

PUBLIC RELATIONS FOR THE SOCIAL MARKET ECONOMY: DIE WAAGE



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

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

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

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

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

*Die Waage/The Society for the Promotion of Social Compromise is a voluntary and private organization that applies commercial advertising methods for the purpose of the common welfare. Die Waage's non-partisan, public service announcements [gemeinschaftsbildende Aufklärungsarbeit] pursue the goal of convincing the entire population of the enduring validity of our economic system.*⁹

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The three officially stated goals of Die Waage were: "1. A factual clarification for the public of the social market economy and a demonstration of the economic advantages that the social market economy already offers all levels of society. 2. Promotion of the social compromise and with that the security of the social peace, which is the basis for a lasting, healthy atmosphere between employers and employees. 3. General improvement of the business community's image and the reduction of resentments against the concept of free enterprise [*freien Unternehmertums*]." ¹⁵ As the organization dedicated itself to this ambitious and comprehensive public relations campaign, it stressed that this undertaking intended to enhance understanding of the social market economy not only for "Lieschen Müller" (John Doe) but also "Dr. Lieschen Müller"—that is to the widest segment of society. Franz Greiß reasoned that industry should conduct a public relations campaign as though the social market economy were its own product, because this invaluable system ensured the industrialist's ability to perform his economic functions effectively and fully.¹⁶

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

völkisch (nationalist or racist) and anti-Semitic sentiments, such as one in which she explained that Jews controlled the American media and had fostered a hostile American public opinion towards Germany. Immediately after the war Noelle-Neumann worked with the French military intelligence organizing some surveys in 1946/47. Early in 1948 she incorporated the Institut für Demoskopie in Allensbach on Bodensee; much of the Institut's work involved research for advertising. In addition, during the 1950s she became a key adviser and pollster in the service of the conservative CDU/CSU.³⁶

Particularly important for Die Waage's public relations campaign was a summary of surveys conducted by Noelle-Neumann's Institut für Demoskopie between 1948 and 1951. These surveys were compiled for the GfG in a single report called *Das Soziale Klima* (The Social Climate). This survey investigated four basic questions: What did the populace know about the social market economy? How were the opposition and the government viewed by the public? What was the relationship between the various social partners, especially industry and labor? Finally, what were the views on the trade unions and codetermination in plants and factories? The Institut für Demoskopie also included as part of the survey a report on "Public Relations and Opinion Research in the United States of America and Great Britain." Drawing on experiences in the United States and Great Britain, this short report underscored the need for business and large industry to involve themselves in public relations.³⁷

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

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

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

Having sketched out the contours of West German public opinion, *Das Soziale Klima* was, in fact, used by Die Waage's executive board as a tool to recruit donors. An early action plan for Die Waage, designed to attract potential donors, was entitled "Something Must Be Done," summed up *Das Soziale Klima*, and provided data depicting the rising discontent among the West German populace regarding economic developments of the last two years in a self-described "scientific" fashion. This report, put together by the GfG, was meant to encourage business interests to contribute to Die Waage's efforts; therefore, it emphasized the political implications of Die Waage's proposed public relations campaign. It opened with, "In the German business community, the understanding is growing that something must be done, that something must be done soon in order to ensure an anti-Marxist majority in the 1953 Bundestag."

The report went on to point out that the Adenauer government was viewed in an ever more negative light, and because of this the government's economic system based on the social market economy and its representatives, the industrialists, were viewed negatively. If the head of the SPD, Kurt Schumacher, came to power, the proposal underscored, it would mean the socialization of key industries, including coal and steel, followed by banking, transportation, insurance, energy, and large chemical industries—which were exactly the industries upon which Die Waage concentrated its fundraising efforts. In addition, those industries not threatened by socialization, the report warned, should be wary of the effects that codetermination could have on their firms. Therefore, it was imperative that an anti-Marxist majority of at least ten to twenty representatives in the Bundestag be secured in the 1953 federal election. This could be done by winning over the vacillating or undecided mass of people. But the report left open the question of which party Die Waage's campaign should support. Although Die Waage was emphatically anti-Marxist, the organization was not officially tied to any political party or religious community.⁴³ The report proposed a series of advertisements that highlighted the increased living standards since 1948, the relationship of employers and employees in solving the age's social problems, and the progress that indus-

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

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

In order to demonstrate the empirical necessity of creating a public relations campaign, the report summarized the survey results compiled in *Das Soziale Klima*. For example, it stressed that in April 1951, 56 percent of the West German population reported that conditions were worse than the year before, whereas in November 1950 only 27 percent maintained this position. Seventy-eight percent of respondents believed something must be done to stop the rise in prices, and almost half (46 percent) held the government responsible for this rise. In addition, most workers were dissatisfied with businessmen, with 69 percent seeing them as “unsocial.” Overall, according to the report, the public was generally ignorant of Economics Minister Erhard's policies, basic economic issues, and the advantages that the social market economy provided. The proposal reported that close to a third of the population was politically indecisive, evidence showing the need to launch a public relations campaign before the next federal election in order to win this group over to the bourgeois parties. A large percentage of West Germans were dissatisfied with the Adenauer regime and did not expect better conditions without a change in government. In addition, Die Waage's public relations proposal stressed the idea that workers were not necessarily interested in class struggle, but their ability to withstand class warfare slogans was undermined by a lack of education. The message of the summary was that people were to a certain extent dissatisfied and ignorant of many economic and political issues, but formed in essence a “*tabula rasa*” and were open to a public relations campaign on the behalf of industry. The dissatisfaction of the broad masses with the economic situation, the report claimed, was the result of a lack of information on the social market economy.⁴⁵ It concluded that “the government and business community—so says

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

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

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

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

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

Neumann pointed out, that in fact, he and the businessmen dealt with the same concern—humanity and then went on to demonstrate the need for public opinion research and its power to make human society understandable. He underscored that the rules of society and its workings remained hazy at best. Compounding this problem was the fact that the masses had exerted an ever growing influence on politics over the course of the twentieth century. One had no measure, other than in a general way, of the attitudes of society as a whole. But since the 1920s new and more exact methods of empirical social research had been developed. In fact, Neumann maintained, “The representative polling method allows us to measure the circumstances of society, whose results, and this is the decisive point, permits us to generalize as a laboratory analysis from some material.” Clearly, the tools of polling research could not be ignored. As Neumann contended, “We are engaged not with the investigation of opinions, but instead with discovering the patterns of behavior stemming from knowledge and ignorance.”⁵²

Neumann highlighted not only the possibilities of public opinion research, but also the dangers that business interests were facing. The SPD drew funds from such a wide membership that it could finance its own ongoing propaganda campaigns. He did not mention, of course, the fact that the business contributions to the CDU/CSU far surpassed the funds the SPD raised through party membership dues. In addition, the trade unions “were constantly effective in regard to shaping opinion, therefore in influencing public opinion.” He argued that, “No matter what goodwill the industrialist may have developed with the workers, it is dissipated the moment that the union members decide to strike, because they do so out of discipline. The unions have several million in their hands and the ability to quickly influence the opinion of these men. Somehow the industrialists must have a way to respond.”⁵³

By citing a series of public opinion surveys, Neumann demonstrated that a more informed population tended to be less radical in its political views. One of these surveys asked West Germans, “What do you think: should people demonstrate and make a commotion in Bonn more often than they do now, or don’t you think about it?” Forty-six percent of the uninformed population thought “more often” would be good. In contrast, only 30 percent of the well informed thought such disturbances were positive, while 64 per cent regarded them as damaging. The survey did not clearly define what it meant by an “uninformed” versus an “informed” individual; however two interesting assumptions are revealed in this poll. First, Neumann implicitly set up a relationship between a decline in radical behavior and the information that would be provided by Die Waage’s proposed public relations campaign. Neumann assumed that the information supplied by

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

Despite Neumann's call for a business-led public relations campaign, there were surely dissenting views regarding industry's appropriate role in strengthening support for the policies of political leaders. Undoubtedly, by 1952 industry had contributed considerable funding to political parties for their election campaigns, especially to the CDU/CSU, FDP, and DP in the 1949 Bundestag campaign. But as one RAND Corporation report concluded in 1954: "While the support among businessmen for the West German Republic is strong, German business still lacks a tradition of democratic conviction and of civic responsibility. The political attitudes of German businessmen may be best described as cautious and as distrustful of all forms of political enthusiasm."⁵⁵ The industrial leaders of the early 1950s had seen a number of governments come and go over the course of their lifetimes and were wary of binding themselves too closely to any political group. Their own experience had taught them to be skeptical of any idealism or enthusiasm about politics. In general, they held a fundamental cynicism toward politics, much like the public at large, and favored concentrating upon narrow business interests. The report also concluded that business leaders avoided any real discussion of politics and thought that political activity was generally bad for one's character.⁵⁶ Given the many companies' collaboration with the Nazi regime, war crimes trials prosecuting some leading industrialists, and a generally negative public opinion toward industry, West German industry had every reason to be leery about openly engaging in politics. There is no doubt that in the circumstances of postwar West Germany, where critical issues concerning industry such as dismantling, denazification, decartelization, and codetermination were being hashed out, industry was, in fact, extremely active in politics—albeit most businessmen tried to conceal such activities from the glare of public view.⁵⁷ In the guise of a reportedly nonpartisan organization, Die Waage was asking business and industry to openly back a political figure. Neumann's solicitations on the behalf of Die Waage illustrate well that businessmen had to be carefully goaded into such participation.

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

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

One problematic question was what the relationship was to be between Die Waage and the *Fördergesellschaften*, particularly how these two organizations would coordinate fund raising. In a letter to the CDU's propaganda chief, Otto Lenz, Erich Neumann reported on an October 1952 meeting of the *Fördergesellschaften* at which the business representatives had attacked Die Waage because they had no way to influence Die Waage's activities. In fact, the BDI and BDA had been raising this issue for the last month. Neumann believed that his argument that it was absolutely necessary for business to conduct public relations had fallen on deaf ears and that 90 percent of these businessmen understood nothing about propaganda.⁶⁰ Die Waage and the *Fördergesellschaften* met early in the development of Die Waage, in December 1952, to explore their future collaboration. The *Fördergesellschaften* were apparently worried that contributions to Die Waage would divert funds that normally went through the umbrella business organizations of the BDI and BDA to political parties. It was suggested, apparently by Die Waage, that about DM 100,000 to 150,000 per month could be allocated from the *Fördergesellschaften* to Die Waage. The representatives of the *Fördergesellschaften* replied that this idea would require approval by the various associations.⁶¹ This proposal was never put into effect, presumably because the associations saw no reason to divert their own funds to Die Waage.

It appears that, in fact, the relationship between Die Waage and the *Fördergesellschaften* soured further over the course of late 1952 into 1953. At a March 1953 meeting of Die Waage's *Vorstand* (executive board) and *Beirat* (advisory board), Die Waage decided that it should clearly explain to firms that a contribution to the organization did not replace one to a *Fördergesellschaft*.⁶² During the election summer of 1953, concerns surfaced that Die Waage's actions were unnecessarily dividing industry's resources.⁶³ At a December 1953 meeting of Die Waage's contributors, Economics Minister Ludwig Erhard advised against Die Waage getting involved with *Fördergesellschaften* lest this jeopardize the unity that prevailed among Die Waage's leadership. Erhard's position, of course, must be understood

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ziehen alle am gleichen Strang” (We are all in the same boat), *“Der deutsche Arbeiter wägt sein Schicksal”* (The German worker weighs his own fate), and *“Fragt die Frauen”* (Ask the women). The top half of each advertisement depicted a scene from everyday West German life above the title. The remainder of the ad consisted of the text, Die Waage’s logo, the scales, and the general slogan for the campaign, *“Zum Wohlstand aller durch geeinte Kraft—führt die soziale Marktwirtschaft”* (The social market economy leads to prosperity for all through unified strength).

These advertisements created a narrative of the economic and social history of the newly formed Federal Republic. The currency reform legend proved to be a central element in Die Waage’s advertisements, as had been in the CDU’s 1949 election campaign. An Institut für Demoskopie survey asked West Germans in April 1952 whether West Germany had experienced an economic upswing since the currency reform. Eighty-eight percent of the respondents answered yes, while only 4 percent thought no and 8 percent were undecided. The survey observed that “[f]rom a mass-psychological perspective, there should be a resonance within the population of the economic ascent since the currency reform, or is the memory of the developments since 1948 displaced by newer, fresh impressions? And to whom, should the occasion arise, could the credit for this upturn be attributed? These two questions are of principal importance in respect to Die Waage’s advertisements.”⁸⁰ Die Waage’s ads left no doubt as to who or what should take credit for the economic upturn.

The advertisement *“Wie Schnell der Mensch vergisst”* (Illustration 4.1), the most widely published of this series, opened with text that evoked images of everyday life immediately following the conclusion of the war: “Trading molasses for shoes—it was scarcely a few years ago. There were 1050 calories daily on the ration card and 100 grams of textiles on the script. In the Bizone in 1947 there was a pair of new shoes for every 30 people.”⁸¹ The text went on to paint a picture of despair, hardship, and deprivation. Ironically, the ad urged the reader not to forget how far West Germany had come since the end of the war but silenced any reference to the Third Reich, thereby placing West Germans in the roles of victims. But there came a dramatic change in 1948: “and then in the summer of 1948 came the currency reform. . . . We had a hard currency again”—ignoring the American role in the Deutsche Mark’s introduction. Without ever mentioning him by name, Die Waage portrayed Economics Minister Erhard as the savior of the West German nation and economy. It was his ideas of the social market economy that secured West Germany’s economic recovery: “the social market economy unshackled the entire energy of our nation for the reconstruction.”

Throughout the text, the idea of “free” was emphasized and defined. Having noted the advent of the currency reform, the advertisement affirmed that with solid money in hand, “What we needed was work. We wanted to produce again and earn money. Our desire for work wanted the go ahead [*freie Bahn*].” The introduction of the social market economy created the opportunity to work and earn money. The same advertisement commented that money was not rationed but earned, and “[f]or that reason, every person, be it worker or industrialist [*Unter-*



WIE SCHNELL DER MENSCH VERGISST

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

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

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

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

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

Wie schnell der Mensch vergißt!

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



Zum Wohlstand Aller durch geeinte Kraft / führt die Soziale Marktwirtschaft

Illustration 4.1 How quickly people forget (a)

nehmer] should earn on the free ‘market’ what ability and desire to work brings him.” The alternate text of “*Wie schnell der Mensch vergisst*” (Illustration 4.2) stressed the acquisition of new freedoms tied to the social market economy:

Who saved us from our misery? There is only one level-headed answer: our workers and industrialists, through their cooperation in the freedom of the social market economy. This democratic action then unleashed the energy for the reconstruction: *One Man* ended the script economy [*Bezugsscheinwirtschaft*], the rationing, and standing in lines. . . . He said: Money is the only script [*Bezugsschein*] of free people!

In this way, the free market was inextricably linked with the acquisition of some form of German self-determination and the reconstruction of a smoothly working, organic society, all of which were ascribed to Erhard’s actions. Having economic freedom was tantamount to the founding of West Germany itself and distanced the new state from the Nazi past. Clearly, the message was that West Germans should not overlook how far both worker and industrialist had come in securing both their economic freedom and a better living standard. The ad explained that “[w]e should never forget what worker and industrialist have accomplished in courageous cooperation since those days. No one should deny the shared benefits. No one should disturb this social peace!” By implication any demand from the left, be it socialization of heavy industry or higher wages, was not only disruptive, but downright un-German.

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



WIE SCHNELL DER MENSCH VERGISST

Schübig gekleidete Frauen und Männer, mit ausgemergelten Gesichtern, reihen sich an zum Schlangestehen. „Nicht drängeln!“ Sie sind verbittert und rücksichtslos, sie hungern. Die zugeteilten Kalorien reichen zur Bettelsuppe. Verzweifelt klopfen sie draußen beim Bauern an. Sie jammern auf den Ämtern um einen Bezugsschein. Ausweglos scheint die Zukunft. Das Krachen der Bomben ist längst verhallt, aber noch kommen haufenweise Menschen um, Opfer von Diktatur und Krieg. Wer noch kann, tauscht Krimskrams am Schwarzmarkt und „schiebt“. Zigaretten werden zum Geld einer Kulturnation . . . Ist es wirklich nur kaum fünf Jahre her?! Wir wollen nicht mehr an das Elend denken, an den beispiellosen Zusammenbruch. Das ist menschlich. Aber wir fragen: Soll auch die Schicksalswende schon vergessen sein? Beispiellos war auch unsere wirtschaftliche Auferstehung! Aus brandgeschwärzten Trümmern und wirt verbogenem Stahl erstehen Werkstätten und Fabriken. Menschen schufteten bis in die Nacht, sie schaffen sich den ersehnten Arbeitsplatz. Die Währungsreform 1948 bringt endlich das langersehnte gesunde Geld – jetzt kommt die ungeheure Maschinerie der Versorgung unseres Volkes mit Lebensbedarf wieder in Gang – und drei Jahre später läuft die deutsche Wirtschaft wieder volle Kraft voraus! Wer rettete uns aus dem Elend? Es gibt nur

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

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

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

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

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



Zum Wohlstand Aller durch geeinte Kraft / führt die Soziale Marktwirtschaft

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Illustration 4.2 How quickly people forget (b)

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

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

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

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



FRAGT DIE FRAUEN

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

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

zur «dritten Macht» geworden und bestimmen vielleicht entscheidend die Form unserer ganzen Wirtschaftsordnung!

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

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

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



Zum Wohlstand Aller durch geeinte Kraft / führt die Soziale Marktwirtschaft

Illustration 4.3 Ask the women

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



DAS DEUTSCHE »WUNDER«

Nicht wir nennen es so, sondern fremde Reisende, die Westdeutschland seit 1948 besuchen. Sie meinen die Wiedergeburt unserer Wirtschaft: aus Schutt und Trümmern vollzog sie sich in einem besiegten, zweigeteilten Land mit zehn Millionen Flüchtlingen und einer zum großen Teil zerstörten oder demontierten Industrie.

Tatsachen veranschaulichen, was hier seit 1948 geleistet wurde: Westdeutschland erzeugte 1951 insgesamt mehr Güter aller Art als 1938, im Jahr des Höchststandes unserer Vorkriegswirtschaft. Die industrielle Produktion war 1951 um 36% höher als 1936. Sie erreichte bei lang entbehrten Massenverbrauchsgegenständen wie z. B. Möbeln, Hausrat, Bekleidung, Rundfunkgeräten und Motorrädern nie dagewesene Höchstziffern. Zugleich stieg die deutsche Ausfuhr um das Siebenfache.

Wir selbst nennen es kein Wunder, was hier seit 1948 vollbracht wurde. Vielmehr waren es der Lebenswille unseres Volkes, Fleiß und Können unserer Arbeiter und Unternehmer, welche die Schicksalswende erarbeiteten.

Die SOZIALE MARKTWIRTSCHAFT brach 1948 die Diktatur des Bezugscheines und gab den Auftakt für den Wiederaufbau. Sie lehrt uns: Nicht die Verteilung des Mangels, sondern nur die ständige Steigerung der Produktion vermag die Lebenshaltung des Volkes zu verbessern.

Einige mutige Männer tiefen Arbeiter und Unternehmer, die Träger der deutschen Wirtschaftsenergie, zum freien Wettbewerb der Leistung auf. Sie folgten dem Ruf. In echter Solidarität bauten sie - von den jüngsten Hilfsarbeitern bis zu den Leitern der Großbetriebe - ihre Arbeitsstätten gemeinsam wieder auf. In einmütiger Zusammenarbeit - im Zeichen der SOZIALEN MARKTWIRTSCHAFT - produzieren Unternehmer und Arbeiterschaft gemeinsam immer mehr, immer bessere und immer billigere Güter, zum Wohle der Gesamtheit. Nur so kommen wir Alle wieder auf einen grünen Zweig.

Sorgen wir dafür, daß die Grundlage unseres gemeinschaftlichen Schaffens, daß der SOZIALE FRIEDE erhalten bleibt!

Zum Wohlstand Aller durch geeinte Kraft



führt die SOZIALE MARKTWIRTSCHAFT

Illustration 4.4 The German “miracle”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

likely to appeal to opinion makers and not the groups that Die Waage was most interested in persuading.⁸⁶

As the summer 1953 Bundestag election approached, the heads of Die Waage continued to grapple with the problem of reaching their key target audience: the working class. Early that year they devised a possible solution: crafting a series of advertisements in the form of a dialogue between two stereotypical West German men.⁸⁷ The advertisement's tactic was to explain the worker's role in the free market economy and management-labor relations through the creation of two "average Joes" whom the public could identify with and trust. The ads would invite readers to enter into a conversation with these two characters—thereby making abstract economic policy more humanized and personal. To explore the effectiveness of such an advertising format, Die Waage employed the Institut für Demoskopie to run a series of test surveys, which were reported in March 1953.⁸⁸ One of the goals of this survey was to determine how to best shape the characters in the advertisement—particularly in terms of their physical attributes and clothing. The chief objective, however, was to test the effectiveness of this dialogue-type approach.

In the test advertisements (Illustration 4.5), the characters of "Querkopf" and "Klarkopf," roughly translated as "wrong-headed fellow" and "clear-headed fellow," discussed what the social market economy was, "debated" its merits, and recounted the economic progress West Germans had made since the currency reform. In general, the ads depicted the slightly more middle-class-appearing Klarkopf explaining the advantages of the social market economy to a questioning, proletarian-looking Querkopf, although both were still recognizable as working men. Querkopf's identity was easily detected by most of those surveyed (83 percent), while the social background of Klarkopf was not as clear (60 percent said white-



Illustration 4.5 The main thing is that we talk together!

collar worker, bureaucrat; 16 per cent, self-employed; and 13, per cent worker). Generally, most readers sensed that Klarkopf was from a higher social class, but 52 percent of respondents thought that two such characters could be friends. The survey revealed that most people saw the worker Querkopf as a more likable, decent, and convincing character. In addition, seeing Querkopf's rounded face, people viewed him as being more friendly, good-natured, open, and not so conceited. In contrast, although many people saw Klarkopf as intelligent, a large percentage also considered him as a bit snobbish. Despite the fact that Querkopf appeared more believable, 56 percent of respondents with an income under DM 250 a month and 55 percent of those with incomes exceeding DM 250 thought Klarkopf's position was the more convincing. In addition, 48 percent of respondents concluded that Querkopf left the two characters' conversation convinced, as opposed to 33 percent for neither being convinced and 8 percent for Klarkopf.⁸⁹

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

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

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

but had seamlessly integrated into the new democratic society. They were to be depicted in masculine places—on the job, in bars, fishing, or picking up their paychecks. Although they were defined by their role as producers in the economy, they had shed any radical tendencies of the proletariat. In this way, Die Waage projected a view of the social market economy and a reconstructed West Germany where “natural” labor and gender roles were reaffirmed—clearly jibing very well with the CDU/CSU’s vision of the 1949 campaign. These advertisements also helped define a political meaning of the social market economy. This economic system was equated with the establishment of political freedom in West Germany and implicitly associated the SPD with a potential loss of that freedom. In the future the social market economy would be tied not only to West German freedoms, but also to the legitimacy of the West German state itself.

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

Notes

1. See Hans Edgar Jahn, *Lebendige Demokratie: Die Praxis der politischen Meinungspflege in Deutschland* (Frankfurt am Main, 1956), 229–231.
2. Wipog document quoted in Gerhard Schmidtchen, *Die Befragte Nation: Über den Einfluß der Meinungsforschung auf die Politik*, 134–135.
3. *Ibid.*, 135
4. Schindelbeck and Ilgen, “Haste Was, Biste Was!” *Werbung für die Soziale Marktwirtschaft*, 33–35.
5. Das Programm der Freiheit, ZSg 1 1/1, BA Koblenz.
6. For example, by September 1953, the organization had received only DM 57,000 in contributions since its founding in January 1953. This paled in comparison to other propaganda efforts. Protokolle der Vorstandssitzung, 14 September, 1953, VI-059-277 (Aktionsgemeinschaft Soziale Marktwirtschaft), ACDP.
7. For an in-depth look at Die Waage, see Schindelbeck and Ilgen, “Haste Was, Biste Was!” *Werbung der Soziale Marktwirtschaft*.
8. H. F. J. Kropff, “Die erste Public Relations Campagne in Deutschland. Erfolgreiches Beispiel der Anwendung von Prinzipien, Methoden, und Mitteln Wirtschaftswerbung zur Ausbreitung nationaler, sozialer, und kultureller Ideen,” ZSg 1 36/2, BA Koblenz.
9. Die Waage, Zugang 121, Ludwig Erhard Stiftung, Bonn (hereafter LES).

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

36. Christopher Simpson, "Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann's 'Spiral of Silence' and the Historical Context of Communication Theory," *Journal of Communication* 46, no. 3 (1996): 148–171; Leo Bogart, "The Pollster and the Nazis," *Commentary* 92, no. 2 (1991): 47–49; and Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, "Political Opinion Polling in Germany," in *Political Opinion Polling: An International Review*, ed. Robert M. Worcester (London, 1983), 44–60.
37. Public Relations und Meinungsforschung in den USA und in England, Institut für Demoskopie, ZSg 132/154 II, BA Koblenz.
38. *Das Soziale Klima*, ZSg 132/154 I, BA Koblenz.
39. *Ibid.*, 37–39.
40. *Ibid.*, 2.
41. *Ibid.*, 51.
42. *Ibid.*, 53.
43. Eine Werbung zur Förderung des sozialen Ausgleichs, 4 December 1951, Die Waage, Zugang 60, LES.
44. *Ibid.*
45. *Ibid.*
46. *Ibid.*
47. Die Waage, Zugang 124, LES.
48. *Ibid.*
49. Protokoll über die Sitzung von Vorstand und Beirat der Waage, 9 March 1953, Die Waage, Zugang 127, LES.
50. Die Waage, Zugang 128, LES.
51. "Die Verantwortung des Unternehmers für die öffentliche Meinung," Vortrag von Erich Peter Neumann, Spring 1953, Institut für Demoskopie, ZSg 132/278, BA.
52. *Ibid.*
53. *Ibid.*
54. *Ibid.*
55. Gabriel Almond, *The Politics of German Business* (Santa Monica, CA, 1955), iii, 29–35.
56. *Ibid.*, 52–58.
57. For more on the political involvement of West German industry, see Wiesen's *West German Industry and the Challenge of the Nazi Past* and Volker R. Berghahn and Paul J. Friedrich, *Otto A. Friedrich: Ein Politischer Unternehmer*.
58. German industry had a tradition of giving money to political parties. See for example, Henry Ashby Turner, *German Big Business and the Rise of Hitler* (Oxford, 1985).
59. Almond, *The Politics of German Business*, 34; and Arnold J. Heidenheimer and Frank C. Langdon, *Business Associations and the Financing of Political Parties: A Comparative Study of the Evolution of Practices in Germany, Norway, and Japan* (The Hague, 1968), 44–48.
60. Letter from E. P. Neumann to Otto Lenz, 30 October 1952, I-172-32/2, (NL Lenz), ACDP.
61. Besprechen zwischen Vertretern der Fördergesellschaft und der Gemeinschaft "Die Waage," 10 December 1952, Die Waage, Zugang 124, LES.
62. Protokoll über die Sitzung von Vorstand und Beirat der Waage, 9 March 1953, Die Waage, Zugang 127, LES.
63. This sentiment was reported by BASF general director Dr. Karl Würster along with members of the executive board. Aktennotiz: Besprechung mit Herrn Generaldirektor Dr. Karl Würster, 2 June 1953, Die Waage, Zugang 124, LES.
64. Berghahn, *The Americanisation of West German Industry, 1945–1973*, 155–181.
65. Bericht über die Besprechung des Waage-Förderer-Kreises am Dienstag, 15 December, 1953, Die Waage, Zugang 129, LES.
66. Notiz am BDI Besprechung, 2 February 1954, Die Waage, Zugang 129, LES.
67. Letter from Brose to Greiß, 24 April 1952, Die Waage, Zugang 61, LES.
68. Letter to Dr. Haberland, Generaldirektor Bayer, 18 February 1954, Die Waage, Zugang 124, LES.
69. Schindelbeck and Ilgen, "Haste Was, Biste Was!" *Werbung für die Soziale Marktwirtschaft*, 68–71.

70. Die Waage, Zugang 129, LES.
71. Die Waage—Ein Bericht über die Tätigkeit in den Jahren 1952–1960, Abt 16, Nr 1, Fasz 2, RWWA.
72. Schindelbeck and Ilgen, “*Haste Was, Biste Was!*” *Werbung für die Soziale Marktwirtschaft*, 82–83.
73. Karl Wurster, the general director of BASF, complained that the ads from the summer of 1953 were glorifying Erhard and that readers who remembered the “*Führerkult* of the Third Reich” might find the ads tasteless. Aktennotiz: B esprechung mit Herrn Generaldirektor Dr. Karl Wurster, 2 June 1953, Die Waage, Zugang 124, LES.
74. Sitzung, 3 November 1952, Die Waage, Zugang, 127, LES.
75. Schindelbeck and Ilgen, “*Haste Was, Biste Was!*” *Werbung für die Soziale Marktwirtschaft*, 82–85.
76. Bericht über die Sitzung von Vorstand und Beirat der Waage, 1 December 1952, Die Waage, Zugang 127, LES.
77. See Protokoll von Vorstand und Beirat, 19 January 1953, Die Waage, Zugang 127, LES.
78. Die Waage—Ein Bericht über die Tätigkeit in den Jahren 1952–1960, Abt 16, Nr 1, Fasz 2, RWWA.
79. Die Waage, Die Betrachtung einer Anzeigen-Serie, January 1952, Institut für Demoskopie, ZSg 132/218, BA Koblenz.
80. Die Wirtschaftliche Aufstieg—Verdienst der Arbeiter oder Unternehmer? Über die Soziale Marktwirtschaft, Institut für Demoskopie, November 1952, Abt, 16, Nr 4, Fasz 1, RWWA.
81. An Allensbach survey estimated that the two forms of “*Wie Schnell der Mensch vergisst*” reached 13.5 million people. Die Waage, Die Beachtung einer Anzeigen-Serie, January 1953, Institut für Demoskopie, ZSg 132/218, BA Koblenz.
82. Kramer, *The West German Economy*, 10–11.
83. Die Waage, Die Beachtung einer Anzeigen-Serie, January 1953, Institut für Demoskopie, ZSg 132/218, BA Koblenz.
84. Kropff, “Werbung im Zeichen der Waage,” 310.
85. *Ibid.*, 310.
86. *Ibid.*, 310–312.
87. *Ibid.*, 319.
88. Eine Untersuchung über die voraussichtliche Wirkung eines Aufklärungs-Feldzuges, March 1953, Institut für Demoskopie, Abt 16, Nr.4, Fasz 11, RWWA.
89. *Ibid.*
90. *Ibid.*
91. *Ibid.*