The American Impact on Western Europe:

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Industrialists, Workers, and Perceptions of America in West Germany in the 1950s

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Over the past decade and a half, historians have undertaken a rigorous reexamination of the post-World War II relationship between the United States and West Germany.[1] They have debated the utility of a number of concepts - "Americanization," "modernization," "colonization," "westernization" - that have long existed in the lexicon of European-American relations.[2] In grappling with these key terms that inform this conference, historians continue to adopt new objects of inquiry that move beyond the original interest in military and foreign relations. They have looked, for example, to youth culture, race relations, and film in order to probe the attitudes of West Germans that lay behind the images of American cultural penetration.[3] Young Germans dancing the boogie woogie, Halbstarke wearing jeans and imitating Marlon Brando, American soldiers chewing gum and drinking Coca-Cola—these familiar images have been complemented by important inquiries into perceptions and mentalities. What did Germans of different classes think of this American "cultural penetration"? Did West Germans simply embrace these new cultural forms, or did they reject them out of hand? The answers, as recent literature has shown, are not so simple.

This paper places industrialists and workers into this ongoing discussion of transatlantic relations after World War II. It seeks to challenge the concept of Americanization by exploring some of the contradictory attitudes and strategies that

businessmen embraced as they pondered their relationship with the West German worker. After World War II, industrialists, in assessing the role of labor and management in the new Germany, were inspired by American models of public relations and human relations. They used American business strategies in their quest to both tame what they saw as the revolutionary tendencies of the working class, and, at the same time, to embark upon a post-National Socialist partnership. But as the "Economic Miracle" took hold in the 1950s, they remained confused and unsure of what America had to offer as a model of democracy and cultural regeneration. In short, industry's attempt to understand its relationship to the worker in a liberal-democracy entailed both selectively imitating the United States, while also critiquing America through the fearful and pessimistic tropes that had existed in Germany long before America's military and cultural arrival.

After World War II, both business leaders and workers found themselves in a state of turmoil. Hitler had crushed the labor union movement, and many leaders had been imprisoned in concentration camps. Industrialists, in turn, faced destroyed factories and compromised reputations, having lent their assistance to Hitler's policies of racial discrimination, conquest, and industrial murder. Material and psychological disarray in Germany made initial attempts by workers and industrialists to regain political power and legitimacy very difficult. More significantly, attempts on both sides to rebuild their relationship were burdened by lingering memories of class warfare, emerging cold war tensions, and the complicity of industrialists in the crimes of Hitler's regime. In the first ten years after the collapse of Nazism, industrialists, unlike the unions, were on the defensive. They were forced to explain their behavior from 1933 to 1945, whether it

concerned their financial relationship to the NSDAP in the early 1930s, the aryanization of Jewish businesses, or the use of slave labor - themes that continue to haunt German industry today.[4] Individual businessmen and companies like Krupp, IG Farben, and Siemens defended themselves not only in military tribunals and denazification courtrooms, but in the press and in a series of commissioned pamphlets and biographies that denied what some businessmen referred to as the Unternehmerschuldbegriff (the theory of industrialist guilt).[5]

The emerging labor movement took full advantage of industry's compromised past and often spearheaded this backlash against German business leaders.[6] From the point of view of labor, the image of the Herr im Hause ("Master of the House") industrialist that had existed since the nineteenth century was only reinforced by that of the "Nazi industrialist" and "Kriegsverbrecherfirma" (war criminal company). Organized labor hoped that workers' resentment against German industry—and indeed the arrest and prosecution of many of its leaders - could only help in its attempts to introduce economic democracy (in the form of codetermination) into the workplace. Eventually, through organizations like the Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund (DGB) and the Wirtschaftswissenschaftliches Institut der Gewerkschaften (WWI), labor was able to gain political leverage against management and to remind the nation of industry's putative sins under the Nazi regime.[7]

From the start, Americans were involved in the process of rebuilding the relationship between unions and companies.[8] One of the most central issues concerned codetermination, or union representation on company managerial boards, an idea that

American companies have to this day rejected (a fact that West German industrialists have envied greatly).[9] In the late 1940s, American union representatives traveled to Germany to advise labor leaders and military occupation authorities on workplace democracy and rebuilding the labor movement - one that would be free from communist infiltration. At the same time, industrialists were benefiting from the arrival of delegations of American industrial leaders, who sought to reestablish transatlantic business relations that had been severed during the war.[10]

Ironically, the rapid reconstruction of industry, especially with the help of the currency reform and the Marshall Plan, occurred while business leaders faced arrest and potential prosecution in Nuremberg by Americans, and while the Allied victors continued to dismantle factories in order to prevent future production of war materials.[11] If the United States's policy toward German business appears contradictory, Americans were themselves often confused.[12] While their government prosecuted business leaders and tore down factories (through 1949), American businessmen and occupation officials were simultaneously meeting their German counterparts in private clubs in Frankfurt and Düsseldorf, or advising firms on how to rebuild as quickly as possible in order to restore West Germany's self-sufficiency. Despite a considerable amount of policy chaos, as the cold war escalated, German industrialists came to accept the Marshall Plan as an indication of America's true intentions to rebuild Germany and to establish a free-market economy—indeed one that would be receptive to American products. To most industrialists, the United States had West Germany's best economic interests in mind,

even if many American authorities continued to look suspiciously on the big industrialists associated with mass crimes.[13]

The rapid economic recovery that followed this period of chaos in the late 1940s is often recalled in overly simplistic and rosy terms in the popular memory of West Germans. Memories of the "Economic Miracle" and the dissolution of class war rhetoric in the 1950s overshadow what was in reality a frequently bitter process of forging a modus vivendi between worker and manager. Arguably, until the mid 1950s, when unions decided to focus more on wage and pension issues than on economic democracy, workers and industrialists were torn between employing the class war rhetoric of old and offering an olive branch to the opposing side. They ended up adopting both strategies, often with paradoxical results. The DGB and the BDI (Federation of German Industry) squared off against each other in 1950 and 1951, employing the most vitriolic language during the codetermination debates, while at the same time searching for a peaceful accommodation.

Only a half-decade removed from the Nazi years, the rhetoric brimming with ideological venom. Quite a few industrialists were hostile to the idea of codetermination, which they saw as a violation of the sacred traditions of private property and owner prerogative. They took their wrath out not only in alarmist flyers that compared union power to fascism, communism, Stalinism, collectivism, and totalitarianism, but also in speeches and public comments that blamed the workers for the rise of Hitler or compared trade unions to Robert Ley's German Labor Front.[14] The acrimonious name-calling came from both sides in the first half of the 1950s, and it continued, albeit in a more muted form, throughout the late 1950s and into the 1960s. A hallmark of this period was the

calculated inversion of historical reality through rhetorical posturing. In reality, not all industrialists had been Nazis, and union leaders knew this. Yet it was equally, if not more, disingenuous for businessmen to argue that the unions and workers were responsible for Hitler's consolidation of power.[15]

Clearly, in the confused period of economic, political, and psychological transition, rhetoric was as important as reality.[16] Projecting a strong image to the public and securing political and economic gains in the emerging free-market system inevitably entailed exaggerated bullying and jockeying for political power. But the mutual hostility ran deeper than words or contemporary "interest politics," and it was indeed a challenge for some public representatives of labor and management to reign in older resentments and hatreds. During this standoff, capturing the sympathies of the public was key, and both sides set up organizations that would represent their partisan needs and win public sympathy. Undoubtedly, the greater burden of winning back the public lay with the industrialists. If West German industrialists were to get beyond the Nazi past, they would have to make positive concessions to the worker—or at least tone down the rhetoric aimed at organized labor. It is at this point that the influence of the United States reenters the picture.

Since the end of the war, industrialists were eager to learn from the Americans the strategies for projecting a positive public image. This was even the case for the older, more conservative businessmen who maintained a paternalist view of factory relations or those who had adhered to the Nazi cause. Industrialists were concerned not only about the attitudes of their own workers, but also about a broader domestic and global public

that was beginning to consume its products. Since the nineteenth century, German companies had made, at best, halfhearted attempts at Öffentlichkeitsarbeit (publicity work). This has many explanations, but much was due to the nature of the German economy, whose backbone was not mass-produced goods, but steel, coal, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, and electrical products. But it also had to do with an elitist rejection of mass consumption. Since the nineteenth century, Germans had been contrasting their tradition of quality in handicrafts and luxury items produced for the wealthy to the shoddy, "American style" consumer goods designed for the broad masses.[17] Likewise the German economy, was a paternalist system in which the owner and the government provided for their workers, without having to pay mind to the actual desires and needs of the employees. Unlike in the United States, where public relations entered the popular vocabulary in the 1920s, many corporate leaders in Germany waited until the 1950s to consider "the masses" as the objects of production or image making. Since the 1920s, industrialists had by no means refrained from sponsoring pro-business/anti-labor publications, which they often placed in waiting rooms or factory bathrooms to catch the glance of the workers. And the Nazis spared no effort to win over (or force) the average German worker to embrace the National Socialist cause. But it was only in the late 1940s and early 1950s that industrialists came to see aggressive public relations as the key to both overcoming public perceptions of a nazified economic elite and winning the trust of a company's workers.[18] Starting in 1949, business leaders increasingly invoked the United States as the model of successful PR, and they imported into the German language the modern sounding English words like "Public Relations," and "Human Relations."[19] With

the revival of the economy, industry quickly abandoned its half-hearted publicity techniques, which, through their narrow focus on elites, were unequipped to deal with the onset of a mass consumer society.

By the mid-1950s, most West German businessmen finally came to consider public relations a powerful and emancipatory tool. This belief found expression in numerous business meetings at the local and national levels, in the many publications about PR, and in the 1951 founding of the German Industry Institute (Deutsches Industrieinstitut - DI), a central public relations and information bureau for German businessmen based in Cologne.[20] Both the DI and the industry's national peak organization, the Federation of German Industry (Bundesverband der Deutschen Industrie - BDI), saw as one of their prime tasks overcoming a past defined by National Socialist crimes and class warfare. In implementing this goal, industrialists looked to the United States for guidance. Many industrialists, despite their misgivings about American consumer culture, looked enviously toward the "the New World,"[21] as a place where workers and the general public showed the businessman his due respect. Although not exactly an accurate assessment of worker/management relations in the late 1940s, this view became the cornerstone of an emerging belief among West German industrialists that they needed to learn the trade of public relations and that the United States was the only place to turn for guidance.[22] Under the auspices of both the BDI and the DI, industrialists debated and discussed the meaning of PR - this "secret science from America."("Geheimwissenschaft aus Amerika")[23] - in their attempts to forge workplace peace (on industry's terms) and win back their reputations.

Throughout the early 1950s, industrialists constantly invoked the United States as the source for the tools of aggressive PR. In a 1950 article, Herbert Gross, a prominent industry publicist, frequent visitor to the United States, and cofounder of the economic daily Handelsblatt, wrote an article on American public relations, in which he admonished his colleagues for being too passive in their publicity efforts and beseeched them to follow America's example. Drawing directly from a 1949 article in Fortune magazine, Gross argued that " A true democracy without the art of persuasion is as impossible to imagine as a totalitarian state without coercion."[24] Gross and others saw public relations as more than just getting the word out about a company's projects; it was about selling an image, winning the public trust, and projecting good will to the consumer and especially the worker. This was to be accomplished through the modern media of film, radio, newsletters, advertising, company profiles, factory tours, interviews, anniversary volumes, etc.[25]

Most of the individuals dedicated to giving industry a new public face had spent time in the United States and therefore felt especially equipped to update the publicity efforts of West German industry. Over the prior thirty years, they had traveled across the Atlantic at some point to work in factories and to learn the techniques of fordism, taylorism, and business management.[26] The president of the BDI, Fritz Berg, had not only spent time in America during the 1920s, but starting in 1951 he led an annual delegation of businessmen to the United States to talk about themes ranging from trade, to finance, to international relations, to public relations.[27] Carl Hundhausen, one of the early German theorists of public relations and director of PR for Krupp in the 1950s, had spent

four years, from 1927 through 1931, in New York as an assistant treasurer on a bank on Wall Street. He returned again in 1937 as a representative of the Henkel Corporation to study American methods of publicity. After putting out a number of works on PR in the 1930s and '40s, he published in 1950 what has been considered the bible of German PR, a book translated into English as Winning the Public Trust.[28]

Fritz Hellwig, the first director of the DI and later CDU politician, had spent his time in the U.S. as a prisoner of war in Fort Reno, Oklahoma, where he led workshops on American democracy for the German POWs and composed several articles comparing the intellectual Geist of Europe to that of United States. His mostly unpublished pieces reflect a common obsession with the fate of Western civilization, and a familiar ambivalence towards the United States as the land of both unfettered individualism and cultural emptiness.[29]

As a final example, Ludwig Vaubel, the future director of the Vereinigte Glanzstoff traveled to America to study management and public speaking at Harvard Business School during the wave of interest in PR in 1950.[30] He kept a diary that offers a fascinating glimpse into the dynamics of cultural encounter after the war. With an infectious enthusiasm, Vaubel detailed his first contacts with America's habits and their attitudes about business, labor, racial relations, money, wealth, leisure, and National Socialism.[31]

These and other business representatives who visited the United States used their experiences in the early 1950s to forge both a more peaceable relationship with labor and a more aggressive defense of their political interests and reputations.[32] Their articulated

goal was to convince the mass of working Germans that they had a stake in a free and prosperous economy and that they must embrace Western individualism by rejecting the "collectivist" and "totalitarian" dictates of the marxist-inspired trade unions.[33] This message was delivered to the workers in a number of books and pamphlets commissioned directly by organizations such as the BDI and the DI and distributed to workers or sold at discount prices as "pocket" books. Most of these were short, throwaway pieces, bearing such titles as "We can all live better."; "The Pay Package and the Capitalists"; "Should we take Money away from the Rich?" "How were Things Two Years Ago?" "Never again Unemployed" and "Does the Planned Economy make you Rich or Poor?"—titles that all reflect that fear of collectivism and the celebration of free market capitalism.[34] Other books were longer and designed to have a more lasting effect on the worker. One example is Gert von Klass's biography of steel industrialist Albert Vögler, whose life story (notwithstanding his membership in the Nazi party and his suicide as the Allies arrested him in 1945) was intended to inspire the worker to strive towards achieving great heights from humble beginnings. This book was particularly aimed at the younger workers who were seemingly less susceptible to the class-warfare rhetoric embraced by the union old-timers.[35]

Industrialists also put great effort into popular novelist and travel writer Heinrich Hauser's Germany Industry: Our Fate. Commissioned by industrial leaders, this work praised the worker and the industrialist as equal partners in West Germany's miraculous economic recovery while at the same time trying to instill "entrepreneurial thinking" into

the younger worker, who "whether he knows it or not" is on a course towards Marxism?[36]

One of industry's most coordinated efforts to reach the worker was Eberhard Schulz's, Das goldene Dach ("The Golden Roof").[37] Commissioned in 1950 as the first "Book of the Year" by the BDI's Kulturkreis (Cultural Circle), Das goldene Dach set out to protect German workers against the lure of collectivism. Eberhard Schulz had published widely on architectural and urban design, and in this book he offered a visual and textual celebration of the factory settlements that were sprouting up around the Ruhr factories. Against the backdrop of the trade union's demands for codetermination, industry used Schulz's text and images to pacify the once hostile worker through the promise of owning a home.[38] In the industrial settlement, argued Schulz, the worker family would finally realize its bourgeois dreams of material comfort. During the day, the husband would work around the corner in the steel factory, while the wife protected hearth and home. As "the soul of the house," she would perform her motherly duties, prepare fruit baskets, tend the garden, visit the local hairdresser, and prepare meals for her husband—all against the backdrop of the factory smokestack.[39] Through this existence, the worker family would breathe in the "perfume of freedom"[40] and would reject the "collectivist" alternative offered by the trade unions and Soviet-sponsored communism. More importantly, the worker himself would assume a moral status equal to that of the industrialist. The distinction between manager and employee would be erased in this utopian realm. In the struggle against communism, the class boundaries of the West

would dissolve, as the common enjoyment of private property and the celebration of freedom would amalgamate all West Germans in a pro-capitalist mindset.

Das goldene Dach, like a number of other industry-sponsored projects, reveals the central preoccupations of West German industrialists and other elites during the Cold War: the lingering fear of worker unrest, the celebration of the family, home, and the entrepreneurial spirit, and the use of culture to confront the "collectivist" enemy. All these books were conceived of as potential bestsellers that would reach the German worker as the ideal graduation gift or as a present from the management for good service.

Next to the business-friendly paperback or the apologetic defense of behavior during the Nazi years, industrialists employed other strategies designed to both pacify the potentially volatile working class and to take employees' needs seriously. One medium was a series of handbooks teaching fellow industrialists about the latest techniques of human relations and public relations. Another was the workers' newsletter/magazine, such as the DI's own Mitarbeiterbrief, which, while unable to entirely hide its hostilities to the unions, did try to express the new language of compromise, with the Arbeiter (worker) having been transformed into the Mitarbeiter ("co"-worker—a more egalitarian term stripped of its proletarian connotations).[41] National business organizations, local chambers of business and commerce, and business-friendly publishing houses also sponsored and financed a number of magazines, like Heim und Werk ("Home and Work") and Das Fenster ("The Window") that were devoted to the lifestyle and needs of the worker. Each edition had stories designed to instill in the worker an appreciation for the businessman and a respect for conservative, "Western" values—saving, private property,

prosperity, and a rejection of socialism and collectivism. In a similar vein to the National Socialist's "Strength through Joy" publications, they contained profiles of vacation spots that workers might visit, as well as colorful advertisements, suggestions about how the worker could communicate more effectively with his boss, inspirational biographies of business leaders, and cartoons and features that tried to capture life on the factory floor.[42]

Finally, we can witness in the 1950s, the reemergence of the company worker's newspaper or magazine, which most firms saw as an expression of industry's new respect for the Mitarbeiter. In 1951, approximately 200 West German firms put out publication for their workers. Two years later the number had risen to 400, bearing such titles as Work and Me, Work and Us, My Work, Our Work, Work and Man, Work and Leisure, and Work and Home [43]

Again the influence of the United States can be felt in all of this. Not only can it be found in the title of industry-sponsored and worker-directed publications, such as "Why do the Americans Live Better?"[44] It was also located in the behind-the-scenes discussions amongst industrialists, who regularly invoked the United States as their model for these public relations efforts. The influence of the United States could also be seen in the participation of Americans in industrial exhibitions, like the first annual Deutsche Industrie Ausstellung (German Industry Exhibition) held in West Berlin in 1950. The goal behind this national exhibition was to expose the common man—the worker—to the latest products emerging from the reviving German economy. A self-avowed weapon in the cold war, the exhibition was held purposely in West Berlin so that East Berliners could cross into the western zones to witness the fruits of diligence that could be achieved

only in a "free economy." Organizers wanted to get the message out to the broader West German public as well. In the months leading up to the exhibition, the newly christened "Marshall Plan Train" had traveled the countryside advertising the upcoming fair, where the products of Germany and numerous countries were to be on display in tents and large pavilions. When the exhibition opened, American Secretary of State George Marshall was himself the honorary ribbon cutter. He was also the namesake for the popular "George C. Marshall House," which presented an exhibition on industry, trade, and labor in the United States, with a separate display on the workings of the American government and American democracy. Several American companies sent their companies over to observe and report back on the newest products emerging from the West German economy.[45]

In addition to industrial fairs, industrialists took advantage of advertising in popular magazines and in short films that celebrated management and workers as equal partners in the prosperous world of free market capitalism.[46] By 1960 the Industriefilm had become one of the most essential public relations tools at industry's disposal, with almost 200 films made annually, highlighting the newest advances in research, technology, production, and human relations.[47] At the "First Industrial Film Show," held in Berlin in 1959, Berlin Mayor Willy Brandt and the BDI's Fritz Berg greeted the guests with an excited acknowledgment of the indispensability of film to industrial public relations and to the artistic world of West Germany.[48] At this exhibition, dozens of documentaries about innovations in rubber, chemistry, magnetics, and sugar production competed for coveted awards for artistry, educational quality, and technical production. A documentary about U.S. business practices called The American Look, a short cartoon

about Germany's social market economy (Kleine Wirtschaftschronik), and dozens of foreign films were also showcased as non-competing features.[49] And Volkswagen unveiled its Straβen der Vernunft ('Streets of Reason"), which, by highlighting car production, "elucidated the positive aspects of sensible rationalization that not only make the life of the individual easier, but contribute to the prosperity of all."[50]

In all of these films, the soundtrack was absolutely essential. Krupp's 1961 Technik—Drei Studien in Jazz sought to establish "a new relationship between images and music" by merging jazz syncopation with the visual rhythm of machinery and labor in three vignettes, entitled "Casting," "Forging," and "Mechanics."[51] In the 1950s conservative elites often feared that jazz would unleash a dangerously youthful abandon and a racialized sexuality, but by the 1960s, industrialists obviously recognized the image of "coolness" and "modernity" that it also might bestow upon their products.[52]

In these various PR media, industrialists looked to America both as their economic savior, their model of a thriving capitalist economy, and the home of modern publicity techniques and human relations. Yet they were always ambivalent about the broader implications of America's influence on German society. The same people who called upon America for help in appeasing the worker and overcoming the past expressed concern that West German society might go the way of America—becoming a cultural wasteland populated by boorish consumers and conformist dolts.[53] The figure of the worker stood at the center of this ambivalence. In the 1950s, the worker became the premier figure on which West German economic elites projected both their anxieties about

communism and American consumer culture. They hoped for a European "Third Way" that capitulated neither to the materialism of the USA nor to the dangerous collectivism of the East.[54] They clung to the notion that the American worker was inferior to the craftsman that lay in every German worker; this depiction was not dissimilar to that of the Eastern worker, who was portrayed as lazy and coddled by the communist state and thus incapable of producing quality goods. But industrialists focused more on America as the home of successfully-advertised but poorly-made products of mass consumption. Even as West Germany opened its doors to foreign products and celebrated a new spirit of internationalism at trade fairs or film festivals, economic elites remained suspicious not only of their own workers' political views, but also of the popular cultural trends from across the Atlantic that the West German worker was imitating. Organizations like the BDI's Kulturkreis invited guest speakers like Spanish philosopher Ortega y Gasset and conducted discussions about art patronage, cultural decline, mass consumption, and relations with America. They reflected upon the cultural traditions of Germany and the Abendland (the West), whose traditions they associated with Europe and not with the cultural wasteland across the Atlantic. America, so went the common argument, did provide a sense of hope that Germany was in good hands; America was, after all, the model of economic prosperity, democracy, and world leadership. But, in the words of Fritz Hellwig, "This hope was mixed with concerns that the intellectual leadership of the West was ultimately being lost to America."["in die Hoffnung mischt sich die Besorgnis, dass die geistige Führung des Abendlandes endgültig an Amerika verlorengeht….][55]

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In highlighting industry's views of the German worker and America's influence in the realm of publicity, one must ultimately pose the question, did this turn toward human relations and public relations help the businessman or the worker in a tangible way? It is clear that in the course of the 1950s, German companies ultimately benefited from the Marshall Plan, an increase in manufacturing and exporting, and the pacification of the worker. The role PR had in this process is difficult to gauge. But with these economic achievements, industrialists certainly grew emboldened, if not always convincing, as they fended off accusations of industrial guilt under Nazism and made gestures of good will toward the Mitarbeiter. Throughout this process of economic recovery, they received financial assistance and moral support from American sympathizers, who saw the health of West Germany's economy and the rehabilitation of its leaders as essential in the cold war battle against communism. By the end of the 1950s, West German industry remained indebted to Americans for the camaraderie many of them had shown throughout Germany's "time of troubles" in the late 1940s and early '50s and their attempts to put World War II and National Socialism behind them.

But was this imitation of American publicity techniques an indication, to invoke Volker Berghahn's words, of the "Americanization of West German industry"? Or was it merely the selective application of American business ideas mixed with some gratitude towards Americans for their help in overcoming the past? Certainly, industrialists themselves portrayed PR, advertising, and other image-making techniques as distinctly

modern and American tools: in industrialists' meetings and in conversations about PR and human relations, the word "modern" and "America" appear repeatedly throughout the 1950s. In this narrow respect, West German publicity strategies were both "modernized" and "Americanized" through the importation of models from across the Atlantic. But the ambivalence felt by industrialists toward the United States and toward their own workers problematizes this reading of Americanization and modernization.

Despite the successful introduction of PR techniques, some of the same people, particularly older industrialists, who turned to America for guidance and help, looked askance at the putatively "American" behaviors and trends that began to permeate West German culture in the 1950s. Gustav Stein, one of the leaders of the BDI's Kulturkreis, spoke for many West German industrialists when he celebrated the widespread prosperity—the "Wohlstand für Alle—that Adenauer and Ludwig Erhard had constructed, while also bemoaning what he saw as an American-imposed "massification" of German society. Stein, in an article in the 1960s, saw the byproduct of economic prosperity as the breakdown of old hierarchies through the dangerous introduction of "Massenproduktion, Massenkonsum und "Massenverhalten" (mass production, mass consumption, and mass behavior").[56] Conservative industrialists like Stein feared that the prosperity that they had worked so hard to create would turn upon them, transforming Germany into a smug, homogenous, and Americanized society that would suppress social differentiation. A common view among business leaders was that the true individualist - the artist, the intellectual, and the entrepreneur - thrives only in a Kulturstaat (and not in a "collectivist" or "materialist" state). In West Germany, the overdemocratization of the

economy threatened to unleash the crowds, who would crush the individual as they flocked to Hollywood films and rock concerts. According to the more conservative industrialists, the almost utopian economic conditions fostered by the "Economic Miracle," were transforming West Germany into an overly democratic behemoth that opened the floodgates to mass movements and, potentially, to a new form of totalitarianism. In this ironic twist of logic, conservative business leaders portrayed American democracy, mass culture, and materialism as the harbinger of the very mass terror that the National Socialists had unleashed and that continued to plague German industry for its part in this horror. To industrialists the United States was at once the home of capitalism and modern techniques such as pubic relations and human relations that were to serve as West Germany industry's salvation. Indeed Americans were themselves regularly consulting with Germany on these very issues.[57] But America was also the home of crass materialism, cultural vapidity, and mass leveling. Through the idea of America, industrialists and other German elites expressed their ultimate ambivalence about the rapid changes taking place in the 1950s.

Industrialists were undoubtedly grateful for the state of the economy at the end of the 1950s. Much of the class war rhetoric within the labor movement had come to end; the Social Democratic Party had removed Marxist language from its platform; and labor only occasionally referred to industrialists as "Fascisten," "Konzernherren" or "Monopolkapitalisten." This language, to be sure, persisted among the European left, which continued to question the role of capitalism in the perpetration of Nazi crimes. But as labor began to reject the notion that management was the archenemy, industrialists also

came to recognize workers as individuals that commanded respect as the lifeblood of a company. Labor-management tension would never entirely disappear, and few felt that it should in a healthy liberal-capitalist democracy. But certainly in the realm of rhetoric, business/labor relations could be seen as having been "Americanized," if the measure of this concept is the disappearance of some of the deeper class war sentiments long absent from American labor relations but ingrained in European intellectual and labor traditions.

But one may still wonder how much of this success was due to America per se, and how much was about West German industry, and by extension West Germany, proceeding along the path of modernization, irrespective of America's military, economic, and cultural influence? The answer, of course, depends on how one defines modernity. If modernity can be equated with economic prosperity, technological progress, an appreciation of public images and advertising, and a new respect for the "working man," then West Germany certainly was modernized and Americanized in the 1950s. But such definitions of modernization and Americanization do not take into account the ambivalence business leaders harbored toward the very sources and consequences of their postwar successes - mass consumption, advertising, publicity, and rising profits. If modernity meant capitalist prosperity, open markets, and the means of projecting a positive corporate image, then many industrialists of the 1950s were enthusiastic about its liberating power. But if modernity meant a loss of cultural hegemony to the country that exemplified these values - the United States - then many economic elites were nervous and hesitant about it. In the minds of many business leaders, the modernization of the economy must coincide with the protection of "Western" (i.e. "German" and

"European") values inherited from the Enlightenment - freedom, individualism, and private property. The great irony of industrialists' anxiety about America was that in the first half of the twentieth century, it was, arguably, the United States, more than Germany or Europe, that had carried on these traditions often associated with the Enlightenment. Germany had recently brought about the powerful destruction of personal liberties, not their preservation. Clearly, in the 1950s German elites were trying to come to terms with their own past through the tropes of Kultur, and through the fear of mass consumption, mass leveling, and "Americanization."

Ultimately, the example of German industry's approach to labor in the 1950s and its new emphasis on image-making continues to reveal how slippery concepts like Americanization and Modernization are. By peering into elite mentalities in West Germany, we can see that that in the 1950s "Americanization" was an incomplete and highly contested process. The imitation of American economic attitudes and models was laden with both fear and hope. The optimism embodied in the idea of America was borne out by the tangible assistance that Americans rendered the German economy after the war. But the euphoria over economic recovery in the 1950s was tempered by the loss of Europe's cultural uniqueness, by the persistence of German traditions and attitudes about labor and culture, and by the lingering specter of the recent past.

Endnotes

[1] For recent examples see Jeffry M. Diefendorf, and Hermann-Josef Rupieper, eds., American Policy and the Reconstruction of West Germany, 1945-1955 (Cambridge, UK, 1993); Michael Ermarth, ed., America and the Shaping of German Society, 1945-1955 (Providence, 1993); Reiner Pommerin, ed., The American Impact on Postwar Germany (Providence/Oxford, 1995); David E. Barclay and Elisabeth Glaser-Schmidt, eds., Transatlantic Images and Perspectives: Germany and America since 1776 (Cambridge, 1997); Dan Diner, America in the Eyes of the Germans: An Essay on Anti-Americanism (Princeton, 1996); Kaspar Maase, Bravo Amerika: Erkundungen zur Jugenkultur der Bundesrepublik in den fünfziger Jahren (Hamburg, 1992); Rob Kroes, et al., eds., Cultural Transmissions and Receptions: American Mass Culture in Europe (Amsterdam, 1993); Richard Pells, Not Like Us: How Europeans have Loved, Hated, and Transformed American Culture since World War II (New York, 1997); Jeffrey Pack, Multiculturalism in Transit: A German-American Exchange (Providence, 1998); and Volker Berghahn, The Americanization of West German Industry (Cambridge, 1986).

[2] For recent debates see contributions by Petra Goedde, Jessica C.E. Gienow-Hecht, Rebecca Boehling, Rob Kroes, and especially Uta G. Poiger, "Beyond 'Modernization' and "Colonization," - all in Diplomatic History 23:1 (Winter 1999): 1-78; and Axel Schildt and Arnold Sywottek, "'Reconstruction' and 'Modernization': West German Social History during the 1950s," in Robert G. Moeller, ed., West Germany Under Construction: Politics, Society, and Culture in the Adenauer Era (Ann Arbor, 1997), 413-40. For two of the most cited books that deal with the "colonization" thesis see Reinhold Wagnleitner, Coca-Colonization and the Cold War: The Cultural Mission of the United States in Austria after the Second World War (Chapel Hill, 1994), and Richard Kuisel, Seducing the French: The Dilemma of Americanization (Berkeley, 1993).

[3] See e.g. Uta. Poiger, "Taming the Wild West: American Popular Culture and the Cold War Battles over East and West German Identities, 1949-1961," (Dissertation, Brown University, 1995); Heide Fehrenbach, Cinema in Democratizing Germany: Reconstructing National Identity after Hitler (Chapel Hill, 1995); Maria Höhn, "GIs, Veronikas and Lucky Strikes,": German Reactions to the American Presence in the Rhineland-Palatinate during the 1950s (Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1995).

[4] For one of the many recent articles on this subject of industry and National Socialism, see "Chroniclers of Collaboration: Historians are in demand to study corporate ties to Nazis," New York Times, February 19, 1998. On actual business complicity, see Peter Hayes, Industry and Ideology: IG Farben in the Nazi Era (Cambridge, 1987), Henry Ashby Turner, German Big Business and the Rise of Hitler (Oxford, 1985), John Gillingham, Industry and Politics in the Third Reich (London, 1987); and Benjamin

Ferencz, Less than Slaves: Jewish Forced Labor and the Quest for Compensation (Cambridge, 1979).

[5] On this publicity work see S. Jonathan Wiesen, " "Overcoming Nazism: Big Business Public Relations, and the Politics of Memory, 1945-50" Central European History 29:2 (1996): 201-26.

[6] See Wiesen, "Reconstruction and Recollection: West German Industry and the Challenge of the Nazi Past, 1945-1955," (Dissertation, Brown University, 1998), Chapter Five.

[7] On the founding of this organization, see the Erich Potthoff Collection in the DGB-Archiv in the Hans Böckler Stiftung, Düsseldorf.

[8] See Michael Fichter, Besatzungsmacht und Gewerkschaften: Zur Entwicklung und Anwendung der US-Gewerkschaftspolitik in Deutshcland, 1944-1948 (Opladen, 1982); Werner Link, The Contribution of Trade Unions and Businessmen to German-American Relations, 1945-1975 (Bloomington, IN, 1978), Berghahn, Americanization, and Rebecca Boehling, A Question of Priorities: Democratic Reforms and Economic Recovery in Postwar Germany: Frankfurt, Munich, and Stuttgart under U.S. occupation, 1945- 1949 (Providence, 1996).

[9] For an introduction to the theme of codetermination and America's involvement in its implementation, see Berghahn, Americanization, 203-30, and Fichter, Besatzungsmacht.

[10] See Link, The Contribution of Trade Unions and Berghahn, Americanization, Chapter One.

[11] On the Nuremberg trial of industrialists, see "'Alle deutschen Industriellen saβen auf der Anklagebank.' Die Nürnberger Nachfolgerprozesse gegen Krupp, Flick und die IG Farben," in Rainer Eisfled and Ingo Müller, eds, Gegen Barberei: Essay Robert Kempner zu Ehren (Frankfurt am Main, 1989), 239-56; Bernd Greiner, "IG-Joe: IG Farben Prozess und Morgenthau-Plan" (Frankfurt, 1996); and Wiesen, "Overcoming Nazism." On dismantling, see Hanns D. Ahrens Demontage: Nachkriegspolitik der Allierten (Munich, 1982), and Berghahn, Americanization, 80ff.

[12] On American occupation policy in the immediate postwar years, see Rebecca Boehling, A Question of Priorities, and John H. Backer, Priming the German Economy: American Occupational Policies, 1945-1948 (Durham, NC, 1971)

[13] On the Marshall Plan, see Charles S. Maier, ed., The Marshall Plan and Germany: West German Development within the Framework of the European Recovery Program (New York, 1991).

[14] For some of the most virulently anti-union language see the speeches and scattered documents of Augsburg businessman, Otto Vogel, NL Otto Vogel, Box 252, Archive for Industrie-und Handelskammer für Augsburg and Scwaben, Augsburg (hereafter "Augsburg").

[15] On industrialists attempts to blame workers for Hitler's successes in 1933, see Oberhausen industrialist Hermann Reusch's controversial statements to this effect in the Gutehoffnungshütte Collection, NL Hermann, Reusch, Box 40010148/3, Rheinisch-Westfälisches Wirtschaftsarchiv-Cologne (hereafter RWWA).

[16] On the cultural mood and complexities of this early postwar period, see Axel Schildt, Moderne Zeiten: Freizeit, Massenmedien und 'Zeitgeist' in der Bundesrepublik der 50er Jahre (Hamburg, 1995); Hermann Glaser, The Rubble Years: The Cultural Roots of Postwar Germany, 1945-1948 (New York, 1986); Axel Schildt and Arnold Sywottek, eds., Modernisierung im Wiederaufbau: Die westdeutsche Gesellschaft der 50er Jahre (Bonn, 1993); and the articles in Moeller, ed., West Germany Under Construction.

[17] See Mary Nolan, Visions of Modernity: American Business and the Modernization of Germany (Oxford, 1994).

[18] On business public relations as they relate primarily to politics, see Elisabeth Binder, Die Entstehung unternehmerischer Public Relations in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (Münster, 1983.)

[19] See Ernst Vogel, Public Relations: Öffentliche Meinungs- und Beziehungspflege in Theorie und unternehmerischer Praxis (Frankfurt, 1952); no author, Public Relations im In- und Ausland: Ein Neuer Dienst (Düsseldorf, 1950?); Friedrich Mörtzsch, Offenheit macht sich bezahlt: Die Kunst der Meinungspflege in der amerikanischen Industrie (Düsseldorf, 1956); and the periodical Informationsbrief für Innerbetriebliche Beziehungen und Public Relations.

[20] On the history of the DI, see Wiesen, "Reconstruction," Chapter Two.

[21] "Public Relations," an article in the newsletter of the Bayerische Hypotheken-und Wechselbank, April, 1953, NL Vogel, Box 146, Augsburg

[22] This was not exactly true. At the time, industrialists in America also felt that they were not appreciated enough, and public opinion polls seemed to bear out this concern. See

Elizabeth A. Fones-Wolf, Selling Free Enterprise: The Business Assault on Labor and Liberalism, 1945-1960 (Urbana/Chicago, 1994).

[23] "Public Relations," NL Vogel, Box 146, Augsburg.

[24] Herbert Gross, Die Pflege der öffentlichen Meinung durch das amerikanische Unternehmertum (1950), NL Reusch, 40010145/306, RWWA.

[25] Ibid.

[26] See Nolan, Visions of Modernity, and Charles S. Maier, "Between Taylor and Technocracy: European ideologies and the vision of industrial productivity in the 1920s," Journal of Contemporary History 5:2 (1970): 27-61.

[27] "Bericht über die Reise der Delegation des BDI nach den USA von July 1951" (Anlage zur Niederschrift über die Hauptausschuss-Sitzung, September 27, 1951), NL Otto Vogel, Box 203, Augsburg. American representatives from the National Organization of Manufacturers also came regularly to the Federal Republic. In 1950 and '51, they conferred with German business over the issue of codetermination.

[28] Carl Hundhausen, Werbung um öffentliches Vertrauen: "public relations" (Essen, 1951). See also Carl Hundhausen, "Public Relations," Zeitschrift für Betriebswirtschaft 15:1 (1938): 48-61. On Carl Hundhausen, see Eva-Maria Lehming, Carl Hundhausen: sein Leben, sein Werk, sein Lebenswerk: Public Relations in Deutschland (1997).

[29] See e.g. Fritz Hellwig, "Amerika und Europa—Die geistige Begegnung," Kulturspiegel: die Zeitschrift der deutschen Kriegsgefangenlager in Grossbritannien [ed. World's Alliance of the Y.M.C.As] 3:2 (October 1946): 27-48. On Hellwig's publications and early career see, NL Fritz Hellwig (I-083), File 003/2 Archiv für Christlich-Demokratische Politik an der Adenauer Stiftung (hereafter ACDP), Sankt Augustin. Also, conversation with Dr. Fritz Hellwig, February 3 1995, Bonn-Bad Godesberg. I am grateful to Dr. Hellwig for taking the time to speak with me at length.

[30] See Ludwig Vaubel, Unternehmer gehen zur Schule: Ein Erfahrungsbericht aus USA (Düsseldorf, 1952).

[31] See Vaubel Collection (ED 321/1-18), vol. 17 (Harvard-Tagebuch, September 8, 1950-December 21, 1950), Institut für Zeitgeschichte, Munich; and Berghahn, Americanization, 254.

[32] For a discussion of Hamburg industrialist and future BdA director Otto A. Friedrich's trip to the United States in 1949, see Volker R. Berghahn, and Paul J. Friedrich, Otto A. Friedrich, Ein Politischer Unternehmer (Frankfurt/New York, 1993).

[33] For a recent piece on industrialist's fears of worker collectivism, see Mark Roseman, "The Organic Society and the "Massenmenschen": Integrating Young Labour in the Ruhr Mines, 1945-58," in Moeller, ed, West Germany Under Construction, 287-320.

[34] Ludwig Reiner, Wir alle können besser leben (Munich, 1953). See the other titles in Rundschreiben #12 of the DIHT's Pressestelle, August 12, 1953, B156/169, Bundesarchiv-Koblenz (BAK).

[35] Gert von Klass, Albert Vögler: Einer der Grossen des Ruhrreviers (Tübingen, 1957). On industry's part in preparing this book see, e.g, the minutes of the meeting of the "Freundeskreis Albert Vögler" in Gelsenberg/Essen, November 11, 1954, A/8943, Thyssen Archive, Duisburg.

[36] Heinrich Hauser, Unser Schicksal: Die Deutsche Industrie (Munich/Düsseldorf, 1952). For the above quotes and industry's involvement in the writing of this book, see "Für die Freie Wirtschaft!" (a one-page appeal from Hauser and his publisher to the attention of all industrialists), NL Reusch, 40010145/152, RWWA.

[37] Eberhard Schulz, Das goldene Dach (Munich/Düsseldorf, 1952).

[38] On industrialists' involvement in this book's preparation, see NL Reusch, Kulturkreis files, 40010146/612, RWWA.

[39] Schulz, Das goldene Dach., 63.

[40] Ibid., 73.

[41] "Arbeitnehmer" was and is another term used in lieu of "Arbeiter."

[42] On the start-up of the Mitarbeiterbrief des Deutschen Industrieinstituts, see NL Reusch, 400101456/310, RWWA. On the founding of Das Fenster, see promotional letter from Graf Bothmer, publisher of the magazine, November 23, 1952 - loose copy in volume 7 of Das Fenster, Institut für Publizistik, Free University, Berlin.

[43] For the complete 26-page list of workers' magazines published in 1953, see DIHT Rundschreiben #15 (October 7, 1953), B156/169, BAK.

[44] See Rundschreiben #12 of the DIHT's Pressestelle, August 12, 1953, B156/169, Bundesarchiv-Koblenz (BAK).

[45] For all the information on the Deutsche Industrie Ausstellung, see Reports on the Deutsche Industrie Ausstellung, Berlin, October 1-15, 1950, Press Information Materials, Landesarchiv, Berlin; see invitation "Berlin ladet Sie ein," in same collection.

[46] Rob Kroes, If You've Seen One, You've Seen the Mall: Europeans and American Mass Culture (Urbana/Chicago, 1996), 93-105.

[47] See the series Der Deutsche Industriefilm, [published by the DI, 1960--).

[48] On the relationship between industry and the fine arts, see Werner Bührer, 'Der Kulturkreis im Bundesverband der Deutschen Industrie und die kulturelle Modernisierung' der Bundesrepublik in den 50er Jahren," in Schildt/Sywottek, eds., Modernisierung, 583-96.

[49] See the catalogue Industriefilmtage Berlin 1959 (12-14 September 1959, Kongreβhalle Berlin). For a discussion of the implications of this genre for industry see the issue of Handelsblatt devoted to an in-depth discussion of the Wirtschaftsfilm; Handelsblatt 16 (September 10, 1959).

[50] Ibid.

[51] See Filmkatalog der DIZ (Deutsche Industriefilm-Zentrale in der deustchen Industrie-Verlags GmbH (Cologne, 1963). This Krupp film from 1961 received a prize for "best educational film for youth," Nationale Industriefilmtage, Berlin, 1961, as well as a "music and dance prize" in Valencia, Spain.

[52] On Germans' ambivalent view of jazz see Uta Poiger, "Taming the Wild West," and Michael Kater, Different Drummers: Jazz in the Culture of Nazi Germany (Oxford, 1992)

[53] On such Anti-American slogans, see Paul Hollander, Anti-Americanism (New Brunswick, 1995).

[54] See Maria Mitchell, "Materialism and Secularism: CDU Politicians and National Socialism, 1945-1945," Journal of Modern History 67/2 (June 1995): 278-308.

[55] See Hellwig "Amerika und Europa."

[56] Gustav Stein Collection, SO I-288-013/1, ACDP

[57] See Wiesen, "Reconstruction," Chapter Seven.