that we all share the same Blessed Faith and social principles.³⁶³

Higgin’s participation in this workshop demonstrates the changing relationship of the United States within this newly emerging community. For a Convention based on the dignity of the worker, participation by the United States, with its reputation for harsh capitalism, may have seemed like an odd inclusion. Nevertheless, the United States was included as a Western nation with a strong Catholic labor movement – stronger than even some countries in continental Europe. Rather than exist as an opposite to Catholic Europe, the United States was presented as an important ally to European Catholics. With Higgin’s address, the American Catholic labor union was recognized and applauded.

The Bochum Catholic Convention was heavily covered in the Catholic and secular press. In fact, an article in *Petrusblatt* proclaimed: “There is no Catholic Convention in the Press or in the public, at congresses or conferences, so much talked about as the Bochum Conference.”³⁶⁴

³⁶¹ Speech, “Die Lage in den Vereinigten Staaten,” Henry Higgins, Diözesanrat der Katholiken im Erzbistum Köln, HAEK, folder 9.

³⁶² Ibid.

³⁶³ Ibid.

³⁶⁴ “Von Bochum nach Passau,” *Petrusblatt*, August 20, 1950.

Michael, *Petrusblatt*, and *Echo der Zeit* all carried lengthy articles featuring the happenings in Bochum. All Catholic publications published Pope Pius's opening address., as well as a series of resolutions passed by the Bochum Katholikentag.³⁶⁵ An article in *Michael* illustrates that Bochum was heralded as an important step towards winning workers back from socialist influence.

The Bochum Katholikentag discussed the social questions of the working class, which has turned its back on the church. The workers do not consider much of our church. They are no longer fiercely opposed, it is true, but the Church leaves them indifferent. 'You are going to end anyways,' they say, 'you will die a gentle death like other world religions, which rarely grow older than two thousand years. All respect for your cultural and moral achievements, but the future belongs to us, the socialists.' We have no right to be upset that these workers do not expect caritas and social lectures - as important as these are - but justice. The future of the Church in Germany will in part depend on whether the workforce returns to the church.³⁶⁶

The article, titled, "Will Bochum Wake Us Up," succinctly summed up the importance of stimulating a German Catholic labor movement, and expressed the hope that Bochum was the commencement. Bochum was only the beginning, and that Catholic workers needed to stay ever vigilant, as winning back the workers was necessary for the Church to remain healthy.

The secular press also covered the events of the Catholic Convention in Bochum. The *Rheinische Post*, a popular secular newspaper in North-Rhine Westphalia, hailed the social decision reached at Bochum as "proof in themselves that workers and enterprises could come together and achieve positive results."³⁶⁷ The *Rheinische Zeitung*, more left-leaning in its views, ran an editorial that praised the main address by CDU politician and then Minister President of North Rhine-Westphalia Karl Arnold. His address included a strong call for the nationalization of key industries, and for the right of codetermination for workers. The *Rheinische Zeitung* article

³⁶⁵ Report, "Digest of German Catholic Press," Records of U.S. Occupation Headquarters, World War II, Office of the Military Government for Germany, (U.S), Record Group 260, NARA II, box 170, folder 46.

³⁶⁶ "Wird Bochum uns Wecken," *Michael*, September 4, 1949.

³⁶⁷ Memorandum, "German Catholic Congress at Bochum," Sept 30, 1949, Office of the Assistance Secretary of State for Occupied Areas 46-49, General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59, NARA II, box 6756, folder 1945-1949.

caused some concern for the American military, which evaluated the message of the article as: “Arnold is fighting with the right things in mind but on the wrong political front. Of course, the hope is implicit that he will change the political front.”³⁶⁸ *Der Spiegel* ran an article preceding the event, but declined to say anything about the social action message of Bochum, and commented instead on the construction of the site: “The most valuable thing on the fairground was - so far - the toilets. 500 are set up.” After describing a 30-foot-high cross that adorned the fairground, the article then included a subtle jab: “To the right of the cross will march the clergy, on the left the laymen.” This perhaps suggested that the Catholic hierarchy was not, in fact, on the side of the workers. The clergy lay to the political right, while the workers were on the left.

Nevertheless, with a large attendance and relevant topic, the Bochum Katholikentag was an important moment in which the German Catholic community, leaders and laity alike, strongly asserted their core beliefs surrounding worker rights. They strongly denounced complete state control of social and economic issues, and argued for a stronger social welfare system based on Christian teaching. If anti-communism was one side of the coin, Catholic unity was the other. The delegations of foreign workers were a symbolic gesture of solidarity. Through a workshop dedicated to international discussion, the Bochum Katholikentag sought to establish a dialogue among Western Nations on the pertinent social questions of the day. Along with other European countries, American representatives were included in this discussion. As shown by Higgin’s speech, American Catholic capitalized on this invitation to showcase the Catholic labor movements in the United States and make a plea for better unity with European Catholic labor movements. Such events illustrate how Americans and Europeans worked collectively to decide the direction of the newly forming Western community.

³⁶⁸ Ibid.

The Catholic Convention stressed the message that communism and socialism were not only misguided but dangerous solutions to the problems of workers. Communism was characterized as a direct attack on the Christian faith and the freedom of the worker. Second was a message of international unity among Catholic workers. This unity, the Catholic Convention wanted to convey, was a crucial building block for a future in which a strong western Europe could withstand communist influence radiating from the East. At the very least, these calls for Western labor solidarity between the United States and Germany was an acknowledgement by Catholics on both sides of the Atlantic of their commitment to realizing Catholic Social Teaching.

4.5 CONCLUSION

With aid of the American military government, Catholic labor organizations became important vehicles of propaganda for the established of the social market economy promoted by the CDU and Ludwig Erhard as minister of economics in the Adenauer administration. It is difficult to quantify how effective the Catholic courses, workshops, and conferences were in garnering support for the economic policies of the CDU and the social market economy. Nevertheless, in the years leading up to the first Bundestag election, Catholic workers received systematic education to convince them of the merits of Christian Social Teaching and the social market economy. With the 1949 election, the Federal Republic took an important step towards becoming a western-oriented market economy, although by the thin margin by which the CDU defeated the SPD during this first West German election. In 1953, the CDU's popularity increased by almost four percent, winning 34.8 percent of the vote while the SPD remained stagnant at 29.3. The improvement of economic conditions and standards of living conditions in West Germany throughout the 1950s

would give legitimacy to the social market economy and further increase the popularity to the CDU, until the party reached an absolute majority of 50.2 percent of the vote in 1957. While also the SPD reached a growing share of the voters, it would take until 1972 for the first - and only time - beat the CDU at the national elections. Riding on the wave of rapid economic growth and markedly improving living standards for the entire population, the CDU was able to preserve its popularity, and maintain control over the government until 1966 when it entered into a grand coalition with the SPD.

5.0 THE CONSUMING CATHOLIC: CATHOLIC WOMEN'S MAGAZINES AND THE RISE OF CONSUMER CULTURE

In the Spring of 1950, Frau Anne Marie Saupp, a member of the German Catholic Women's League (Katholischer Deutscher Frauenbund, KDFB), traveled to the United States with a group of German women to partake in an exchange program funded by the Women's Affairs Branch of the American occupation, and partially sponsored by the National Catholic Welfare Conference (NCWC). Ostensibly, the trip provided these women with the "chance to create a bridge of understanding" between Germans and Americans.³⁶⁹ While in the United States, Saupp participated in joint conferences with the American National Council of Catholic Women, where discussions were held on a variety of issues ranging from family and marriage, to welfare and charity. Much of the trip, however, revolved around conversations about the household. The conference included talks on "consumer economics" and new household technology. The women even toured an appliance manufacturing factory in Detroit, Michigan. Frau Saupp praised the plethora of "notable housewives" she encountered and marveled at the ease with which they worked in their "well-equipped kitchens." The standard of living for American women clearly made a deep impression on her. German Catholic women came to see this high standard of living, filled with household commodities and mass manufactured goods, as a defining and alluring factor of the emerging western community.

In the decade after the Second World War, Germans searched for stability and comfort after years of economic uncertainty, social upheaval, and the ravages of war. Historian Eckart

³⁶⁹ Letter containing a report, Frau Saupp to Ehrle, March 10, 1951, Katholischer Deutscher Frauenbund, archive, Köln, 2 – 142 -6.

Conze identified this search for security as a defining feature of the Federal Republic of Germany in the latter half of the 20th century.³⁷⁰ Many turned inwards, focusing not on politics, but on the family and home.³⁷¹ With this retreat to the domestic sphere came an emphasis on standards of living and household consumption. As Germany rebuilt during the occupation, Germans in both the east and west keenly appraised which system – capitalist or communist – could offer them security and comfort.³⁷² Historians such as Victoria de Grazia, and David Crew have illustrated that the conceptions of “needs” in the 1950s expanded to not only include the basic necessities of food, clothing, and housing, but also consumer commodities previously considered luxuries, such as cars, washing machines, and refrigerators.³⁷³ This placed pressure on western Europe to expand their social welfare systems, and pressure on eastern Europe to match the commodity production of the west.³⁷⁴ This focus on the standard of living and household consumption, and which government could provide it, became a central battle site between the communist countries of eastern Europe and capitalist countries of western Europe.

Historians have begun to trace how these changes in consumption came about, and the main actors of change. As one of the first historians to address the rise of mass consumption in West Germany, Michael Wildt traced the shift after 1945 from modest to mass consumerism in West Germany, and argued that at the end of the 1950s, consumption practices had altered

³⁷⁰ Eckart Conze, *Die Suche nach Sicherheit: Eine Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland von 1949 bis in die Gegenwart* (Munich: Siedler, 2009), 14-16.

³⁷¹ Robert Moeller, *Protecting Motherhood: Women and the Family in the Politics of Postwar West Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 10-20; Donna Harsh “Industrialization, Mass Consumption, Post-Industrial Society,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Modern German History*, ed. Helmut Walser Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 666.

³⁷² David F. Crew, “Consuming Germany in the Cold War: Consumption and National Identity in East and West Germany, 1949-1989, an Introduction,” in *Consuming Germany in the Cold War*, ed. David F. Crew (Oxford: Berg, 2003), 1-5.

³⁷³ Victoria de Grazia *Irresistible Empire: America’s Advance through the 20th Century*, (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005), 340-345; Crew, “Consuming Germany,” 5-7.

³⁷⁴ Walter L. Hixson, *Parting the Curtain: Propaganda, Culture, and the Cold War, 1945-1961* (New York: St. Martin’s, 1997), 151-214.

dramatically as the result of rising wages and proliferation of luxury goods and mass-produced food.³⁷⁵ Later works attempted to not only map this rise of consumer culture, but also analyze the institutional and commercial bodies which advocated for this development. Victoria de Grazia's *Irresistible Empire* saw the rise of mass consumption in Europe as an American import. She analyzed how European business leaders adopted and molded American consumption habits and accompanying business practices such as the chain store, scientific advertising, and branding.³⁷⁶ Erica Carter's *How German Is She* placed gender at the center of this increased consumerism, and examined how the activities of West German federal agencies and companies' effective advertisements convinced women to participate in the transformation of the Federal Republic into a consumerist nation.³⁷⁷ Women emerged as the central figures in this new postwar consumer culture, and throughout the 1950s, commodity consumption became the central focus of a housewife's responsibilities. Both de Grazia and Carter developed the idea of a consumer citizen. For de Grazia, this concept describes how European ideas of social responsibility blended with American modes of consumption to create an economic political system where the state defined the minimum standard of living, and intervened in the market to assure all citizens maintained that level.³⁷⁸ For Carter, the consumer citizen referred to how West German women participated in the reconstruction of the West German economy, and thus the construction of a West German identity, by exercising their purchasing power. This new identity, Carter argued, was largely defined in economic terms and based on concepts of consumption and material betterment.³⁷⁹

³⁷⁵ Michael Wildt, *Am Beginn der "Konsumgesellschaft": Mangelersahrung, Lebenshaltung, Wohlstandshoffnung in Westdeutschland in den fünfziger Jahren* (Hamburg: Ergebnisse Verlag, 1994).

³⁷⁶ See the chapter "The Consumer-Citizen: How Europeans Traded Rights for Goods," in De Grazia, *Irresistible Empire*, 336-373.

³⁷⁷ In particular, see the chapter "The Consuming Woman as Boundary of the West German Nation," in Erica Carter, *How German Is She?: Postwar West German Reconstruction and the Consuming Women* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1997), 55-78.

³⁷⁸ De Grazia, *Irresistible Empire*, 336-373.

³⁷⁹ See in particular the chapter "The Housewife as Consumer Citizen," in Carter, *How German*, 78-110.

By examining Catholic magazines, this chapter provides another perspective into the rise of mass consumption in Germany after the Second World War. Both de Grazia and Carter focused on how businesses, advertising agencies, and governmental bodies promoted consumer culture throughout 1950s West Germany. These institutions, however, had an obvious vested interest in the increased consumption of goods. Businesses and advertising agencies benefited monetarily by convincing people to buy more, and high standards of living provided legitimacy to the capital system of the Federal Republic and United States. This chapter illustrates that this burgeoning materialism had surprising support from segments of German Catholic society, a development that seems counterintuitive given the church's wariness about consumer culture. The pages of certain Catholic women's magazines exhibited not only a wholehearted acceptance of consumerism, but promoted it, with little to no discussion about the influence of the American lifestyle or crass materialism on German traditions. This proliferation of consumer culture into the religious sphere illustrates how central the development of a consumer capitalist society was to the reconstruction of West Germany's postwar society.

This chapter explores the discourse set forth by German Catholic women's magazines published throughout the early 1950s regarding the roles of women as consumer, housewife, and young unmarried worker. This rhetoric encouraged women to embrace household consumerism; publications by the German Catholic press featured articles and advertisements that prompted women to buy the latest commodities for their homes, and to stay current with the newest fashions. Moreover, this discussion of consumption was juxtaposed against an evaluation of what a planned economy could offer. In the pages of Catholic women's magazines, the ability to buy an abundance of household goods and fashionable apparel was marketed as a specifically Western capitalist perk. Women living in the United States, the epitome of a capitalist consumer paradise, were enviable in their material possessions, while women living under eastern communist states were miserable

with their lack of goods and choice. Thus, during the early Cold War, Catholic women's magazines branded countries with market economies as consumer paradises. It was, as these magazines suggest, this material consumption— rather than a commitment to democracy, freedom of speech, or human rights – that marked the difference between East and West for these German women.

5.1 GENDER UNDER CHURCH AND OCCUPATION

Gender heavily influenced the avenues through which the average Catholic woman participated in and molded the newly emerging transatlantic Western community. While the American occupation forces and Catholic organizations in the realm of labor, press, and youth encouraged individuals to foster Western-oriented, international partnerships and collaborations, these objectives within the sphere of women's groups were less explicit. Rather than focusing on developing international Catholic ties or promoting values that would later be considered western, conferences designed for Catholic women concentrated on issues of the private sphere: child rearing, strengthening the family, and household consumption. This difference can in part be explained by American occupation policy regarding women, as well as the dominant Catholic teaching regarding gender roles.

Within the Religious Affairs Branch of the American occupation, Catholic women's groups commanded little attention. While the Religious Affairs Branch and the National Catholic Welfare Conference had clear objectives and tailored activities concerning the Catholic press, Catholic labor groups, and as we shall see in Chapter Five, Catholic youth groups, the same attention was not afforded Catholic women's organizations. Instead, endeavors involving women's organizations were often delegated to the Women's Affairs Branch. Barring a few exceptions, the

Women's Affairs Office organized conferences and transatlantic exchanges across secular and confessional lines. As a result, more than other spheres of activity, undertakings involving women tended to cross confessional and partisan divides. Frau Saupp, for example, was part of a group of women from a variety of major women's organizations throughout West Germany that went on the exchanges. Saupp participated on behalf of the Catholic contingent. This makes it difficult to identify a specifically Catholic voice within activities for women in American occupation initiatives.

The Women's Affairs Branch itself was created relatively late in the occupation – 1948.³⁸⁰ It was welcomed by German and American women, as women involved in the occupation efforts, women's groups in the United States, and German women's organizations themselves, had strongly advocated for such a branch since the onset of the occupation.³⁸¹ The importance of women as a demographic in Germany should have been obvious to American occupation officials. The carnage of the Second World War had created a steep gender imbalance in Germany; there were 7 million more women than men in postwar Germany.³⁸² Women, as a result, were integral to the postwar labor force. Jobs in industry and trade that had previously been dominated by men required female labor to rebuild.³⁸³ What was more, women shouldered the task of creating livable spaces for themselves and their families; over three million German men had been killed during the war, and as of 1946, two million more were still detained in prisoner of war camps. Men who did return from the front often lacked the mental or emotional capability to help run a household.³⁸⁴

³⁸⁰ Rebecca Boehling "Gender Roles in Ruins: German Women and Local Politics under American Occupation, 1945-1955" in *Gender and the Long Postwar: The United States and the Two Germanys, 1945-1989*, eds., Karen Hageman and Sonya Michel (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014), 55-57.

³⁸¹ Ibid.

³⁸² Ibid.

³⁸³ Ibid. See also Angela Vogel, "Familie" in *Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, ed. Wolfgang Benz (Frankfurt: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1983). Unlike the labor forces in the United States and the United Kingdom during the Second World War, which mobilized female workers for the war effort, Nazi policy strongly encouraged women to remain in the household.

³⁸⁴ Moeller, *Protecting Motherhood*, 30-31.

Women were clearly going to play an important part in the foundation of the Federal Republic of Germany, yet the American occupation forces did little to address them directly.

The fear that women would be enticed by communist propaganda finally spurred the decision to create a Women's Affairs Branch.³⁸⁵ A 1950 report from the Public Affairs Branch of the American Occupation worried over the intensifying "efforts of the Communists and the Communist-affiliated organizations to take over women's groups in the American Zone."³⁸⁶ Operating through the Democratic Women's League of Germany (*Demokratischer Frauenbund Deutschlands*, DFD), communists were allegedly sending out "unremitting propaganda" accusing the United States of the "exploitation of Europe via the Marshall Plan," and luring in women with "fallacious advertising of anti-Communist speakers to attract women to *Frauenbund* meetings."³⁸⁷ The DFD was a women's organization founded in 1947 comprising of communists, socialists, and non-politically affiliated women who had been active in the anti-fascist movement during the Nazi regime. The American occupation officials viewed this organization as a communist front, and distrusted its overtly political voice.³⁸⁸ To help strengthen what they deemed as more non-partisan women's organizations, and thus divert membership from the DFD, OMGUS finally created the Women's Affairs Branch in 1948.³⁸⁹ This branch, however, stressed civil participation such as volunteer work and community-centered activities over political activities such as running for office or other public roles.³⁹⁰

Within German Catholic circles, women's activities in reconstruction were also confined to specific civic duties. A report by the historical division of the U.S. High Commissioner for

³⁸⁵ Boehing, "Gender Roles in Ruins," 55-56.

³⁸⁶ Report, "Office of Public Affairs Report," September 1950, General Records of the Department of State, Records of the Office of Western European Affairs, 1941-1954, Record Group 59, box 2437, folder 81.

³⁸⁷ "Office of Public Affairs Report," September 1950.

³⁸⁸ Boehing, "Gender Roles," 50.

³⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 57.

Germany reported that while women certainly “made a great contribution to the religious life of Germany through many lines of service,” and that the churches “do lay great stress on the value of special organizations for women,” the leadership roles for women within religious institutions was lacking. While women played an integral part in welfare and community building projects, “German women have received little direct official recognition,” and had a “lack of opportunity to share in the councils of the church.”³⁹¹ This criticism of the church rings hollow, however, considering the American occupation force’s late addition of the Women’s Affairs Branch, and their own emphasis placed on civic duty roles for women rather than political leadership. Nevertheless, by both the occupation and the Catholic church, women were relegated into the role of homemaker and volunteer.

This positioning of women into the domestic sphere reflected the general trend in gender relations during the 1950s in Germany. While working was a necessity for many women, working women were still stigmatized in Germany society. Social norms expected women to be the center of the home and family, and whether working or not, assume the full burden of housework.³⁹² Politics in the Federal Republic of Germany remained male-dominated during the 1950s. Only seven percent of the first Bundestag was female, and women comprised a measly 15 percent of party membership throughout the 1950s. Those women who were active in politics were an anomaly and viewed themselves as a sort of elite; they tended to be highly educated, older, single, and unburdened with child care.³⁹³

³⁹¹ Henry P. Pilgert and Hildegard Waschke, *Women in West Germany: With Special Reference to the Policies and Programs of the Women’s Affairs Branch* (Washington D.C.: Historical Division Office of the Executive Secretary of the U.S. High Commissioner for Germany, 1952), 54.

³⁹² Carter, *How German*, 52.

³⁹³ Elizabeth D. Heineman, *What Difference Does a Husband Make: Women and Marital Status in Nazi and Postwar Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 141.

While the Basic Law of the Federal Republic, adopted in May of 1949, ostensibly tackled gender equality, little changed in the immediate postwar period. Article 3, Paragraph 2 of Basic Law directly – if vaguely – addressed women’s equality by affirming that men and women had equal rights. What was left ambiguous, however, was whether this equality was as voting citizens, as workers, or as parents and wives.³⁹⁴ Many conservative policy officials, unsurprisingly, did not believe this proclamation of equality should extend into the private sphere. The Catholic hierarchy and leading members of the CDU led the crusade against equalizing gender roles in the home. For familial and social stability, they argued, the husband needed to remain the unquestionable head of the household.³⁹⁵ As a result, the Federal Republic’s Civil Code, which defined women’s economic and social rights and had been in existence since 1900, was left mostly unchanged until 1957. This left wives subordinate to the husband, limiting her say in her right to work, her control over property, and even in parental decisions.³⁹⁶

These provisions followed the then-dominant Catholic ideology surrounding the role of women.³⁹⁷ From the late 19th century and lasting until the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s, ideas of Marian piety heavily influenced female gender roles within the church.³⁹⁸ Women were presented as pure, chaste, and motherly, and meant to govern the domestic sphere.³⁹⁹ The rise of industrialization in the 1800s served to widen the gap between the male-dominated public space

³⁹⁴ For a discussion of the debate surrounding the treatment of gender equality in the adoption of the Basic Law, see Chapter 2, “Constituting Political Bodies: Gender and the Basic Law,” in Moeller, *Protecting Motherhood*, 38-75.

³⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 66-70.

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 41. It was not until 1957 that the civil code was revised with the Law on the Equality of Men and Women in Civil Law, which granted women the right to employment, the ability to retain her premarital assets, and gave her more power in exercising parental power.

³⁹⁷ Ruff’s *Wayward Flock* deals extensively with Catholic organizations for young women in the early years of the Federal Republic. He argues that questions of gender roles heavily influenced the marked decreased in young women’s membership in organizations for young women throughout the 1950s.

³⁹⁸ For a discussion of the “feminization” of the church, and the rise of Marian devotion see David Blackbourn, *Marpingen: Apparitions of the Virgin Mary in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994).

³⁹⁹ For a discussion of the rise of the gendered separation of the public and private sphere in Germany see Rebekka Habermas, *Frauen und Männer des Bürgertums: Eine Familiengeschichte, 1850-1850* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht Verlag, 2000).

and female-governed domestic space, while simultaneously pushing working class women out of the home and into the public sphere.⁴⁰⁰ German Church leaders decried the increase of wage-earning women, proclaiming that the movement of women into the public sphere masculinized women and feminized men. By the 20th century, they compared women who worked, wore trousers, or campaigned for equal rights were compared to the fallen Eve, the root of all sin and the opposite of the Virgin Mary.⁴⁰¹

The Catholic Church's official stance on gender roles and on the separation of public and private spheres continued after the Second World War. Church leaders in women's organizations and youth groups attempted to rejuvenate ideas of Marian piety. Church officials tried to restore Marian congregations, which had developed in the early 1900s to cultivate female piety through prayer, hymns, and worship at the local parish. In the postwar period, church officials re-established 600 such congregations.⁴⁰² Church officials also made clear that flirting, dancing, and other forms of social interaction between unmarried men and women went against church teaching.⁴⁰³ The uncompromising positions Catholic officials took on issues regarding a woman's place in society made it difficult for Catholic women, particularly the younger generation, to reconcile their faith with the newly emerging German postwar society. This new West German society was characterized by rising standards of living, the lure of mass consumption, and a wave of popular culture. Young women left Catholic organizations in droves, bored of meetings that preached piety, the supremacy of family, and outdated values concerning women.⁴⁰⁴

⁴⁰⁰ For a discussion of the effects of industrialization on the conceptions of the public and private sphere see Leonore Davidhoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class: Explorations in Feminism and History* (New York: Routledge, 1992).

⁴⁰¹ Ruff, *Wayward Flock*, 100.

⁴⁰² *Ibid.*, 90-94.

⁴⁰³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 115-118.

Entangled in the debate on female gender roles were discussions of American influence on German women and society. To many conservative Germans, the United States posed a threat to the morals of German women. While studies such as Uta Poiger's *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels*, and Kasper Maase's *BRAVO* illustrate the German fascination for American culture, particularly among the youth, strong segments of the population viewed American culture more skeptically.⁴⁰⁵ In the postwar period, anti-American clichés concerning the rampant hedonism in the United States were prevalent in Germany, cutting across class, educational, and political boundaries. As Christoph Müller illustrates in his work *West Germans Against the West*, the segments of West German society that protested social change or sexual equality often conflated these changes in German society with the corrosive influence of the United States. In doing so, they evoked an image of the United States that was defined by mass consumerism and sexually liberated, career-oriented women.⁴⁰⁶ In the postwar period, this image of the United States was further compounded by the fraternization between German women and the American G.I.'s who were stationed in Germany at the time. The relationships between Germans and American soldiers were harshly condemned by conservative portions of the German population – the Catholic Church being one of them. To them, the relations stood as a visible symbol of American hedonism.⁴⁰⁷ Many Germans accused American lifestyles and culture as promoting promiscuity, overt sexuality, and excessive consumption, and perceived it as a dangerous influence on German women.

Based on the Catholic Church's teachings on gender, and on the perceived negative influence that American culture could have on German women, one would expect articles in Catholic women's magazines to exhibit reservations towards mass consumption and household

⁴⁰⁵ Poiger, *Jazz*; Maase, *BRAVO*.

⁴⁰⁶ See the chapter "Hedonism and Equality," in Müller, *Against the West*, 121.

⁴⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 124.

consumerism. However, on the contrary, these Catholic women's magazines presented 20th century mass consumerism as surprisingly symbiotic with postwar Catholic ideals, and oftentimes upheld American women as shining role models. The magazines showcase a Catholic community caught between older, more conservative values, and a new world filled with consumer goods and changing roles for women.

5.2 A CHANGE OF FACE

Frau und Mutter and *Frau und Beruf* were two popular Catholic women's magazines, published by the Catholic Women's Society of Germany (*Katholische Frauengemeinschaft Deutschlands*, KFD). This organization was the central organization for Catholic women's affairs, and had branches in every diocese. *Frau und Mutter*, which translates to *Wife and Mother*, was founded in 1909 under the title "Die Mutter." It was banned by the Nazis in 1939, falling prey to the Nazi's increasingly strict censorship of the press, and re-established after the war in 1948. The publications, which were printed in Düsseldorf, served as a "bridge across the diocese."⁴⁰⁸ The readership for this magazine was about 450,000 in 1951, and grew to over 600,000 in 1961. In 1951 the diocese with the highest subscriptions rates were Cologne, with 110,000, and Münster, with over 166,000.⁴⁰⁹ It served as the main German Catholic women's magazine apart from a publication out of Munich, Germany: *Die Christliche Frau*. *Die Christliche Frau*, however, had a much smaller circulation radius as it only served the area around Munich.

⁴⁰⁸ Nikoa Hollman, "100 Jahrgänge 'Frau und Mutter': Die Geschichte der größten deutschsprachigen katholischen Zeitschrift," accessed March 8, 2018, <https://www.kfd-bundesverband.de/>.

⁴⁰⁹ Memorandum, "Aufstellung über Frau und Mutter und Die Mitarbeiterin in westdeutschen Diözesen," Katholische Frauengemeinschaft Deutschlands, Archive, Düsseldorf, 375.2.

Frau und Beruf, which translates to *Women and Work*, was a sister publication of *Frau und Mutter*, and began printing in 1952. This magazine explicitly targeted the “third stand,” referring to women who were no longer children but not yet married. This magazine had a noticeably younger feel to it, and focused on topics like fashion and office life. When this magazine was created by the Catholic Women’s Society, it was heralded as the first such magazine of its kind – no publication marketed towards younger working Catholic women had existed in Germany prior to *Frau und Beruf*.⁴¹⁰ Alongside the two women’s magazines, articles from a third publication, *Michael*, will supplement the analysis. *Michael* was a weekly newspaper published for Catholic youth, and often contained articles marketed towards young females. A more in-depth look at *Michael* will occur in the following chapter on German Catholic youth.

The content and lay out of the postwar reincarnations of Catholic women’s magazines displayed a drastic departure from their prewar predecessors. Since *Frau und Beruf* was a new kind of publication, the closest pre-war comparison is *Der Kranz*, a magazine for Catholic female youth printed by the Catholic Young Women’s Organization of West Germany from 1928-1933. The 1938 edition of *Der Kranz* and the first edition of *Frau in Beruf* in 1952 demonstrates the drastic visual difference. Some of these changes reflect the widespread shifts that were occurring in the Catholic press as discussed in Chapter Three; the old German script was discarded, religious iconography and imagery was reduced, and photographs replaced drawn images.⁴¹¹ In addition, advertisements for home appliances, beauty products, department stores, and furniture companies flooded Catholic periodicals after the Second World War. Like the other Catholic postwar

⁴¹⁰ “*Frau und Beruf*,” *Frau und Mutter*, April 1952.

⁴¹¹ As discussed in the third chapter these changes were widespread in Catholic publications in the postwar period. These changed, in part, were brought on by American influences from personal transatlantic interactions.

publications, these newspapers also changed their publication styles to capture the interest of a wider readership.

The changes in these magazines, however, went far beyond the visual; the articles themselves shifted topic and focus. As a magazine marketed towards mothers, *Frau und Mutter* remained focused on women as mothers and hearts of the household. *Frau und Beruf*, however, shows a marked departure from prewar publications such as *Der Kranz*. The content of *Der Kranz* reflected the official doctrine of the Catholic Church regarding the role of men and women in society. The January 1938 edition of *Der Kranz* opened with the article “This Mystery is Great,” which extolled marriage between a man and a woman as the sacred representation of the relationship between Christ and his church.⁴¹² It was followed by a letter from a brother to his sister about her approaching wedding, delivering advice on how to be a good wife.⁴¹³ In case those articles were not sufficient in convincing young females of the importance of marriage, this edition also boasted a decorative print and clarifying article on St. Paul to the Corinthians 13, which was commonly read at weddings.⁴¹⁴ Two other articles discussed the life and activities of women in religious order. *Der Kranz* thus focused upon two main potential future paths for young women: upcoming marriage or the possibility of becoming a nun, and offered no discussion or guidance for a young, single girl not looking to pledge herself to a man or God.

The first edition of *Frau and Beruf* shows a radical departure from the bride or nun ultimatum. An article titled “The Third Stand,” accompanied by pictures of women as nurses, typists, and factory workers, addressed the women who were neither married or members of a convent. It proclaimed that “Marriage and cloister is certainly a worthwhile way of life, but not

⁴¹² “Dieses Geheimnis ist Groß,” *Der Kranz*, January 1938.

⁴¹³ “Brief an eine junge Braut,” *Der Kranz*, January 1938.

⁴¹⁴ “Das Hohelied der Liebe,” *Der Kranz*, January 1938.

the only one.” More and more women were making lives outside of the confines of family and the nunnery, the article admitted, and it was the duty of the church to both recognize this and provide more attention and support to these working women.⁴¹⁵ This shift, however, was most likely more of a response to current events than a trail blazing position. In the postwar period, many women had little choice but to work. A 1950 West German census revealed that out of 15.4 million households, 1.7 million consisted of women living alone, whereas 2.1 million of them women were the heads of households.⁴¹⁶

Frau und Beruf attempted to embrace this working female population; its first edition proclaimed it to be “The mouthpiece for all questions and problems of the working woman,” and addressed “social and political questions, film, theater, fashion and healthcare.” Each edition featured an article about a different profession, with the first publication detailing the training, work, and salary of a flower arranger. Other articles in the issue dealt with topics ranging from popular fashion to quick recipes.

While overseen and edited by the Catholic Women’s League, the license for the publication of *Frau und Mutter* and *Frau und Beruf* was held by the Episcopal Office for the Pastoral Care of Women (*Bischöflichen Hauptarbeitsstelle für Frauenseelsorge*), an office created in the early 1900s by the German bishops to handle women’s affairs within the church. This means that the license, and consequently some of the funding and paper allotment, came directly from German bishoprics. The head of the Episcopal Office for the Pastoral Care of Women was Hermann Klens, a priest born in 1880 who strongly upheld traditional Catholic messages about women’s role in society. In the postwar period, he spearheaded the efforts to reestablish the Marian congregations discussed earlier in the chapter. He heavily objected to women working, and urged those who had

⁴¹⁵ “The Third Stand,” *Frau und Beruf*, April 1952.

⁴¹⁶ Moeller, *Protecting Motherhood*, 32.

to work to enter into “appropriate professions” such as teaching and nursing.⁴¹⁷ This reveals the tension in which *Frau und Beruf* was an official publication of the Catholic Church, while publishing material that ran contrary to official teachings of the Church on issues of female piety and gender roles.

This tension can perhaps be explained by the presence of a female head editor for the first time in its history. This editor, Maria Vielhaber, ran the magazine from 1948 until 1957. While little archival documentation about her activities as the editor exist in the archives of the Catholic Women’s League, the content of *Frau und Mutter*, and the creation of *Frau und Beruf* under her leadership, suggests that she held a more open attitude towards women engaging in the public sphere and women’s relationship to consumerism. Interestingly, her name also appears frequently on attendee lists for events organized by the American occupation and the NCWC Office of Cultural Relations in Germany. In 1951 she participated in an occupation-sponsored conference on marriage and family, and in 1952 attended the opening of the Bonn office for the NCWC Office of Cultural Relations.

These changes illustrate a drastic departure from pre-war Catholic women’s magazines. They provided a discussion forum for both single young women and housewives on matters beyond piety and church dogma on wifely duties. The magazines addressed women not solely as possible brides and mothers, but also as consumers. However, these changes remained ideologically limited in scope, as women were encouraged to be consumers only within the realm of the household. As the publications focused on women’s consumption of household appliances, food, and clothing, the image of the women’s market power remained squarely within the private realm. The publications were marketed towards wives, homemakers, and young women who

⁴¹⁷ Ruff, *Wayward Flock*, 104-105.

would one day join their sisters in the domestic sphere. As such, these magazines did little to challenge the separation of men and women in the public and private spheres respectively. They did, however, promote the materialistic consumption by women as a duty performed for the service of the household.

Magazines prompting consumerism, however, were not unique to Catholic publications. In fact, as Erica Carter illustrates in her work *How German is She*, magazines and advertisements played a pivotal role in the rise of mass consumption in West Germany. Magazines such as the *Verbraucher Rundschau*, published by the Consumer Association's Working Party (*Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Verbraucherverbände*), were developed solely to promote consumption. The Consumer Associations Working Party was a national association for housewives, and worked to educate consumers on their role in the economy. They published monthly shopping guides, and operated consumer centers that provided advise on how to save and spend.⁴¹⁸

However, unlike the *Verbraucher Rundschau*, *Frau und Beruf* and *Frau und Mutter* were religious publications, meant to provide advice and guidance to Catholic women. Their readership, however, was part of a population that was unsure of how this new consumer culture fit with their religious beliefs. *Frau und Beruf* and *Frau und Mutter* provided these women with the confidence to consume in line with their religious beliefs. For example, a young wife and mother who opened her January edition of *Frau und Mutter* in 1951 would have started with an article titled "The Mother — the Soul of the Family," instructing her on her vital role in building strong families, which would then form the basis of society. She might then have skimmed over an article upholding the sanctity of marriage, reminding her that God's teachings and laws on marriage were

⁴¹⁸ Carter, *How German*, 53-57. The influence of the Consumer Association's Working Party organization was far-reaching, as it boasted seven million members by 1954. The readership of its publication fluctuated between 10-60 thousand readers.

in accordance with nature. After, she could have flipped to a full-page article titled “Furnishing and Living,” which began with the statement:

All efforts of family pastoral care will only be successful if they also take into account the physical well-being. Above all, care is needed for the family's living space. Only in a home, which gives life to the space, in which children can grow, are the conditions for a happy marriage, and for good parenting, met.⁴¹⁹

Accompanied with photographs of staged living spaces, she would have read tips on how to decorate and best arrange the furniture. The picture of a living room lined with shelves filled with knick-knacks proclaimed: “Although lots of shelves fill the walls, the impression of a crowded room is avoided, because furniture does not exceed eye height.” In other words, the furnishing of the room, and the household commodities filling it were not just luxuries. They were necessities that created a pleasant and comfortable home.

This blending of instruction on both religion and consumption was unique to these Catholic magazines. Buying the latest appliances, or adopting the newest fashions, was not only acceptable, but encouraged. The new focus on fashion, the home, and household commodities illustrate how certain segments of the Catholic community embraced and promoted the emerging postwar consumer society. This acceptance of consumerism by these Catholic women’s magazines paved the way for Catholic women to embrace the mass consumption that formed a core of the Cold War western community.

⁴¹⁹ “Einrichten und Wohnen,” *Frau und Mutter*, January 1951.

5.3 COMMODITIES AND THE CATHOLIC HOME

In the decade after the Second World War, the pages of Catholic women's magazines focused heavily on creating the ideal home. This search for a safe, secure, and stable space is not surprising, considering the hardship, instability, and destruction that the Second World War and its aftermath wreaked on German society. Particularly in the heavily bombed cities, livable housing was a luxury. The housing that was available was often falling apart – windows were missing, pipes were broken or frozen, and electricity was spotty at best. In the first few years after war, women had to clear the rubble to construct a semblance of normalcy.⁴²⁰ Yet as West Germany's economy stabilized, owning a home or apartment was something that people could reasonably aspire to.

An article in *Frau und Mutter* illustrates the postwar yearning for a safe and stable home. An article in their January 1952 edition titled, "The Home Forms People," lamented that although it had been six years since the war ended, "The hardships and consequences of homelessness in terms of health, morals and religion are observed day after day in our devastated country." This problem of homelessness, however, was more than merely lacking a place to eat and sleep. It ate at the moral fiber of the country, as homes were the centers of family life. "Home is one of man's primal desires. He needs a place of safety and security to develop, to survive the struggle in the world, and to find peace." Two photographs accompanied the article – one of a sitting room and the other of a child's room.⁴²¹ Flowers provided a cheerful touch to the sitting room's table, and a plant sat on the dresser next to the child's bed. Cozy rugs graced the floors, and paintings and patterned curtains adorned up the walls. These images of domestic contentment would have provided a deeply contrasting image to the photographs of rubble that circulated in West Germany

⁴²⁰ For a good evaluation of the conditions with which German women rebuilt their lives in the first few years after the war, see the chapter "Emerging from the Rubble," in Moeller, *Protecting Motherhood*, 8-37.

⁴²¹ "Das Heim formt den Menschen," *Frau und Mutter*, January, 1952.

after 1945. Such comfortable and furnished homes, *Frau und Mutter* informed its readers, were prerequisites for lasting peace and stability.

Throughout the first postwar decade, Catholic women's magazines endorsed the ownership of a single-family home or apartment as the ideal living situation. This message was informed by wider movements within German Catholic circles. Providing housing for families was a staple of Catholic social action in postwar Germany. During a time when housing in certain areas of Germany was sparse, Catholic groups asserted that the ownership of a single-family home or apartment was a right, rather than a luxury. In 1949, a Catholic Action committee in Germany produced a list of democratic principles that they believed should guide the reconstruction of German society. One of the main bullet points was home ownership. These "Family homes should have at least four rooms – a kitchen, 3 bedrooms (parents, boys, girls) and bath. A separate entrance for each family and if at all possible, a small garden."⁴²² Owning such a home, Catholic groups argued, provided families stability that allowed society to rebuild.

By 1950, this focus on the home, however, had extended beyond the belief that simply owning a home provided security and stability. Articles in *Frau und Mutter*, *Frau und Beruf*, and *Michael* demonstrate that this preoccupation with home ownership was enmeshed with growing household consumerism. Not only should young adults and nuclear families reside in their own dwellings, but these living spaces should be fashionably furnished and equipped with the latest technology. The ability for Germans to buy household goods was a product of the changing economic and political landscape of the 1950s. After the dearth of food and goods experienced during the 1940s, the 1950s saw an influx of consumer goods into the West German market. This

⁴²² Report, "Catholic Lay Action on Democratic Principles but not Political Formation," no date, Records of U.S. Occupation Headquarters, World War II, Office of the Military Government for Germany, (U.S), Record Group 260, NARA II, box 6, folder 4.

was in part due to improving economic conditions in the nascent Federal Republic. The government introduced a currency reform on June 20, 1948. While this reform caused initial turmoil, it successfully destroyed the black market and stabilized the economy. Historians once credited the currency reform, along with foreign aid and changes brought by the social market economy, with the “Economic Miracle” of West Germany. However, current research has created a more nuanced picture of the Federal Republic’s economic growth after the Second World War.⁴²³ The war time destruction to Germany’s industrial complex was not as dire as initially thought. In 1948 – due to the huge war-time growth– industrial assets were still 11 percent higher than they were in 1936.⁴²⁴ Thus even before 1948, economic recovery in West Germany was underway.

This influx of consumer goods in the 1950s was also stimulated by the Korean War. With the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, the American government pressured European countries to contribute to the war effort. However, West Germany had no army and was banned from producing military products. As a result, consumer commodities comprised an important part of West German industry, resulting in a plethora of consumer goods within the country.⁴²⁵ While the number of goods available for purchase increased, the beginning of the 1950s saw little growth in the amounts of goods owned. In fact, the Korean War caused the prices of raw materials to skyrocket, which then caused a spike in the prices of commodities.⁴²⁶ It was not until the mid- to late 1950s that German households began acquiring household machinery such as washing

⁴²³ For an overview of the economic history of the Federal Republic, see Werner Abelshauser, *Wirtschaftsgeschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 1945-1980* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1983); Mark E Spicka, *Selling the Economic Miracle: Economic Reconstruction and Politics in West Germany, 1949-1957* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007); James C. Van Hook, *Rebuilding Germany: The Creation of the Social Market Economy, 1945-1957* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

⁴²⁴ Spicka, *Selling*, 20.

⁴²⁵ De Grazia, *Irresistible Empire*, 358. This argument was first put forth by Abelshauser in his work *Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, 67-68.

⁴²⁶ See the chapter “The Korean Crisis, The Social Market Economy, and Public Opinion” in Spicka, *Selling*, 95-99. These rising prices caused a brief but tense moment of uncertainty over the direction of the market economy, and discontentment among the West German population during the years of the war. This discontent eased once prices stabilized.

machines, spin dryers and electric mixers.⁴²⁷ For example, in 1952, only 3.1 percent of West German households owned coffee machines; by 1957 this number had shot up to 53. Nevertheless, the West German output of consumer goods increased during the early 1950s. It was precisely this time-period that Catholic magazines encouraged women to increase their consumption.

Articles on properly furnishing and equipping the home peppered the pages of *Frau und Mutter* in the early 1950s. “Where does service to the Family Begin?” a 1954 article in *Frau und Mutter* asked. “It begins,” the article answered, “with the furnishing of the apartment.”⁴²⁸ Other publications, such as the Catholic youth newspaper *Michael*, circulated similar messages. The March 1953 edition proclaimed that a home should be a place where one could “Not only seek shelter from the cold, or have a warm meal on the stove, or a bed for sleep, but a room in which your being can unfold.”⁴²⁹ The lengthy article then provided tips on “what is going to make a home out of your room with four walls,” and provided advice from which color armchair to choose, to convincing the reader of the necessity of owning nesting tables.⁴³⁰ These articles moved beyond the safety provided by four walls, and began to ascribe importance to the contents of the home. In short, what filled the home was as important as the home itself.

These material possessions, Catholic women’s magazines reassured, did not need to be lavish or costly. This helped to promote the consumption of mass manufactured goods, which differed from traditional European methods of consumption of more costly, locally handmade pieces.⁴³¹ *Frau und Mutter* assured its readers that furniture for their houses did not need to be expensive or fancy, because new furniture factories were bringing “good and cheap furniture,

⁴²⁷ Carter, *How German*, 54.

⁴²⁸ Dr. Gusti Gebhardt, “Wo Beginnt der Dienst an der Familie?” *Frau und Mutter*, July 1954.

⁴²⁹ “So Kannst du Wohnen,” *Michael*, March 1953.

⁴³⁰ “So Kannst du Wohnen,” *Michael*, March 1953.

⁴³¹ See Chapter 4, “Big Brand Goods” in de Grazia, *Irresistible Empire*.

which has a modern feel for a practical but beautiful home."⁴³² This new modular furniture was in fact "more practical in a small apartment than the rigid and giant furniture of earlier times." Such lightweight, easy to move, and efficient furniture with its simple clean lines could "shape a room in a friendly way without oppressive narrowness."⁴³³ *Michael* advised its young readers that when choosing a carpet for your apartment, "it does not have to be a real Persian rug!" Instead, there are "good value hand-knotted rugs in beautiful soft colors and with simple patterns."⁴³⁴ This insistence on the merits of factory produced furniture coaxed Germans to not only accept, but stylistically prefer the new mass produced products.

Perhaps the strongest example of how wholeheartedly these magazines embraced the widespread consumption of mass produced commodities was the way in which articles blended seamlessly with advertisements for businesses and commodities. An article in *Frau und Mutter* on how to furnish one's apartment ended with the statement: "Maybe we will make you want to change your own four rooms – to move, push, and transform – who knows?" For inspiration, three photographs of simple yet stylish rooms sat next to the text, conveniently providing the brand of the featured furniture – WK-Sozialwerk Möbeln.⁴³⁵ Articles often touted specific products and brands. One article in *Michael*, which expounded the benefits of a fully equipped kitchen, recommended the counters and cabinets from the company Kruse, whose counters had a "low gloss finish due to a particularly resistant varnish," and cabinets which featured handles that were "equally firm, equally pleasing, equally stable."⁴³⁶ Another article in *Michael* featured the Starmix blender and the sewing machine from Pfaff.⁴³⁷ These articles not only prompted the reader to shop,

⁴³² "Einrichten und Wohnen," *Frau und Mutter*, January, 1951.

⁴³³ Ibid.

⁴³⁴ "So Kannst du Wohnen," *Michael*, March 1953.

⁴³⁵ "Wer Bewohnt die Wohnung," *Frau und Mutter*, July 1954.

⁴³⁶ Ibid.

⁴³⁷ "Hilfe im Haushalt," *Micheal*, March 1953.

but served as a ringing endorsement for branded goods.

Other articles tried to convince women that these new appliances would save time and energy. “Practical for the House and Garden,” an article in *Frau und Mutter* from November 1954, featured pictures of rural housewives using various household appliances, with captions explaining the usefulness and time-saving practicality of the new gadget. In one picture, for example, a housewife heats a large basin of water with an electric immersion heater. Accompanying the image was the title: “For the infant, the bathing water is quickly brought up to the precise temperature with the immersion heater.” Another image of an electric kitchen motor boasted that such an appliance could “perform all cutting and friction work of vegetables, potatoes, fruit and meat for the housewife.”⁴³⁸ In a December 1954 edition of *Michael*, for example, a page long article tackled the question “Why a Built-in Kitchen?” The Answer? Because German women spent “on average around four to five hours in the kitchen.”⁴³⁹ In pictures and words, the article laid out how a well-designed and well-equipped kitchen – with appliances such as a dish washer, electric oven, and electric blender – would provide the help the housewife needed.

While this mechanized kitchen developed in both the United States and Germany during the 1950s, the use of such kitchen appliances was often seen by Germans as particularly American. Frau Saupp, who had participated in an exchange to the United States, ran an American household for three days as part of her exchange program. She was quick to point out the difference in the reliance on household appliances. The American women, Frau Saupp explained, was equipped with technology and machines that allowed them to “work their appointed kitchen in a far easier way than our German women can.” This difference in available technology was in part because “in our poor country, technical equipment will not come so soon. The practice of our housewives

⁴³⁸ “Praktisches für Haus und Hof,” *Frau und Mutter*, July 1952.

⁴³⁹ “Warum Einbau-Küchen?: Frauenwünsche zur Küchenfrage,” *Michael*, December 5, 1954.

depends upon different conditions than in the rich and swift living new world.” Access, however, was not the only reason for the difference. These conditions, she elaborated, also had to do with tradition: “German housekeeping is based upon traditional thinking and working issues from the attitude of the woman herself.” These customs, furthermore, were “inherited also from mothers to daughters, and it may be that this tradition makes her happy even though it hinders her in using more modern techniques.” These traditional ways, however, were not always worse, as “the great dependence on machines is sometimes more inconvenient than the reliability on our own arms, and brings more uniformity of the menus than the fanciful and troublesome performance of the German housewives.”⁴⁴⁰ Frau Saupp’s comparison of the German and American household illustrates that German women saw a rationalized household as an American import, different from the way that German women ran their households.

This equation of America with a technical household was not unique to Frau Saupp. An article in *Michael* titled “Rationalization of Housekeeping: Michael and the Household” lamented: “In America – as every child knows – a thoroughly rationalized household with a fully equipped kitchen at the core is the general case.”⁴⁴¹ In Europe, on the other hand “there are many [young men], and also many women, who mistrust technology for some difficult to explain reason.”⁴⁴² The article relayed the story of a theoretical young man, Michael, who declared that his wife, on top of being a loving mother and genteel woman, “is never allowed to use a potato peeling machine.” He further rationalized this statement with the assertion that “a potato peeled by hand, is bound to the wife’s loving effort.” This sentiment echoes that of Frau Saupp’s, in which household machinery somehow lessened the tradition and love that women exhibited through their

⁴⁴⁰ Letter containing a report, Frau Saupp to Ehrle, March 10, 1951, *Katholischer Deutscher Frauenbund*, Archive, Köln, 2– 142– 6.

⁴⁴¹ “Rationalisierung der Hauswirtschaft: Michael und der Haushalt,” *Michael*, March 28, 1953.

⁴⁴² *Ibid.*

household work.

Catholic women's magazines, however, published articles that assuaged the fears that a rationalized kitchen was somehow detrimental to traditional culture or a loving marriage. The article about the theoretical young man Michael continued by gently chiding the youthful ignorance of such a view. Once he was married, the article asserted, he would learn that "technology can never kill the human in man, if man only understands its possibilities wisely." Designing and buying a perfectly rationalized kitchen was something to be embraced, not ridiculed.

This focus on the time saved by a rationalized kitchen was intertwined with the Catholic emphasis on the primacy of the family and the importance of the mother for the household. Such appliances, it made clear, would save the housewife from the mundane kitchen tasks that had previously consumed her life. An article in *Michael* in March 1953 admitted that although these appliances were "not cheap, they are a good value," and their value lay in the time that they saved the housewife. With these household commodities, "the work force of the working housewife, especially those with many children, is spared." With this reduction in household labor, "the woman and mother can win time for themselves, for the husband and the children." These new benefits, the article argued, made it so that the "machine-hostile woman no longer has any reason to mistrust the new apparatus."⁴⁴³ Ultimately, these time-saving machines gave more opportunities for women to act as wives and mothers.

An article in *Frau und Mutter* in July 1953 titled "I am Happy, When I am at Home," praised the ways in which a modern kitchen eased the burden of the housewife. Bread, it proclaimed, could easily and quickly be made with an electric mixer, and clean up was a breeze

⁴⁴³ "Hilfe im Haushalt," *Michael*, March 1953.

with a dishwasher. This new ability to quickly prepare dishes had advantages: “It has been shown that in such a kitchen, family meals become more varied and better, because the housewife has more joy in the planning, cooking, and baking without being overburdened.”⁴⁴⁴ An article in *Michael* in the March edition of 1953 featured pictures of the Starmix blender, and extolled the virtues of the sleek machine that “helps to change your kitchen! From old well-known ingredients, you can conjure up new, delicious dishes in no time!”⁴⁴⁵ This blender was more than a kitchen appliance. It was a tool that would allow you to turn your boring ingredients into something new and exciting. Thus, while Frau Saupp had suggested that sticking to traditional methods of cooking and baking made German women happy, Catholic women’s magazines wanted to prove that an electric mixer and dishwasher could make them even happier. Not only could these appliance ease the burden of housework, but they could spice up old routines. These articles sought to convince their readers that far from eroding traditional German methods in the household, technology, in fact, made one a better mother and wife.

While the United States often served as the model country for a rationalized household in Catholic magazines, communist states were the foil. Information on women in the Soviet Union, however, was less readily available than in the United States, as travel to the Soviet Union from West Germany was not as simple as travel to the United States. An article in *Frau und Beruf* on women in the Soviet Union stated, “It is not easy to get a reliable account of the life of women in the Soviet Union.” Nevertheless, this question of how life was for women in the Soviet Union was a central curiosity for women in West Germany. An article in *Michael* from October 14, 1951 titled “Women under the Soviet Star” stated that “Always the questions remains: How is it for the

⁴⁴⁴ “Ich bin froh, wenn ich zu Hause bin,” *Frau und Mutter*, July 1953.

⁴⁴⁵ “Traum Küchen,” *Michael*, March 28, 1953.

women in the Soviet Union?”⁴⁴⁶

This question of women’s life under a communist state was more than mere curiosity, but an influential dynamic in the emerging Cold War dynamics.⁴⁴⁷ This conversation held heightened emotional currency for Germans, as the East and West encapsulated the two competing visions of a regenerated Germany. In the West, under the influence of the United States, the Federal Republic’s economy and society developed under the understanding that a market economy would raise the standard of living of all citizens. In the East, the German Democratic Republic’s communist rhetoric promised that class disparity and inequality would be vanquished with a planned economy and the nationalization of industry.⁴⁴⁸ Moreover, communist propaganda promised to liberate women from the bondages of the home by providing state support for child care.⁴⁴⁹ The ability of an economic system and government to provide the desired standard of living and requisite commodities would emerge as a mark of legitimacy throughout the 1950s. Officials in both the Federal Republic and the Democratic Republic had a vested interest in convincing women that their respective economic policies would fulfill not only their needs but their wants.

The picture that Catholic magazines painted of the life of women under a planned economy was not optimistic. These articles in Catholic women’s magazines in the early 1950s, however, did not focus on the lack of commodities in the Soviet Union and other communist countries, but on the scarcity of basic goods and food. The 1955 article from *Frau und Beruf* on women in the Soviet

⁴⁴⁶ “Frauen unterm Sowjetstern,” *Michael*, October 14, 1951.

⁴⁴⁷ Greg Castillo, “Domesticating the Cold War: Household Consumption as Propaganda in Marshall Plan Germany,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 40, no. 2 (April 2005): 261-288.

⁴⁴⁸ Donna Harsch, *Revenge of the Domestic: Women, the Family, and Communism in the German Democratic Republic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).

⁴⁴⁹ For an analysis of communist and Soviet ideology surrounding gender roles and family politics, see Wendy Goldman, *Women, the State and Revolution: Soviet Family Policy and Social Life, 1917-1936* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993). For the DDR context, see Harsch, *Domestic*.

Union stated that while the majority of married women wanted to focus on raising their children, in the Soviet Union “this is not possible... because the man rarely earns enough to be able to feed his family.” Even if the wives could stay home, the article informs the reader, “It is not welcome, when the woman no longer goes to work, especially in the village, where the peasants are only the workers of the state, which egregiously exploits them.” The harsh demands on the working women, “goes a long way beyond the strengths of the healthy woman, who therefore ages comparatively early.”⁴⁵⁰ The magazines opined that while the situation in the United States afforded women relief from housework, Soviet lifestyles failed to provide basic living necessities.

A more detailed article about life under a communist regime was informed by a journalists’ travels through Yugoslavia. Yugoslavia presents a different case than other European communist-led countries, because while the country was run by a communist regime, after 1948, the country was not aligned with the Soviet Union. With its break from the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia became a popular travel destination for West Germans on vacation. In January 1953, *Frau und Mutter* published an article about Yugoslavia, precisely because it was a popular destination during tourist season. The article sought to provide a picture of “how [Yugoslavians] live, their nature, how they work, how the family is held together, and how they serve God and the state.”⁴⁵¹ The article very quickly turned political, informing the reader that “The split from Moscow means in no way a loss of communism. The visitor from the West feels that very clearly.” This feeling of living in a communist state clearly affected the life of the women. Tasks such as selling their eggs, chicken and fish took hours because they needed to travel to the town over to find buyers. “At the village fountain the water is fetched daily and carried home on the head.” The article presents an image in which household chores dominated the time of the women, and resulted in bleak, burdensome

⁴⁵⁰ “Die Frau in der Sowjetunion,” *Frau und Beruf*, March, 1955.

⁴⁵¹ “Yugoslavien,” *Frau und Mutter*, January 1953.

lifestyle.

Frau und Mutter also painted a picture of scarcity in the GDR. A 1955 article warned its readers of a communist propaganda campaign in which the East German government invited West German children for a four week holiday in Eastern Germany for only 25 DM. Alarmed by how many West German families were allegedly taking the communists up on their offer, they pleaded: “We ask our readers not only to read and pay attention to this article, but also to alert other families about the dangers of the Soviet zone holiday campaign.”⁴⁵² The article predictably warned the mothers of the spiritual and ideological danger their children would face if they took advantage of this offer and exposed their children to communist propaganda. They also highlighted dire condition in the East Germany:

And this happens now at the same time, in which the food in the Soviet zone is as tight as it has been for years. The sugar sales in the HO-stores had to be stopped, butter and margarine are limited, and before Easter even flour was only available to buy in small quantities. The population of the Soviet zone in the previous year has already noted with great bitterness that the guests from the federal territory were better fed than their own children.⁴⁵³

Sending your child to the GDR was not only dangerous for their spiritual well-being, but their physical wellbeing.

These messages of scarcity and hardship would have resonated with West German women more strongly than a discussion of a lack of household commodities. The rationing, hunger, and hardship of the immediate years after the war would have been fresh in their memories. As discussed earlier, while the production of commodities had increased, in the early 1950s most Germans had not yet purchased the household appliances that were being marketed to them. For the average household, such purchases were still costly luxuries that would require saving and

⁴⁵² Begegnung mit der Ostzone,” *Frau und Mutter*, July 1955.

⁴⁵³ Ibid.

budgeting to obtain. In the first half of the 1950s, reading an article despairing how communist women did not own blenders or chic furniture would have rung hollow to a reader who also lacked those possessions.

In the 1950s, Catholic magazines targeting youth and women strongly emphasized the need a well-furnished home with a newly rationalized kitchen. Through articles and advertisements, they prompted women, as the managers of the domestic sphere, to buy the necessary commodities. In doing so, they encouraged Catholic women to become enthusiastic household consumers. While explicit comparisons between life under a communist or capitalist regime were not made, articles on the life of women under communist regimes provided a grim contrast to the easy and idyllic life in western Europe and America. Rather than facing the burden of fetching water or spending hours in the kitchen, modern conveniences could cut the time of chores drastically. These secure, well-equipped, comfortable homes – marketed as necessities for an idyllic family life – were fully achievable only through consumption.

5.4 FAB OVER DRAB: CATHOLIC WOMEN AND CLOTHING CONSUMPTION

Household consumerism was only one aspect of the growing focus on material possessions within the pages of postwar Catholic magazines. Alongside the pictures of well-furnished and stylishly designed rooms were photographs or sketches featuring elegantly garbed women striking chic poses. Women were also encouraged to dress stylishly in the latest fashions from Paris and America, and sported “natural-looking” make-up. Articles in Catholic women’s magazines showcased the latest fashions, and encouraged women to buy them ready-made from department stores. Such a possibility was marketed as a luxury of a market economy.

Articles that advised women on the latest trends of the season, the “in” fabrics, and the smartest cuts became commonplace in the pages of Catholic women’s magazines. True to its promises to focus on topics of interest to young women, *Frau und Beruf* featured numerous articles per edition regarding fashion. Their first publication provided advice about the latest trends in cuts, patterns, and fabrics for 1952, and demonstrated how to build a wardrobe that functioned for both work and leisure. “For the outfit that appeals for both work and the afternoon,” the article instructed, “Pepita is trump. A very fancy pattern, even for stronger figures.” For those ladies on a budget, a cuprama-wool mix, which was “relatively cheap and solid,” offered a good alternative to the more expensive pure wool.⁴⁵⁴

An article in *Frau und Mutter*, whose articles were geared towards an older audience, titled “Shopping, How to do it” provided a how-to guide for department store shopping. The article recommended completing most food and clothing shopping on the weekend, and advised women to create a shopping list before embarking on their shopping. It also provided hints and tips on how to conduct oneself in a department store. For example, the article admonished: “It is dumb to stand around in the shop and not know [what you want].” Such actions tried the patience of the saleswomen. Nevertheless, it was perfectly acceptable to “inquire what products were being newly offered, and what is currently particularly good value.”⁴⁵⁵ Treating the saleswomen with courtesy, furthermore, and saying “please and thank you” were sure-fire ways to gain better and friendlier service. The article also assured the reader that she had some sort of agency when buying pre-made clothing and products. It was perfectly acceptable to voice dissatisfaction over poorly made

⁴⁵⁴ “Mode 1952,” *Frau und Beruf*, April 1952.

⁴⁵⁵ “Einkaufen: Wie Man’s Macht,” *Frau und Mutter*, July 1954.

garments, or to protest when a store did not carry a range of sizes. Rather than seeing such complaints as a nuisance, “responsible companies are always grateful to you.”⁴⁵⁶

Such an article on how to shop for food and clothing provides seemingly commonsense advice: make a shopping list, stay savvy about good deals, be polite and courteous to the sales women, and be confident when making a complaint about a faulty product. It highlights, however, how shopping in mass retail stores was a new and perhaps uncomfortable experience for many German women. Department stores smacked of consumerism and departed from earlier European-style modes of consumption that relied on small shopkeepers. While department stores and chain stores developed in the early 20th century in Germany, their popularity had been slow to gain popularity; in the 1930s, department stores in Germany comprised only four percent in total retail trade.⁴⁵⁷ Articles like the one discussed above prompted German women to adopt new shopping habits. Rather than make their own clothes or order a dress from a local shop, purchasing ready-made clothing from a large department store was not only an easier option, but one sanctioned by the church.

Just as the American kitchen served as an enviable model of a rationalized kitchen, the American women often served as a model for fashion consumption. In May of 1952, *Die Wacht*, a popular Catholic youth magazine, ran a biography about Alice, a 24-year-old American secretary who lived in Chicago. The article explicitly connected the life of Alice to her European counterparts, saying that “between her and her European colleagues, the Atlantic stretches, and yet her joys and sorrows are fundamentally the same as those of the English, French and German.” She, like her western European counterparts, had to budget her money and time. This idea of

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁷ For information on the emergence of department stores in Europe see Chapter Three, “The Chain Store: How Modern Distribution Dispossessed Commerce” in de Grazia, *Irresistible Empire*, 130-183.

budgeting money in order to afford life's luxuries placed consumption the central connection among women in Europe and the United States. The rest of the article relayed in meticulous detail Alice's material belongings. Her work outfits, of which she had three, cost around \$50 dollars each – no small sum in 1953. These smart outfits hung next to four stunning cocktail dresses, which she wore on nights out with her boyfriend.⁴⁵⁸ The crowning glory of her wardrobe, however, were her shoes, which were “a true luxury.” She owned three pairs of flats and five pairs of heels which matched her outfits in form and color. Articles in *Frau und Beruf* portrayed American women in a similarly glamorous life. In an article from May, 1953 about women in the United States, a German described her encounter with American women. These women, she informed the German reader, were always smartly and tastefully dressed, and their make-up was colorful and perfectly applied.⁴⁵⁹

The fashion of women living in communist states was portrayed in the opposite way. In June of 1954, *Frau und Beruf* ran an article that lamented the condition of women living under totalitarian states. The article, “Women without Color,” relayed a cinema outing with two young girls in West-Berlin, with one hailing from West Germany, and one recently arrived from East Germany. The piece featured a picture of laboring women dressed in homely clothing with the caption: “Gray, dull, and emotionless the face of the woman who is employed in the totalitarian state, wherever labor is needed, without consideration for her peculiarity.” The article was explicit in its comparison in the East versus the West. While gazing at passerby dressed in their evening best, the girl who had formally resided in the East exclaimed: “Your Westerners, who can do everything you want and do not know what deprivation is!”⁴⁶⁰ A later article in 1955, that discussed

⁴⁵⁸ “Alice: Ein amerikanisches Mädchen: Manches hat sie mit ihren deutschen Kolleginnen gemeinsam,” *Die Wacht*, May 2, 1953.

⁴⁵⁹ “Amerikanerinnen, Denen ich Begegnete,” *Frau und Beruf*, May 1953.

⁴⁶⁰ “Frauen ohne Farben,” *Frau und Beruf*, June 1954.

the life of women in the Soviet Union, provided a similar dreary picture of life in the Soviet Union. The article, featuring another image of plainly-clad women, read: “The ready-made clothing, which is offered in the big state department stores, hardly shows an individual note. The fabrics are coarse and dark.”⁴⁶¹ Shopping under a communist regime, in other words, provided little joy or entertainment.

These articles illustrated how Catholic women’s magazines maintained a clear dichotomy between what a market economy and a planned economy could offer. Western capitalist society – often modeled by the United States – could provide women with the creature comforts that made life enjoyable. Planned economies of the East, on the other hand, offered dreariness and monotony. Catholic women’s magazines made their position clear: Catholic women in Germany should wholeheartedly embrace capitalism and the world of commodities it offered.

While this discourse on abundance and dearth was informed by an east-versus-west dichotomy, the immediate goals of the editors and writers behind these magazines was not to peddle the merits of the United States. Their insistence on urging women to shop both for their houses and themselves rested on the idea that women and the household economy were integral to the growth of the new West German economy.⁴⁶² The economy held special significance in the rebuilding of West Germany. German nationalism based on political formulations lost its luster to the German population after the National Socialist period, and in the 1950s the German population exhibited a general disinterest in political affairs and retreated into the family.⁴⁶³ As Erica Carter argues in *How German Is She*, West Germans no longer placed pride in their government, and instead, transposed national pride onto economic recovery and the developing social market

⁴⁶¹ “Die Frau in der Sowjetunion,” *Frau und Beruf*, March 1955.

⁴⁶² The argument that women were viewed as central to the emerging postwar consumer culture, and thus the health of the economy, is convincingly made in the chapter “Postwar National Identity and the West German Women,” in Erica Carter, *How German*, 19-43.

⁴⁶³ Donna Harsch, “Industrialization, Mass Consumption, Post-industrial Society,” 666.

economy.⁴⁶⁴ In short, the national economy became the focus of national sentiment, displacing other previously powerful sources of national pride, such as the military or government.

The idea of women as consumers was closely tied to support for the social market economy that was developing in West Germany under the guidance of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), its first chancellor, Konrad Adenauer, and the first economic minister, Ludwig Erhard. Catholic magazines served as an advertising tool and informational guide for women on how to navigate this market-based economy.

The ability to shop, support for the social market economy, and political support for the CDU were closely intertwined in the pages of *Frau und Mutter* and *Frau und Beruf*. A large one-page advertisement for the Social Market Economy ran multiple times in *Frau und Mutter* throughout the early 1950s. The organizations behind the advertisement was dubbed The Weight Scales (*Die Waage*). Formally known as The Society for the Promotion of Social Compromise (*Gemeinschaft zur Förderung des sozialens Ausgleichs e.V.*), this organization was created in 1952 to build support for the Social Market Economy through an extensive public media campaign.⁴⁶⁵ As many of the founders were Catholic entrepreneurs from Cologne, the ideology behind their actions were informed by their desire to support an economic and social order based on Christian principles. While this organization was not officially connected to the CDU, the Waage, and others like it, played an important role in garnering public support for Adenauer and the CDU.⁴⁶⁶

While an advertisement was not necessarily an endorsement by the magazine, its prominence in a Catholic women's magazine makes a political statement. Consider the contrary: an advertisement for the economic or political platform for the Social Democratic Party of

⁴⁶⁴ Carter, *How German*, 19-43.

⁴⁶⁵ For more information on Die Waage, see the chapter "Public Relations for the Social Market Economy: Die Waage," in Spicka, *Selling*, 109-139.

⁴⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 112-113.

Germany did not grace the pages of these magazines. The advertisement for the Social Market Economy flowed seamlessly with the previous pages, as it was written like just another article, rather than an advertisement. The advertisement, which opens with the title “We women have forgotten nothing, and Learned a Great Deal,” strongly promoted the Social Market Economy, and played upon the emotions of the reader to do so.

The advertisement began by asking the reader to recall the times of postwar hardship. It lamented the time when women and their families had to live off 800 calories per day; the accompanying picture of long, winding lines outside of a fish market elicited negative memories of rationing and scarcity. The Social Market Economy, the article continued, had brought with it prosperity and choice. Women were afforded the choice to shop where they wanted, and for what they wanted. Instead of being empty, shelves were filled with items that their children could not even pronounce. Women no longer waited in line to receive their rations of fat and flour, but happily bought shoes and brought presents home to their children. The advertisement claimed that the Social Market Economy was the only system that afforded women power: “We know, that only in the free play of forces, in the exchange between supply and demand, is the housewife a factor with which one must reckon.”⁴⁶⁷ Indeed, with the Social Market Economy, “The world was brighter and life was worth living.” In an interesting turn, the article then conflated the postwar conditions with a planned economy, asking the question: “Experience that again?” and answering: “Heaven preserve us from it. Whoever has participated in what a “planned economy” means, has had enough of it forever.” The article ends with the proclamation that after living under a planned economy and the Social Market Economy, “We women have decided – for Erhard’s Social Market Economy.”

⁴⁶⁷ “We Women had forgotten Nothing, and Nevertheless Learned a Great Deal,” *Frau und Mutter*, September 1953.

In short, the advertisement provided two distinct reasons why the Social Market Economy was the best choice for women. The market economy offered women a plethora of good, and it also provided women with agency in their power to dictate the goods and services they wanted. Articles within the pages of *Frau und Mutter* and *Frau und Beruf* corroborated the advertisement's message about the benefits of the free market. An article in *Frau und Beruf* entitled "The economic importance of the Housewife's work" stated that "The social market economy places the housewife at the center of attention, because by clever behavior in purchasing, the housewife can decisively influence the economic events."⁴⁶⁸ This influence, however, was only possible if women "correctly manages and uses the goods available or which belong to her or her household." In this cycle of supply and demand, women could exercise their purchasing power to dictate what was offered to them. In return, their purchasing fueled the production of goods and thus the economy. These market forces, and women's purchasing power within them, "gives the housewife her special significance."⁴⁶⁹

This consumption, furthermore, was smart and rational, with an eye for good prices. Articles in the magazines prompted women to make smart decisions about what they bought in terms of food, clothing and furniture. The emphasis on "clever behavior" and the necessity for women to "correctly manage" the household budget made shopping a planned and logical endeavor rather than merely a pleasure outing. The articles indeed prompted women to spend their money on commodities, but never encouraged women to spend recklessly.

In addition to shopping for the latest fashion, the majority of women's shopping experiences revolved around food. As such, articles involving the price of food, and spending wisely on food, peppered the pages of *Frau und Mutter*. For example, an article from *Frau und*

⁴⁶⁸"Die wirtschaftliche Bedeutung der Hausfrauenarbeit," *Frau und Beruf*, September 1954.

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid.

Mutter on October 1954 titled “Forethought for the Winter: an Economic Issue for the Women” provided an in-depth discussion addressing the worry that many housewives had: “How do we get over the autumn months, which heavily burden the household income with precautions for winter?” The article provided advice on how to stock up for winter. Above all, was “to be aware of good prices.” The housewife, for example, should pay close attention to the fact that: “The pound-wise purchasing of apples, for example, is becoming more and more expensive, especially in the case of lively demand before Christmas. The price of potatoes begins to rise steadily in the spring.” Using such information would help the housewife make smart, cost-effective food purchases. The article also asserted that these budgeting activities of the housewife should not be overlooked: “The supply and the correct supply of the family also in the winter months is a considerable domestic and economic achievement of the house wife.”⁴⁷⁰ Planned consumption was not only beneficial for the family budget, but it also infused female household activities with importance and purpose.

This emphasis on the rational aspects of consumption, and on the importance of consumption for the nation’s economy may explain why the pages of Catholic magazines had little discussion of the morality of such blatant consumerism. By emphasizing that such shopping required the women to be “clever” consumers and highlighting the fact that such buying required careful planning and thought, consumerism was no longer considered a lavish, superfluous danger. Consumption was not something women needed to be protected from. Rather, it was a rational, necessary action. In this way, discussion of the morality of consumption seems to have been side-stepped in these magazines.

⁴⁷⁰ “Vorsorge für den Winter: Ein Wirtschaftsthema für die Hausfrau,” *Frau und Mutter*, October 1954.

5.5 CONCLUSION

Catholic women's magazines prompted women to shift their consumption habits – prompting them to purchase household commodities, mass produced furniture, and ready-made clothing. This promotion of consumerism reveals an enthusiastic acceptance of a capitalist system that depended on materialism and mass consumption, and a rejection of a planned economy. The blatant support of mass consumerism within the pages of these German women's magazines throughout the early 1950s illustrates how far some Catholic circles had moved away from denouncing crass materialism and presenting it as an American import. In fact, portrayals of American lifestyles were co-opted to coax German women to spend judiciously and increase their consumption of material goods. Women living under capitalist systems, as modeled by Americans, were glamorized as modern and chic. These housewives had access to commodities that alleviated the burden of housework. In contrast, women living in socialist countries were portrayed as dingy, overworked, and old-fashioned. These representations of women living in the communist East and the capitalist West portrayed the message that capitalism and mass consumption offered women a life of comfort and ease, while communism inflicted hardship and struggle.

These magazines framed women's shopping not merely as frivolous entertainment, but as an integral action to help the economy and support the nation. Recognizing the importance of consumption to the growing West German economy, Catholic publications encouraged women to contribute by budgeting for their household, and purchasing household wares and ready-made fashion. The rhetoric of the magazines imbued women with the sense that budgeting and shopping were not only a satisfying endeavor, but a rational and serious act. By endorsing mass consumption and capitalism – peddling it as not only necessary to help rebuild West Germany, but to create a better home life – these magazines branded capitalism in a way that German Catholics could, and

did, accept.

6.0 AMELIORATING AMERICAN MASS CULTURE: NEGOTIATING AMERICAN INFLUENCE ON GERMAN CATHOLIC YOUTH

In 1954, Reinhard Hoersch traveled from his home city of Cologne, Germany to the United States to spend a year with an American family in Oak Park, Illinois. As an energetic 18-year-old, he joined the Young Catholic Student Organization, the German Club, the Camera Club, and Intramural Ping-Pong.⁴⁷¹ His experience in attending Fenwick High school and living with an American family made him question many of the pervasive stereotypes about American society that he previously held. Wanting to share his newly gained insights with his countrymen back home, he wrote three articles that were published in the popular newspaper, the *Rheinische Post*. In the articles, he declared that many of the images Germans had of Americans were false, informing his German audience that “Not every American lives in a skyscraper, has several Negro servants, and drives a heavy ‘Cadillac’”⁴⁷² He dubbed America as “a country of progress,” marveling over the abundance of household appliances such as automatic washing machines, dryers, dishwashers, and electric irons. At the same time, however, he criticized what he saw as a “more, more, more” mentality, in which people were never satisfied with what they had.⁴⁷³ While his criticism of materialistic greed possibly caused the sponsors of the trip to cringe, the article also painted a picture of Americans who were hard-working, pious, and cultured.⁴⁷⁴

Reinhard’s trip, like those previously discussed, had been orchestrated by the NCWC and funded in part by the American State Department. While the exchange trips for experts addressed

⁴⁷¹ Questionnaire, “Reinhard Hoersch, Telling Our Story,” 1953-54, NCWC/USCCB Department of Education, ACUA, Box K20 Folder Reinhard Hoersch.

⁴⁷² Reinhard Hoersch, “Nicht jeder Amerikaner wohnt im Wolkenkrater,” *Rheinische Post*, January 30, 1954.

⁴⁷³ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid.

specific topics, the trips for teenagers were simply designed to immerse the German youth in American society for a year. The objective of these trips was to provide German Catholic youths with alternative American cultural references that could counter the onslaught of American mass culture. As previous studies have shown, German youth enthusiastically embraced American popular music and dancing styles, much to the consternation of the more conservative elements of German society – including the Catholic church.⁴⁷⁵ As such, Catholic youth leaders were eager to help repackaging American cultural influence into something less threatening.

Historian Mark Ruff illustrates how some Catholic youth leaders in the postwar world attempted to adopt elements of popular culture that became so alluring to German youth during the 1950s and 1960s. While some Catholic leaders continued to decry the rising popularity of mass culture, other ambitious youth leaders attempted to organize hobby clubs, jazz festivals, and film showings. Their efforts initially seemed successful, as Catholic youth groups flourished in the immediate decade after the war, reaching over 1 million members in the mid-1950s. By the late 1950s, however, many of these youth groups disintegrated, losing almost half of their membership by the mid 1960s.⁴⁷⁶ The failure of these youth groups to capture the interest of young Catholics, Ruff argues, was caused in part by generational gaps, which limited the connections aging church leaders could make with their young church members. Perhaps more importantly, traditional Catholic youth structures, which were hierarchical, authoritative, and still separated by gender, were ultimately incompatible with the newly emerging mass culture that was based on freedom and individualism. Ruff's work explains how the failure to capture the following of youth led to the erosion of the Catholic church's influence within German society throughout the 1950s.

⁴⁷⁵ Poiger, *Jazz*; Maase, *BRAVO*; Alexander Stephan, ed., *Americanization and Anti-Americanism: The German encounter with American Culture after 1945* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2005).

⁴⁷⁶ Ruff, *Wayward Flock*, 13-14.

Building on Ruff's scholarship, this work places German Catholic youth work within the larger trend of growing American cultural influence on youth, and the emerging Western sphere of the Cold War.

By paying systematic attention to the pervasive influence of the United States' mass culture upon young German Catholics – a dimension Ruff did not develop – this work provides important context by identifying and analyzing countless attempts by church leaders to harness specifically American cultural products to tempt the youth back into the church's fold. This chapter examines how the image of America was used as a weapon in this struggle between Catholic influence and mass popular culture. European commentators often saw the rise of mass culture as synonymous with American cultural influence. As such, the concerns and rejections of mass culture had often historically been often couched in terms of anti-Americanisms. Nevertheless, the transatlantic alliance that was emerging in the late 1940s and early 1950s made the looming presence of American influence in Germany society all but unavoidable.

After 1945 many German Catholic youth leaders no longer focused on demonizing American culture and influence, but attempted to redefine America itself. What was more, American Catholic leaders participated in this rebranding of America. The image of the United States that the German and American Catholic youth leaders wanted to convey was an alternate version, where Disney fairytales replaced gangster movies, and American novelists and artwork replaced American popular music icons and boogie-woogie dancing. In this America, youth were studious, good citizens, and wholesome, rather than delinquent and rebellious. Through programs and publications, American occupation officials, American Catholics, and German Catholic youth leaders encouraged German Catholic youth to embrace this idea of the United States. This was part of an effort to showcase aspects of American culture to Catholic German youth that Catholic leaders found not only more palatable, but could present as a model to German society.

The first part of this chapter will analyze the Catholic youth newspaper *Michael* to gain a sense of how German youth leaders were attempting to present American culture to their readers. The second part of the chapter will focus on the exchange of teenaged students to highlight the efforts of the National Catholic Welfare Conference to present a specific image of the United States. The experiences and opinions of the students themselves are captured in return reports, bulletins, and newspapers, and these sources provide unique insight into how German Catholic youth responded to these efforts. Overall, the American image cultivated by both the American Catholics who participated in the exchange and the German editors of *Michael* are strikingly similar: pious, hard-working, and civic-minded.

6.1 CATHOLIC YOUTH BETWEEN EAST AND WEST

In his 1947 report to the National Catholic Welfare Conference headquarters in Washington, D.C., Bishop Muench reported: “It might be said that German youth is suffering more than any other group in shattered Germany. The specter of hunger hovers everywhere, accompanied by lack of economic opportunity, political disillusionment, and a lack of housing facilities with all the accompanying danger to morals.”⁴⁷⁷ Many German youth not only lacked a stable home, but parental guidance; 1.25 million teenagers had lost one parent, and 250,000 had lost both.⁴⁷⁸ Both American officials and Catholic leaders saw this condition of German youth as a potential threat to the future of Germany, as youth was an important pillar in rebuilding a stable and democratic Germany. As such, “to help German youth,” Muench continued, “is among the chief aims of the

⁴⁷⁷ Report, “Report on conditions of the Church in Germany and Allies Questions,” 1947, Aloisius Muench Papers, ACUA, box 49, folder 12, 10-11.

⁴⁷⁸ Goedde, *GIs and Germans*, 133.

American High Commission in assisting Germany in its work of reconstruction. If youth is won for this work, the future of Germany is rendered secured.”⁴⁷⁹

The youth that had matured under the swastika had been heavily indoctrinated both through schooling and the mandatory Hitler Youth. The Hitler Youth Law of 1936 made membership in the organization mandatory, elevating the group to an apparatus of the Nazi State. Even before 1936, however, the Hitler Youth had gained popularity among young Germans. Its ranks swelled from a modest 100,000 in 1933 to 5.4 million by 1936. The Hitler Youth appealed to young Germans, offering its charges a feeling of security and providing them with a worldview that granted strength and power to its adherents.⁴⁸⁰ It also afforded young Germans more freedom and responsibility than previous youth groups run by the Church or schools – most notably, young girls and boys were encouraged to socialize and interact. The Hitler Youth first and foremost, however, immersed their young charges in the racially hierarchical, nationalistic propaganda of the Nazi State

Along with making membership mandatory, the Hitler Youth Law of 1936 also suppressed all other youth organizations. At the turn of the nineteenth century, youth groups had surged in popularity across Germany as new ideas concerning the role and place of teenagers in German society changed.⁴⁸¹ During this time, academics began to define the category of “adolescent” – a development phase between childhood and adulthood, where individuals had limited independence from parents, and formed strong social bonds.⁴⁸² Youth groups that focused upon

⁴⁷⁹ Report, “Problems Old and New in Germany: A Brief Report,” Aloisius Muench, Fall 1950, Aloisius Muench Papers, AUCU, box 38, folder 8, 8.

⁴⁸⁰ For more information on the Hitler Youth see Michael H. Kater, *Hitler Youth* (Cambridge, M.A.: Harvard University Press, 2004); Hans Joachim Wolfgang Koch, *The Hitler Youth Origins and Development, 1922-1945* (New York: Cooper Square Press, 2000).

⁴⁸¹ For more information on the German youth movement, see Peter Stachura, *The German Youth Movement: An Interpretation and Documentary History* (London: St Martin’s Press, 1981).

⁴⁸² Detlev Peukert, *Grenzen der Sozialdisziplinierung: Aufstieg und Krise der deutschen Jugendfürsorge, 1878-1932* (Cologne: Bund, 1986).

the nurturing and development of adolescents grew in popularity, and in particular *Wandervögel* groups became commonplace. Formed in the late 1800s in a town on the outskirts of a quickly expanding Berlin, the *Wandervögel* were youth groups that on the surface focused on the romanticism of the outdoors, and encouraged adolescents to interact with nature. Drawing its members from middle-class youth, these groups eschewed the bourgeois conventions of Wilhemine society, and protested the expectation of unquestioned youth obedience. Rather, the ideological underpinning of the *Wandervögel* held, youth required freedom to wander and explore their world free from restriction.⁴⁸³

The popularity of *Wandervögel* prompted the creation of similar Catholic youth groups. By the early 1900s, Catholic leaders had realized the importance of securing the loyalty of youth to maintain a robust Catholic community. As such, Catholic associations tried to reach all youth social groups, and formed numerous industrial worker associations, rural youth groups, and variations of the *Wandervögel*. Catholic youth groups for young girls, as discussed in the previous chapter, tended to be narrowly focused on piety and Marian devotion. By the summer of 1935, however, the Nazi police forced the dissolution of the Catholic youth organizations.⁴⁸⁴ This centralization and nationalization of youth activities broke the previously robust Catholic youth movement, which boasted an impressive membership of 1.5-2 million in 1930.⁴⁸⁵

Thus, when entering Germany in 1945, Allied occupation officials needed to develop policies to help undo a decade of Nazi indoctrination and rebuild youth organizations with groups

⁴⁸³ For more on the *Wandervögel*, see Winfried Mogge, “*Ihr Wandervögel in der Luft ...*” *Fundstücke zur Wanderung eines romantischen Bildes und zur Selbstinszenierung einer Jugendbewegung* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2009); Hans Blüher, *Wandervogel: Geschichte einer Jugendbewegung* (Frankfurt am Main: Dipa-Verlag, 1976).

⁴⁸⁴ Lawrence D. Walker, *Hitler Youth and Catholic Youth, 1933-1936 – A Study in Totalitarian Conquest* (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1971).

⁴⁸⁵ For more on the growth of the Catholic youth movement, see Paul Hastenteufel, *Katholische Jugend in ihrer Zeit, vol 1. 1900-1918* (Bamberg: N Göbel, 1988).

that were shadows of their former selves. In 1945, the United States outlawed the Hitler Youth, removed teachers who had been members of the Nazi Party, and cleared Nazi ideology infused teaching material from classrooms.⁴⁸⁶ The United States military government forbid the formation of any youth group in the American zone without their approval. By early 1946, the Allied occupying policy placed youth at the center of democratizing and reeducation efforts.⁴⁸⁷ As relations between the Western occupied powers and the Soviet Union deteriorated, the American occupation officials also sought to develop a Youth Activities Branch. This branch focused predominantly on creating programs and policies that would aid in the building of democratic ideals among youth.⁴⁸⁸

The Catholic Church, for their part, asserted the right to begin organizing immediately upon Germany's unconditional surrender. In July of 1945, the archdioceses of Munich petitioned the American Military Government to allow the Catholic church to resume their youth activity:

The youth very often deprived of their parent's care, kept away from religious life and driven into politics, poisoned with national socialist ideas by pamphlets and films, at school and compulsory organizations, at meetings and courses, in camps and in the labour-service despising everything that is not German and not Aryan, needs perhaps most of all a thorough reeducation and renovation ... The present condition of the German youth, however, demands quickly the full display of all available force. Therefore, we think it is high time to begin the work of education inside and outside of the church by giving her the necessary bases and possibilities⁴⁸⁹

⁴⁸⁶ For American occupation policy regarding German youth see the chapter "Selling Democracy: GIs and German Youth" in Goedde, *GIs and Germans, 127-164*; For information on the American occupation's attempt to restructure the German school system see James Tent, *Mission on the Rhine: Reeducation and Denazification in American-Occupied Germany* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982); Brian M. Puaca, *Learning Democracy: Education Reform in West Germany, 1945-1965* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

⁴⁸⁷ Jaimey Fisher, *Disciplining Germany: Youth, Reeducation, and Reconstruction after the Second World War* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2007), 63-70.

⁴⁸⁸ Goedde, *GIs and Germans*, 130-135.

⁴⁸⁹ Letter, Ordinate of the Archdiocese to Military Government, July 27, 1945, Records of U.S. Occupation Headquarters, World War II, Office of the Military Government for Germany, (U.S), Record Group 260, NARA II, box 6, folder 10.

The church believed the youth required immediate attention and guidance. Religious life, furthermore, offered youth the proper moral guidance. The occupation, following their policy of not interfering with German religious life, quickly allowed not just the Catholic youth organizations, but other religious youth groups to organize well before other groups.

More than allowing Catholic youth groups to form, however, the American occupation provided them with the financial capacity to do so. An astonishing portion of the McCloy funds granted to the Catholic Church, discussed in the second chapter, went to youth projects. Funding a total of 31 projects equaling over 1.2 million DM in total, the American occupation helped the church to rebuild the physical foundation for their work. As the average yearly income for a West German family was around 4,000 DM, 1.2 million DM was a substantial amount. These projects included youth activity centers in Munich and Rasdorf, homes for young apprentices in Köln, and towns for homeless youth in Wiesbaden and Karlsruhe.⁴⁹⁰ 150,000 DM went to fund the headquarters for the central catholic youth organization that emerged in the postwar period, the League of German Catholic Youth, (Bund der Deutschen Katholischen Jugend, BDKJ). During the opening ceremony for this center, young boys in uniform carried not only the banner for the BDKJ, but an American flag.⁴⁹¹ The eagerness of the American occupation to help Catholic youth organizations rebuild demonstrates how both the American administration in Germany and German Catholic community held similar ideological objectives for the future of German youth.

The American occupation forces, the American Catholic Church, and the German Catholic Church saw not only lingering influence of Nazi policies as a threat, but also Communist ideals. Their fears were not unfounded. With the collapse of Nazism in 1945, an ideological vacuum

⁴⁹⁰ Report, "Catholic Funds from McCloy Projects," 1951, Records of Office of the General Secretary/ NCWC International Affairs, box 38, folder 9.

⁴⁹¹ Photograph, Jugendhauses Düsseldorf e.V., Archive.

ensued in Germany. German youth in particular were disillusioned after the war and were, in the words of the historian Konrad Jarausch, “extraordinarily open to foreign offering, thirsting for contacts with the outside world.”⁴⁹² Adopting either American or Soviet culture and ideology could fill that void and provide individuals with both a way to escape from their Nazi pasts and a vision for the future.⁴⁹³ In the east, the Soviet model instilled hope not only in members of the workers movements but in members of the middle class who looked to reorient German society and were inspired by socialist ideals. The creation of a German socialist state promised a decisive break with the Nazi past.⁴⁹⁴

The German Catholic church understood the allure of communist influence on youth. A statement written by an anonymous German priest expressed such concerns in January 1946: “The German youngmen, disemployed, without hope of work and not knowing a great and clear program for the future reconstruction, could become on [sic] day communists, only by despair.”⁴⁹⁵ The priest believed that youth, trapped in the abysmal circumstances of postwar Germany, were particularly susceptible to communist influence. German youths in the immediate decade after the war indeed lived in dire conditions. Over 1.5 million children – ethnic Germans from territories ceded to Poland and the Soviet Union as well as from Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and Romania, lived within West Germany, with 740,000 of them making their homes in temporary camps. The trauma and insecurity brought on by the war and its aftermath heightened the possibility that youth could easily be drawn to communist ideology.

⁴⁹² Jarausch, *After Hitler*, 121.

⁴⁹³ See the chapter “Amerikanisierung und Sowjetisierung. Eine vergleichende Fragestellung zur deutsch-deutschen Nachkriegsgeschichte” in Konrad H. Jarausch and Hannes Siegrist, *Amerikanisierung und Sowjetisierung in Deutschland 1945-1970* (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 1997), 19-20.

⁴⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 113.

⁴⁹⁵ Report, “Catholic Clergy and American Occupation Forces,” January 1946, Records of Office of the General Secretary/ NCWC International Affairs, ACUA, box 28, folder 2. This document is labeled by the ACUA archive as written by an unnamed German priest.

The American Catholic hierarchy shared this conviction. An exchange between Father William McManus and Cardinal Samuel Stritch, two leading members of the American Catholic hierarchy and active in the National Catholic Welfare Conference (NCWC), illustrates how imminent and serious they perceived the threat to be.⁴⁹⁶ In a memorandum to Cardinal Stritch, Father McManus identified women, youth, religious organizations, and refugees to be in particular danger of “infiltration.”⁴⁹⁷ Youth were in an exceptionally precarious position because of the rampant unemployment at the time. He worried: “I fear that these young people, many of whom are extremely cynical, are a very fertile field for the Bolshevist who might very readily lead them to Communism.”⁴⁹⁸ McManus cited the popularity of communism among youth in Eastern Germany as proof that the Russians were “extraordinarily successful in the indoctrination of their subjects in the philosophy of Karl Marx.” He believed that the Soviets “have devised a special type of appeal which is circulated among the groups by Communist infiltrators,” to gain access to and influence these groups.

Although German Catholics feared the potential communist influence upon young Germans, they found the ever-growing popularity of American mass culture equally threatening. This anxiety felt towards the cultural pull of the United States was hardly a new phenomenon. Stretching back into the 18th and 19th century, Europeans often positioned the United States as an “other.” The United States loomed as a symbol of the alarming changes rapidly occurring in the world – democracy, liberalism, industrialization, mass consumption. As discussed earlier,

⁴⁹⁶ Samuel Stritch was the archbishop of Chicago, and born to an Irish father and Irish-immigrant mother. In 1935, he was elected to the administrative board of the NCWC. He was also an influential member in the creation of the War Relief Services, which provided immense aid to Germany after WWII. For more information about Stritch’s tenure as the archbishop of Chicago, see Steven M Avella, *This Confident Church: Catholic Leadership and Life in Chicago, 1940-1965* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992).

⁴⁹⁷ Memorandum, McManus to Stritch, October 23, 1950, Records of Office of the General Secretary/ NCWC International Affairs, ACUA, box K21 10/115, folder: Religious Education in Germany McManus Reports.

⁴⁹⁸ Ibid.

throughout the 19th and early 20th century, European Christian intellectuals responded to the newly developing liberal order in part by aligning themselves against what they defined as the hedonistic, materialistic, chaos of the United States. However, as Philipp Gassert argued, 20th-century anti-Americanism was strongly correlated to the rise of the United States as a hegemonic economic, political, and cultural powerhouse.⁴⁹⁹

The German Catholic Church historically saw youth, in particular, as vulnerable to American cultural influence. For example, the Church strongly supported the Weimar Republic's 1926 Law to Protect Youth from Trashy and Dirty Writing, which sought to provide moral censorship on reading material marketed towards young Germans. Many of the books censored were by American authors, such as the spy series Nick Carter, the jungle tale Tarzan, and the western Buffalo Bill. Supporters of the 1926 *Schmutz und Schund* law saw such novels as un-German, and as such, harmful influences on German youth.⁵⁰⁰ This concern towards the potential American influence over German youth continued into the postwar period. In 1950, the Bishop of Cologne, Cardinal Faulhaber, made a public address entitled the "Appeal for the Protection of Youth and the Security of the nation." He forcefully reiterated the Church's stance that youths needed protection from trash and smut, echoing the language of the 1926 Weimar law.⁵⁰¹

⁴⁹⁹ There is a large body of scholarship that defines, dissects, and analyzes the idea of Americanization, and anti-Americanism. See Philipp Gassert. "The Anti-American as Americanizer: revisiting the Anti-American Century in Germany," *German Politics and Society* 90 (2009): 27; Gassert, "Amerikanismus, Antiamerikanismus, Amerikanisierung," *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 39 (1999): 531- 561; Jarausch and Siegrist, eds., *Amerikanisierung und Sowjetisierung*; Chrisitan Schwaabe, *Antiamerikanismus: Wandlungen eines Feindbildes* (Fink: Munich, 2003); Russell A. Berman, *Anti-Americanism in Europe: A Cultural Problem* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 2004); Alf Lüdke, Inge Marssolek, and Adelheid Saldern, eds., *Amerikanisierung: Traum und Alptraum im Deutschland des 20 Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1996).

⁵⁰⁰ Margaret F Stieg, "The 1926 German Law to Protect Youth against Trash and Dirt: Moral Protectionism in Democracy," *Central European History* 23 (March 1990): 37-39.

⁵⁰¹ Heide Fehrenbach, "Cinema, Spectatorship, and the Problem of Postwar German Identity," in *The American Impact on Postwar Germany*, ed. Reiner Pommerin (Providence: Berghahn Books, 1997), 165-195.

In the postwar period, the impact of American culture on the film, dance, and musical tastes among German Catholic youth alarmed the clergy and many youth leaders.⁵⁰² The violent and over-sexualized nature of film was an oft-repeated concern of the more conservative elements of German society, particularly the Catholic Church. The films they decried ranged from gangster pictures that glorified violence, to romance movies which they believed encouraged unrealistic expectations in life, love, and marriage.⁵⁰³ After 1945, when many children had survived bombing raids, allied invasions, and been indoctrinated with the violent racial hierarchy of National socialism, the threat of film on the morality of youth seems misplaced. However, as many Germans saw a direct correlation between what youth watched and how they acted, films presented a heightened risk towards youth morality. At a time when German Catholic leaders saw an entire generation of young Germans as unmoored and needing guidance, such movies existed as a counterforce to the society they hoped to build.

What was more, Germans had come to equate American culture itself with what they saw in Hollywood movies. In the eyes of many Germans, the America of the Hollywood films – violent, sexual, and anti-authoritarian – was the true reality of the United States. This equivalency frustrated Patrick Boarman, who lamented: “There is the widely popular notion of the American as a kind of highly mechanized barbarian and of America as a crude wilderness of skyscrapers, gangsters, jazz bands, cowboys, pin-up girls, and money-mad millionaires steeping on each other’s necks in the mad scramble for dollars.”⁵⁰⁴ Comments from Catholic teenagers who participated in a student exchange program to the United States in 1951-1952, which will be discussed in detail further down, made clear the pervasive power of these preconceived notions of America. George

⁵⁰² Ruff, *Wayward Flock*, 75.

⁵⁰³ *Ibid.*, 72.

⁵⁰⁴ Letter, Boarman to McManus, April 29, 1951, NCWC/USCCB Department of Education, ACUA, box 10/5, folder 4.

Rinnebach, a student from the French zone of occupation, was quoted in the Chicago diocesan newspaper: “When I came to America, I thought every other man in Chicago was a Gangster. I was also under the impression that everybody in America had his own Ford Car.”⁵⁰⁵ Another student stated, “The general thinking about America goes along the lines, ‘The land of opportunity,’ dollars, gay people, superficiality, easy life.”⁵⁰⁶ Similar stereotypes appear again in the students’ return reports, when the NCWC asked them to list three questions that their friends and family at home would ask them about the United States. One student conjectured: “Is it true what we hear about American living conditions, organized and political gangsterism, juvenile delinquency, McCarthy?”⁵⁰⁷ Questions were also heavily focused on the material possessions of Americans: “Is it true that almost everybody in America is loaded, as people sometimes say?”⁵⁰⁸ or, “How come that everybody in America has these modern conveniences?”⁵⁰⁹ These quotes reveal specific cliché’s about American lifestyles and culture. Many Germans believed that “gangsterism” was prevalent in the United States, that American youths were delinquent, and that easy wealth over hard work characterized American working culture.

Many Catholic leaders voiced their concern over Hollywood movies and their effect on German perceptions of the United States to the American occupation, as a monthly report form the Religious Affairs Branch in 1950 stated:

Several religious leaders who have returned from visits to the U.S. have advised the Religious Affairs Branch that the average American film being shown in Germany tends to counteract the good influence of the Exchanges program. Declaring that most American

⁵⁰⁵ Report. “German and Austrian High School Student Program Report” Jan 27, 1954, ACUA, National Catholic Welfare Conference/ The Records of the Office of the General Secretary, Box 28, Folder 23, 24.

⁵⁰⁶ Program Report, “Excerpts from Letters and Reports of German and Austrian Students Brought to the U.S. through NFCC and NCWC, 1951, ACUA, National Catholic Welfare Conference/UCCS, Box X20, Folder German Austrian Program History 45-9.

⁵⁰⁷ Questionnaire, “Michael Heising, Telling Our Story,” 1951, NCWC/USCCB Department of Education, ACUA, box X20, folder Michael Heising.

⁵⁰⁸ “Reinhard Hoersch, Telling Our Story.”

⁵⁰⁹ Questionnaire, “Guenter Isenberg, Telling our Story,” NCWC/USCCB Department of Education, ACUA, box K20, folder Isenberg Guenter 1953-54, German.

films available to Germans give a false picture of American life, they recommend that American film distributors exercise more care in choosing movies to be sent to Germany.⁵¹⁰

Despite the hysteria surrounding the influence of American films, neither Boorman or the Church leaders specified the particular American film German Catholics saw as corrupting the youths. In fact, the film that caused the largest uproar in the early 1950s was a German-produced film. *Die Sünderin*, translated as *The Sinner*, released in 1951, was directed by the Austrian Willi Forst, and told the sordid story of a Munich prostitute who falls in love with an artist after the Second World War. This movie, which had the first female nudity scene in a German-speaking movie, and depicted both suicide and euthanasia, caused an uproar in the Roman Catholic community. Nevertheless, the corrosive influence of Hollywood movies, and the images of America they offered, remained a generalized concern.⁵¹¹

It was between the communist influence from the East and American influence of the West that German Catholic youth leaders sought to rebuild their organizations. As we will see in the following sections, Catholic leaders in Germany and the United States would actively mold an image of the United States to make it less objectionable to the German Catholic population. Doing so would lessen the perceived differences between Americans and Germans, and make a Western cultural alliance more acceptable.

⁵¹⁰ Report, "Religious Affairs Bavaria December 1950, Dec 1949- Feb 1951," Records of the U.S. High Commissioner for Germany, Record Group 466, NARA II, box 2, folder E and CR Monthly Reports.

⁵¹¹ Gregory D. Black, *The Catholic Crusade against the Movies, 1940-1974* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

6.2 A GERMAN IMAGE OF AMERICA IN *MICHAEL*

Despite the long-standing reservations towards the trashy and provocative American pop-culture, not all German Catholics wholesale rejected American cultural imports. Indeed, many German Catholic youth leaders recognized the importance of curating an acceptable version of American entertainment for German youth. In particular, the example of *Michael*, a weekly newspaper published for young Catholics between the ages of 18-25, illustrated how the German Catholic reception of American culture was varied and multi-faceted.⁵¹² While some articles warned against the dangerous influence of popular music and dance, others praised American art, literature and film. The editors of this magazine actively shaped an image of American culture and lifestyles that aligned with more with German high culture and less than with what they deemed to be crass American popular culture. In doing so, they also made sense of the emerging transatlantic world by assigning Europe and Germany the distinctive role of the West's cultural curator.

Michael's articles covered a range of topics including politics, economy, and culture. While articles on religion and Catholic dogma existed, they by no means dominated the columns. The weekly edition from December 16, 1951 demonstrates this well. The articles featured on the first page was titled "Straßburg – Close up: Days in the European Council – Eisenhower urges – Adenauer: "Let us do it quickly!" This article gave a detailed report of discussions occurring in Strasbourg regarding movements towards European integration. The article covered details of the Schuman Plan, the debate over creating a European army, American pressure on European nations

⁵¹² *Michael* was short lived after the war, beginning in 1948, and falling victim by 1955 to more popular secular magazines such as *Bravo*. This decline was not unique to *Michael*, but followed the general trend in which Catholic youth magazines lost their popularity by the late 50s and shuttered their publishing houses. Catholic youth magazines faded away one by one throughout the 50s because they failed to capture the interest of young readers; the newspapers focused on religious topics, had unappealing lay-outs, and used antiquated typeface. While this analysis holds true for Catholic youth newspapers such as *Die Wacht*, and *Die Jungführer*, *Michael* defies such classification.

to come to quick decisions, and Adenauer's support for the endeavor.⁵¹³ Other articles within the edition discussed topics such as the restriction of German air travel to Berlin, the rise of Düsseldorf as an economic and shopping center, and on the alarming increase in the crime rate among German youth.⁵¹⁴ This edition was typical of the weekly paper the editors sent out.

Michael's editors, Paul Botta, Gunthar Lehner and Georg Thurmair, had steady contact with the National Catholic Welfare Conference (NCWC). They show up on participant lists from various conferences planned by the NCWC, and attended the opening of Boorman's office of cultural relations in Bonn.⁵¹⁵ While detailed information about their exact interactions is lacking, the participation of *Michael's* editors in NCWC activities in Germany illustrate that they were aware of the NCWC's aims in Germany. Furthermore, the layout and content of *Michael* suggests that they were keen to participate in the mission to reframe American culture. It also stands to reason that their images of the United States were in part influenced by the portrayal of America that Boorman's Office of Cultural Affairs labored to create. As demonstrated below, articles in *Michael* indeed echo Boorman's arguments discussed in the first chapter – that America had more to offer German Catholics than refrigerators and morally questionable dancing and movies.

Michael portrayed the military alliance of the Federal Republic and the United States as inevitable. A page long article on NATO strategy in 1952, three years before West Germany would join the Western defense alliance, began with the proclamation: "Michael is known for eyeing things and not being like an Ostrich with his head poked in the sand. We have therefore asked a military specialist to explain to our readers the European NATO strategy so that we can get to

⁵¹³ "Straßburg - aus der Nähe: Tage in Europa-Rat - Eisenhower drängt - Adenauer: "Handeln wir rasch!" *Michael*, December 16, 1951. Past editions of the newspapers *Michael* are housed in both the center for the Bund der Deutschen Katholischen Jugend in Düsseldorf, and the Kommission für Zeitgeschichte in Bonn.

⁵¹⁴ "Im Geist von Chicago? Lufthansa vor neuem Start - Keine Flüge nach Berlin;" "Düsseldorf erfüllt alle Wünsche: Kleine Residenz wird Wirtschaftszentrum;" "Wir sind alle angeklagt," *Michael*, December 16, 1951.

⁵¹⁵ Letter, Boorman to McManus, January 5, 1954, NCWC/USCCB Department of Education, ACUA, box10/5, folder 8.

know the role that Germany should play in it.”⁵¹⁶ This alliance, *Michael* made clear, was an American led one. In a later article, *Michael* explained:

The undoubtedly most effective and well-established system of treaties within American Alliance policy is the North Atlantic Treaty ... In it, the neighbors of the northern Atlantic are joined together to form a close security guard. The US is the strongest power here ... In the Council of Ministers, where the major lines of NATO activity are determined at regular intervals, as well as in the Joint General Staff, which has established itself at Fontainebleau, near Paris, the voice of the United States is more important than any other only because of its greater economic and military weight.⁵¹⁷

The participation of West Germany in a Western military alliance clearly dominated by the United States was presented as the natural course for Germany. It wasn't a matter *if* the Federal Republic would join NATO, but when and what role it would play.

While the American dominance within the military sphere of the Western world was unquestionable, the editors at *Michael* stressed that European countries also had an important duty to fulfill – that of providing the West with its spiritual and cultural soul. The article “Europe as the Spiritual Power Source,” printed in *Michael* on April 2, 1950, clearly articulated this responsibility. As its title suggests, this article located Europe's importance to a Western alliance – and the world as a whole – not in its military power or economic health. Rather, its importance lay in its long history of cultural achievement, and one that could not be matched by the United States. Indeed, “American culture also has its roots in Europe. It can only live if Europe remains the source of its energies.” In this way, they pushed back against the notion that European countries had to join the Western ranks as underling nations in an American dominated community. The article proclaimed: “We must become strongly and internally united. But not to fight others, but to share our wealth. We need to repay America in spiritual values, what it has been providing us with material aid over

⁵¹⁶ “Die NATO Strategie: Europäische Pläne des atlantischen Generalista bes,” *Michael*, November 30, 1952.

⁵¹⁷ “Bewaffneter Frieden: Die Stützpunktsystem der USA,” *Michael*, December 25, 1953.

the last few decades.”⁵¹⁸ While western Europe may have been dependent upon the United States for military protection, America needed Europe for its spiritual force. This assertion highlights not only the deeply entrenched conviction that European culture and lifestyles were superior to those of America, but also the failure of German Catholics to come to terms with the horrors of the Nazi regime. That Europeans, who had led the world into two bloody world wars that claimed the lives of millions, and Germans who, under National Socialism had committed unspeakable atrocities, should serve as the West’s spiritual voice was the height of irony. Nevertheless, the Catholic Germans involved with *Michael* asserted that Europeans and Germans were crucial as spiritual and cultural stewards, lest the West be completely overrun with crass popular culture.

The editors at *Michael* were clear which American forms of culture they deemed inappropriate for youth, and ran articles criticizing certain American styles of music and dance. Much of their ire was directed at jazz and boogie-woogie. Mark Ruff, in his work *Wayward Flock*, deftly analyzes the reaction against these forms of popular culture in the pages of *Michael*. In a portrait of the week, *Michael* ran the image of a young German man dancing to jazz. Its accompanying caption read: “The ecstasy of these jazz fans, which a large share of the youth indulges in, stands in sharp contrast to the healthy cheerfulness of the boys and girls who want to be simple, natural, and genuine. It is easy to decide with whom out people can build our future.”⁵¹⁹ Those Germans who “danced wildly” to jazz music were deemed dangerous with their wanton ways. The men too effeminate; the women too masculine.⁵²⁰ On the other hand, those youths who took pleasure in nature walks and other “simple” forms of entertainment – much like the Catholic

⁵¹⁸ “Europa als geistige Kraftquelle,” *Michael*, April 2, 1950.

⁵¹⁹ Ruff, *Wayward Flock*, 77.

⁵²⁰ *Ibid.*

youth activities of the prewar years – were emphasized as acceptable models for German Catholic youths.

The idea that certain elements of American culture could be agreeable to German Catholics influenced the content of *Michael*. While criticizing certain aspects of American culture, the editors at *Michael* simultaneously attempted to emphasize American art, and literature. An article from the fall of 1953, “America’s Voice in Art,” detailed a traveling art exhibit by the New York Museum of Art in Düsseldorf that showcased the paintings and sculptures of contemporary American artists. Europeans and Germans, the articles began, had an intense interest in the United States. “The reasons that cause this curiosity and thirst for knowledge are obvious. The role of the US in world politics is too vast, too confusing and contradictory are the messages that come over from there.” This left Germans and Europeans with such a quagmire of information about the United States “that one does not feel the desire to convince oneself of the facts by their own eyes.” The exhibit, the article proclaimed, provided Europeans with a clearer picture of the United States than any other source that was crossing the Atlantic. “What awaits you – is relayed by artists, as has always been the case, most clearly, most truly?⁵²¹ This America, the article illuminated, was a country of contrasts: “The contrast in the view from the roof top garden of the Empire State Building and from an alleyway between the sky-scrappers, by the long-distance flight across the continent and endless hiking across the savannahs of the Midwest.” The artwork itself, furthermore, was worthy of praise: “Europe necessarily hears the American voice, and declares that this voice is no longer content to be, as in the last century, an echo of the old world, but rather ... cause its own echo.” Not only did Americans produce art worthy of critical acclaim, but this art was the true and proper lens through which Germans could study United States.

⁵²¹ “Die Stimme Amerikas in der Kunst,” *Michael*, October 11, 1953.

Not only artists, but American writers were showcased in the pages of *Michael*. Throughout the winter of 1954, the editors of *Michael* printed excerpts from Hemmingway's *The Old Man in the Sea*. Throughout 1955, the American author Jean Webster's *Daddy-Long-Legs*, the story of an orphan girl who attends college thanks to mysterious benefactor, was printed in full-page, weekly segments. John Steinbeck was also a reoccurring literary figure in the pages of *Michael*. One such article provided readers with a brief character sketch and praised his literary works of art, proclaiming that "His first works, *Tortilla Flat*, *Heavenly Willows*, *Of Mice and Men* depict an extremely realistic, but by no means skeptical or cynical picture of all those fears and sufferings that torment the poor, the non-transcendental, the lonely."⁵²² These articles exposed young Germans to critically acclaimed American literature, encouraging them to spend their time reading Hemmingway rather than dime novels.

Moreover, the themes of the books chosen prompted Germans to understand their own conditions through American literature. The protagonist in *Daddy Long Legs*, Judy, lived a bleak existence in an orphanage until she was saved by the anonymous benefactor. This heartwarming rags-to-riches story would have been a welcome fairy tale to those youths who had grown up without homes or parents. Judy herself was a hard-working and studious youth – catching the eye of her benefactor in part through her studiousness and talented writing. *The Old Man and the Sea* told the story of a fisherman who, in his old age, lost his vigor and become a miserable shadow of his former self. On the surface, the story can be read as one of inspiration, as through pure strength and resolve, the old man recalls the feeling of his youthful glory by catching an impressive Marlin. In both works, hard-work and perseverance serve the protagonists well. That the editors chose American stories to transfer these ideas suggests how they were trying to capitalize on the allure

⁵²² "Einmalig in New York," *Michael*, November 5, 1955.

that all-things American held with youth – albeit in the forms and with the messages that conformed to their tastes and ethics.

The editors at *Michael* not only attempted to showcase American art and literature, but promoted pieces of popular culture that remained safely within conservative sensibilities. Namely, no violent, sexual, or disruptive content. This is most obvious in the ways the magazine treated American films. Rather than criticize American movies that they deemed inappropriate, the editors at *Michael* instead took a more positive approach and promoted specific American films. In particular, *Michael* showed an affinity for Disney films, and consistently ran advertisements for the company's upcoming films and published articles evaluating their merit.

Some articles praised the technical skill involved in such films. One article entitled “Adventures of a Puppet” analyzed the movie *Pinocchio* and marveled at the technical capabilities displayed in the film production which turned 450,000 individual drawings into a magical film. In these animated movies, the reviewer wrote, technical mastery merged with art to form a beautiful masterpiece. With this sentiment countered the critique that had so plagued Boorman in his interactions with Germans – that America was technologically advanced but deficient in culture. This revision, however, only went so far. While Americans demonstrated technical skill in bringing the story to life, the script itself was Italian in origin. *Pinocchio* was a children's story written in Florence by the Italian author Carlo Collodi in the late 1800s. Europe still remained the original source of cultural achievement. Nonetheless, the editors of *Michael* illustrated that the technological achievements of the States could be put to good use, and create works of art with cultural value.

Another article on the movie *Dumbo*, titled “The Wizard of Pencils,” expounded the moral lessons that the Disney movies offered:

It is based on a very moral and pedagogic agenda, which is not out of tune but

convincing; it shows how the abandoned, castaway, stupid and clumsy can also come to the fore. Disney said, 'Every good piece of theater, or any good film, contains a teaching, depicts a moral. This has also been true of fables since the time of Aesop's, for plays since Shakespeare. That is why one always reads in articles and books that the stage - and now the canvas - is truly an effective force of morality.'⁵²³

Certain films from the United States were not only appropriate for Catholic sensibilities, but in fact had much to offer in terms of moral education. In the tale of *Dumbo*, the young awkward elephant overcame adversity through perseverance and hard-work. *Pinocchio* preached deference to authority, as it told the story of a little boy who befell dangerous circumstances when he failed to listen to his elders. Thus, these movies espoused messages of hard-work and obedience. These motifs were a far cry from those of the Hollywood gangster films, which eschewed conventional morals and made tragic heroes out of outlaws. These American animated films, far from being a danger to young viewers, they could impart valuable lessons about life.

Watching these films could also be a rewarding pastime that could bring together old and young. This is obvious in a letter that *Michael* published from a reader who wrote to the editors about a topic she had been discussing with her friends. While she and her 10 year old daughter, Helle, lived in their "two separate worlds, that of the adult and the child," both she and her daughter enjoyed the books and films from Disney.⁵²⁴ This caused her to ask the question "Is Disney something for children, or something for adults?" She relayed the story of how she bought the books *Bambi* and *Snow White* for her and her daughter to read together. They had enjoyed the books so much, that when the movies came to the theaters in their town, they eagerly purchased tickets. These films, she lauded, enchanted both her and her daughter. The joy of viewing a new born foal and charming animals living in nature was a "beauty that Disney has artificially imitated

⁵²³ "Die Hexenmeister des Zeichenstifts," *Michael*, April 20, 1952.

⁵²⁴ "Disney, meine Tochter und ich," *Michael*, April 22, 1951.

in a movie.” The joy from such a film “was not a question of age, but a question of the heart.”⁵²⁵ Disney films provided wholesome fun that both youth and adults could enjoy together. At a time when aging Catholic youth leaders were struggling to connect with their young charges, these films could provide a medium that could bring old and young together. As such, these films did not create a chasm between youths and their authority figures, but brought them together with a common pastime.

The editors of *Michael* indeed emphasized the positive aspects of American culture and encouraged young Germans to embrace these imports to mold a more cultured transatlantic Western community. However, while lauding American culture, they did not try to erase the difference between the two countries. In fact, they explicitly highlighted these differences. In 1955, *Michael* published an article titled: “Are Americans Different,” that began with the paragraph:

Today we harbor the opinion, supported by political developments, that Europe and America form a substantial unity: that of the "West," a unity with regard to thought, feeling, and tradition. The opinion is certainly correct. Unfortunately, it has by now become a platitude, the opposite of a real position. As far as the USA is concerned, it is not at all obvious that Americans and Europeans are like each other. Everyone who was over there will confirm the abundance of palpable differences, certainly in thought and feeling. And many a visitor, confused, soon throws the thesis of the commonality completely overboard. It is necessary to point out the differences, the zones of possible friction and discussion. Then there is the chance - and often empathy and even reflection are necessary - to meet the American on a fertile common plane.⁵²⁶

As certain partners in the Western world, unity between the two countries was undeniable. This unity, however, did not mean an erasure of cultural differences between the two nations. Neither did it mean a wholesale acceptance of aspects of American influence that they deemed destructive. Rather, the magazines attempted to reckon with the American cultural influence on German youth by curating a picture of American culture and lifestyles to the German Catholic community.

⁵²⁵ Ibid.

⁵²⁶ “Sind die Amerikaner Anders? Eindrücke eines Europäers,” *Michael*, April 24, 1955.

Michael's articles on American lifestyles and even on the American political hegemony within the emerging Western Cold War alliance was not simply an acceptance of falling into line behind the United States in the emerging East and West Cold War division.

The editors at *Michael* used the pages of the magazine to manage their response to the increasing American influence in Germany's political, cultural, and social sphere. They sifted through the flood of cultural products from the United States to select the literature, art, and films that aligned with their desire to rebuild Catholic youth with familiar ideals – youth that were studious and hard-working, and maintained respect and deference to their elders. This message of harmony between youths and adults would only become more important to Catholic youth leaders as the 1950s wore on. By the mid 1950s, jazz and gangster movies were supplanted with rock n' roll and so-called “rebel movies,” that glorified messages of rebellion against the status-quo. These movies, such as *The Wild Ones*, about a delinquent and unruly motorcycle gang in California, did more than glorify violence or promote sexual promiscuity. Rather, they depicted youths all-out rebelling against society and authority. The staid and wholesome aspects of American culture that the German Catholic youth leaders wanted to portray stood in even starker contrast to these disruptive American cultural imports.

6.3 “OPERATION HOSPITALITY:” GERMAN TEENAGE EXCHANGE PROGRAM

Just as the editors at *Michael* were attempting to cultivate a particular image of American culture, German American Catholics were eager to help them. One of the strategies to provide alternate cultural references for German youth was student exchanges. Between 1951 and 1952, the National

Catholic Welfare Conference (NCWC) organized the exchange of 50 German and 26 Austrian teenagers. The following year, the NCWC focused upon the German exchange program, increasing the number of participants to 70, and decreasing the Austrian contingent to eight.⁵²⁷ This exchange of Catholic youth was part of a larger teenage exchange program initiated by the United States' State Department and undertaken in cooperation with a variety of private institutions. Running from 1951 to 1954, it facilitated the exchange of 1,875 German teenagers.⁵²⁸ These exchanges sought to provide young Germans with an experience of the United States that focused on culture, religious life, and civil democracy. The NCWC and the hosts of the exchange students wanted to showcase that American youth were not necessarily seeped in the pop culture that caused German Catholic leaders so much consternation. Rather, American youth were well-educated, good-citizens, studious, and hard working.

The objective of the student exchanges, as relayed by the NCWC in a program report, was to “contribute to the development of understanding and good will between the people of the United States and those of Germany.”⁵²⁹ The hope was, as the Chicago Catholic newspaper, *The New World*, explained, was to provide the students with “the opportunity to live ‘the American way’ for a full year” with the hopes of acquainting “these youngsters with the principles and ideals of our democracy” and “develop in them an enduring spirit of friendship towards the people of the United States.”⁵³⁰ While showcasing American democracy was often mentioned in conjunction

⁵²⁷ Beginning in 1953, the State Department authorized its Fulbright Program, already active in organizing and funding exchanges between the United States and various nations, to organize exchanges between Germany and the United States. As a result, exchange programs operated by the U.S. government and private institutions became unnecessary.

⁵²⁸ Henry J. Kellermann, *Cultural Relations as an Instrument of U.S. Foreign Policy: The Educational Exchange Program Between the United States and Germany 1945-1954* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1978), 261.

⁵²⁹ Report, “Program Report: German and Austrian High School Student Program,” December 22, 1954, NCWC/USCCB Department of Education, ACUA, Box K20, folder 26. Hereafter cited as Program Report, December 22, 1954.

⁵³⁰ “Does Your Teen-Ager Want German ‘Brother, Sister?’” *The New World*, Chicago, May 18, 1951.

with the exchanges, in practice this received little attention. After the first year of organizing the program, the NCWC evaluated their efforts through open-ended questionnaires given to both the host families and students. None of the questions attempted to gauge the efficacy of their objective to impart democratic values on their young guests. Rather, they asked the hosts: “Do you feel at the end of the year’s visit your youngster was a sincere friend of the United States?” In a similar vein, when interviewing the German students about their experience they asked: “What do you think will be the three questions about the United States which your friends at home will most frequently ask you?” and “In your own words briefly tell us why you think the exchange program promotes understanding and good will between peoples of different nations?” It seems that gauging and molding the perception of the United States among young Germans was more important than imparting any democratic or civic education.

The formulaic responses by students and host families to these questions suggests that the NCWC was heavy handed in stressing the objective of building a transatlantic friendship. The host families reported that the exchanges had cultivated “international understanding and good will” between the United States and Germany.⁵³¹ This understanding and good will, however, really translated to securing an ally. One family, who had hosted a German girl because they “felt it was our Christian and patriotic duty,” exclaimed that the girl returned to Germany as a “sincere friend of the United States.” Another assured the NCWC that their host son had learnt much about the United States, and “your efforts put forth into the program should have resulted in good terms of international understanding and good will.” Another patriotically exclaimed that “Uncle Sam will have a loyal friend” in Germany.⁵³² While it would be impossible to gauge the veracity of these sentiments, the repetitive language used in the responses suggests that the host parents had been

⁵³¹ “Program Report,” December 22, 1954.

⁵³² Ibid.

thoroughly briefed on the main point of the exchanges: to foster feelings of good will towards America.

Indeed, the NCWC carefully curated the trips to ensure that the students would return to Germany with experiences that highlighted the vibrancy of American Catholicism, the merits of American culture, and the wholesome nature of American family and youth. As the experience of the teenagers depended heavily on the temperament of their host families, the NCWC was meticulous in their selection. These American families had to fit the particular image that the NCWC wanted to portray – pious, and middle-class. The most important part of the application was a confidential report written by the parish priest. This report included detailed information on the “the family’s stability, financial means, practice of religion and general fitness for the program.”⁵³³ As these families required a ringing endorsement by the local parish priest to participate in the exchanges, they likely not only attended church regularly, but were intimately involved in church affairs.⁵³⁴ Many of these families were involved in the local Catholic school, and many of the exchange students attended these schools.⁵³⁵ Apart from the religiosity of the family, close attention was paid to the stability of the family, as well as their financial situation. In short, the NCWC program administrators were looking for solidly Catholic middle class families, with both a mother and a father.

The families were also carefully instructed on how to best immerse their young charges in American society. The NCWC suggested that the families to help the youths find part-time employment to earn spending money, and heavily encourage participation in community affairs

⁵³³ Ibid.

⁵³⁴ Ibid.

⁵³⁵ I do not have an exact statistic for how many students attended Catholic School vs. Public School. When reading through the existing reports by students, which listed where the student attended, often a Catholic School is listed. Reports from students are in various folders in CUA National Catholic Welfare Conference/ Department of Education Box X20.

and school clubs.⁵³⁶ The families seemed successful in both endeavors. As will be discussed below, many students found part-time jobs. Most students were members of four or five different clubs based on interest.⁵³⁷ Others held positions on the student council or joined sports teams. Outside of school organizations, students became members of popular American youth groups. They joined 4-H, which first developed in the late 1800s as an organization for rural youth, as well as the Boy Scouts and the Girl Scouts, which were both national youth organizations designed to nurture good citizenship. Some students joined specifically religious youth groups, such as Young Christian Students, or the Catholic Youth Organization.⁵³⁸ The German students seemed to have embraced their surroundings, and actively participated in an “American” way of life.

Host families were also coached in how to navigate discussions that touched upon cultural differences in Germany and the United States. An analysis of the program reported: “Host families are advised to refrain from invidious comparisons between life here and life in Europe, to encourage objective study of our nation’s good and bad points, to insist that the student keep in close contact with parents in friends in Germany.”⁵³⁹ Thus the NCWC wanted to promote constructive, non-inflammatory discussions about cultural differences between the United States and Germany. However, while the NCWC played lip-service to not glossing over problems in American society, they did make attempts to prevent these youths from encountering the unsavory sides of American society and culture. In a program evaluation in 1951, the NCWC expressed concern over sending German students to the South, where society was blatantly segregated. Such

⁵³⁶ Report, “Program Report: German and Austrian High School Student Program,” January 27, 1954, NCWC/USCCB Department of Education, ACUA, box K20, folder 26. Hereafter cited as Program Report, January 27, 1954.

⁵³⁷ This information can be seen in the “Telling Our Story” documents in NCWC/USCCB Department of Education, ACUA, in various folders, as well in the program reports.

⁵³⁸ See students reports from Box X20 and Program Report, December 22, 1952, appendix part I.

⁵³⁹ “Program Report,” December 22, 1952.

an experience, they realized, highlighted the hypocrisy of the American attempts to reeducate German youths, and underlined Nazi racial propaganda rather than counteract it.⁵⁴⁰

The NCWC's attempts to curate the experiences of the young Germans did not end with the selection of the families. Throughout the year, the NCWC also circulated a bulletin to the participating families and students which highlighted the experiences of the students. These testimonials were provided to the NCWC through personal correspondence, as the program coordinators required the students to write them regularly. Most notably, the bulletins included a specific section on students' impressions on the religious life of Americans.⁵⁴¹ The comments all speak to the impression that many Americans were devout Catholics. One student noted "I was greatly impressed by the religious life of the American People. I have never seen so many people receive Holy Communion in Germany on one Sunday."⁵⁴² This conclusion often came in sharp opposition to what the students had expected. This is evident in a telling comment by one of the students: "Contrary to the impression prevalent in Europe, that Americans are materialists, I found evidence of deep spirituality in the people of Detroit. Here you will find downtown churches crowded for noon-weekday Mass ... This is no indication of Materialism."⁵⁴³

The bulletin also highlighted when Germans saw that life in America was not necessarily how Germans back home imagined it. The bulletin relayed that one student wrote: "An impression I would tell to my relatives and friends in Germany is ...[that] people of Europe have wrong impressions about America through the Hollywood film productions ... Most Hollywood movies which we have seen before we came over don't agree with the realities of American life."⁵⁴⁴

⁵⁴⁰ Report, "Evaluation of Student Exchanges, 1951" McManus, NCWC/USCCB Department of Education, ACUA, box 10/5, folder 3.

⁵⁴¹ Newsletter, "Short Newsletter" 1951, NCWC/USCCB Department of Education, ACUA, box K20, folder 26.

⁵⁴² Ibid.

⁵⁴³ Ibid, 2-3.

⁵⁴⁴ Ibid.

Another student agreed: “The general thinking about America goes along the lines, ‘land of opportunity,’ dollars, gay people, superficiality, easy life, I could convince them according to my experience of the contrary.”⁵⁴⁵ These impressions of the piety of Americans and on erroneous European impressions suggest that German teenagers were indeed positively assessing American culture and religious life. However, it is questionable how central these images were to their experiences in the United States. More likely, the student responses published in the bulletin say more about the attempts of the NCWC to create a strong narrative about the vigor of Catholic life in the United States.

This tension between the intent of the NCWC, and the reality of the German teenagers in the United States becomes obvious in a number of cases. One such case revolved around the desire of the NCWC to present Americans as hard-working. The NCWC hoped that students would return to Germany having “‘learned by doing’ that Americans work hard for the many material advantages they had.” In this way, the NCWC also wanted to shift the perception from Americans as crass materialists, to one in which Americans worked hard for their material possessions. To this end, students were encouraged to earn their own spending money. The NCWC hoped that having the student work would showcase hard-work as an American ethic. The NCWC wanted the exchange students, on their return to Germany, to express that the American way of life was not one of just rampant consumerism, but one that necessitated hard work. Many students did indeed earn their own spending money, either by chores or through part-time jobs.⁵⁴⁶ One student reported that it was not hard to obtain working papers for part-time jobs, and had procured a job at a clothing store with the intent to both earn spending money and experience American business life.⁵⁴⁷

⁵⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁵⁴⁶ “Program Report,” December, 1952.

⁵⁴⁷ “Short Newsletter,” 17.

Another girl wrote: "I am so busy that I have hardly any time to write letters. I am making spending money helping in a hospital in Louisville as an X-Ray technician."⁵⁴⁸ Many other students held a range of jobs from working at the local grocery stores, babysitting, and as delivering milk. In evaluating the program, the NCWC claimed that "Every high school student was articulate on the point that although the United States is very comfortable with its high standard of living, it is not a nation where money grows on trees or where people get things without working for them."⁵⁴⁹

Some students corroborated this evaluation; for example, one student in her monthly correspondence with the NCWC stated: "It is known in Germany that American people live more comfortably, have more machines (in the kitchen, for instance) cars, refrigerators, television set, etc. but we do not realize over there that the American people have to work for it, very hard, in fact."⁵⁵⁰ For others, however, the consumerist culture outshined the message of hard work. Reinhard Hoersch's article in which he identified a "more, more, more," mentality of Americans highlights that even though he was willing to concede that American worked hard, consumerism ran rampant. Another student, when asked what made a large impression on him responded that he was "astounded at the large number of cars he saw in this country."⁵⁵¹ Although the NCWC encouraged host parents to help the teenagers find employment, some chose to give their guests an allowance to see movies, go on dates, and shop.⁵⁵² Still others may have thought very little about how earning their spending money equated to American work ethic or morals. Rather, having jobs was a way of gaining work experience. One student, who stated that upon returning to Germany he would enter the export business, reported: "The experience I gathered in this year will

⁵⁴⁸ "Program Report," December 22, 1952.

⁵⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁰ "Short Newsletter," 24.

⁵⁵¹ "Program Report," December 22, 1952.

⁵⁵² Questionnaire, "Telling our Story Klaus Hoppe," 1954, NCWC/USCCB Department of Education, ACUA, box K20, folder Hoppe, Klaus, 1953-54, German.

be then of very much use, because working through American companies I not only know some things about Am. Business, but too about the Am. Market.”⁵⁵³

Ironically, while imparting democratic values seemed to have little to do with the NCWC’s planning of the trip, the German students whole-heartedly embraced participating in the political life of the United States. German students who spent the 1952/1953 school year in the United States actively joined in the 1952 presidential elections. One Germany boy, Georg Bluemel, helped with “getting out the vote” in Oregon. His class designed a handbill regarding the election, and posted them around their town. On election day, he handed out tags reading “Have you voted? Wear this to remind others.”⁵⁵⁴ He marveled at the fact that he was a German boy reminding Americans to vote.⁵⁵⁵ A German girl, Christel Foerster, participated in a mock election held at her Ohio school. “We had debates in class, and between periods Republicans and Democrats shouted their convictions, wearing their candidate’s pin.”⁵⁵⁶ Because the majority of the girls were not of voting age, her school held a mock election day. What was more, many of the students became involved in their school’s student councils. Some students served as elected members of the student government, while others would sit in on meetings.⁵⁵⁷

The youth’s participation in American politics and mock politics, however, did not necessarily translate into more positive images of American culture. One German girl, Gerda Schnitzler, described her experience at an election rally in Chicago:

Did you ever imagine how exciting an American election campaign could be? ... An election assembly is a very entertaining event. It is a mixture of variety show, carnival, and election campaign. Glee clubs, bands, singers, people with cowbells and trumpets and balloons, and, last but not least, Hollywood stars preceded the

⁵⁵³ Questionnaire, “Telling our Story, Manfred Krischek,” 1954, NCWC/USCCB Department of Education, ACUA, box K20, folder Krischek, Manfred German.

⁵⁵⁴ “Short Newsletter,” 15.

⁵⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁶ “Program Report,” December, 22, 1952.

⁵⁵⁷ Questionnaire, “Guenter Idenberg, Telling our Story,” NCWC/USCCB Department of Education, ACUA, Box K20, Folder Idenberg Guenter, 1953-54.

presidential candidates on the speaker's platform... I am perfectly sure that now you will agree with me that an election campaign in America is entirely different from the one in Europe.⁵⁵⁸

Gerda's description of the election campaign was not one of serious policy debates. Instead, the presidential candidates themselves were overshadowed by the fanfare. Balloons and Hollywood stars created a carnival atmosphere, doing little to paint a politically conscious American public.

The most memorable experiences of the German teenagers often had little to do with religion or American high culture. One girl reminisced: "And there will forever linger in my mind the exciting experience at my first football game when I was trying to sell popcorn with some of the girls in my class."⁵⁵⁹ Another student who spent his year in Missouri reported that his Fridays were typically spent at parties, and Saturday nights were spent square dancing. Another young boy from Trier wrote "You will be astonished when I write that we play football... We practice every day and last Friday we played our first game. After the game we had an open-house party... We danced."⁵⁶⁰ Even activities sponsored by religious organizations were fused with less than staid elements. One girl stated that she attended a meeting of the Catholic Youth Organization every two weeks. After attending mass and having a discussion, she would find a place to "dance or listen to the latest records."⁵⁶¹ *The Washington Post* published an article featuring the 49 teenaged participants in 1952 immediately before their departure back to Germany, describing them so: "They looked at ease in gaudy tee-shirt as they made the Burlington piano jump with boogy-woogy licks."⁵⁶² Thus despite attempts to control the exchange experience for the young Germans, in reality the NCWC had little control over which experiences resonated with the German youth.

⁵⁵⁸ "Program Report," January 27, 1954.

⁵⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁶¹ Ibid.

⁵⁶² "Young Germans swap tales of Year in U.S.," *The Washington Post*, July 10, 1952.

That German teenagers would focus on light-hearted fun and entertainment is not surprising. This American experience of selling popcorn, dancing, and attending football games was a sharp contrast to the experience young Germans faced during the last years of the Second World War and subsequent military occupation. Living under fear of invasions by foreign troops or bombing raids would have been a recent memory for many of them. Even once the war was over, they would have been facing scarcity and rationing. Some Catholic newspapers in the United States identified this dynamic, as the *Catholic Chronicle* from the diocese of Toledo, Ohio stated: “Memories of war and postwar days in Europe will be coated over with happier experiences for a dozen teen-age visiting students this term in the Toledo diocese.”⁵⁶³ Indeed, the German teenagers seemed to happily embrace the comparatively light and carefree life.

When the students would return to Germany, it was these social interactions of dancing, dating, attending football games, and the like, that most likely would have been the topic of conversation among the young exchangees and their friends. Take, for instance, what one student wrote about what he would tell his friends when he returned:

Being teen-agers ourselves, it is most obvious that quite a number of our first conversations at home with friends and especially at school will turn into the big subject: boys and girls of our own age in the U.S.A. How much I am going to tell them! I will start with happy school life which is so different in almost every way up to their family life and the big question of how to spend the long week-end, not forgetting clothes, jobs, cars, and driving, dancing (which cost me so much practice and I yet can't do it!) dates, clubs, etc. Having experienced so much of teen-ager activities, I have all good designs and plans to bring a little American spirit into my class and school.⁵⁶⁴

While these children were living with Catholic families and no doubt attended weekly mass and participated in other religiously themed events, these things were overshadowed by events more exciting to young 17 and 18 year olds. The result was a narrative that had little to do with

⁵⁶³ “Visiting Students,” *Catholic Chronicle*, Toledo, Ohio, August 31, 1951.

⁵⁶⁴ “Program Report,” December 22, 1952.

studiousness, hard-work, or religion. Indeed, this picture of carefree youth who spent their time shopping, dating, and dancing fit awkwardly with the messages that the NCWC wanted to relay.

The NCWC engineered the teenager exchange program to showcase American religiosity, civic-mindedness, and hard-work. In doing so, they hoped to supplant the dominant Hollywood-induced perceptions of America with a picture of American culture and youth that was devout, well-educated, studious, and hard working. The exchange students may well have introduced their German friends, family and peers to these tailored perceptions of the United States. In addition, however, the young exchange students also dated, danced, and shopped. It was these experiences that resonated with them the most. While the NCWC could attempt to mold a particular image of the United States, they had little control over whether German youth found this image more appealing than the mass culture the NCWC despaired over.

6.4 CONCLUSION

In the immediate decade after the war, German and American Catholics attempted to reframe the conversation about American culture to discuss not what was dangerous, but what it could offer. German Catholic youth leaders, while rejecting certain aspects of American culture, cultivated an image of the United States that would fit with their more conservative world view. *Michael* editors attempted to negotiate with, rather than reject, American cultural imports. The National Catholic Welfare Conference, through their exchanges, aided in this curation by promoting a wholesome image of American youth. Both American and German Catholics involved in these endeavors wanted German youth to connect to and understand the United States not through Hollywood film

and boogie-woogie, but through art and literature. It was these youths, they hoped, that could form the future of the emerging transatlantic world.

These attempts, however, would prove ineffective as the decade progressed. While in the early 1950s, these leaders were contending mainly with jazz and gangster movies, this would shift in the mid-1950s to rock n' roll and Hollywood movies of rebellious youth, which had a strong message of youth rejecting authority.⁵⁶⁵ Attempts by Catholic leaders to mitigate and redirect youth interactions with American culture away from these songs and films and towards the more staid aspects of American culture would prove futile. This is not because the United States lacked the cultural sophistication that the NCWC and German Catholic youth leaders attempted to showcase. The fundamental issue was, rather, that German and American youth leaders had little control over how German teenagers consumed American culture. Youths in the 1950s and 60s were rebelling against the authority of their elders, who had led them to disaster with National Socialism. As such, the wholesome and safe messages the Catholic leaders were trying to peddle failed to resonate with German youth. Instead, they embraced the rebellious attitude depicted in American popular culture.

However, the importance of these efforts lay not in their successes or failures. The importance lay in the exercise of rebranding America itself. To the worried parents and Church leaders who spoke out against the influence of the United States, this new image of America was not dangerous, and less frightening. It was a United States that offered military protection, and even economic aid, but one that was still guided by European and German culture. Joining a Western sphere of influence, therefore, did not have to mean an acceptance of the commercialized, promiscuous, and popular influence of American pop culture. Rather, they thought they could

⁵⁶⁵ Poiger deals extensively with German youth's interactions with these elements of American culture in her monograph, *Jazz*.

formulate a Western cultural community that would embrace particular facets of American culture while rejecting others. Unfortunately, even in the carefully curated environment created by the NCWC and German youth leaders, German teenagers gravitated towards the more light-hearted and fun facets of American culture – football games, dates at the local malt shop, and co-ed dances.

7.0 CONCLUSION: WHAT KIND OF WEST

By the Spring of 1955, West Germany had changed dramatically since the collapse of National Socialism. This was not a complete break from the past, as many of the Federal Republic of Germany's political and economic institutions were resurrected from the Weimar Republic. Nevertheless, as historian Heinrich Winkler argued in his work *The Long Road West*, 1945 served as a "profound, political, social, and moral rupture."⁵⁶⁶ In May of 1955, the Federal Republic obtained most of its sovereignty. The Allied powers retained the rights to maintain troops on German soil, prohibited the development of an independent German army, and continued their ultimate authority over any decisions regarding the possible reunification of East and West Germany. What was more, West Germany could not freely choose its military alliances. This sovereignty had only been gained through the shrewd negotiations of Adenauer, who demanded sovereignty, and in exchange promised the creation of an army for the Federal Republic of Germany, and the country's subsequent entrance into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The promise would be kept, as the Federal Republic joined NATO in 1955.⁵⁶⁷

The Federal Republic of Germany was now militarily entwined with western Europe and the United States, and increasingly, the government also promoted measures of economic integration. In 1951, West Germany, Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands created a common market for coal and steel with the European Coal and Steel Community. This economic integration was, in part, meant to help end the centuries-long volatile tensions between France and Germany. Six years later with the Treaty of Rome, these same countries would propose

⁵⁶⁶ Winkler, *Germany*, 583.

⁵⁶⁷ Granieri, *Ambivalent Alliance*, 80-85

the construction of a single market for goods, labor, and capital, thus embarking on the road that would eventually lead to the European Union. Influenced both by the desire to join the western world after German society had historically rejected it for centuries, as Winkler argued, and to achieve stability after decades of hardship and uncertainty, as Conze argued, the Federal Republic had taken political and economic measures to situate itself in a western European community and transatlantic alliance.

Catholics in the United States and Germany, however, had a particular vision of the West that they wanted to create – one which involved more than economic agreements and military alliances. In 1945, German and American Catholics set out to build a spiritually devout, Christian Western community. This world would not only be staunchly anti-communist, but also avoid the pitfalls that they thought characterized the alliance with the United States – the spread of rampant consumerism, lack of culture, and callous capitalism. It was this objective that prompted American Catholics to involve themselves with the American occupation regime in Germany. This idea of a unified, Christian West also convinced many German Catholic leaders to subdue the long-standing negative perceptions of American culture and society. Instead, these leaders attempted to create an understanding of an American-led western world that they could join without reservation.

As this dissertation illustrated, the American occupation forces were eager to facilitate activities that helped German and American Catholics to contribute to building this West. By doing so, the occupation not only courted the more conservative elements of German society that harbored long-standing anti-American sentiments, but also helped to strengthen those parts of German society that were staunchly anti-communist. The occupation officials outside the Religious Affairs branch cared little about the endeavors to create a devout, pious and Christian west. The occupation officials also did not seek out the church for its alleged resistance to the Nazi regime. Although Nazi resistance was indeed highlighted by the occupation officials where it

existed, collaboration or indifference to the Nazi regime was often, as in the case of the Catholic Church, swept under the rug when inconvenient. Instead, the anti-communist nature of the church was the ultimate reason that the American administration sought out the cooperation of Catholics. Occupation officials believed a strong and healthy Catholic community could stave off the spread of communism to Western Germany. It was this belief that prompted them to quickly approve licenses for Catholic publications, build community centers and labor schools, and facilitate exchanges with Catholic leaders and youths. What was more, promoting American and German Catholic relations would be one more avenue through which West Germany would be more closely aligned with the United States.

As my dissertation illustrates, Catholic Germans eagerly embraced the idea of a Catholic community that moved beyond the borders of Germany. In 1948, the Mainz Catholic Convention set German Catholic society on a path towards a more international community. Catholic solidarity, participants of the Catholic Conference argued, was necessary both for securing world peace after a disastrous half-century, and building a strong bulwark against the emerging strength of the Soviet Union and communist influence. This international thinking would outlast the physical occupation. The 1956 Catholic Convention in Cologne focused on Catholic participation in larger world organizations such as United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations (UN). The opening speech for the workshop on international work stressed “the importance, that Catholics must come out of their provincial thinking, in order to participate in and contribute to international work.”⁵⁶⁸ This work, the speech continued, would be done through important world organizations in which Catholics should

⁵⁶⁸ “Lage und Aufgaben der Internationalen Arbeit,” in *Die Kirche das Zeichen Gottes unter den Völkern: 77. Deutscher Katholikentag 1956 in Köln*. (Bonn: Zentralkomitee der deutschen Katholiken, 1957), 383-389.

become an influential part of.⁵⁶⁹ At the time, 17 of the German Catholic organizations represented at the Catholic Convention already had representatives at world organizations such as UNESCO.⁵⁷⁰ In this way, German Catholics positioned themselves as integral participants in building a new international postwar order.

While American Catholics and occupation officials had hoped that their activities would facilitate a German-American Catholic relationship, they failed to produce any institutionalized relationship. The German Catholic dedication to internationalism was not necessarily directed at a close bond with the United States. Activities meant to foster international solidarity oftentimes just included the United States – recall the German and French newspapers that petitioned the NCWC for an American contributor, and American representatives at Catholic Conferences in Mainz in 1948 and Bochum in 1949. These German initiatives always existed within the larger framework of building solidarity largely among countries within western Europe. Nevertheless, Americans were now seen as a part of it, supplanting the idea of a geographically specific *Abendland* confined to continental Europe with a broader transatlantic west.

More pragmatic reasons for German Catholics to aid the American occupation also existed. Cooperating with the occupation and building relationships with American Catholics provided German Catholic leaders with the vital resources they needed to rebuild their society following the war. During the occupation, when resources, food, and building space were scarce, those organizations that had access to resources which could aid in the swift rebuild of post-war Catholic society. Organizations that could rebuild the fastest were able to have a greater influence on the reconstruction of German society. This need for resources worked well for the American

⁵⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁰ Questionnaire, “Fragebogen-Auswertung,” 1955, Zentralkomitee der deutschen Katholiken, Archive, Bonn, folder Allgemeiner Schriftverkehr.

occupation officials. Second, having this important role as rebuilders of German society also helped Catholics avoid any uncomfortable or incriminating discussions concerning the German Catholic Church and their community during the Nazi period. Acquiring the support of the American occupation and American Catholics provided validity to their actions.

This dissertation also highlights the unexpected consequences of the endeavor to connect American and German Catholics. The devout Catholic who subscribed to *Echo der Zeit* sat down on Sunday mornings to a much different periodical than that of before the Second World War; the articles no longer focused solely on the German Catholic experience, but also included the latest news from around the Catholic world. What was more, these articles sat alongside advertisements for modern furniture and Coca-Cola. The wives and mothers who read their monthly Catholic women's periodical would glean the message that mass consumerism was not something to be shunned, but rather embraced. They could happily purchase rugs, appliances, and clothing as good West German citizens and respectable Catholics. The young working Catholic women may have felt a sense of approval from the Church regarding her endeavors outside the home, and vindicated in spending her hard-earned pay check on dresses and shoes. Catholic adults, however, could have felt a sense of unease about young Catholics, as the traditional church youth organizations failed to compete with the rise of popular culture. It seemed clear that regardless of efforts by youth leaders, young Germans were resilient against efforts to capture their interest with more pious films, music, and literature. By 1955, Catholic society had in some ways become less traditional, less insular, and more in line with the consumerist mass culture of the 20th century.

Questions raised by this dissertation warrant more research and attention than this iteration could provide. First, this research raises several questions about Catholicism in the United States 1940s and 1950s. Did the eager participation of Catholics in American anti-communist endeavors during the 1950s lessen long-standing anti-Catholicism within American society? Furthermore,

were American Catholic youth leaders also attempting to capture youth's attention with what they deemed as more wholesome and pious activities? As German Catholics newspapers had adopted their commercialized layouts from American Catholic newspapers, when, how, and why had these commercialized forms of religious print developed in the United States? Did American women's and youth publications contain similar messages of consumption? If so, were these more long-standing aspects of American Catholics magazines and newspapers, or were they also more recent developments in response to the Cold War? Answering these questions would provide a more nuanced picture of the transfer of culture across the Atlantic. This research could identify the ways in which German Catholics altered aspects of American culture upon implementing them in Germany, while also investigating if and how American Catholics adopted any strategies as a result from their trips to Germany or from German visitors. Mapping out this cultural exchange in both Germany and the United States would illustrate how the forms and ideas of the western world were emerging within Catholic circles on both sides of the Atlantic.

Second, a more systematic analysis of how these actions by German and American Catholics fit within a larger context of postwar European integration is warranted. The cooperative activities undertaken by American and German Catholics were often part of a wider American and western European initiative to emphasize Catholic bonds among western European nations, with the purpose of promoting European integration. How influential were these actions by Catholic institutions in Germany and the United States in helping to create a sense of European unity in the postwar period? Following this line of research would not only highlight the Catholic influence in European integration, but demonstrate how the postwar formation of closer political and cultural ties between Germany and the U.S. must be understood as tightly connected to the process of West European integration.

Lastly, while this dissertation ends in 1955, bringing the analysis into the 1960s is crucial to understand how the rebuilding of Catholic society in this time period effected the trajectory of the Catholic community in Germany society. By the 1960s, the strength of the Catholic church had lessened.⁵⁷¹ The previously robust Catholic organizations that formed the backbone of the German Catholic milieu had experienced a boom in the late 1940s and early 1950s, but failed to retain their influence. For example, Catholic youth groups, which had over a million members before Second World War, crumbled by the end of the 1950s.⁵⁷² While this dissertation was not a commentary on the supposed secularization of German society, or the exodus of many Germans from the Church in 1960s, it shed light on an important line of inquiry for historians researching this question. The church's hierarchical and authoritarian ways made many Catholics who had grown up during the 1950s and early 1960s to leave the church. As Mark Ruff illustrated, the measures taken by the church to retain their interest was too little, and too late. This dissertation, however, reveals that many segments of the German Catholic population after 1945 offered German youth a more worldly and less stringent form of Catholicism that could blend with a less authoritarian and hierarchical outlook. Publications directed at young Germans, like *Frau und Beruf*, and *Michael*, provide the best examples. Indeed, these newspapers allowed for youth to attend movies, indulge in the latest fashions, and embrace consumerism. This suggests that the rejection of the Church by Germans who had grown up in the 1950s and 1960s requires a more nuanced analysis.

After the Second World War, Catholics in the United States and Germany had engaged in concerted action to cultivate closer bonds across the Atlantic. These activities, they hoped, could engender a sense of unity, strengthening cultural ties that could form a western community to serve as a foil to communism in the east. Among these endeavors were attempts to cultivate a new image

⁵⁷¹ Ibid.

⁵⁷² Ruff, *Wayward Flock*, 10-15.

of the United States that was more in line with the values of a Catholic society. American Catholics like Patrick Boarman and William McManus focused on portraying the United States in a more positive light – one that was less consumerist, less capitalistic, less secular. Many German Catholic leaders participated in this endeavor, eagerly presenting this image of the United States to their communities. While their attempts also introduced commercialization and consumption into the Catholic life in West Germany, many German Catholics in 1955 were indeed embracing the emerging western world.

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