

The Modern Guild

Rotary Clubs and Bourgeois Renewal in the Aftermath of National Socialism

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On 11 March 1957, a prominent judge in Ulm, West Germany, presented his life story to fellow members of his local Rotary Club. Acknowledging that the typical résumé consisted of a string of facts and dates, he wanted to offer a more “human” picture of himself. He spoke about his fighting as a bewildered Wehrmacht soldier on the Eastern front, his capture by the Soviets in June 1944, and the poor nutrition and brutality of his two-year camp experience. The judge went on to discuss the existential crisis engendered by captivity, his return to a bombed-out home, and the rebuilding of his career in a new democracy. Even with such rebounding fortunes, however, the life of a judge could be very lonely. The Ulm Rotary club, the speaker concluded, provided him with the opportunity to break out of this solitude—to interact with members of other professions and to forge new social relations.¹

On the surface, these self-disclosures might have seemed unbecoming of an upstanding public figure. Yet the Ulm judge was not alone in his desire to discuss his personal traumas and career successes with a gathering of professional men. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, thousands of other West Germans met on a weekly basis to share their private stories and aspirations as members of an international service organization. With the founding of the Federal Republic in 1949, Rotary clubs sprang up in almost every city in West Germany. Inspired by the motto “Service above Self,” their members raised money for charities, supported international student exchanges, and gave speeches on culture and current events. But who were these *Rotarier*? Why did they find such a welcome home in postwar Germany? How did this American-born association of professionals reflect the social and cultural priorities of the new West German democracy?

This essay takes up these questions by focusing on Rotarians as self-avowed “elites” who saw as their calling the infusion of universal ethical norms into West German society. In meeting regularly with their fellow members, or “Friends” (*Freunde*), Rotarians took the cultural and political issues of their time—the nature of democracy, the Cold War, the fate of the country’s youth, transatlantic relations—and employed them to build a collective self-image of the international bourgeois citizen, committed to an ethos of philanthropy and responsibility. Creating (or reviving) this new elite, however, was not a care-free enterprise. The traumatic legacy of National Socialism and war, and the Rotarians’ own complicated trajectories through the Third Reich, made this task of bourgeois renewal all the more urgent and complicated.²

In its use of the terms *Bürgertum* and “elite,” this essay offers a new perspective on a long-standing sociological and historical debate about whether a middle-class had survived the scourges of depression and war. Scholars have disagreed about the extent to which the class divisions of the Wilhelmine period disappeared amid the upheavals of inflation, depression, and two world wars. Only recently has the discourse widened to include what Volker Bergahn has referred to as the “norms, values, and social conventions” of the West German *Bürgertum*. How did professionals, regardless of their relative economic position, *perceive* themselves as elites in a new democracy?³ In answering this question, historians have all but overlooked West German Rotary Clubs as sites of bourgeois self-fashioning.⁴ Yet at their weekly meetings, Rotarians wrestled with some of the central issues facing all West German professionals: How could one balance professional and community service with an enjoyment of prosperity and mass leisure? How could one assert oneself as an individual while adhering to a collective morality? How could one adhere to the ideals of truth and integrity while also avoiding a confrontation with the Nazi past? Looking at how Rotarians responded to these questions provides a glimpse into the mental world of West German elites after 1945.

Rotary Germany: From Weimar to the Federal Republic

Rotary first came to Germany in 1927. At the time German leaders, notably industrialists, were looking to America for models of modern business practices—whether in Fordist assembly-line production, mass consumption, or human relations.⁵ It is perhaps not surprising that Wilhelm Cuno, the general director of the Hamburg-American Steamship lines, was Germany’s first Rotarian. The industrialist and former German chancellor brought the American service organization to a city, Hamburg, known for its openness to outside cultural influences, especially from the Anglo-American world. At the time of its German debut, Rotary was the oldest and the largest of what would eventually

be the “big three” service organizations, namely, Rotary, Kiwanis, and Lions. It was founded in 1905 in Chicago and instantly spread, with every major American city having a Rotary club by 1911 and many European countries founding clubs in the 1920s and 1930s.⁶ Of the major organizations, Rotary carried the most prestige, celebrated for its merging of business, culture, and social activism. It was based on an ethos of fraternity, philanthropy, and social networking. To this day, Rotary clubs around the world attempt to realize “the advancement of international understanding, good will and peace through a world fellowship of business and professional men united in the ideal of service.”⁷

The centrality of these social and ethical goals was apparent from Rotary’s initial arrival in Germany. Victoria de Grazia has written splendidly on the first decade of Rotary in Germany, when Rotary Club Munich drew the likes of Thomas Mann into the world of “clubby fraternizing.”⁸ In Club Dresden, free professionals ranging from the Lord High Mayor of the city to the chief of police, from bankers to theater directors, met weekly over lunch and at formal celebrations to discuss the social and intellectual issues of the day. Whether at the Rotary Club Berlin or the Rotary Club Cologne, the educated bourgeoisie and the economic bourgeoisie (*Bildungsbürgertum* and *Wirtschaftsbürgertum*) came together for a dialogue about the meaning and practice of “world citizenship.”⁹ German Rotarians were “practical idealists,”¹⁰ whose commitment to bourgeois humanism (*Bürgerlichkeit*) entailed a greater turn to philosophy and the arts than their more commerce-minded counterparts in the United States. By 1937, when Rotary Germany dissolved itself under pressure from the Nazi government, there were forty-two clubs with approximately 1,200 members.¹¹

There is not the space in this essay to elaborate on the early history of Rotary Germany, first in the waning years of the Weimar Republic and then during the Third Reich. It is important, nonetheless, to note the untimely proximity of Rotary’s arrival in Germany to its demise. Six clubs in Germany were founded after Hitler’s coming to power, only to face almost immediate pressure to remove their Jewish members and adhere to the tenets of National Socialism.¹² The tension between Rotary’s internationalism, which the Nazis lumped together with Free Masonry, and the pressure to put nation above all else, ultimately forced the Rotary clubs to disband. Even after their official disbanding, former club members continued to meet informally and at some risk, occasionally giving their groups new names. The Berlin Rotary Club renamed itself the “Beuth-Tisch,” after Prussian Finance Minister Peter Beuth, who founded a men’s professional discussion group in 1821,¹³ and members of the Frankfurt am Main Rotary Club met regularly in private homes until 1943, under the name “The Wednesday-Society” (*Mittwochs-Gesellschaft*).¹⁴

After 1945, West Germans rebuilt their professional associations under the watchful eye of Allied occupation officials. In the case of Rotarians, former

members faced the assumption among military authorities that too many of them had accommodated, if not embraced, National Socialism. Indeed the assumptions were not unfounded: a fair number of Rotarians had attempted to reconcile the Rotary service ideal with the promise of a vibrant *Volksgemeinschaft*.¹⁵ After the war, this reality would hamper initial attempts to reconstitute the Rotary clubs of Germany. Even as former Rotarians began meeting again, the Rotary International (RI) headquarters in Chicago surveyed the newly constituted associations with suspicion and prevented them from using the word "Rotary." Rotarians met under a variety of names, with the umbrella title of "Clubs der Freunde von 1927." The fact that these men regrouped despite Allied scrutiny is a testament to the power of their identities as Rotarians. Yet when the Allies eventually conceded that former Rotary clubs might reform, RI initially held fast to the view that Germans could not reenter the international organization until there was a general peace treaty and Germany was reunited. With the founding of the Federal Republic in 1949, however, RI welcomed German Rotary clubs back into its ranks. This reconstitution of the Rotary movement mirrored the gradual reintegration of the country into a community of Western democracies.

Like in the 1920s and 1930s, a substantial percentage of Rotary members after 1945 represented the world of business and finance. According to Rotary's rules, only one member of a given profession could be represented in a local club. But Rotary's classification system allowed a number of executives and managers to represent industry as specialists in a particular industrial branch or trade. Some familiar names in German industry and politics counted among the ranks of these early postwar Rotarians. Ernst von Siemens of the Siemens electrotechnical concern joined the Munich Rotary Club in the 1950s, as did Franz Josef Schöningh, the publisher of the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*.¹⁶ Robert Pferdenges and Baron Waldemar von Oppenheim of the banking firm Oppenheim entered the reconstituted Cologne club.¹⁷ Joining the Essen Rotary Club was Baron Tilo von Wilmowsky, former deputy chairman of the Krupp concern's supervisory board and the uncle of firm owner Alfried Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach.¹⁸ Alfried Krupp's brother Berthold von Bohlen und Halbach also joined his uncle as a member, along with a large number of individuals tied to Ruhr industry. Entering the Wuppertal club was Ludwig Vaubel, the future director-general of the chemical firm Vereinigte Glanzstoff and organizer of the "Wuppertal Circle" of seminars for entrepreneurs.¹⁹ Newly appointed Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, himself a member of 1927's Cologne Rotary Club, was considered an honorary member of the Bonn club, although he did not officially join.²⁰

Surveying these names might suggest that the Rotary clubs were dominated by wealthy and politically powerful leaders who played visible roles in the rebuilding of a postwar democracy. Indeed a rumor existed that one had

to be rich to become a Rotarian, prompting would-be candidates to make special appeals for admittance, attributing the loss of their personal wealth to the war or their flight from the East.²¹ While many of the well-to-do, especially from the business world, were indeed drawn to the Rotary clubs, one must avoid the assumption that these clubs were merely pragmatic assemblies of political and economic power. The founding of the Federal Republic saw a number of other organizations that catered more specifically to the business world and its immediate partisan interests. In the early 1950s, the Federation of German Industry (BDI) and the public relations organization German Industry Institute (Deutsches Industrie-Institut) became sites of more practical discussions about local and national economic developments. While these associations were ostensibly devoted to lobbying and “interest politics,” they drew into their orbit a number of cultural leaders as well. In 1951, the BDI established a Cultural Circle, or *Kulturkreis*, that was devoted to the patronage of art and architecture and to a broader cultivation of creative endeavor.²² Likewise in 1951, the BDI established study groups (*Arbeitsgemeinschaften*), that brought business leaders into contact with the likes of historian Hans Rothfels and playwright Carl Zuckmayer to discuss the interrelationships among business, politics, religion, and culture.²³ But Rotary differed from these other associations by representing a wider cross-section of the educated and economic elite. At any given meeting, a businessman might find himself face-to-face with a lawyer, doctor, musician, or an esteemed professor, like historian Werner Conze of Rotary Club Münster.²⁴

There were multiple motivations for accepting an invitation to join this elite circle of friends. Some members recognized the potential for professional networking and intellectual stimulation, in keeping with Germany’s longer associational tradition. Others saw themselves as explicitly following in the footsteps of historic male organizations (*Männerbünde*), from the Hanseatic merchant guilds to Benjamin Franklin’s Junto Society of men devoted to mutual improvement and the public good.²⁵ While different in multiple respects, the Rotary movement, according to one German member, shared with these predecessors the ideals of “selectivity, proving one’s worth, mutual help, expressed utilitarianism, regular meetings, and multiple forms of conviviality.”²⁶ But this self-proclaimed “modern guild”²⁷ differed from other associations in its rejection of any professional or religious particularism and in its emphasis on the idea of service on a global level. Noting with frustration Hitler’s perversion of the concepts “service” and “sacrifice” (to a racially homogenous national community), Rotarians were careful to recast these ideals in strictly international terms. “Humanism,” “understanding,” “friendship,” “responsibility,” and “self-sacrifice” were the watchwords of the movement, all of which were meant to unite members from Latin America to Asia.

International Service, Mass Consumption, and Bourgeois Individuality

How did Rotarians enact these virtues in the 1950s, when West Germans were attempting to carve out a post-Nazi identity? They did so in three discernible ways: through community and international service, through an accommodation to the worlds of leisure and mass consumption, and through the promotion of bourgeois elitism.²⁸ First, on the most visible level, Rotarians were community activists. Guided by their motto “Service above Self,” they sponsored clothing and food drives and hosted charity fund-raisers. They also promoted art exhibitions and awarded scholarships to financially disadvantaged students.²⁹ While Rotarians eagerly engaged in these local activities, such gestures were merely one dimension of larger national and international exercises in altruism. They sent Christmas care-packages to families behind the Iron Curtain, sponsored international exchange programs, and, in the aftermath of the Hungarian uprising in 1956, provided food, shelter, and clothes for exiles. The same year, they supplied aid to survivors of a mining disaster in Belgium and flood relief in India.³⁰ These forms of international benevolence had defined the Rotary movement since its inception in the United States, but in the setting of postwar West Germany, such humanitarian gestures were part of larger project of “moral rearmament.”³¹

Rotarians were not the only men’s clubs engaging in these activities. In the course of the 1950s, Lions International, by mid-decade the largest service organization in the world,³² had set up dozens of clubs throughout Germany, inevitably challenging the sense of exclusivity that German Rotarians enjoyed. With the message “We serve” (*Wir dienen*) and their devotion to friendship and international goodwill, there was much overlap in the missions of both organizations, and a sense of competition and cooperation marked the relationship between the two. By 1955, the Lions Clubs in the Federal Republic could boast the membership of prize-winning Hamburg scientist Pascual Jordan³³ and, within Konrad Adenauer’s cabinet, transportation minister Hans-Christoph Seebohm and justice minister Wolfgang Haußman.³⁴

The idea of international service took on special meaning in postwar Germany, as Lions and Rotarians tried to provide German professionals with an ethical sensibility and civic-mindedness in the aftermath of National Socialism. At their weekly meetings in the 1950s, Rotarians regularly implored each other to look beyond Germany—to engage in *Europa-Arbeit* (“work on behalf of European Unity”)³⁵ and to follow wider developments in global politics and economics. Global humanism depended on an intimate knowledge of the world, and Rotarians shared stories of their trips to Japan, India, Cuba, the United States, and the Soviet Union. They led international visitors on tours of factories and other local sites of interest, and they met foreign Rotarians at

trade fairs like the Leipzig Messe and at international expositions, where West Germans were finding new business opportunities.

This spirit of internationalism entailed a certain amount of pageantry. In 1955, to mark the Golden Anniversary of the Rotary movement, Rotary Club Hamburg engaged in a “flag exchange,” sending its club banner to counterparts in Egypt, Chile, Argentina, and to the Rotary Club of Hamburg, Pennsylvania.³⁶ Celebrations of new club charters could be lavish affairs, with foreign visitors and new Rotarians enjoying sumptuous meals, a round of speeches, and classical music.³⁷ But amid the celebrations of communal and international fraternity, Rotarians did not shy away from controversial themes. Some Rotarians’ speeches were charged with historical and political content, as they reflected on the dangers of communism, British colonial policy in India, the legacy of the Dreyfus Affair in France, the sad fate of the American Indian, the psychology of Hitler, and racial tensions in the United States.³⁸ By educating each other in history and politics, Rotarians hoped to position themselves as well-rounded world citizens, whose professional lives would be infused with an intellectual and global sensibility.

Rotarians in the 1950s were intent on promoting a distinct ethical worldview, and they did so both in their philanthropic activities and in their discussions about themes of international significance. Yet they also hoped to understand the changing nature of their own society. In the years of the “Economic Miracle,” this meant acculturating themselves to the expanding worlds of leisure and consumption while still maintaining, to invoke Hans-Peter Schwarz’s formulation, “bourgeois thought patterns and lifestyles.”³⁹ The weekly club reports from 1957 reveal a host of themes relating to the increased opportunities for leisure that attended the recovering West German economy. Discussions of vacation travel, electronic music, and German literature were followed by reflections on the importance of self-irony, thoughts about Walt Disney, and discussions of astrology.⁴⁰ Rotarians listened to lunchtime lectures about the lifestyles and philosophies of effective and humane managers. They cautioned each other about diseases related to overwork—so-called *Managerkrankheiten* (“manager-illnesses”)—and emphasized the importance of cultivating a relaxing hobby like stamp collecting.⁴¹

Taken together, there was a larger message in these discussions: after many years of war and hardship, it was important to safeguard one’s bourgeois comforts. But, importantly, Rotarians had to be wary of letting material pleasures distract them from their true calling of service. Club members admonished their colleagues to avoid complacency in their newfound prosperity. Such “comfortism,” argued one member, could lead to apathy—to an *ohne mich* (“without me”) attitude that ran counter to Rotary ideals of civic engagement. Elites should undoubtedly enjoy their free time and family life and, ideally, cultivate an appreciation for art and music. But these pleasures were not ends in them-

selves. They allowed the Rotarian to discover his humanity amid the rapid pace of modern existence.⁴² They served the higher purpose of creating a generation of men committed to public service.

Merging leisure and responsibility was by no means an effortless process in the midst of rapid socioeconomic change, and Rotarians spent much time trying to diagnose the problems facing modern society. They drew inspiration from European and American scholars and cultural critics. Most notably in Germany, sociologist Helmut Schelsky introduced the concept of the *nivellierte Mittelstandsgesellschaft* (literally, “leveled-out middle class society”), in which the distinctions between the proletariat, the middle classes, and the wealthy were being erased, as the social mobility of the working class converged with the downward mobility of the bourgeoisie.⁴³ If Economics Minister Ludwig Erhard’s goal of “prosperity for all” (*Wohlstand für Alle*) was approaching reality by the end of the 1950s, not every German was comfortable with this widespread abundance. While liberals like Erhard and Schelsky took heart in the softening of rigid class structures, social conservatives revived longstanding fears of a “revolt of the masses.” Would mass democracy and mass consumption lead to the elimination of socioeconomic distinctions and a lowering of cultural standards? In asking this question, West Germans echoed the worries of American Dwight Macdonald, the widely read critic of mass culture, who saw everything from comic books to Hollywood films as dangerous challenges to high-brow culture. This tyrannical reign of *Kitsch* could be attributed in part to the increasing sway of “the public” or “the masses” over cultural and social life.⁴⁴

Within the German Rotary Clubs, one can observe a marked ambivalence toward this expanding world of mass consumption.⁴⁵ On the one hand, Rotarians, through their major ties to business, had a stake in seeing the expansion of the global economy and the increased purchasing power of domestic and foreign consumers. On the other hand, their self-understanding as elites was potentially threatened by the increasing “massification” of society.⁴⁶ While Rotarians represented the spectrum of neoliberal to conservative ideologies (and less commonly social-democratic), one can nonetheless find in their many speeches in the mid to late 1950s consistent reflections on the meaning of these changes for their own calling as Rotarians. In a lecture entitled the “Middle-Class Problem,” a Rotarian from Club Recklinghausen bemoaned the passing of an “upright and estimable *Bürgertum* in Germany.” Where once the spirit of the “dependable German handworker” symbolized the self-reliant free professional, there was now a smugness attending increased prosperity and economic growth. The greatest threat to the middle class was not government policies that favored widespread social and economic opportunity. Rather, the problem lay in the realm of the *Geist*. Increased prosperity was leading to a collective lack of responsibility and an erosion of personal relationships amid

a faceless modern bureaucracy. The challenge for Germans was to tap into the high moral character embodied in the rapidly disappearing figure of the independent businessman.⁴⁷ The importance of this goal was summed up by another Rotarian in a talk entitled “Reflections on the Journey of an *unbürgerlich* Generation.” “The proletarian of yesterday,” he argued to his Friends in Rotary Club Wuppertal, is the “credit-worthy citizen of today.” While this was a positive historical development, this economic leveling and consumerism also risked bringing about a “spiritual anarchy,” which could be averted only through elitist displays of moral responsibility, most notably in cultural patronage and philanthropy.⁴⁸

Such expressions of ambivalence about mass consumption, prosperity, and technology were familiar tropes of the 1950s. To a large degree, they emanated from the United States, where cultural commentators observed a society comprised of lonely and lackluster “organization men”—a crowd of corporate drones who lacked the self-initiative and individuality of an earlier era.⁴⁹ This diagnosis appeared in the writings of Cold War liberals and cultural conservatives on both sides of the Atlantic.⁵⁰ What made them so resonant for professional elites, however, was the extent to which these men considered themselves, in many respects, the antidote to the problems of social and moral decline. This is where the German Rotary movement came in. In imbuing their wealth and status with an ethical content, Rotarians saw themselves in a unique position to heal the problems of the modern world. The multiple manifestations of “civilization-sickness” (*Zivilisationskrankheit*)—apathy, egotism, ennui, as well as a host of physical ailments—could be addressed only in reinstating some measure of social and cultural stratification.⁵¹ This project of *Elitebildung* (“elite formation”) was by no means exclusive to the Rotary movement. Indeed the concept was omnipresent in the new German democracy, as politicians and businessmen discussed ways of fostering post-fascist leadership ideals in the country’s youth.⁵² But Rotarians were among the most vocal in this call for a new sociocultural elite, whose moral example would supplant the discredited ideologies of the past.⁵³

But what actually characterized an “elite”? Rotarians spent much time trying to answer this question at their weekly meetings. Was elitism based on class, education, or more abstract ethical values and behaviors? Echoing Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gasset, most Rotarians argued that “in the age of the masses” the elite could belong to any class.⁵⁴ An elite individual was defined not by his wealth but by his ethic of personal responsibility and his striving to exceed beyond what was merely expected of him. Embracing the human being with all of his creative potential would stave off the process of social leveling that had enabled both the rise of popular fascist movements and the embrace of vulgar, “Americanized” culture. As embodied by Rotarians, the new elites were above all individualists, men who would display the

force of their personal character and thereby challenge the cultural power of the “mass man.”⁵⁵

The values of the individual—as entrepreneur, artist, or writer—defined the self-understanding of many elites during this period. Yet this celebration of individuality presented a potential dilemma for Rotarians, as it could appear at odds with the organization’s motto “Service above Self.” Did not this ideal entail the de-prioritizing of the self in the name of a universalist ethic? As Rotarians explained to each other, self-sacrifice did not mean self-abnegation.⁵⁶ Only by thriving in their professions—and perhaps in the process attaining wealth and status—could one serve as models of diligence and moral integrity. Individual achievement was the foundation of collective morality, allowing Rotarians to use their professional connections and social influence in the service of humankind. They would, by extension, give moral content to the materialism that attended West Germany’s rapid economic recovery.

Rotarians and the Legacy of National Socialism

In the 1950s, debates about mass society, elitism, and leadership ethics were not unique to the Federal Republic. They accompanied wider discussions throughout the West about the meanings of freedom and conformity in an age of totalitarianism and mass democracy, and they could be heard in universities, political circles, and private clubs from Berlin to Berkeley. But these debates carried an extra weight for postwar West Germans. As Rotarians discussed contemporary social issues, the traumas of the recent past—Hitler, war, and defeat—were very much present. Recasting *Rotarier* as international elites entailed a series of uneasy confrontations with the discredited legacy of National Socialism. These moments of historical memory could hinge on the complicity of an individual Rotarian in Nazi crimes, or on the organization’s own history during the early years of the Third Reich.

Recent historiography has revealed how widespread discussions of National Socialism were during the seemingly “silent years” of the 1950s. While it was not until the 1960s that the Holocaust as such began to pervade public discourses in West Germany, the experience and legacy of National Socialism nonetheless defined the terms of political and social debates during the first decade of the Federal Republic.⁵⁷ To a great extent, the history of Rotary Germany mirrors this general trajectory. In the early postwar years, moving beyond National Socialism meant proving to the world that their new clubs were not populated by former Nazis. Not surprisingly, members felt compelled to assert their non-Nazi or anti-Nazi credentials, especially when dealing with American Rotarians. Thus we have the case of the director of a city library asking Rotary International to consider his position as a representative of UNESCO

as proof of his commitment to international understanding and “so that you are assured that you don’t have an old Nazi before you.”⁵⁸

The sociological make-up of Rotary of Germany was indeed a source of some concern to RI officers, and at the direction of the Chicago headquarters, the new clubs were to make every effort to keep their memberships “young.” Members had to be active in their professions and could not in any way be politically compromised.⁵⁹ But to what degree was the presence of potential ex-Nazis an issue? The membership list of Rotary Club Mönchengladbach, a typical, mid-sized club, offers but one example of Rotary’s potentially nettlesome demographics in the early 1950s. When the club was established in 1953, it had 22 members, with a median age of 48 years. The oldest member was a 65-year old physician, and the youngest was a 40-year old art historian. The majority of members were born between 1905 and 1913,⁶⁰ representing a generation that Harold Marcuse has referred to as “1933ers.” As a rule, this generation had “formed no strong relationship to the Weimar Republic,” and had “experienced Nazism as a positive turning point.”⁶¹ A large number of post-war Rotarians had indeed established themselves professionally shortly before or during the Third Reich, and many had established comfortable working relations with the state and party apparatuses. These facts alone indicate little about true attitudes and behaviors of individual members during the Nazi years, whether in this particular club or more widely; indeed, some Rotarians went on an “internal emigration” from 1933 to 1945.⁶² But they do reveal the extent to which Rotarians had accommodated themselves professionally to the Nazi regime.

Thus founding members in the early 1950s were naturally wary when a controversial name appeared in their ranks. Such was the case of Adenauer’s chief of staff Hans Globke, who had co-written one of the official commentaries on the Nuremberg Racial Laws of 1935. When the newly constituted Rotary Club Bonn put forward its list of officers in 1950, Globke’s name was second from the top, as vice president. Robert Haussmann, governor of Rotary’s Germany district, had initially recommended Globke for the position, but when he learned of Globke’s past, he registered his immediate disapproval. Now thrust into a negative spotlight, Globke, argued Haussmann, would lead to damaging publicity at a defining moment in the organization’s history. “It would be very unfortunate for Dr. Globke, for the Club and, not least, for me, if this led to difficulties.”⁶³ Haussmann’s retroactive withdrawal of support was answered with defiance on the part of other Rotarians, who defended their nominee at the risk of public criticism.⁶⁴

The Globke case was one of several examples of Rotarians having to decide between loyalty to a fellow member or shielding their clubs from unflattering attention. Which was a true demonstration of Rotarian values—fraternal fidelity or confronting, however pragmatically, the Nazi past? This was not

always easy to answer. Rotarians in West Germany faced a similar choice in the 1960s, when Friedrich von Wilpert, a founding member of the Bonn club and Germany district governor from 1957–59, wrote a book length history of Rotary in Germany.⁶⁵ His 1962 study followed the organization from its arrival in Hamburg in 1927 through the readmission of Germany's clubs into Rotary International in 1949. Given Rotary Germany's short and tumultuous history, a large portion of the book concerned the fate of the clubs during the Nazi years. Wilpert offered a careful and unadorned portrayal of the organization during the years after Hitler's ascension to power. Rather than drifting into apologetics about the outright persecution of Rotarians, Wilpert instead painted a more nuanced picture of a movement struggling to reconcile its own internationalist aims with the hyper-nationalism of the Nazi period. During the early Nazi years, argued Wilpert, Rotarians did not distance themselves en masse from Nazism so much as try to put the best face on the political developments when non-Germans expressed concern over Hitler. Some Rotarians had been "careerists" during the 1930s and early 1940s, but the majority had been genuinely torn between duty to the Fatherland and commitment to the Rotary movement. Eventually, the Nazis forbade Rotarians from joining the NSDAP, and vice versa, before direct pressure from Goebbels spelled the end of the movement.

Forty years after its composition, Wilpert's portrayal of Germans' complicated choices under Nazism may seem uncontroversial. But in the early 1960s, it was bold in its unvarnished confrontation with the past, coming from the pen of a leading Rotarian.⁶⁶ Many individual Rotary clubs during the 1950s and 1960s published their own histories, which were less open about the internal struggles Rotarians faced.⁶⁷ They rarely mentioned the sad departure of Jewish Rotarians, as Wilpert had in his manuscript, nor the early hopes harbored by some Rotarians that they could steer Hitler along a more reasonable course.

To his consternation, Wilpert faced widespread criticism when he circulated his unpublished manuscript among fellow Rotarians. Some critics argued that too little time had passed for such an open rendering of the past. Other feared that young club members, who had not experienced the political pressures of the time, would not understand why their predecessors had placed their guarded faith in Hitler in 1933; with such knowledge, they might grow disillusioned with the organization. Still others expressed concern that the book, at its worst, could be misused by international critics of Germany. "What you have written," conceded one anonymous assessment, "is unfortunately too true." But, the statement concluded, as Rotarians, one was obliged to question whether the book passed the organization's "Four-Way Test": Is it the truth? Is it fair to all concerned? Will it build goodwill and better friendships? Will it be beneficial to all concerned? To most Rotarians the answer was No.⁶⁸

Wilpert himself was not prepared to withdraw his manuscript, insisting that his work was written entirely in the spirit of Rotary, to provide a useful and truthful history to future Club Friends and historians. He initially rejected suggestions that he hand over the work to the Federal Archives, to be accessed only after the year 2000. For the next six years, Rotarians debated the fate of the manuscript. By 1964, Wilpert had agreed that publishing the book would “wake a sleeping dog,” and he agreed to remove the developments from 1933 to 1937 from his work. Finally, in 1968, the Rotary Governor Council in Germany voted against publication altogether, and Wilpert conceded defeat, but not without a parting plea that Rotarians eventually face up to the truth of the Nazi years, when Rotarians had tried to save their movement by “making a pact with the powers in the Reich.”⁶⁹ After sitting untouched for twenty years, the original manuscript was eventually made accessible in 1987, fifty years after the dissolution of Rotary Germany under National Socialism.⁷⁰

At first glance Friedrich von Wilpert seemed an unlikely proponent of this “coming to terms with the past.” A German nationalist and staunch anti-communist, he had been forced to leave his home in Danzig, where he had been the first secretary of the city’s Rotary club in 1931. He eventually became a press officer in the West German Ministry for Expellees, Refugees, and the War-Damaged during the 1950s. His belief that his native Danzig was never a nazified city (despite the Nazis’ dominance of the Danzig Senate since 1933) indicates how much Wilpert’s views were in keeping with other, predominantly conservative German expellees.⁷¹ Yet as district governor, Wilpert saw a faithful rendering of the Nazi years to be a fundamental expression of Rotary’s commitment to honesty and to the country’s reintegration into a community of democracies.

By the time Wilpert wrote his manuscript, the Holocaust was front-page news in West Germany. During the last year of Wilpert’s tenure as district governor, West Germany had begun to witness a wave of anti-Semitic incidents, including the scrawling of swastikas on the Cologne synagogue and the defacement of Jewish cemeteries.⁷² With the 1961 trial of Adolf Eichmann, Germans were beginning to reflect more openly on their own relationship to Nazi crimes. While it is unclear whether Wilpert was influenced by these events, his book reflected the expanding public discourse on Nazi crimes in the 1960s.

But the manuscript’s controversial reception among his fellow Rotarians also reveals how reliving the past was still a fraught and painful exercise for West German elites. For, if some Rotarians had quietly disapproved of Hitler in the 1930s, others had put their faith in the regime and had tried to reconcile Rotary’s aims with the racist and nationalist tenets of National Socialism. For them, and for the German bourgeoisie more broadly, the defeat in 1945 was not an unambiguous moment of celebration. As one Rotarian put it, “For us Germans, the military capitulation meant the simultaneous destruction of

a vast number of ethical, material, and moral values.”⁷³ Responding to this moral collapse took many forms in West German society, from abstract discussions of totalitarianism to reflections on one’s own victimization by the Nazis and the Soviets.⁷⁴ Mirroring the tentative nature of memory in the 1950s and early 1960s, Rotarians were uneasy about the public nature of Wilpert’s revelations. Rather than engaging in a public discussion about the different forms of behavior in the Third Reich, Rotarians chose to present their postwar commitment to service as a deeply ethical act that united all members, regardless of their or their predecessors’ political choices in the past. Even if they did not declare it as such, for most Rotarians rebuilding their clubs in West Germany was itself an exercise in “coming to terms.” Memory was selective and pragmatic, as organization leaders constantly weighed a historical reckoning against its public relations implications. But Rotarians did hope that a revival of bourgeois elitism—based on the ethos of service—would supplant the bankrupt Nazi *Weltanschauung*.

Taken together, these moments of controversy reflected the larger challenges facing West German society in its first decades, as debates over the role of former Nazis, and the political and moral legacy of the past, accompanied the building of democratic structures and discourses. How could Germany assert itself and move beyond its recent past without breeding international ill-will? This was a challenge for all Germans, but it resonated more loudly for an organization that saw itself as grounded in international ethical norms. For Rotarians, the answer to this question lay less in a dialogue with the Nazi past than in the values of their own organization. By explicitly espousing an ethos of global understanding and service, West German Rotarians hoped to offer models of ethical behavior to their fellow citizens. Reviving the values of the nineteenth century *Bürgertum*—reasoned debate, public service, male association, individuality—would not shield Germany from its compromised past. But it would ease the transition from authoritarianism to democracy. This had been the goal of the early Rotarians in the aftermath of World War I, and it again became the *raison d’être* of this new generation of elites, now faced with even greater practical and psychological hurdles.



Like any cultural and social movement, Rotary embodied a number of contradictions. On the one hand, German *Rotarier* echoed the ideals of groups like the *Wirtschaftspolitische Gesellschaft 1947* that envisioned a “free society without privileges, the conceits of family origin, higher social positions, or greater possessions.”⁷⁵ On the other hand, the practice of philanthropy and social responsibility depended to some degree on real wealth and status. Likewise, the very concept of “elite,” Rotarians conceded, aroused suspicion. It seemed to imply a reactionary challenge to the democratization of society, or

could be misunderstood as a call for a plutocracy. But, agreed most Rotarians, “Even a democracy needs an elite,” a group whose behavior stood as a model of moral rectitude.⁷⁶

One must not downplay the pragmatic dimension of this ethical elitism. As one of the group’s mottos “He Profits Most Who Serves Best” indicates, there was a measure of professional self-interest in Rotarian altruism. Certainly, Rotarians saw themselves not merely as cultural and social ambassadors but also as powerful leaders in a postwar world order. This view emerges not only in Rotary lectures but also in the advertisements that adorned the pages of the organization’s magazines. A particularly revealing advertisement in 1957 depicts a man in the middle of negotiations at a setting resembling the United Nations. The placard in front of him bears the words, “Etats-Unis,” and his expensive timepiece is very visible against the ad copy: “Men who guide the destinies of the world wear Rolex watches.”⁷⁷

These narratives of prestige and power were widespread throughout the West in the 1950s, and despite Rotary’s commitment to international understanding, they often had an ideological component. Rotarians drew widely from prevailing Cold War discourses, wherein communism was seen as a dangerous “collectivist” challenge to Western individuality and capitalist freedom. Professional elites, whether in North America or Europe, could do their part in preventing the ultimate triumph of totalitarianism. Even if they were self-avowed internationalists, Rotarians saw European and Atlantic unity as the foundation of a stable and peaceful world order. This does not mean that the German Rotary movement merely echoed the ideological concerns of American elites. In the 1950s and 1960s, Rotary Germany remained a hybrid of national traditions and external influences. The organization borrowed its very language and structure from the original Rotarians in the United States. But Germans took an American organization and infused it with German priorities and concerns. Their goal of “recasting bourgeois Germany”⁷⁸ was necessarily a national project born of the country’s recent history, when war and economic upheaval had weakened older social and cultural hierarchies. Ironically, it took an institution from America, the land of mass culture and democracy, to provide a model of elitism in postwar West Germany.

Ultimately, the true uniqueness of the West German Rotary movement lay in the proximity of a National Socialist past. In the early Federal Republic, the international ideals of the Rotary movement—service, friendship, loyalty, responsibility—had deep resonance in the aftermath of World War II. The moral failures of the Nazi years needed to be redressed through the promotion of democracy and peace, and West German Rotarians selectively drew lessons from the past—the meaning of mass movements, the nature of Hitler’s rule, the fate of Rotary under National Socialism—to guide them in this process. Theirs was, to borrow Jürgen Kocka’s words, “a project of civil society.”⁷⁹

In attempting to reconstitute a bourgeois public sphere, Rotary expressed the ethos of voluntary cooperation and association that had been inherited from the Enlightenment. The combination of elitism and democracy, individuality and collective morality manifested a much older bourgeois ideal—now revived in service of a postwar democracy. If Helmut Schelsky and other writers in the 1950s were “skeptics” who believed that a German *Bürgertum* had essentially disappeared, Rotarians can be seen as “cautious optimists” who at the very least endeavored to be the driving force behind its renewal.⁸⁰

Notes

1. Lebenslauf von Rotarier S., 11 March 1957, RC Ulm/Donau, German Rotary Clubs Collection, B111 (“Deutsche Rotary Clubs”), Packet no. 38, (hereafter B111/38), Bundesarchiv Koblenz (hereafter BAK). Note that, as of the summer of 2000, this collection was only partially indexed. The number following “B111” corresponds to the number written on a specific box or packet. For another Rotarian reflection on captivity, see Vortrag des Rotariers G. in RC Hamburg, 30 November 1955, B111/9, BAK. On the postwar reflections of POWs and returnees more generally, see Frank Biess, “The Protracted War: Returning POWs and the Making of East and West German Citizens, 1945–1955,” Ph.D. diss., Brown University, 2000; and Robert G. Moeller, *War Stories: The Search for a Usable Past in the Federal Republic of Germany* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 2001).

2. I will be using the concept of *Bürgertum* interchangeably with “bourgeoisie,” although the German term has deeper cultural connotations. From the massive literature on this theme, see as an introduction Hannes Siegrist, “Ende der Bürgerlichkeit? Die Kategorien ‘Bürgertum’ und ‘Bürgerlichkeit’ in der westdeutschen Gesellschaft und Geschichtswissenschaft der Nachkriegsperiode,” *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 20 (1994): 548–83.

3. Volker R. Berghahn, “Recasting Bourgeois Germany,” in *The Miracle Years: A Cultural History of West Germany, 1949–1968*, ed. Hanna Schissler (Princeton/Oxford, 2001), 326–40; and Volker R. Berghahn, Stefan Unger, and Dieter Ziegler, eds., *Die deutsche Wirtschaftselite im 20. Jahrhundert. Kontinuität und Mentalität* (Essen, 2003). For a case study on postwar elites, see Michael R. Hayse, *Recasting West German Elites: Higher Civil Servants, Business Leaders, and Physicians in Hesse between Nazism and Democracy, 1945–1955* (New York/Oxford, 2003). On the history of German professions, see Geoffrey Cocks and Konrad H. Jarausch, *German Professions, 1800–1950* (New York/Oxford, 1990).

4. Rotary Germany, however, has recently published its history. See Manfred Wedemeyer, *Den Menschen verpflichtet. 75 Jahre Rotary in Deutschland, 1927–2002* (Hamburg, 2002). For an exhaustive history through 1949, also from the perspective of a Rotarian, see Friedrich von Wilpert, *Rotary in Deutschland. Ein Ausschnitt aus deutschem Schicksal* (Bonn, 1991). See also the sardonic and critical rendering in “Rotary: Filz in Nadelstreifen,” *Der Spiegel* 21 (1983): 56–74. On the controversial inception of this book, see below. Many Clubs have short histories posted on their official websites.

5. See Mary Nolan, *Visions of Modernity: American Business and the Modernization of Germany* (Oxford, 1994).

6. Jeffrey A. Charles, *Service Clubs in American Society: Rotary, Kiwanis, and Lions* (Urbana/Chicago, 1993), 9 and Chap. 6.

7. *Ibid.*, 128.

8. See Victoria de Grazia, *Irresistible Empire: America's Advance through Twentieth Century Europe* (Cambridge, 2005), msp. 26. I thank Professor de Grazia for providing me a draft copy of her chapter on interwar European Rotarians.

9. *Ibid.*, 61.

10. *Ibid.*, 49.

11. *Ibid.*, 33.

12. These were Freiburg, Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Wuppertal, Friedrichshafen, Bielefeld, and Krefeld. The Krefeld club established its charter in April 1937, a mere six months before Rotary Germany's dissolution in October. See Wilpert, *Rotary in Deutschland*, 156, and 300–01.

13. The group was the *Verein zur Beförderung des Gewerbeleisses*. See *ibid.*, 232. On this organization, and for an introduction to Rotary under Nazism, see also Manfred Wedemeyer, "Rotary in the Third Reich: Survival or Internal Emigration," in *Rotary's Global History Fellowship (An Internet Project)* (<http://rotaryhistoryfellowship.org/global/conflict/germany>) [Accessed 3 June 2004].

14. Wilpert, *Rotary in Deutschland*, 242.

15. At least 21 former Rotarians were decorated with the title of *Wehrdienstführer*. See the (sensationalist) discussion in Peter Wendling, *Die Unfehlbaren: Die Geheimnisse exklusiver Clubs, Logen und Zirkel* (Zürich, 1991), 154.

16. See Ottmar Katz, "Beziehungen muss man haben," *Abendzeitung* [Munich] (2 January 1957), in B111/20, BAK.

17. See files on the founding of RC Köln, in B111/4, BAK. Pferdenges had also been the president of the Cologne Club before its dissolution in 1937. See De Grazia, 43.

18. On Wilmowsky's membership, see RC Essen, #41 1955/56, Bericht über die Zusammenkunft am 3. April 1956, B111/2, BAK. On Berthold von Bohlen, see files on the founding of RC Essen, B111/6, BAK. In the 1930s, Wilmowsky had been a member of RC Halle.

19. On Vaubel, see Bericht #40 (13 April 1956), in Wuppertal files, B111/1, BAK. On the "Wuppertal Circle," see Volker R. Berghahn, *The Americanisation of West German Industry* (Cambridge, 1986), 254.

20. On Adenauer, see file on the founding of RC Bonn in 1949, B111/5, BAK.

21. See e.g. Herr G. to Rotary International in Chicago, 8 September 1950, B111/1, BAK.

22. On the Kulturkreis, see Werner Bühner, "Der Kulturkreis im Bundesverband der Deutschen Industrie und die kulturelle Modernisierung der Bundesrepublik in den 50er Jahren," in *Modernisierung im Wiederaufbau: Die westdeutsche Gesellschaft der 50er Jahre*, eds. Axel Schildt and Arnold Sywottek (Bonn, 1993), 583–96; and S. Jonathan Wiesen, *West German Industry and the Challenge of the Nazi Past* (Chapel Hill/London, 2001), 167–70.

23. On these *Arbeitsgemeinschaften*, see Wiesen, *West German Industry*, 177.

24. On Conze, see files on RC Münster/Westf., B111/26, BAK. For a brief introduction to Conze's postwar career, see Moeller, *War Stories*, 58. For a longer discussion

of Conze's controversial research during the Third Reich, see Ingo Haar, *Historiker im Nationalsozialismus, Deutsche Geschichtswissenschaft und der "Volkstumskampf" im Osten* (Göttingen, 2000).

25. "Der Historische Standort von Rotary International oder Männerbünde in der Geschichte," lecture (name and date unavailable) delivered at RC Neuss am Rhein, B111/14, BAK.

26. Ibid.

27. This reference to Rotary as a "modern guild" comes from the Rotary publication *Service is my Business* (Chicago, 1948).

28. Rotarians also explicitly emphasized the importance of service to their professions and to their own and other Rotary clubs. See Bericht über die Distriktskonferenz des 98. Distrikts am 3 November 1956 in Bad Kreuznach, B111/20, BAK.

29. For a list of typical Rotarian acts of philanthropy, see Clubtätigkeitenbericht, RC Bielefeld, January 1957, B111/17, BAK.

30. On these humanitarian activities, see *Reporting on Rotary, 1956–1957*, B111/21, BAK and *ibid.*

31. Originating in Oxford, England in the 1920s and later based in Caux, Switzerland, the Moral Rearmament movement brought together leaders from around Europe to discuss the reinfusion of ethics into European life and, more specifically, to foster a reconciliation between former enemies. Many German leaders, including Rotarians, took part in the meetings. See Referat über die 'Moralische Aufrüstung,' gehalten von Rotarier D., Anlage zum Bericht Nr. 32/55–56, 13 February 1956, RC Bentheim," B111/9, BAK.

32. By the end of 1955, there were 16,700 Lions clubs in 69 countries, as opposed to 8,400 Rotary clubs. See Dr. Jur. Heinz M. Wittenberg, District Governor of Germany, Lions International, to Herr K. 19 November 1955, B111/25, BAK.

33. Jordan appears to have been a member of, or an active participant in, RC Hamburg as well, despite the general Rotarian rule precluding membership in two service clubs, scattered files in B111/25, BAK.

34. Ibid.

35. Herr R. of the Geschäftsstelle der Europa-Union Wuppertal speaking on the European Union, 22 July 1956, RC Wuppertal files, B111/1, BAK.

36. On this "Flaggen austausch," see reports from RC Hamburg in B111/9, BAK.

37. See e.g. the charter celebrations of RC Bad Homburg, RC Lündeberg, and RC Flensburg, B111/25, BAK.

38. On the Dreyfus Affair, see lecture by Rotarier H., 3 April 1957, RC Krefeld, B111/27, BAK. Likewise see "Probleme Indiens," RC Wuppertal, Bericht #5/1955/56, B111/1; "Adolf Hitler, ein neurotisches Problem," RC Hildesheim zum Bericht Nr. 52/57, 29 January 1957, B111/39, BAK; "Das Rassenproblem in den USA," Vortrag von Rot. M., RC Mülheim a.d. Ruhr, Anlage zum Wochenbericht, 19 March 1956, B111/6, BAK.

39. Hanz-Peter Schwarz, *Die Ära Adenauer*, 2 vols. (Wiesbaden, 1961–64), quoted in Berghahn, "Recasting Bourgeois Germany," in Schissler, ed., *The Miracle Years*, 328.

40. See the series of weekly reports from 1957 in B111/17, BAK., including "Die wundersame Geschichte von Walt Disney," von Rot. S., RC Mönchen-Gladbach, 27 February 1957, B111/6, BAK.

41. On "Managerkrankheiten," see RC Trier, #14–1955/56, meeting on 7 October 1955, B111/1. BAK.

42. "Komfortismus als Lebensstil," Kurze Inhaltsangabe des Vortrages von Rot. S., 7 October 1955, RC Wuppertal, B111/1, BAK.

43. On the influence of Schelsky in the 1950s, see Uta G. Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels: Cold War Politics and American Culture in a Divided Germany* (Berkeley/Los Angeles, 2000), Chap. 3. See also Josef Mooser, "Arbeiter, Angestellte und Frauen in der 'nivellierten Mittelstandsgesellschaft.' Thesen," in Schildt and Sywottek, eds., *Modernisierung im Wiederaufbau*, 362–76.

44. Dwight Macdonald, "A Theory of Mass Culture," in *Mass Culture: The Popular Arts in America*, eds. Bernard Rosenberg and David Manning White (Glencoe, Ill., 1957), 59–73. For more on Macdonald, see Volker R. Berghahn, *America and the Intellectual Cold Wars of Europe* (Princeton, 2001), 98–103.

45. On consumerism in West Germany, see Michael Wildt, "Changes in Consumption as Social Practice in West Germany During the 1950s," in *Getting and Spending: European and American Consumer Societies in the Twentieth Century*, eds. Susan Strasser, Charles McGovern, and Matthias Judt (Washington D.C., 1998).

46. The concept of *Vermassung* pervaded the speeches and writings of Rotarians during the 1950s. On conservative elites and perceptions of "the masses" in the 1950s, see Axel Schildt, *Konservatismus in Deutschland. Von den Anfängen im 18. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart* (Munich, 1998), 211–52. For a discussion of the economic and social realities of the 1950s, see Axel Schildt and Arnold Sywottek, "'Reconstruction' and 'Modernization': West German Social History during the 1950s," in *West Germany under Construction: Politics, Society, and Culture in the Adenauer Era*, ed. Robert G. Moeller (Ann Arbor, 1997), 413–43. On the cultural mood of the period, see Axel Schildt, *Moderne Zeiten: Freizeit, Massenmedien und "Zeitgeist" in der Bundesrepublik der 50er Jahre* (Hamburg, 1995).

47. "Das Mittelstandsproblem." Vortrag von Rot. W., 7 March 1957, RC Recklinghausen, B111/14, BAK.

48. "Gedanken zum Weg einer unbürgerlichen Generation." Vortrag von Rot. S., 19 October 1956, RC Wuppertal, B111/15, BAK.

49. William H. Whyte, Jr., *The Organization Man* (Garden City, 1957).

50. See Berghahn, *America and the Intellectual Cold Wars in Europe*.

51. For Rotarians' views on this theme, see "Zivilisationskrankheiten." Vortrag von Rot. K. am 13 February 1957, Anlage 2 zum Wochenbericht Berlin Nr. 31/1956/57, B111/40. Rotarians spoke often about the manifestation of sickness in society, e.g. "Ist die moderne Kunst krank?" Vortrag von Rot. F., 1 July 1957, RC Oldenburg, B111/39, BAK.

52. See e.g. "Führungsaufgaben des Unternehmers," Vortrag des Herrn R. vor Mitgliedern des Lions- und Rotary-Clubs, 6 June 1957, B111/39, BAK.

53. On the importance of authority and leadership, see "Vom Geheimnis der Autorität," Vortrag von Rot. Dr. E., 2. July 1956, RC Ulm, B111/38, BAK. On *Elitebildung* and leadership ideas among West German businessmen, see Morten Reitmayer, "'Unternehmer zur Führung berufen'—durch wen?," in *Die deutsche Wirtschaftselite im 20. Jahrhundert: Kontinuität und Mentalität* [Bochumer Schriften zur Unternehmens- und Industriegeschichte, Bd. 11], eds. Volker R. Berghahn, Stefan Unger, and Dieter Ziegler (Essen, 2003), 317–36.

54. See e.g. "Elite—im Zeitalter der Masse." Vortrag von Rot. P., 15 October 1956, RC Ulm/Donau, Bericht 15–56/57, B111/38, BAK.

55. On early postwar concepts of the “mass man,” see e.g. Mark Roseman, “The Organic Society and the ‘Massenmenschen’: Integrating Young Labour in the Ruhr Mines, 1945–58,” in *West Germany Under Construction*, ed. Moeller, 287–320.

56. On the importance of the “self” to Rotarians, see Gustav Hillard-Steinbömer, RC Lübeck, “Über das Wesen der Selbstbiographie.” Reprinted in *Der Rotarier* (1955), B111/21, BAK.

57. On West German memory in the 1950s, see, as introductions, Norbert Frei, *Adenauer’s Germany and the Nazi Past: The Politics of Amnesty and Integration* (New York, 2002), and Jeffrey Herf, *Divided Memory: The Nazi Past in the Two Germanys* (Cambridge, 1997).

58. Herr G. to Rotary International in Chicago, 8. September 1950, B111/1, BAK.

59. On some of these qualifications, see Bernhard Goldschmidt, Governor of the 74th District (West Germany) to Professor A., 14 November 1952, B111/1, BAK.

60. RC Mönchen-Gladbach, “Gründer-Mitglieder-Liste,” 1953, B111/11, BAK. I have chosen this club based on the availability of membership data.

61. Harold Marcuse, *Legacies of Dachau: The Uses and Abuses of a Concentration Camp, 1933–2001* (Cambridge, 2001), 292.

62. Wedemeyer, “Rotary in the Third Reich.”

63. Robert Haussmann, Governor des 74. Distrikts to Rot. S., 31 October 1950, B111/5, BAK.

64. When the correspondence ends, Bonn Rotarians are resisting Haussmann’s pleas. I have not been able to determine whether Globke remained in the position of Vice President.

65. “Rotary in Deutschland. Ein Ausschnitt aus deutschem Schicksal. Von Friedrich von Wilpert (als Manuskript gedruckt, umfassend die Zeit, 1927–ca 1950).” Kl. Erw. (Kleine Erwerbungen): Nr. 474–1 (fol. 1), BAK.

66. Wilpert’s manuscript is not without its biases. He refers, for example, to a Jewish and communist defamation campaign against Germany in the early 1930s. Wilpert, *Rotary in Deutschland*, 67.

67. See e.g. *Fünfundzwanzig Jahre Rotary Club Hannover: Festschrift, 1932–1957*, in B111/21, BAK.

68. “Urteile über das Manuskript ‘Rotary in Deutschland.’” Kl. Erw. 474–2, folder 1, BAK. See the following series of correspondences about the manuscript, which span the years 1962 to 1968, in the same files.

69. Wilpert, “Schlussbemerkung zur bisherigen Behandlung meines Manuskriptes ‘Rotary in Deutschland,’” 10 June 1968, Kl. Erw. 474–2, BAK.

70. The manuscript was eventually published in book form. See Wilpert, *Rotary in Deutschland*. For Wilpert’s own description of this controversy, see *ibid.*, 321. See also Wedemeyer, *75 Jahre Rotary*, 122–27.

71. On expellee organizations in West Germany, see Pertti Ahonen, “Domestic Constraints on West German Ostpolitik: The Role of the Expellee Organizations in the Adenauer Era” *Central European History* 31 (1998): 31–63.

72. On this wave of Antisemitism in 1959–60, see Detlef Siegfried, “Zwischen Auferarbeitung und Schlußstrich. Der Umgang mit der NS-Vergangenheit in den beiden deutschen Staaten, 1958 bis 1969,” in *Dynamische Zeiten: Die 60er Jahre in den beiden deutschen Gesellschaften*, eds. Axel Schildt, Detlef Siegfried, and Karl Christian Lamers (Hamburg, 2000), 77–113.

73. "Wo stehen wir heute?" Redner: Rot. M., RC Siegen, Anlage zum Wochenbericht, 12 December 1955, B111/1, BAK.

74. This view came through in some Rotarians' autobiographical presentations. See Lebenslauf von Rotarier S., 11 March 1957, RC Ulm/Donau," B111/38, BAK. On the sense of victimization after World War II, see Moeller, *War Stories*.

75. See "Wirtschaftspolitische Gesellschaft Tagung in Frankfurt." Referat gehalten von Rot. H. beim RC Trier, am 27.1.56, B111/1, BAK.

76. "Problem der Elitebildung." Vortrag von Rot. H., 2 November 1955, Anlage 2 zum Wochenbericht Berlin Nr. 18/1955/56. B111/9 (Aktenordner #1), BAK.

77. *The Rotarian: An International Magazine* 90:5 (May 1957):1 in B111/18, BAK. There is an important gender component to this elitist message that demands further exploration. Rotarians—whether in Germany or abroad—saw their clubs as bastions of distinctly male economic and social power. Rotary International did not accept women as members until a 1987 U.S. Supreme Court decision mandated that they do so. On Rotary Germany as a "men's only" club, see De Grazia, *Irresistible Empire*, 44.

78. Berghahn, "Recasting Bourgeois Germany," [Title derived from Charles S. Maier, *Recasting Bourgeois Europe: Stabilization in France, Germany, and Italy in the Decade after World War I* (Princeton, 1975)].

79. See Jürgen Kocka, *Industrial Culture and Bourgeois Society: Business, Labor, and Bureaucracy in Modern Germany* (New York/Oxford, 1999), 284.

80. On this characterization of Schelsky, see Siegrist, "Ende der Bürgerlichkeit?"