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Defending the “Peace of Sunday”: The Debate over Sunday Labor in the West German Steel Industry after the Second World War

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Abstract

Working hours were largely unregulated in nineteenth-century Germany, but a powerful alliance emerged in the 1890s between the Christian churches and the socialist labor movement to prohibit most industrial labor on Sunday, including most production of steel. In the 1950s steel management persuaded organized labor that it would be advantageous to produce steel continuously throughout the week, the prevalent system in other countries. The Evangelical Church retreated in this debate, but the Catholic Church waged a fierce and partly successful campaign from 1952 to 1961 to defend the old prohibition. Until the 1980s organized labor continued to cooperate with both major churches to keep Sunday industrial labor quite rare. Their influence declined suddenly after national reunification in 1990, however, and many Germans have come to prize individual freedom above the old principle, honored by Christians and the unchurched alike, that most people should have the same day of rest.

German governments made little attempt to regulate working hours for adults in the nineteenth century, but a powerful alliance emerged in the 1890s between the Christian churches and the socialist labor movement to secure the prohibition of most industrial labor on Sunday, including most steel production. In the 1950s, steel management persuaded organized labor, however, that it would be far more cost-effective to produce steel continuously throughout the week, the prevalent system in other industrialized countries. The Evangelical Church of Germany retreated gracefully before this united front of management and labor, but the Catholic Church waged a fierce campaign from 1952 to 1961 to defend the old prohibition. The Catholic bishops and influential Catholic leagues insisted that Sunday industrial labor could be permitted only where it was a “technological necessity,” not simply because it was profitable, citing as the classic example the deep-shaft coal mines that would flood if their water pumps did not operate continuously. In 1961, this battle ended with a partial yet significant victory for the bishops, but their heavy-handed tactics antagonized many potential allies. This controversy, largely ignored by historians, illustrates the bright hopes among the Catholic clergy after the Second World War for the “rechristianization” of German society, the political influence gained by the episcopate in the 1950s through alliance with the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) led by Konrad Adenauer, and the growing anger among many Catholics as well as Protestants and freethinkers over the ways in which the bishops exerted that influence. With the issue of Sunday rest, however, the bishops

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championed a truly popular cause, and the consequences of this debate defy many broad generalizations about the abrupt decline in the churches' influence during the 1960s.¹

Much of the best recent scholarship on German Catholicism after 1945 has employed the techniques of cultural history and focused on the experience of intellectuals. Benjamin Ziemann for example has questioned the conventional wisdom about religious decline by documenting a positive and creative response by the Catholic hierarchy to the rise of new scholarly methods for statistical analysis, opinion sampling, and psychotherapy.² In his masterful study of debates among historians and intellectuals over the church's relationship with the Third Reich, Mark Edward Ruff concludes that the positive response by media commentators in 1963–64 to Rolf Hochhuth's hostile stage depiction of Pope Pius XII in *The Deputy* marked "the last gasp of the Catholic milieu, the final extraordinary mobilization of organizations, politicians and clerics. But this time, it was unable to prevent a fundamental taboo from being not just infringed but shattered." Peter Lösche and Franz Walter have suggested, however, that the most dangerous problem for the "Catholic milieu" in the 1950s was the "absence of enemies" and that the emergence of a hostile media environment in the 1960s encouraged "recatholicization."³ With valuable international comparisons, James Chappel has focused on the experience of Catholic social theorists to analyze why the relative consensus of the 1950s gave way to discord in the 1960s. He emphasizes the "modernism" of social Catholicism and Christian democracy in the 1950s, meaning their effective synthesis of progrowth economic policies with comprehensive social welfare programs.⁴ It should be noted, however, that until the 1980s at least, German Catholics remained far less likely than Protestants to earn a university degree. The vast majority of Catholic parishioners were down-to-earth workers, farmers, and small shopkeepers who paid little attention to theatrical premiers or debates on university campuses. They cared very much about the length and rhythm of the work week, and they expected bishops to defend Christian values without increasing the burdens of labor. This article is a plea for historians of organized religion to pay more attention to labor history.

Dissident Catholic intellectuals, in particular, have long aroused great interest among historians of the 1950s, figures such as the journalist Walter Dirks, novelist Heinrich Böll, and

¹ The only historian to focus on this debate appears to be Christel Karlheim in "Katholische Kirche und Sonntagsarbeit. Entwicklungslinien am Beispiel der Eisen- und Stahlindustrie im Ruhrgebiet," *Mitteilungsblatt des Instituts für soziale Bewegungen* 36 (2006): 29–43, who breaks off the story in 1958. For good analyses of the influence of the Christian churches on public life, see Thomas Grossböling, *Losing Heaven: Religion in Germany since 1945*, trans. Alex Skinner (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2017); Kristian Buchna, *Ein klerikales Jahrzehnt? Kirche, Konfession und Politik in der Bundesrepublik während der 1950er Jahre* (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlag, 2014); Thomas Gauly, *Katholiken. Machtanspruch und Machtverlust* (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag, 1992); and Frank Bösch, *Die Adenauer-CDU. Gründung, Aufstieg und Krise einer Erfolgspartei 1945–1969* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2001). The following article is based on previously neglected archival records of the Catholic workers' clubs in the Ketteler House in Cologne (cited as "KAB Archiv"), the Historical Archive of the Cologne Archdiocese (HAEK), and records of the CDU and papers of CDU politicians in the Archive for Christian Democratic Politics at the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Sankt Augustin (ACDP) and the German National Archive in Koblenz (BAK).

² See Benjamin Ziemann, *Encounters with Modernity: The Catholic Church in West Germany, 1945–1975*, trans. Andrew Evans (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2014), and Mark Edward Ruff, "Integrating Religion into the Historical Mainstream: Recent Literature on Religion in the Federal Republic of Germany," *Central European History* 42 (2009): 307–37.

³ Mark Edward Ruff, *The Battle for the Catholic Past in Germany 1945–1980* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 192; Peter Lösche and Franz Walter, "Katholiken, Konservative und Liberale. Milieus und Lebenswelten bürgerlicher Parteien in Deutschland während des 20. Jahrhunderts," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 26 (2000): 471–92 (esp. 487–88). Compare the excellent regional study by Wilhelm Damberg, *Abschied vom Milieu? Katholizismus im Bistum Münster und in den Niederlanden 1945–1980* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1997).

⁴ James Chappel, *Catholic Modern: The Challenge of Totalitarianism and the Remaking of the Church* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018), 182–258; Paul Misner covers some of the same ground with a focus on Christian trade unions and Catholic workers' clubs in *Catholic Labor Movements in Europe: Social Thought and Action, 1914–1965* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2015), 255–96.

historian Ernst-Wolfgang Böckenförde, who publicly criticized Adenauer's policy of rearmament, the bishops' close alliance with the CDU, and the historical legend that Catholics had been united in opposition to the Third Reich. Such intellectuals suffered painful ostracism and other reprisals by the episcopate and the revived Catholic leagues for laypersons. The leaders of German Catholicism became preoccupied with anti-communism during the Cold War, sought to present a united front to the outside world, and did their best to silence dissenting Catholic voices.⁵

In this controversy over Sunday labor, however, the most tenacious and effective Catholic dissidents were not intellectuals but rather veterans of the League of Christian Trade Unions for Catholic and Protestant workers that existed from 1899 to 1933, labor activists who relied on their own experience and expertise to adapt Catholic moral teaching to new economic and social realities. Their trade unions were founded amid bruising battles with a powerful "integralist" faction of the Catholic clergy, which insisted that Catholic workers should only join purely Catholic labor organizations under strict clerical supervision that refrained from strike activity. Pope Pius X greatly preferred the purely Catholic organizations, but in 1912 he grudgingly acknowledged in the encyclical *Singulari quadam* that German bishops who faced peculiar local conditions might permit Catholic workers to associate with Protestants in autonomous Christian trade unions.⁶ In 1945, almost all veterans of the Christian unions resolved to help cofound both the unified *Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund* (German Labor Federation, or DGB) to represent workers of all political outlooks and the new Christian Democratic Union to unite Catholics and Protestants in the political realm. They also founded an influential network of social committees (*Sozialausschüsse*) to defend the interests of workers in the CDU. In October 1945, their long-time leader and mentor, Adam Stegerwald, made his way to Cologne shortly before his death to tell his closest colleagues that the senior Catholic clergy, because of its obsession with retaining control of the laity, had thwarted all the most promising initiatives by the Christian trade unions since 1900 to achieve genuine democracy and respect for workers' rights. Stegerwald reproached the bishops, in particular, for thwarting the campaign for democratic reforms of Imperial Germany during the First World War, Stegerwald's own attempt in 1920 to found a "Christian Democratic" Party uniting Catholics and Protestants, and efforts in the last years of the Weimar Republic to rally a broad antifascist front in defense of parliamentary democracy. No dissident Catholic intellectual compiled a more incisive critique of the episcopate's role in politics. "It can be predicted," Stegerwald concluded about the senior clergy, "that political reaction will emerge again in the foreseeable future. In that situation, Catholic workers must learn from the past and never again allow themselves to be misused for reactionary aims." Several key actors in the following story took this advice to heart.⁷

⁵ See Peter C. Kent, *The Lonely Cold War of Pope Pius XII: The Roman Catholic Church and the Division of Europe, 1943-1950* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002); Suzanne Brown-Fleming, *The Holocaust and Catholic Conscience: Cardinal Aloisius Muench and the Guilt Question in Germany* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006); and Ruff, *The Battle for the Catholic Past in Germany 1945-1980*, 13-47, 86-120; and Chappel, *Catholic Modern*, 40-52, 152-69.

⁶ Eric Dorn Brose, *Christian Labor and the Politics of Frustration in Imperial Germany* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1985); Rudolf Brack, *Deutscher Episkopat und Gewerkschaftsstreit 1900-1914* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1976); Bernhard Forster, *Adam Stegerwald (1874-1945). Christlich-nationaler Gewerkschafter, Zentrumspolitiker, Mitbegründer der Unionsparteien* (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 2003), 30-127; and Pius X, *Singulari quadam*, September 24, 1912 (https://www.vatican.va/content/pius-x/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-x_enc_24091912_singulari-quadam.html).

⁷ See Stegerwald's detailed summary of his remarks, "Aus meinen Erlebnissen im Kampf gegen den Integralismus und die politische Reaktion in katholisch-kirchlichen Kreisen," sent to Johannes Albers in late October 1945, BAK/NL Katzer/565; William L. Patch, *Christian Trade Unions in the Weimar Republic, 1918-1933* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985), 20-32, 63-71, 133-41; Forster, *Adam Stegerwald (1874-1945)*, 162-220, 265-89, 437-74, 588-627; and William L. Patch, *Christian Democratic Workers and the Forging of German Democracy, 1920-1980* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 9-75, esp. 69-72.

The Legal Framework for Labor in the German Steel Industry, 1890–1951

Since ancient times most Christians have applied to Sunday, the day of Christ's resurrection, the Old Testament commandment to "remember the sabbath day and keep it holy" (Exodus 20:8), but they have tended to ignore many sabbath regulations of Judaism. The Roman Emperor Constantine for example decreed in the year 321 that judges and townspeople must not work on Sunday, but he exempted the rural populace on the grounds that many forms of agricultural labor could not be interrupted. He thus departed from Mosaic Law, which specifies that farmers too must rest on the sabbath, even during times of plowing and harvest (Exodus 34:21).⁸ For many centuries thereafter, Roman Catholics and all major Protestant denominations honored Sunday as a day of worship and rest, but they rarely sought to prohibit all labor. Reformed denominations in the tradition inspired by John Calvin, including a minority of German Protestants, went the furthest toward a strict "sabbatarian" observance, but Lutherans and German Catholics tolerated a wide range of activities on Sunday so long as they did not interfere with participation in worship services. Those who regularly did chores on Sunday afternoon probably made up a substantial majority of the population in early modern Germany.⁹

In modern times industrialization made labor so intensive and the work week so long that traditional respect for Sunday overlapped with a desperate longing among workers for at least one full day of rest per week. The first child labor law in the Kingdom of Prussia, adopted in 1839, prohibited any employment on Sunday of children under the age of sixteen, but the authorities long treated adults as "free" to sign any labor contract they chose. Most labor historians agree that the average length of the work week in German industry was an utterly exhausting seventy-two hours in the year 1871 and declined only very slowly thereafter.¹⁰ The Protestant state churches soon noted an alarming decline in church attendance among industrial workers, and they blamed excessive demands by employers. Calls to respect the "peace of Sunday" (*Sonntagsruhe*) and assure workers a full day of rest became the first issue to generate widespread political activism among earnest German Protestants, who founded leagues to promote Sunday observance in many cities and published hundreds of pamphlets and petitions. Catholics were slower to take up the issue, but the Catholic Center Party sparked a major Reichstag debate in 1885 with a bill to prohibit most industrial labor on Sunday. Chancellor Otto von Bismarck and the liberal parties blocked that initiative, but it gained support from the German Conservative Party, leading socialists, and Pope Leo XIII. Leo's famous social encyclical *Rerum novarum*, issued in May 1891, proclaimed that "the working man has interests in which he should be protected by the State," beginning with "the obligation of the cessation from work and labor on Sundays and certain holy days." Most clergymen were firmly anti-socialist, and anticlericalism had come to permeate the socialist labor movement, but on the issue of Sunday labor the two sides agreed.¹¹

⁸ See Donald A. Carson, ed., *From Sabbath to Lord's Day: A Biblical, Historical, and Theological Investigation*, reprint edition (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1999), 21–55, 221–98, and Reinhard Richardi, *Grenzen industrieller Sonntagsarbeit: Ein Rechtsgutachten* (Bonn: Verlag Neue Gesellschaft, 1988), 19–21.

⁹ See Clemens Wischermann, "'Streit um Sonntagsarbeit.' Historische Perspektiven einer aktuellen Kontroverse," *Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 78 (1991): 6–38 (esp. 6–11), and Carson, *From Sabbath to Lord's Day*, 299–341.

¹⁰ See Elisabeth Anderson, "Ideas in Action: The Politics of Prussian Child Labor Reform, 1817–1839," *Theory and Society* 42 (2013): 81–119, and Gerhard A. Ritter and Klaus Tenfelde, *Arbeiter im Deutschen Kaiserreich, 1871 bis 1914* (Bonn: Dietz Verlag, 1992), 361–65.

¹¹ "Denkschrift über die Sonntagsfrage," published by the Evangelische Oberkirchenrat on March 7, 1877, in Günter Brakelmann, ed., *Kirche, soziale Frage und Sozialismus. Band 1: Kirchenleitungen und Synoden über soziale Frage und Sozialismus 1871–1914* (Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1977), 51–56; Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum*, sections 40–41 (http://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_15051891_rerum-novarum.html); Wischermann, "Streit um Sonntagsarbeit," 14–28; Friedrich Heckmann, *Arbeitszeit und Sonntagsruhe. Stellungnahmen zur Sonntagsarbeit als Beitrag kirchlicher Sozialkritik im 19. Jahrhundert* (Essen: Die blaue Eule, 1986); Heiner Grote, *Sozialdemokratie und Religion, 1863–*

Christian social activists rejoiced in 1890 when the young Kaiser Wilhelm II dismissed Bismarck, allowed his Anti-Socialist Law to lapse, and exhorted the Reichstag to satisfy the legitimate demands of workers, especially their demand for Sunday rest. Wilhelm had been raised by a strict Calvinist tutor who familiarized him with the “sabbatarian” view of Sunday, and this probably explains why he emphasized that issue.¹² A broad front of academics, pastors, and civil servants then founded the Evangelical Social Congress, which secured passage in June 1891 of the Workers Protection Law (*Arbeiterschutzgesetz*) with support in the Reichstag from the Conservative Party, some liberals, the Center Party, and the recently legalized *Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands* (Social Democratic Party of Germany, or SPD). The law required strict government inspection of working conditions and imposed a sweeping ban on Sunday labor in factories, mines, and construction sites, except for essential maintenance work. Implementation was delayed until the Bundesrat (Federal Council), which represented the state governments, completed negotiations with industrialists in 1895 regarding a detailed list of the work processes banned. State governments were authorized to grant further exemptions to the ban, but only if “work processes take place whose nature does not permit interruption or postponement.” For the steel industry, continuous operation was permitted in massive, old-fashioned blast furnaces (*Hochöfen*), but the modern Bessemer, Siemens-Martin, and Thomas-Gilchrist furnaces that accounted for most German production were required to cease operation from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. every Sunday.¹³

Wilhelm II and the Conservative Party turned against the Evangelical Social Congress in 1895–96, denouncing it for socialist sympathies, and Christian social reformers enjoyed no major political victories under the empire thereafter.¹⁴ The ban on Sunday labor endured, nevertheless, because it proved so popular. Church attendance rates among industrial workers had sunk to a very low level, but millions who never attended church agreed that workers should have the same day of rest. Shared rest on Sunday proved a great boon to family life and every form of workers’ organization. Industrial workers also gained access to a wide range of leisure activities because the law did not interfere with the German tradition that public transportation, hotels, restaurants, and cultural and recreational facilities should be allowed to operate on Sunday. The law granted just enough exemptions that most industrialists accepted it without protest, and many discovered that productivity per work hour rose significantly when workers enjoyed more rest. The legal ban on Sunday labor encouraged a significant reduction in total work hours, and the trade unions made further reductions a high priority in their job actions. The average length of the industrial work week therefore declined by 1900 to sixty-one hours and by 1913 to fifty-five and one-half hours, resulting in a major improvement in workers’ quality of life.¹⁵

1875 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1968); Helga Grebing, ed., *Geschichte der sozialen Ideen in Deutschland. Sozialismus—Katholische Soziallehre—Protestantische Sozialethik. Ein Handbuch* (Essen: Klartext Verlag, 2000), 613–87, 878–948.

¹² Reichstag speech by Wilhelm II on May 6, 1890, in Brakelmann, *Kirche, soziale Frage und Sozialismus*, I: 254–55. For the struggle by the puritanical Georg Ernst Hinzpeter to mold young Wilhelm’s character, see John C. G. Röhl, *Wilhelm II. Die Jugend des Kaisers 1859–1888* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1993).

¹³ Text of the Workers Protection Law of June 1, 1891, in Wolfgang Ayass, ed., *Quellensammlung zur Geschichte der deutschen Sozialpolitik 1867 bis 1914. III. Abteilung: Ausbau und Differenzierung der Sozialpolitik seit Beginn des Neuen Kurses (1890–1904). Band 3: Arbeiterschutz* (Mainz: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2005), 230–48, quotation on 234; “Bekanntmachung betreffend Ausnahmen von dem Verbote der Sonntagsarbeit im Gewerbebetriebe,” *Deutsches Reichsgesetzblatt 1895* (Berlin, 1895), 12–59, esp. 19 (https://de.wikisource.org/wiki/Deutsches_Reichsgesetzblatt_1895); Karl Erich Born, *Staat und Sozialpolitik seit Bismarcks Sturz. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der innenpolitischen Entwicklung des Deutschen Reiches 1890–1914* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1957), 84–100; Klaus Pollmann, *Landesherrliches Kirchenregiment und soziale Frage. Der evangelische Oberkirchenrat der altpreussischen Landeskirche und die sozialpolitische Bewegung der Geistlichen nach 1890* (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 1973), 12–22, 111–20.

¹⁴ Pollmann, *Landesherrliches Kirchenregiment und soziale Frage*, 25–29, 160–301; Grebing, *Geschichte der sozialen Ideen in Deutschland*, 951–81.

¹⁵ See Wischermann, “Streit um Sonntagsarbeit,” 30–34; Ritter and Tenfelde, *Arbeiter im Deutschen Kaiserreich, 1871 bis 1914*, 364–71, 747–780, 818–35; Jürgen Reulecke and Wolfhard Weber, eds., *Fabrik, Familie, Feierabend. Beiträge zur*

The restrictions on Sunday labor were reinforced by the Weimar constitution of 1919, which proclaimed in Article 139 that “Sunday and state-recognized holidays remain legally protected as days of rest from labor and of spiritual edification (*der Arbeitsruhe und der seelischen Erhebung*).” This article was proposed by veterans of the Evangelical Social Congress in the German Democratic Party and proved one of the least controversial in the constitution. In 1949, this article was incorporated without debate into Article 140 of the Basic Law of the Federal Republic, and the Workers Protection Law remained embedded in Section 105 of the German Commercial Code. In both constitutions, the SPD permitted Christian social activists to group the article on Sunday rest with the provisions on church-state relations, not those on economic life or basic rights, so that it was presented as Christianity’s gift to the German people. This constitutional guarantee of Sunday rest was and remains unique in the world.¹⁶

For several years after the Second World War, German steel industrialists did not complain about restrictions on Sunday labor because they faced more urgent problems. The victorious Allies regarded the steel industry as more closely tied than any other to the war machine of the Third Reich, and steel industrialists were denounced as Hitler’s accomplices. Proposals to nationalize industry provoked controversy, but the Allies agreed at the Potsdam Conference in July 1945 to dissolve German cartels, syndicates, and trusts, to demolish factories that had produced arms, and to restrict German steel production to a small fraction of its prewar level. In November 1945, the British military government went so far as to arrest seventy-five leading Ruhr steel industrialists in the middle of the night and detain them in a prison camp for several months without specific criminal charges. The Ruhr steel industry had been organized into a handful of large combines that were integrated vertically through ownership of coal mines and metalworking plants, but in 1946 the British sequestered their ownership shares and created a trusteeship agency to carve out two dozen medium-sized corporations that simply produced steel. These corporations soon accepted demands by German trade unionists with British support for “parity co-determination” (*paritätische Mitbestimmung*), that is, a strong voice for elected factory councils in some management decisions and equal representation for capital and labor on the corporate supervisory board (*Aufsichtsrat*). Industrialists facing the threat of expropriation accepted co-determination as the lesser evil.¹⁷

The US government was soon persuaded by its military governor in Germany, General Lucius Clay, and many economists that West German industry should be revived quickly to make Germany self-sufficient, liberate American taxpayers from the burden of occupation costs, and promote the recovery of Europe as a whole. Clay firmly opposed parity co-determination and proposals to nationalize industry as grave threats to economic revival. In June 1948, he forged an alliance with the Christian Democratic Union and its adviser, the neoliberal economist Ludwig Erhard, to persuade the elected West German state governments to abolish wartime price controls and rely on free competition to stimulate recovery. The SPD and organized labor denounced Erhard because wages remained frozen while consumer prices began to rise, as Erhard sought to prevent an inflationary wage-price spiral. In September, the CDU insisted therefore that Anton Storch, a Catholic veteran of the old

Sozialgeschichte des Alltags im Industriezeitalter (Wuppertal: Peter Hammer, 1978); and Gerhard Huck, ed., *Sozialgeschichte der Freizeit*, 2nd ed. (Wuppertal: Peter Hammer, 1982).

¹⁶ See Peter Häberle, *Der Sonntag als Verfassungsprinzip*, 2nd ed. (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2006), 15–79, 103–4, and Gerd Albracht, “Sonntagsarbeit—Auswirkungen und rechtliche Probleme,” *Arbeit und Recht* 37, no. 4–5 (April–May 1989): 97–120, esp. 98–99.

¹⁷ John Gillingham, *Coal, Steel, and the Rebirth of Europe, 1945–1955: The Germans and French from Ruhr Conflict to Economic Community* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 97–110, 190–207; Jonathan Wiesen, *West German Industry and the Challenge of the Nazi Past* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 53–59; Horst Thum, *Mitbestimmung in der Montanindustrie. Der Mythos vom Sieg der Gewerkschaften* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1982), 18–36; James C. van Hook, *Rebuilding Germany: The Creation of the Social Market Economy, 1945–1957* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 53–93; Karl Lauschke, *Die halbe Macht. Mitbestimmung in der Eisen- und Stahlindustrie 1945 bis 1989* (Essen: Klartext Verlag, 2007), 17–48.

Christian trade unions who held an influential post in the new German Labor Federation, become minister of labor for the Economic Council that represented the state governments alongside Erhard as minister of economics. Storch's first act in office was to deregulate wages, and real wages began to rise appreciably by December 1948, as a long period of robust economic growth began.¹⁸

In autumn 1948, General Clay rejoiced over the growth of West German steel production and urged his superiors in Washington to raise the internationally agreed ceiling on steel output so that Germany could export steel and facilitate reconstruction throughout Europe.¹⁹ According to a confidential report by Anton Storch (hitherto ignored by historians), Clay became angry at year's end when he learned that German steel plants halted production on Sunday to comply with regulations from the 1890s. Clay summoned both Erhard and Storch in mid-January 1949 to demand that the West German steel industry adopt the more efficient system of continuous production long since adopted in America. Erhard promised meekly to study the issue, but Storch replied firmly that German steel furnaces needed to shut down once a week for repairs because they were much older on average than their American counterparts and that German workers detested Sunday labor. Clay dismissed these arguments but soon found to his surprise that German steel industrialists endorsed them.²⁰

Storch invited his friends in the Catholic workers' clubs to mobilize popular opposition to Clay's proposal, and they complied eagerly. The labor minister soon received an emotional petition on behalf of the 200,000 members of the church-affiliated *Katholische Arbeitnehmer-Bewegung Westdeutschlands* (Catholic Workers' Movement of Western Germany, or KAB), which noted that the Third Reich had sought to dissolve all ethical restrictions on human behavior, for example by requiring Sunday labor in wartime industry. "If our people and especially workers are to develop again into an ethically strong community aware of its ethical responsibilities, then all insightful persons in positions of responsibility must see to it that Sunday is honored again and that human beings have the leisure on Sunday to develop their personalities." To introduce the continuous work week, the KAB leaders concluded, would encourage "the secularization of all values." In early March, the Christian Democratic workers of Duisburg on the Ruhr also held a mass rally to denounce any proposal for more factory labor on Sunday.²¹ Storch's encounter with General Clay thus sparked an emotional debate that lasted for years.

Storch served under Konrad Adenauer as the first labor minister of the Federal Republic until 1957, and Ludwig Erhard remained the economics minister until he succeeded Adenauer as chancellor in 1963. The Adenauer cabinet soon established an enduring legal framework for the steel industry. Organized labor persuaded Adenauer to embrace "parity" in the Co-Determination Law for the Coal, Iron, and Steel Industry of May 1951, a great victory for the trade unions.²² In July 1951, Adenauer agreed with the Americans and British, however, to restore untrammelled private ownership of the steel mills. Families whose ownership shares in the old Ruhr combines had been sequestered now received shares of equal value in the new steel corporations, and steel industrialists thus regained autonomy and

¹⁸ John Gimbel, *The American Occupation of Germany: Politics and the Military, 1945-1949* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1968), 5-49, 56-64, 80-84, 112-19, 148-56, 233-37; Carolyn Eisenberg, *Drawing the Line: The American Decision to Divide Germany, 1944-1949* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 272-76, 334-47, 380-82, 409-10, 446-52; Patch, *Christian Democratic Workers and the Forging of German Democracy, 1920-1980*, 59-75, 89-97; van Hook, *Rebuilding Germany*, 139-88.

¹⁹ See his reports to Washington on September 18 and November 22, 1948, in Jean Edward Smith, ed., *The Papers of General Lucius D. Clay: Germany 1945-1949*, 2 vols. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1974), II:858, 931-33.

²⁰ See the account by Alfons Mayer, secretary for the Catholic workers' clubs of Cologne, of what Storch told him on January 26, 1949, KAB Archiv/1/30.

²¹ KAB petition to Storch on January 29, 1949, ACDP/NL Even/1; resolution adopted on March 6, 1949, by the Sozialausschuss christlicher Arbeitnehmer Duisburgs, Landesarchiv Nordrhein-Westfalen, Duisburg/RW 277/910.

²² See Patch, *Christian Democratic Workers and the Forging of German Democracy, 1920-1980*, 119-32.

respectability. Organized labor suffered another defeat in 1952, moreover, when co-determination was introduced in only a weak form in corporations outside the coal-iron-steel sector.²³ Despite General Clay's fears regarding parity co-determination, it actually promoted cooperation between management and Germany's powerful *Industriegewerkschaft Metall* (the Metalworkers' Industrial Union, or *IG Metall*) to pursue the reform he desired, the continuous production of steel.

The Battle over Exemptions to the Ban on Sunday Steel Production, 1952–1961

In the early 1950s, Ruhr industrialists scrambled to meet rapidly growing demand for steel throughout western Europe. One firm in Oberhausen, the *Hüttenwerke Oberhausen Aktien-Gesellschaft* (HOAG), still relied on Siemens-Martin open-hearth furnaces, which had first been developed in the 1860s but still accounted for more than 50 percent of all Ruhr steel production. In 1950, HOAG improved the quality of its furnaces with ceramic inner linings. The improved furnace did not need to shut down once a week for repairs but required a constant high temperature to prevent cracks in the lining; fuel was required to keep it hot even if nothing was produced, so it became far more cost-effective to produce continuously. In June 1952, HOAG therefore made a seductive proposal to its workers to reduce the work week from fifty-three to forty-two hours, with a wage increase sufficient to avoid any loss of weekly earnings, if they accepted a complex schedule of rotating shifts to maintain production on Sundays. Each worker would receive two full days of rest per week but was only promised nine completely work-free Sundays per year. The elected HOAG factory council and the local branch of *IG Metall* endorsed this plan, and the state government of North Rhine-Westphalia granted a temporary exemption to the ban on Sunday production for the new system to take effect in January 1953.²⁴

In August 1952, the Catholic bishops of Germany denounced HOAG's plan on the following grounds:

Sunday labor is only permissible when it is necessary, not merely advantageous Mere advantages for the firm and workers (reduction of fixed costs, shorter work weeks, bonuses for Sunday labor, and so forth) do not justify the replacement of the Sunday holiday with the flexible work week (*gleitende Arbeitswoche*). It is mistaken to base decisions that affect ethical and religious values on the criteria of whether steel production rises or work hours can be reduced. It is essential to take account of the values that fulfill and elevate humanity, especially in this age threatened by materialism.²⁵

Although they were not named, this declaration implied stern criticism of the observant Catholics and CDU politicians who led the state government of North Rhine-Westphalia, Prime Minister Karl Arnold and Labor Minister Johannes Ernst, both veterans like Anton Storch of the old Christian trade unions.

As the state prime minister since 1947, Karl Arnold supported parity co-determination vigorously, and he was an expert on conditions at HOAG, having recently been elected as a workers' representative to its board of supervisors with the support of *IG Metall*.²⁶

²³ Patch, *Christian Democratic Workers and the Forging of German Democracy, 1920–1980*, 133–40; Isabel Warner, *Steel and Sovereignty: The Deconcentration of the West German Steel Industry, 1949–54* (Mainz: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 1996), 11–90; Wiesen, *West German Industry and the Challenge of the Nazi Past*, 179–235.

²⁴ Report by Martin Heix of the KAB to Jakob Kaiser, November 1, 1952, with attached memorandum on the HOAG case by Professor Guido Fischer, BAK/NL Kaiser/39/121-36; Karlheim, "Katholische Kirche und Sonntagsarbeit. Entwicklungslinien am Beispiel der Eisen- und Stahlindustrie im Ruhrgebiet," 34–36.

²⁵ "Protokoll der Plenarkonferenz der Bischöfe der Diözese Deutschlands," Fulda, August 11–13, 1952, with attached "Leitsätze zur gleitenden Arbeitswoche," 6 and 11–12, HAEK/CR II/2.19/3.

²⁶ Detlev Hüwel, *Karl Arnold. Eine politische Biographie* (Wuppertal: Peter Hammer, 1980), 71–74, 83–89, 110–19, 128–41, 207–22, 236–40. For Arnold's appointment to the HOAG Aufsichtsrat, see the *IG Metall* leadership conference of January

Arnold and Ernst agreed that the new plan benefited HOAG workers greatly and that the bishops' distinction between "necessary" and "merely advantageous" had little meaning in the modern world market, where firms whose costs of production exceeded those of foreign competitors would soon go bankrupt. German steel had long been protected from foreign competition by high tariffs, but in 1952 West Germany joined the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), which abolished tariffs between member states and sought to guarantee fair competition. Arnold and the DGB leadership supported this break with protectionism and felt obliged to promote the emergence of an efficient and competitive steel industry.²⁷

Several historians have analyzed the movement for "Christian socialism" on the left wing of the CDU in the postwar years, which advocated public ownership of the coal and steel industries. The Catholic bishops opposed it because papal encyclicals condemned every form of socialism, and the CDU committed itself by 1949 to the free-market economics of the Protestant Ludwig Erhard.²⁸ The debate over Sunday labor revealed that many Catholic clerics regretted the extent of Erhard's victory and sought to demonstrate that Christian moral principles still guided economic policy.

Many clerics also regretted the decision by so many Catholic workers to join the unified labor unions in the DGB. In 1945, that choice had been endorsed by Pope Pius XII and the German episcopate, and about one-third of the 6 million members of DGB-affiliated labor unions in the 1950s were Roman Catholics, the same proportion as in the West German population at large. A majority of Catholic DGB members appear to have voted consistently for the CDU from the 1950s at least through the 1970s.²⁹ In 1952–53, however, Cardinal Josef Frings of Cologne, the chairman of the Fulda Bishops' Conference, concluded along with his episcopal colleagues in Münster and Paderborn that cooperation with social democrats in the DGB encouraged Catholic workers to ignore moral teachings in the single-minded pursuit of an improved standard of living. These bishops feared the spread of "materialism" in West Germany's consumer society and therefore sponsored an attempt in 1955 to revive separate Christian trade unions, which attracted very little support among workers. The KAB was largely controlled by these bishops, and its top functionaries took the lead in both the campaign against Sunday labor and the founding of the new Christian Labor Federation. The KAB's position that no Catholic worker could remain a member of a DGB-affiliated union in good conscience lacked any clear theological rationale, and it was opposed by the Vatican because the DGB remained firmly anti-communist.³⁰ With great sadness, the eminent Jesuit social theorist Oswald von Nell-Breuning noted a revival among clerical colleagues of the "extremely dangerous" integralist tendency from the years before 1914 when he conferred with DGB leaders in March 1954. Nell-Breuning affirmed a simple

26, 1950, in Walter Dörrich and Klaus Schönhoven, eds., *Quellen zur Geschichte der deutschen Gewerkschaftsbewegung im 20. Jahrhundert. Band 10: Die Industriegewerkschaft Metall in der frühen Bundesrepublik 1950–1956* (Cologne: Bund-Verlag, 1991), 18.

²⁷ See Karl Arnold, "Arbeiterschaft und europäische Neuordnung," in *Essener Kongress 1950 der christlich-demokratischen Arbeitnehmerschaft. Christlich, Deutsch, Demokratisch, Sozial, Europäisch* (Bonn, no date), 65–73 (BAK/NL Katzer/631), and Hüwel, *Karl Arnold*, 177–80, 268–72. For the founding of the ECSC, see Alan Milward, *The Reconstruction of Western Europe, 1945–1951* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 362–420, and Gillingham, *Coal, Steel, and the Rebirth of Europe, 1945–1955*, 228–363.

²⁸ Rudolf Uertz, *Christentum und Sozialismus in der frühen CDU. Grundlagen und Wirkungen der christlich-sozialen Ideen in der Union 1945–1949* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1981); Maria Mitchell, *The Origins of Christian Democracy: Politics and Confession in Modern Germany* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2012), 76–179; Patch, *Christian Democratic Workers and the Forging of German Democracy, 1920–1980*, 75–109.

²⁹ See Patch, *Christian Democratic Workers and the Forging of German Democracy, 1920–1980*, 4–5, 62, 295. In the Bundestag election of September 1953, the CDU won 35 percent of all votes of blue-collar workers versus 48 percent for the SPD. Among Catholic workers, it defeated the SPD, 47 percent to 36 percent, and among Protestant workers it lost by 22 percent to 60 percent; see Bösch, *Die Adenauer-CDU*, 157.

³⁰ See William L. Patch, "The Legend of Compulsory Unification: The Catholic Clergy and the Revival of Trade Unionism in West Germany after the Second World War," *Journal of Modern History* 79 (2007): 848–80, and Wolfgang Schroeder, *Katholizismus und Einheitsgewerkschaft. Der Streit um den DGB und der Niedergang des Sozialkatholizismus in der Bundesrepublik bis 1960* (Bonn: Dietz Verlag, 1992), 78–89, 130–97, 349–62.

truth forgotten by many bishops, that a variety of political programs are compatible with any set of ethical norms.³¹

Spokesmen for the Evangelical Church of Germany proved far more diplomatic than their Catholic colleagues in June 1954, when the state government of North Rhine–Westphalia held a conference to discuss the results of the HOAG experiment. The representatives of management and *IG Metall* both pronounced it a resounding success, which had enhanced profitability while improving the quality of life for steelworkers. The Catholic bishops were represented by Father Hermann Joseph Schmitt, the senior clerical supervisor of the KAB, who demanded that HOAG's exemption be canceled because of the danger that Sunday would lose any special status. "Whoever wants to serve the people and workers in particular," Schmitt pleaded, "must not subordinate themselves to a 'technological regime' (*technische Lebensordnung*)." Protestant church representatives agreed with management and labor, however, that HOAG had achieved great progress both with regard to "social ethics" and economic productivity, and the state labor minister renewed the firm's exemption from the ban on Sunday production.³² This discussion reflected the self-image of most social policy experts and pastors engaged in outreach to workers in the Evangelical Church, who sought after 1945 to promote respectful dialogue between business leaders and the German Labor Federation, not to impose policy solutions based on a "Christian social theory." A sizeable minority of Protestant church leaders also identified militant anti-socialism as the worst failing among churchmen before 1933 and sought rapprochement with the SPD; Adenauer's pursuit of rearmament after 1950 provoked many of them to denounce the CDU.³³

On May Day 1955, the DGB published a new action program that placed top priority on achieving the forty-hour work week for all workers. The social committees embraced this goal, and in September their national congress resolved that "it is necessary to adapt the law on working hours to the demands of the present day." The Catholic bishops responded, however, that no plan to reduce the length of the work week could be accepted if it led to any increase of Sunday labor.³⁴ The KAB functionary who chaired the new Christian Labor Federation, Johannes Even, seized on this issue to distinguish his unions from the "materialistic" DGB, but he could only persuade a handful of Catholic workers to leave *IG Metall*. The leaders of the social committees opposed the effort to revive separate Christian trade unions, but conservative Christian Democrats sympathized with it, and the CDU obliged the social committees to adopt a public stance of neutrality regarding the competition between the mammoth DGB and its minuscule Christian rival.³⁵

³¹ "Niederschrift über ein Gespräch zwischen Vertretern des Deutschen Gewerkschaftsbundes mit Vertretern katholischer und evangelischer Verbände und Institutionen" on March 9, 1954, in the DGB-Archiv (housed in the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in Bonn), Abteilung Vorsitzender, 5/DGAI/1854, 13–14.

³² See Schmitt's "Bericht über die Sitzung im Ministerium für Arbeit, Soziales und Wiederaufbau des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen" on June 30, 1954, KAB Archiv/1/30.

³³ Martin Möller, *Evangelische Kirche und Sozialdemokratische Partei in den Jahren 1945–1950. Grundlagen der Verständigung und Beginn des Dialoges* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Rupprecht, 1984); Grebing, *Geschichte der sozialen Ideen in Deutschland*, 1035–1103; Buchna, *Ein klerikales Jahrzehnt?* 299–308, 415–47; Wolfgang Schroeder, "Die gewerkschaftspolitische Diskussion in der evangelischen Kirche zwischen 1945 und 1955," in *Sozialer Protestantismus und Gewerkschaftsbewegung. Kaiserreich—Weimarer Republik—Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, ed. Frank von Auer and Franz Segbers (Cologne: Bund Verlag, 1994), 221–41; Martin Greschat, *Der Protestantismus in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 1945–2005* (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2011), 9–79.

³⁴ "Mai 1955" and "Zur 40 Stundenwoche. Die Notwendigkeit der Arbeitsverkürzung vom Standpunkt der Arbeitswissenschaften," *Soziale Ordnung* 9, no. 5 (May 1955): 1–4; resolution on "Arbeitszeit" adopted by the Seventh National Congress of the Social Committees on September 17–18, 1955, in *Soziale Ordnung*, "Beilage" to the issue of October 1955, "Entschliessungen der VII. Bundestagung," 2 (source of quotation); "Konveniat der westdeutschen Bischöfe," November 3–5, 1955, Anhang 2, "Stellungnahme der deutschen Bischöfe zur Frage der Vierzigstundenwoche und zur Frauenarbeit," HAEK/CR II/2.19/16.

³⁵ "Ansprache von Johannes Even," June 16, 1956, attached as "Anlage 9" to the "Bericht über den Verlauf des CGD-Bundeskongresses vom 15.–17.6.1956 in Essen," BAK/NL Katzer/815; Patch, *Christian Democratic Workers and the Forging of German Democracy, 1920–1980*, 154–68, 192–96.

In September 1956, the bishops became alarmed when the steel industry opened negotiations with *IG Metall* to introduce continuous operation in thirteen additional Siemens-Martin plants in the Ruhr, where another 17,500 workers would need to accept rotating shifts that included labor on many Sundays. *IG Metall* reminded the bishops through one of its Catholic functionaries that a great many steelworkers had always been obliged to work until 6:00 a.m. on Sunday, leaving them unable to do anything but sleep during the day or to work Sundays on repairs. Management and labor promised to do everything possible to increase the number of Sundays when workers enjoyed a full day's rest. The bishops replied: "In all our enterprises we must remember the word of the Lord: 'What does it profit a man, if he gains the whole world but loses his soul?' A people that adopts economic cost-benefit analysis as its highest guide destroys its ethical foundations and jeopardizes its true welfare in this world and the next."³⁶ In November, the episcopate deputized Bishop Michael Keller of Münster to remind steel industrialists and labor leaders forcefully that Sunday rest was protected by the Basic Law and that the commercial code permitted Sunday industrial labor only when required by "the technical necessities of production." They both replied, however, that continuous production offered gains for workers and the economy as a whole too great to be ignored, and they signed their new collective labor contract on December 21.³⁷ The DGB vice-chairman, Bernhard Tacke, an observant Catholic and the highest-ranking Christian Democrat in the unified trade unions, assured the public that organized labor had always championed Sunday as a day of rest and would increase the number of work-free Sundays under this agreement, while dramatically increasing leisure time overall.³⁸

The state government of North Rhine-Westphalia was now led by social democrats, with Heinrich Hemsath as labor minister, so Catholic activists felt free to launch fierce attacks as he considered whether to grant the exemption required for this agreement to take effect. The agreement was based on American models, but Adenauer's minister for family affairs, Franz-Josef Wuermeling, denounced it as an "Eastern import" and urged the *IG Metall* functionaries who had signed it to emigrate to communist East Germany.³⁹ The KAB held several rallies, and Cardinal Frings chose the strongest form of polemic available to him, a pastoral letter read from every pulpit in the Cologne archdiocese on February 24, 1957. Shared rest on Sunday must be preserved, he concluded, because for more than a thousand years it had been "a pillar of the Christian social order, a bulwark for the view that human beings of all stations in life are more than beasts of burden..., and a safeguard of the Christian family." Hemsath replied firmly that he would approve the new agreement because it secured at least thirteen Sundays completely free of labor, more than Karl Arnold had achieved in 1952, while reducing the total amount of labor on Sunday (including early morning and evening shifts) to a level well below that of 1950.⁴⁰

³⁶ "Der Pferdefuss," *Ketteler Wacht* 18 (September 15, 1956): 1; Bruno Trawinski to "Eure Eminenz!" September 24, 1956, with enclosed "Gemeinsame Erklärung" by management and labor of September 22, BAK/NL Kaiser/153/20-25; "Erklärung zur gleitenden Arbeitswoche," attached to the "Protokoll der Plenarkonferenz der Bischöfe der Diözesen Deutschlands," September 27-29, 1956, 16, HAEK/CR II/2.19/3; interview of Bruno Trawinski (the Catholic *IG Metall* district leader for Hagen) by Herbert Reichel, "Für und wider die gleitende Arbeitswoche," *Gesellschaftspolitische Kommentare* 4, no. 4 (February 15, 1957): 3-5.

³⁷ "Ergebnisprotokoll der Besprechung zwischen Vertretern der Kirche, Vertretern des Arbeitgeberverbandes Eisen und Stahl und der Industrie-Gewerkschaft Metall" on November 2, 1956, KAB Archiv/1/30; report by Bishop Keller in the "Protokoll der Beratungen auf dem Konveniat der westdeutschen Bischöfe," November 5-7, 1956, 3, HAEK/CR II/2.19/17; "Protokoll: Besprechung 23.11.1956, Düsseldorf," KAB Archiv/1/30.

³⁸ "Mehr freie Sonntage für Stahlarbeiter," *DGB Nachrichtendienst*, 45/57 (February 15, 1957), and "Sonntag—heilig oder unheilig? Ein Interview mit Bernhard Tacke," *Welt der Arbeit*, February 8, 1957, 6, clippings in the KAB Archiv/1/30.

³⁹ "Ist Gott dagegen?" *Der Spiegel* 11, no. 9, February 27, 1957, 18-19.

⁴⁰ KAB, "Protokoll über die Sitzung des geschäftsführenden Vorstandes," January 23, 1957, KAB Archiv/1/1; Cardinal Frings, "Fastenhirtenbrief," written on February 15, 1957, and published in the *Kirchlicher Anzeiger für die Erzdiözese Köln*, February 20, 1957, 64-70, KAB Archiv/1/30; Frings to Hemsath, March 13, 1957, and Hemsath's reply of March 23, ACDP/NL Ernst/2/2.

The heated rhetoric by Catholic activists distressed most leading Protestants. The Synod of the Evangelical Church of Westphalia adopted a resolution on Sunday labor in November 1956 that resembled the statements by Catholic bishops, but it acknowledged that exemptions could be granted whenever they served the “public interest,” a principle granting more discretion to Hemsath than did the “technological necessity” recognized by the Catholic bishops. In February 1957, Evangelical Church representatives promised Hemsath that they would not attack his plan in public because it clearly benefited the steelworkers; they demanded only that he discourage attempts to imitate this experiment in other branches of industry.⁴¹ Hemsath also gained support from the federal labor minister, Anton Storch, who now displayed more flexibility than he had with Lucius Clay in 1949. Storch told the Bundestag on April 10 that Sunday labor should never be permitted merely to increase profits, but he agreed with Hemsath that the regulations from the 1890s must be updated. The US steel industry had long since adopted continuous production, Storch noted, because it relied on “mammoth furnaces” that could not be shut down on Sundays, and this technology might spread quickly in Germany. Storch appointed an expert commission to prepare recommendations for a federal law on Sunday labor, but its investigations dragged on for many months without result.⁴²

Activists in the Catholic leagues gained the impression that greedy industrialists and socialist labor bosses had agreed to trample on the peace of Sunday. Cardinal Frings denounced the new agreement in his public sermon on the eve of May Day 1957, and the Catholic Family League published an inflammatory pamphlet that vowed to “combat this atheistic assault in the most radical way.” Countless other branches of industry would now demand similar treatment, it argued, and the result would be “the mechanization of the human being, the atomization of the family, and the transformation of the workplace into a madhouse.... The bad experiences after the French and Russian Revolutions should give everyone pause when they hear that workers are supposed to become beasts of burden, yoked to Sunday labor in the name of social progress.”⁴³ *IG Metall* was thus linked both to Soviet communism and the Jacobin Reign of Terror.

The indignation was most intense among Catholics who had little contact with actual steelworkers. When he finally visited HOAG in 1959, after years of polemicizing on behalf of the KAB, Father Wilhelm Wöste of Münster reported to his clerical colleagues with astonishment that all the numerous Catholics on its factory council supported continuous production and agreed that workers were less likely to work on Sunday now than they had been before 1952. Wöste speculated that management had threatened them with reprisals if HOAG’s exemption was revoked, but the evidence seems clear that the steelworkers found their quality of life much improved.⁴⁴ Werner Steinjan, the social policy expert for the Evangelical Church of the Rhineland, visited HOAG at about the same time, and every worker he met complained that the new work schedule imposed by the state government in 1957 to

⁴¹ Resolution by the Landessynode der Evangelischen Kirche von Westfalen, November 1956, published in “Neuregelung der Arbeitszeitordnung?” *Betriebsräte-Briefe der Christlich-Demokratischen Arbeitnehmerschaft Deutschlands* 49 (March 1957): 2, clipping in KAB Archiv/1/30; “Aktennotiz über die Besprechung ‘Gleitende Arbeitswoche’” in Düsseldorf on February 15, 1957, KAB Archiv/1/30.

⁴² Speech by Storch on April 10, 1957, 2. *Deutscher Bundestag: Plenarprotokoll* 203, 11512–515 (<http://dipbt.bundestag.de/doc/btp/02/02203.pdf>); “Feldzug gegen den DGB?” *Gesellschaftspolitische Kommentare* 4, no. 11 (June 1, 1957): 2–4; report by Hermann-Josef Wallraff to the Central Committee of German Catholics on the past year’s discussions of Sunday labor in the federal labor ministry, “Niederschrift des Informationsgesprächs ‘Sonntagsruhe’” on May 23, 1958, KAB Archiv/1/30.

⁴³ Cardinal Frings, “Predigt am Vorabend des 1. Mai 1957 im Dom,” KAB Archiv/5/4; Familienbund der deutschen Katholiken, “Um unsere Zukunft: Die Familie in Gefahr? Gesicherter Sonntag, gesicherte Familie!” (sixteen-page pamphlet, Münster, no date [1957]), 8, 10–11, 16, KAB Archiv/1/30.

⁴⁴ Wöste to Hermann Joseph Schmitt and Wallraff, September 4, 1959, KAB Archiv/1/30. See also “Wir lassen uns die 42-Stunden-Woche nicht nehmen,” *Echo der Arbeit* (the HOAG company newspaper), February 20, 1957, KAB Archiv/1/30, and “Wird die Einsicht Karl Arnolds missachtet? Stahlarbeiter lassen an der 42-Stunden-Woche nicht rütteln,” *Stahl und Eisen: Die I. G. Metall in Oberhausen* 2, August 1958, 1, clipping in ACDP/NL Ernst/2/2.

satisfy the bishops' demand for more work-free Sundays often required them to work two shifts in a row on Saturday, leaving them exhausted. They greatly preferred the HOAG system of 1953–56 for nurturing family life and worship, and Steinjan promised to convey that message to the authorities.⁴⁵

As North Rhine–Westphalia entered a state election campaign in 1958, Catholic league activists sensed isolation in public opinion and agreed to suspend their polemics regarding Sunday labor.⁴⁶ They resumed their agitation, however, soon after the Christian Democrats returned to power in Düsseldorf in August 1958. A lawyer with close ties to the business community, Franz Meyers, now served as prime minister, and he brought Johannes Ernst out of retirement as labor minister to deal with this vexing problem. In October 1958, Ernst felt obliged to renew the exemptions for the steel industry so as not to prejudice the deliberations in Bonn regarding a federal law. The KAB denounced this decision, and the Catholic clubs of Münster wrote Ernst that “all efforts by Church organs to improve the federal labor ministry’s bill and achieve further restriction of Sunday labor are jeopardized when you as an avowedly Christian minister take such measures.”⁴⁷ The leader of the CDU delegation in the state parliament, Wilhelm Johnen, relied on activists from the Catholic leagues to conduct his election campaigns, and he implored Ernst to grant only “very short-term” prolongations to the exemption because this issue had an enormous impact on “Christian opinion.” Ernst agreed to grant a renewal for just six months.⁴⁸ As that term neared its end, Ernst learned to his dismay in February 1959 from the new federal labor minister, Theodor Blank, that no progress had been made in Bonn; Blank had submitted draft federal regulations to the interested parties, but they encountered sharp criticism from all sides. Ernst therefore issued another six-month extension at the state level.⁴⁹

The federal government published statistics in early 1959 showing that the proportion of German steelworkers who never worked on Sunday had increased since 1956 from 75.6 percent to 82.8 percent, while every other country in the ECSC had a much higher proportion of steel plants operating on Sunday than did Germany. For the Protestant social expert Steinjan, these figures revealed good faith on the part of steel management and *IG Metall*, which were doing their best to reduce Sunday labor to the bare minimum needed to remain competitive with neighboring countries.⁵⁰ The bishops and Catholic leagues still perceived a crisis, nevertheless.

Johannes Ernst took heart briefly in May 1959 when Father Josef Engel, the chief social policy expert for the Central Committee of German Catholics, sent word that he would become the chief Catholic negotiator regarding the federal law on Sunday labor and would advise the bishops to rely on the judgment of the most knowledgeable Catholic laypersons involved. Founded in 1952 as an umbrella organization for the Catholic laity, the Central Committee was dominated by representatives of the eighteen largest Catholic leagues with a combined membership of 3 million. The Catholic Office in Bonn, the lobbying agency established by Cardinal Frings, alternated between engaging the Central Committee

⁴⁵ See Steinjan’s report, “Besuch Siemens-Martin-Werk II, Hüttenwerke Oberhausen AG am 9.7.59,” sent to Johannes Ernst on August 4, 1959, ACDP/NL Ernst/2/2; and the complaints about the new regulations of 1957 in “Martinswerke-Arbeitszeit mußte geändert werden,” *Echo der Zeit (HOAG Werkszeitung)*, October 18, 1958, KAB Archiv/1/30.

⁴⁶ “Niederschrift des Informations-gesprächs ‘Sonntagsruhe,’” conference held by the Central Committee of German Catholics on May 23, 1958, 8–11, KAB Archiv/1/30.

⁴⁷ “Arbeitsgemeinschaft Katholischer Verbände und Organisationen im Bistum Münster” to Johannes Ernst, October 7, 1958, and several petitions from KAB locals in ACDP/NL Ernst/2/2.

⁴⁸ Johnen to Ernst, October 21, 1958, and Ernst’s memorandum for the state cabinet that same day, NL Ernst/2/2.

⁴⁹ “Vermerk” on a meeting between Blank and Ernst on February 5, 1959, NL Ernst/2/2; Hermann Joseph Schmitt to Blank, April 28, 1959, KAB Archiv/1/30.

⁵⁰ Statistisches Bundesamt, Aussenstelle Düsseldorf, “Statistische Zahlen zum Problem der Gleitenden Arbeitswoche,” March 25, 1959, NL Ernst/2/2; Werner Steinjan, “Eine Ideallösung gibt es nicht. Wo bleibt die Regelung für die Sonntagsarbeit in der Stahlindustrie?” *Sonntagsblatt (Hamburg)*, July 12, 1958, and Steinjan to Johannes Ernst, August 4, 1959, NL Ernst/2/2.

and engaging the Fulda Bishops' Conference directly to negotiate with officials of the federal government regarding issues that concerned the church. In the past it had mattered little which arm of Catholicism was deployed because clerical supervisors appointed by the bishops had gained so much influence in the Catholic leagues since 1945 that they mirrored episcopal views. Engel seemed to promise a new era of self-restraint among senior clerics and respect for the expertise of laypersons, but he was pressured into leaving the Central Committee soon thereafter.⁵¹

By August 1959, the Fulda Bishops' Conference had decided to retain direct control of the talks in Bonn regarding Sunday labor and appointed as negotiators three priests who took a very firm line—the Jesuit social theorist Hermann-Josef Wallraff and the KAB's top clerical supervisors, Hermann Joseph Schmitt and Wilhelm Wöste. On August 11, officials of the federal labor ministry invited them to submit proposals for a bill, but they replied that the bishops had only authorized them to reject any proposal that might increase Sunday labor, not to make suggestions of their own.⁵² Wallraff had conducted some research on the technology of steel production, and he argued emphatically that, although most existing furnaces could not be shut down on Sundays without substantial economic loss, the steel industry could easily invest in new technologies that could be shut down at a negligible cost. According to Wallraff, all objections to a ban on Sunday production could be met simply by granting industry a grace period to make adjustments.⁵³ His expertise impressed the bishops, but for those outside the Catholic hierarchy, it often seemed unclear what basis Wallraff had for his confident pronouncements.

Fathers Wöste and Schmitt had met with Johannes Ernst already in April 1959 to demand in the name of the episcopate that he immediately ban Sunday production in North Rhine-Westphalia for all steel furnaces with a capacity of less than fifty tons. They could not explain, however, why they chose this ceiling, how many plants would be affected, or what the costs would be. Ernst wrote Wöste to express dismay over his peremptory tone and vagueness about details. "As you know," Ernst concluded, "I bear the political and the objective responsibility for the decisions made here. Suggestions and demands from one side or the other—also from the side of the Church—cannot relieve me of this responsibility."⁵⁴ The state labor minister became more indignant when the young editor of the KAB journal denounced him as one of the many CDU politicians who had succumbed to the mania for "profit at any cost." Ernst confided to an old friend that "I sometimes have the impression that people love to talk the most about issues when they know the least about them."⁵⁵ He told a meeting of the Ruhr social committees soon thereafter that no government official could take responsibility for "economically mistaken decisions that plunge the workers of their state into distress. International competitiveness cannot be taken lightly. Jobs for thousands of people depend on it, perhaps our whole economy." Any

⁵¹ See the "Vermerk" of May 26, 1959, by Ernst's aide Dr. Fischer on a meeting with Engel on May 20, NL Ernst/2/2; Thomas Grossmann, *Zwischen Kirche und Gesellschaft. Das Zentralkomitee der deutschen Katholiken 1945-1970* (Mainz: Matthias-Grünewald-Verlag, 1991), 74–94, 135, 444–50; Buchna, *Ein klerikales Jahrzehnt?* 315–47; and Frederic Spotts, *The Churches and Politics in Germany* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1973), 164–79.

⁵² "Niederschrift über die Besprechung zu Fragen der Sonntagsarbeit," meeting in the Katholisches Büro in Bonn on August 10, 1959, KAB Archiv/1/30; "Niederschrift über die Besprechung vom 11. August 1959 über die Fragen der Sonntagsarbeit in der Eisen- und Stahlindustrie im Bundesarbeitsministerium," written on August 27, 1959, KAB Archiv/1/30.

⁵³ See Hermann-Josef Wallraff, "Sorgen um die Sonntagsruhe," *Soziale Ordnung* 11, no. 6 (June 1957): 84–86; and Wallraff's twenty-three-page pamphlet, "Der Sonntag und die gleitende Arbeitswoche" (Rottenburg, 1957), in KAB Archiv/1/30.

⁵⁴ Report for Ernst by his aide Dr. Fischer on April 14, 1959, NL Ernst/2/2; Wöste to Ernst, April 16, 1959, and reply of April 23 (source of quotation), NL Ernst/2/2; Hermann Joseph Schmitt to Ernst, April 18, 1959, and reply of April 23, NL Ernst/2/2.

⁵⁵ Wolfgang Vogt, "Profit um jeden Preis? KAB protestiert gegen Ausdehnung der Sonntagsarbeit," *Ketteler Wacht* 13 (July 1, 1959): 1; Ernst to Vogt, July 16, 1959, and reply of August 5, NL Ernst/2/2; Ernst to Jakob Kaiser, July 22, 1959, NL Ernst/2/4 (source of quotation).

workers' representative in the CDU who quarreled with the KAB was in an awkward position, however, and Ernst felt grateful to be replaced as labor minister in November by the much younger Konrad Grundmann, a white-collar worker active in the social committees.⁵⁶

Grundmann received his baptism of fire in March 1960 when he hosted a conference on Sunday labor for thirty-three representatives of the steel industry, *IG Metall*, and the Catholic and Evangelical Churches. The industrialists and trade unionists declared that the current exemptions worked very well in practice and should be prolonged. The Catholic representatives demanded that all exemptions be terminated. When the discussion became heated, Wallraff exclaimed that it made no difference to him whether a return to the old system required more steelworkers to labor on Sunday for repairs because the symbolic value of an idle steel plant outweighed the question of how many workers actually rested. He implied thereby that the bishops did not care about either the material or spiritual welfare of the workers affected directly. The Evangelical representative Steinjan responded that Grundmann was justified in prolonging the exemptions if he determined that "they are important for the economy."⁵⁷ Grundmann decided with a heavy heart to renew the exemptions for six months, but when they expired in October, he only renewed them for three months to pressure the federal government into action.⁵⁸

The drafting of federal regulations sought by Theodor Blank had long been delayed by divisions within the CDU, the refusal by steel industrialists to provide the data needed to calculate the costs of banning Sunday production, and legal advice to the government that the Bundestag, where Adenauer commanded a solid majority, was not competent to legislate in this matter. The experts on constitutional law held that only the current Bundesrat representing the state governments, where majorities were unpredictable, could alter regulations issued by the old Bundesrat in 1895.⁵⁹ These deliberations gained momentum quickly, however, when Chancellor Adenauer pressed for speedy action. In the past Adenauer had scrupulously avoided actions that might suggest that the CDU was subservient to the episcopate, to avoid antagonizing Protestant voters. He became alarmed, however, by signs of a loss of support for the CDU among the clergy after the SPD adopted the Godesberg Program in November 1959, which identified "Christian ethics" as one of the major ideological roots of democratic socialism and dropped any demand to nationalize large-scale industry. In several well-publicized conferences soon thereafter, prominent social democrats engaged in polite dialogue with Catholic and Protestant clerics.⁶⁰ Adenauer told CDU leaders in July 1960 that "the CDU does not appear as a unified party with clear goals; it appears to many elements of the German people as a group filled with all sorts of lobbyists, where majorities emerge in one way or another." He warned that many leaders of the Evangelical Church and even some Catholic bishops had become hostile to the CDU, now that "the Social Democrats suddenly pretend that they have become Christian." The chancellor exhorted his party colleagues to revive the sense of a shared Christian identity in their party.⁶¹

⁵⁶ See the minutes of the meeting in Duisburg on September 21, 1959, NL Ernst/2/2, and Patch, *Christian Democratic Workers and the Forging of German Democracy, 1920-1980*, 200-13.

⁵⁷ Compare the state labor ministry's summary of this meeting on March 25, 1960, "Fragen der Sonntagsarbeit in der Eisen- und Stahlindustrie," with the minutes by a Catholic participant, "Aktennotiz über die Besprechung 'Sonntagsarbeit und kontinuierliche Arbeitsweise,'" both in NL Ernst/2/2.

⁵⁸ Grundmann to Johannes Albers, September 26, 1960, ACDP/04-013/040-1; "Sonntagsarbeit: Wallraffs Gebot," *Der Spiegel* 14, no. 38, September 14, 1960, 27-31; "Sonntagsarbeit: Im Rohr krepirt," *Der Spiegel* 14, no. 46, November 9, 1960, 31-33.

⁵⁹ See the explanation of these constitutional issues by Wilhelm Wissing to Paul Lücke on June 20, 1960, ACDP/NL Lücke/106/2.

⁶⁰ SPD Godesberg Program at https://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/pdf/eng/Parties_percent20WZ_percent203_percent20ENG_percent20FINAL.pdf, esp. 1 and 5; Kurt Klotzbach, *Der Weg zur Staatspartei. Programmatik, praktische Politik und Organisation der deutschen Sozialdemokratie 1945 bis 1965* (Berlin and Bonn: Dietz Verlag, 1982), 299-454; Gauly, *Katholiken*, 153-66; Grossböling, *Losing Heaven*, 69-72.

⁶¹ "Sitzung des engeren Parteivorstands," July 6, 1960, in Günter Buchstab, ed., *Adenauer: "... um den Frieden zu gewinnen."* *Die Protokolle des CDU-Bundesvorstands 1957-1961* (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1994), 707.

Labor Minister Blank now redoubled his efforts to draft a highly restrictive federal ordinance for Sunday labor in the steel industry. Among the veterans of the old Christian trade unions, Blank had long been the most loyal to Adenauer, and he too sought to reemphasize the Christian identity of the CDU.⁶² News of Blank's plans leaked to the press in August, and business lobbyists warned that a ban on Sunday steel production would reduce output by 10 percent and eliminate many thousands of jobs. One business journal editorialized that the special status of Sunday on the calendar was not "an essential part of the substance of interdenominational Christianity" but rather a "remnant of the social policy ideas of the patriarchs of Judaism." The journal of the social committees fired back that the Nazis too had often sought to discredit the positions of the Christian clergy by linking them to Judaism.⁶³

Cardinal Frings wrote Adenauer on September 25 to demand that the cabinet support Blank against the business lobbyists; he had known Adenauer for forty years, many spent as his parish priest, and wrote with a tone of authority. The steel industrialists, Frings noted, raised many economic, technological, and social policy arguments for Sunday labor, but church officials had determined that these arguments were "mostly incorrect and lack any objective foundation." Frings expressed indignation over the assumption by most journalists that the industrialists knew more about the steel industry than did church spokesmen. He concluded that "the segment of the German population which adheres to Christian principles and especially the clergy, the Catholic Labor Movement, and other noteworthy Catholic leagues would not understand any weakening of the planned protections for Sunday." These words obviously carried weight because Adenauer told his Bundestag delegation two days later that a law to protect the "peace of Sunday" must be adopted soon. "We must not forget," he concluded, "that we are a Christian people and a Christian party; let's demonstrate that as we regulate this matter!"⁶⁴

The veteran CDU parliamentary leader Heinrich Krone took charge of the following negotiations. He was a devout Catholic sympathetic to the bishops, but Krone became alarmed on October 7 when Catholic representatives took an aggressive stance in a summit conference with leading industrialists. Krone confided to his diary that Hermann-Josef Wallraff demanded a halt in production on Sunday for every steel furnace and threatened to "open fire with all guns if a ban is not issued. This tone worries me. If only the Church were more Franciscan!"⁶⁵ Adenauer sought to rally support for bold action nevertheless by telling his Bundestag delegation on October 25 that "in this nervous age, ... we must see to it that Sunday again becomes a day of rest," not merely a day to go to church but a "day of rest, edification, and recreation" for everyone. He complained that state exemptions had been granted recently not only for steel but also for paper, glass, ceramics, and aluminum, and he vowed to draft a comprehensive law on Sunday labor soon.⁶⁶ Frings then visited Adenauer on November 7, and they agreed that the federal government

⁶² See Patch, *Christian Democratic Workers and the Forging of German Democracy, 1920–1980*, 48, 89–95, 116–17, 160, 218–22, 251–52.

⁶³ See Johannes Even to Paul Lücke, August 30, 1960, NL Lücke/106/2; "Sonntagsarbeit: Stellungnahme der Bischofskommission" in Münster, September 8, 1960, and "Sonntagsarbeit: Stellungnahme der katholischen Kommission" in Bonn, September 5, 1960, NL Lücke/106/2; report by Wilhelm Wöste to the KAB leadership, "Sitzung des Verbandsvorstandes," September 19, 1960, KAB Archiv/1/1; and Lutz Esser, "Sie sagen Christentum und meinen Kattun," *Soziale Ordnung* 14, no. 9 (September 1960): 151 (quoting from the lead article published in the *Industriekurier* of Düsseldorf on August 16, 1960).

⁶⁴ Frings to Adenauer, September 25, 1960, NL Lücke/106/2; minutes of the CDU Bundestag delegation on September 27, 1960, in Reinhard Schiffers, ed., *Die CDU/CSU-Fraktion im Deutschen Bundestag. Sitzungsprotokolle 1957–1961*, 2 vols. (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1998–2004), II:677. For background see [Cardinal] Josef Frings, "Erinnerungen an Konrad Adenauer," in *Konrad Adenauer und seine Zeit. Politik und Persönlichkeit des ersten Bundeskanzlers. Band I: Beiträge von Weg- und Zeitgenossen*, ed. Dieter Blumenwitz et al., 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1976), 149–55.

⁶⁵ Heinrich Krone, *Tagebücher 1945–1969*, ed. Hans-Otto Kleinmann, 2 vols. (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1995–2003), entry of October 7, 1961, I:451–52.

⁶⁶ *CDU/CSU-Fraktion im Deutschen Bundestag 1957–1961*, II:691.

would ban all steel production on Sunday, with a grace period of a few years to allow industry to adjust. This agreement was a remarkable victory for the bishops, who were opposed not only by the SPD and Free Democratic Party but also by most business lobbyists and trade unionists within the CDU.⁶⁷

Blank presented a draft decree to the cabinet on December 21 along the lines demanded by Frings. The steel industrialists prepared for this meeting by promising the cabinet to implement a compromise plan devised by Professor Otto Neuloh and supported by the Evangelical Church to guarantee every steelworker at least twenty-six work-free Sundays per year; this was a significant concession because industrialists had rejected the plan as too expensive when it was first proposed in 1958. The industrialists emphasized, however, that all hopes to modernize the German steel industry required the construction of much larger furnaces that would be more difficult to halt on Sunday and that every other steel-producing country in the world acknowledged the need for continuous production.⁶⁸ Adenauer expressed some hesitation by telling his cabinet ministers that, although “the work-free Sunday must be secured,” they must also consider carefully “the impact on the competitiveness of the German iron and steel industry and the requirements of the plans to build larger Siemens-Martin and electrical furnaces.” The Protestant interior minister, Gerhard Schröder, who had old ties with the steel industry, then spoke in favor of the Neuloh Plan and against any outright ban. Ludwig Erhard did not attend this meeting, but he threw his considerable weight behind Blank by announcing through his top aide that he perceived no threat to international competitiveness because the steel industry was rapidly developing new technologies that did not require continuous production; he concluded that “from the standpoint of economic policy and the supply of steel, no objections should therefore be raised to the draft decree.” Blank then gained cabinet authorization to submit for approval by the Bundesrat a decree requiring that every steelworker promptly receive at least twenty-six work-free Sundays per year and that every steel furnace halt production for at least eight hours on Sunday by 1964, and at least sixteen hours by 1966.⁶⁹ Erhard may not have truly believed the arguments made by his aide in this meeting, but he refused to quarrel with the bishops while he maneuvered to consolidate support as Adenauer’s successor. Adenauer already sought to persuade CDU colleagues that Erhard was unfit to become chancellor, so the economics minister avoided any conflict.⁷⁰

The German Labor Federation quickly mobilized all SPD-led state governments to oppose Blank’s decree in the Bundesrat, and even the CDU prime minister, Franz Meyers, expressed grave concerns. Meyers was influenced primarily by industrialists, but also by a mass rally of Christian democratic steelworkers, who telegraphed him that Blank’s decree would make their lives far more difficult and probably increase the number of workers required to labor on Sunday for repairs. North Rhine–Westphalia therefore joined the SPD-led governments on February 10, 1961, when the Bundesrat resolved that it could not approve Blank’s decree until he answered a long list of difficult questions about conditions on the world steel market and the likely costs of his plan. Blank had no answers for most of these questions.⁷¹

⁶⁷ Krone, *Tagebücher 1945–1969*, entries of October 26 and November 7, 1961, I:454–56.

⁶⁸ See the memorandum for Blank by the Wirtschaftsvereinigung Eisen- und Stahlindustrie, December 16, 1960, NL Lücke/106/2, and Karlheim, “Katholische Kirche und Sonntagsarbeit. Entwicklungslinien am Beispiel der Eisen- und Stahlindustrie im Ruhrgebiet,” 40–42.

⁶⁹ Cabinet minutes at <https://www.bundesarchiv.de/cocoon/barch/0000/index.html>, meeting of December 21, 1960, point 4, quotations from Adenauer and Staatssekretär Ludger Westrick.

⁷⁰ See Patch, *Christian Democratic Workers and the Forging of German Democracy, 1920–1980*, 214–18, and Volker Hentschel, *Ludwig Erhard. Ein Politikerleben* (Berlin: Ullstein Verlag, 1998), 441–598.

⁷¹ Krone, *Tagebücher 1945–1969*, January 8, 1961, I: 466; report by Krone to the CDU Bundestag delegation, January 17, 1961, *CDU/CSU Fraktionsprotokolle*, II: 745; telegram to Meyers and Grundman on January 22, 1961, by the “christlich-sozialen Hüttenwerker Nordrhein-Westfalens” assembled in Duisburg, ACDP/04-013/51/2; Franz

Blank finally achieved a compromise in May 1961 acceptable to all parties. All steelworkers would still receive at least twenty-six work-free Sundays, but Blank now exempted permanently from his ban every Siemens-Martin furnace with a capacity of more than seventy-five tons, electrical furnaces more than ten tons, and furnaces employing two experimental new techniques. Grudgingly accepted by Cardinal Frings, this decree sailed through the Bundesrat and was promulgated on July 7.⁷² The DGB published a short statement calling it “an acceptable solution” and a step forward in organized labor’s long campaign to promote Sunday rest. In a meeting closed to the public, *IG Metall* leaders complained that Catholic editorialists who had no idea what they were talking about had attacked them repeatedly for “acting against God and Nature.”⁷³ Most trade unionists felt relieved that the Bundesrat had prevented Catholic zealots from inflicting major damage on the steel industry.

Sunday Labor after 1961

The most direct result of Theodor Blank’s decree was to encourage steel industrialists to invest in the types of furnaces exempt from the ban on continuous operation. In 1961, a period of steady growth in the West German steel industry based on slowly evolving technology gave way to a period of massive investment to modernize plants. Between December 1948 and December 1961, raw steel output grew from about ten to thirty-three and one-half million tons, while the number of steelworkers rose from 180,291 to 420,568, meaning that output per worker did not increase dramatically. In the next three years alone, output rose by another 10 percent, while the labor force contracted by 5 percent. Management now persuaded *IG Metall* that survival in the world market required strenuous efforts to automate steel processing, build Siemens-Martin furnaces that were five times larger than those common in the 1950s, and introduce new oxygen-process and electrical furnaces that required very little labor.⁷⁴ German steel built up massive excess productive capacity in the 1960s because of exaggerated estimates regarding the economies of scale and long-term trends in demand, until the First Oil Shock of 1974 caused a collapse in the demand for steel and a massive wave of plant closings and layoffs in the Ruhr. Steel faced similar problems in the United States and other European countries, of course, and industrialists in each country had somewhat different rationales for their overconfidence before 1974.⁷⁵ The political influence of the Catholic bishops provided one distinctively German reason why so many industrialists believed that bigger always meant better.

Adenauer’s political strategy to reemphasize the Christian identity of the CDU flopped in the Bundestag election of September 1961, when the Christian democratic voting share dropped from 50.2 percent in 1957 to 45.3 percent. In 1962, the CDU endured similar losses in the state election in North Rhine–Westphalia, and those losses were heaviest in the Ruhr

Meyers to Chancellor Adenauer, February 15, 1961, BAK/NL Lücke/106/2; “Sonntags doch,” *Der Spiegel* 15, no. 9, February 22, 1961, 16.

⁷² “Verordnung über Ausnahmen vom Verbot der Beschäftigung von Arbeitnehmern an Sonn- und Feiertagen in der Eisen- und Stahlindustrie,” July 7, 1961 (<https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/sonntrstindausnv/BJNR009000961.html>); Krone, *Tagebücher 1945–1969*, April 21 and May 1, 1961, I: 485–87; cabinet minutes at <https://www.bundesarchiv.de/cocoon/barch/0000/index.html>, meetings of May 3, 1961, point 6, and July 5, 1961, point B; “Sonntagsarbeit. Hohe Werte,” *Der Spiegel* 15, no. 28, July 5, 1961, 18–19.

⁷³ DGB press release published in *Soziale Ordnung* 15, no. 9 (September 1961): 154; *IG Metall* leadership conference of May 30, 1961, in Felicitas Merkel, ed., *Quellen zur Geschichte der deutschen Gewerkschaftsbewegung im 20. Jahrhundert. Band 9: Die Industriegewerkschaft Metall in den Jahren 1956 bis 1963* (Frankfurt/Main: Bund-Verlag, 1999), 631–33.

⁷⁴ See Lauschke, *Die halbe Macht*, 159–86.

⁷⁵ Lauschke, *Die halbe Macht*, 231–329; Hans G. Mueller, “The Steel Industry,” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 460: *The Internationalization of the American Economy* (March 1982): 73–82; Hans K. Schneider, “Steel Crisis: Consequences of the European Steel Policy After World War II,” *Journal of Institutional and Theoretical Economics* 142 (1986): 138–51; Angelo Pichierra, “Confronting Crisis in the European Steel Industry: Diagnosis and Strategy,” *Industrial Crisis Quarterly* 4 (1990): 99–119.

Valley. The social committee in the steel city of Duisburg reported after this election that “for the first time the SPD appears to have succeeded at making a breakthrough among churchgoing workers.” Adenauer concluded thereafter that the CDU should distance itself from the churches because of the increasingly secular outlook of German voters, and most CDU leaders since then have followed that advice.⁷⁶ West Germany did not suddenly become irreligious, however. In 1987, the church-tax-paying members of the Evangelical and Catholic Churches still made up 84.5 percent of the total population, compared with 96.0 percent in 1956; Muslim immigrants had become another 3 percent, a small but vibrant Jewish community had reemerged, and there had been some growth of small Protestant denominations and novel spiritual practices. Attendance at worship services had declined more rapidly than church membership, however, and faster still was the decline in the willingness of church members to follow the guidance of clergy regarding political choices, sexual behavior, and recreational activities. The last trend is often described as “religious decline” but in some ways reflected the emergence of a healthier relationship between the clergy and laypersons.⁷⁷

The Catholic bishops blundered in the debate over steel because they ignored the views of Catholic steelworkers, insisted that “technological necessity” was the only grounds for exemptions, and pronounced judgment about technical issues they did not understand. Bernhard Tacke, the Christian Democratic vice-chairman of the DGB, had many sharp disagreements with senior clerics during his long career, but he recalled most vividly near the end of his life a distressing encounter at the climax of this debate with Joseph Höffner, the future archbishop of Cologne, who demanded that all steel plants shut down on Sunday but still did not understand that a ceramic lining would crack if it did not maintain a constant high temperature.⁷⁸ Repeated statements by some bishops implying that Catholic workers were morally obliged to join the powerless Christian Labor Federation had already nurtured the impression that the episcopate did not care about workers’ vital interests. That impression helped the SPD to consolidate a dominant position in the Ruhr Valley from the 1960s until the 1980s in a region where the CDU had been quite powerful in the 1950s.⁷⁹

Despite the miscues of the bishops, Catholic veterans of the old Christian trade unions such as Johannes Ernst and Anton Storch formulated a position on Sunday labor that was embraced by the Evangelical Church and commanded very powerful support in public opinion—that it should be permitted only where it was in the public interest because of its great importance for the economy as a whole. Most CDU politicians felt obliged after 1961 to honor that principle. The first major attempt to imitate steel took place in early 1958, when the paper industry employers’ association offered to reduce the work week to forty-one hours and raise hourly wages by 12 percent if workers accepted continuous production. The DGB-affiliated chemical workers’ union cautiously endorsed this plan, but

⁷⁶ See Patch, *Christian Democratic Workers and the Forging of German Democracy, 1920–1980*, 224–29 (quotation on 228), and Ronald J. Garnieri, “Politics in C Minor: The CDU/CSU between Germany and Europe since the Secular Sixties,” *Central European History* 42 (2009): 1–32.

⁷⁷ See the federal government’s compilation of church membership statistics in “Zahlen und Fakten. Die soziale Situation in Deutschland,” August 10, 2020 (<https://www.bpb.de/nachschlagen/zahlen-und-fakten/soziale-situation-in-deutschland/61565/kirche>); Ziemann, *Encounters with Modernity*, 30–52, 78–98, 171–210; Grossbörling, *Losing Heaven*, 105–258, 273–88; and Greschat, *Der Protestantismus in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 1945–2005*, 80–194.

⁷⁸ See the transcript of Yorck Dietrich’s interview with Tacke on August 7, 1990, 3–6, ACDF/NL Tacke/15/5. Tacke recalled this exchange taking place in his first meeting with Höffner as bishop of Münster, which he became in mid-1962, but the encounter may have occurred in 1960–61 while Höffner served as adviser to Bishop Keller. For a more respectful discussion of Höffner’s economic views, see Chappel, *Catholic Modern*, 202–14.

⁷⁹ See Patch, *Christian Democratic Workers and the Forging of German Democracy, 1920–1980*, 161–68, 192–96; Schroeder, *Katholizismus und Einheitsgewerkschaft*, 188–256, 403–11; and Karl Rohe, “Political Alignments and Re-alignments in the Ruhr, 1867–1987: Continuity and Change of Political Traditions in an Industrial Region,” in Karl Rohe, *Elections, Parties, and Political Traditions: Social Foundations of German Parties and Party Systems, 1867–1987* (New York: Berg Publishers, 1990), 107–44.

Theodor Blank condemned it as labor minister and warned CDU colleagues that the chemical and cement industries would follow suit immediately if paper gained its wish. The Catholic leagues mobilized opposition, and many paper industrialists became discouraged and withdrew from this campaign.⁸⁰ Adenauer's influential minister of housing, Paul Lücke, became the subject of intense lobbying by the owners of the J. W. Zanders Paper Factory in his district of Bergisch-Gladbach, who warned that they would go bankrupt unless permitted to operate continuously. There was no great cost involved with halting the production of paper on Sunday, however; Zanders merely sought enhanced revenue to justify the cost of purchasing the most modern machinery, which would itself eliminate many jobs. Lücke therefore urged Blank and Konrad Grundmann to reject the demand by Zanders, and Grundmann cancelled all temporary exemptions for paper factories in North Rhine Westphalia by November 1960.⁸¹

Several state governments did grant exemptions later to allow the continuous production of paper, glass, ceramics, and chemicals, sometimes in response to court judgments after industrialists filed suit alleging that other firms or branches of industry had received preferential treatment. These exemptions required political or legal battles with an uncertain outcome, however, and the Catholic bishops apparently came close enough to securing an absolute ban on Sunday steel production to discourage many industrialists in branches with less political influence than steel. Government studies from the 1970s and 1980s suggest remarkable stability in Sunday employment in the industrial sector. Between 1981 and 1987, the proportion of industrial workers employed on Sunday remained constant at 5 percent, while it rose from 7 percent to 13 percent in the service sector.⁸²

The German Labor Federation finally achieved its old goal of the forty-hour work week in 1967 through collective bargaining.⁸³ The DGB campaigned thereafter for the two-day weekend, meaning that Saturday and Sunday should both be defined as days of rest, with exceptions compensated as overtime labor with a bonus of 100 percent of the hourly wage. That demand lacked the constitutional basis of Sunday rest, but the DGB made significant progress toward achieving it. In the late 1980s, however, the German weekend was challenged by the Siemens Corporation and IBM, which both made permission for continuous operation as a "technological necessity" the precondition for opening plants in Germany to produce computer chips. Other high-tech firms soon raised similar demands.⁸⁴ Since 1990, Germany has also struggled to regulate a growing number of temporary and part-time jobs and labor by supposedly independent contractors. Whenever such issues arise, efforts to restrict weekend labor, whether through collective bargaining or government action, rarely succeed without the support of a powerful labor union.

The Jesuit social theorist Hermann-Josef Wallraff acknowledged the importance of powerful unions in the early 1960s, when he dropped his support for the Christian Labor Federation and aligned himself instead with the DGB. He opposed the neoliberal policies of the cabinet of Ludwig Erhard (1963–66) and cheered the formation of the first Great Coalition at the federal level between the CDU and SPD (1966–69). Wallraff became the

⁸⁰ Report by Wilhelm Gefeller to DGB leaders on February 4, 1958, in Jens Hildebrandt, ed., *Quellen zur Geschichte der deutschen Gewerkschaftsbewegung im 20. Jahrhundert. Band 12: Der Deutsche Gewerkschaftsbund 1956–1963* (Bonn: Dietz-Verlag, 2005), 250; Blank's report to the CDU Bundestag delegation, May 6, 1958, *CDU/CSU Fraktionsprotokolle 1957–1961*, I:180–81; minutes of a discussion between Blank and Johannes Ernst, February 13, 1959, NL Ernst/2/2; Father Joseph Engel's fifteen-page summary in March 1959 of discussions about the paper industry convened by the federal labor ministry over the past year, "Zur Sonntagsruhe in der Papierindustrie: Diskussionsstand März 1959 in der Kommission Sonntagsruhe," KAB Archiv/1/30.

⁸¹ See the extensive correspondence over this issue in NL Lücke/106/2, including Grundmann to Blank, November 5, 1960, and the related documents in NL Ernst/2/2.

⁸² Albracht, "Sonntagsarbeit—Auswirkungen und rechtliche Probleme," 100.

⁸³ See Andrei Markovits, *The Politics of the West German Trade Unions: Strategies of Class and Interest Representation in Growth and Crisis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 83–87, 196–201, 397–99.

⁸⁴ See Albracht, "Sonntagsarbeit—Auswirkungen und rechtliche Probleme," 97–98, 105–118.

most dynamic clerical supporter of the DGB's campaign to expand parity co-determination from the coal and steel sector to other branches of industry, and he served as personal adviser to the influential chairman of the construction workers' union, SPD politician, and observant Catholic Georg Leber. This was no isolated case because the encyclicals of Pope John XXIII and decrees of the Second Vatican Council in the early 1960s acknowledged that Catholics could in good conscience support democratic socialist parties. Cardinal Frings became a champion of reform and sought reconciliation with Catholics who supported the SPD or became DGB functionaries; he thus helped to achieve more respect among senior clerics for the expertise of laypersons in the spirit advocated in 1959 by Josef Engel. Major signs of change came in 1967 with the election of Leber as the first social democratic member of the Central Committee of German Catholics and a formal resolution by the KAB in 1968 stating that social democrats were welcome to join the Catholic workers' clubs.⁸⁵

The years in which so many priests and bishops had vilified the DGB as "materialistic" inflicted irreparable damage nevertheless on Catholic influence within organized labor. From the 1890s to the 1920s, thousands of parish priests served as talent scouts among Catholic workers, and the People's League for Catholic Germany and League of Christian Trade Unions offered them valuable adult education programs as labor organizers. Most priests lost interest in that project after 1945, however, and a career as labor organizer came to appear as repugnant to most young parishioners. The defection in 1955 by a few Catholic DGB functionaries to the very hostile Christian Labor Federation also provoked something resembling a witch hunt in the DGB. It had about 5,000 salaried functionaries altogether, and careful inquiries by the social committees indicated that the number supporting Catholic social theory declined from more than 700 in January 1955 to a mere 280 in 1962 and no more than 145 in 1975.⁸⁶ The proportion of Catholic members of the DGB remained similar to their proportion of the total population, and in the Bundestag election of 1976 (when the SPD was in general far more popular than it had been in the 1950s), 28.4 percent of DGB members still voted for the CDU/CSU, compared with 57.8 percent for the SPD, and 8 percent for the FDP.⁸⁷ Catholic members of the DGB were reduced to a largely passive role, however, and the assertions by clerics in the 1950s that social democrats dominated the "unified" labor unions became a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Most political scientists in the 1980s still regarded the Christian churches as one of the four most influential "interest groups" in West German politics, not as powerful as big business and organized labor to be sure, but at least equal in clout to the farm lobby. The churches' influence did not result from pressure tactics but from their reputation in public opinion for dedication to the common good. CDU and SPD politicians who sought for any reason to persuade voters to sacrifice short-term material self-interest for the public welfare cherished support from the Christian churches. Both Catholic and Protestant lobbyists recognized, however, that the precondition for exerting influence was cooperation between them; any position championed by only one confession had little chance of swaying the government.⁸⁸ Chancellor Helmut Kohl learned about the enduring influence of organized religion in 1987, when his CDU-led government finally introduced the comprehensive federal law to regulate Sunday labor promised by Adenauer in 1960. Kohl's Work Hours Bill

⁸⁵ See Wallraff's interview in Wolfgang Schroeder, *Gewerkschaftspolitik zwischen DGB, Katholizismus und CDU, 1945 bis 1960. Katholische Arbeiterführer als Zeitzeugen in Interviews* (Cologne: Bund-Verlag, 1990), 325–38; Patch, *Christian Democratic Workers and the Forging of German Democracy, 1920–1980*, 242–60; Gauly, *Katholiken*, 179–215; and John W. O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008).

⁸⁶ Patch, *Christian Democratic Workers and the Forging of German Democracy, 1920–1980*, 247–48, 306–7.

⁸⁷ See Horst W. Schmollinger, "Zur politisch-gesellschaftlichen Beteiligung von Gewerkschaftsmitgliedern. Gewerkschafter in Parteien, Kirchen und Vereinen," in *Gewerkschaftliche Politik: Reform aus Solidarität*, ed. Ulrich Borsdorf et al. (Cologne: Bund Verlag, 1977), 135–57, esp. 137.

⁸⁸ See Göttrik Wewer, "Die grossen Kirchen und das politische System der Bundesrepublik Deutschland," in *Die Kirchen und die Politik. Beiträge zu einem ungeklärten Verhältnis*, ed. Heidrun Abromeit and Göttrik Wewer (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1989), 49–87.

expanded the grounds for exemptions from the ban on Sunday labor significantly, but it was soon withdrawn in the face of sharp criticism by the German Labor Federation and the Catholic and Evangelical Churches.⁸⁹

The communist government of East Germany sought ruthlessly to undermine organized religion, and it created the most irreligious society in Europe; the Evangelical Church there lost more than two-thirds of its members between 1949 and 1989.⁹⁰ The old political consensus of the 1890s remained strong enough after national reunification in 1990, however, that the new constitutions of the East German states all adopted provisions on Sunday rest modeled on Article 139 of the Weimar constitution. Brandenburg did innovate in 1992, however, when it only defined Sunday as “a day of rest from labor,” omitting the phrase “and of spiritual edification,” and placed this provision in the section of the constitution on “basic rights” rather than the section on religion. These changes weakened the connection with Christian ideas about Sunday, and the city-state of Berlin imitated that example in 1995. National reunification undermined the claim by the two major churches to represent the great majority of the German people because their combined membership sank abruptly to 72.3 percent of the population in 1990 and 52.1 percent in 2019.⁹¹

The political influence of the churches had obviously declined by 1994, when Helmut Kohl succeeded at enacting a revised version of his 1987 bill as the current Work Hours Law for reunified Germany. Alarmed by persistent high unemployment, the Kohl cabinet made several concessions to demands by employers for more “flexibility” in the labor market. Kohl’s long-serving minister of labor, Norbert Blüm, was a former automobile assembly-line worker who rose to lead the social committees; he found these demands for “flexibility” maddening and later concluded that such reforms did not yield any of the economic benefits promised by business lobbyists.⁹² Article 9 of the Work Hours Law declares that blue- and white-collar workers cannot be employed on Sundays and legal holidays, and the following articles list exceptions and specify procedures to apply for additional exemptions. Article 10 states like the old Workers Protection Law of 1891 that industrial workers may be employed on Sundays for necessary maintenance and repairs, but it also states that they may be employed if “the interruption of production ... requires the hiring of more workers than would be needed for continuous production.” Other provisions imply that Sunday labor is permissible when needed to prevent the failure of an enterprise. Further research is needed to analyze this law’s impact on employment practices.⁹³

Conclusion

The intriguing debate between Mark Ruff and Lösche and Walter mentioned earlier exceeds the scope of this article (see footnote 3 previously). It should perhaps be noted, however, that the term *Catholic milieus* was coined to describe living communities, such as the thousands of farm villages and coal miners’ neighborhoods where the overwhelming majority voted for the Center Party in every Reichstag election from 1871 to 1933.⁹⁴ Catholic milieus began to erode in 1945

⁸⁹ See Albracht, “Sonntagsarbeit,” 118–20, and Richardi, *Grenzen industrieller Sonntagsarbeit*.

⁹⁰ Grossbölting, *Losing Heaven*, 259–73.

⁹¹ Häberle, *Sonntag als Verfassungsprinzip*, 99–103; church membership figures at Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, “Die soziale Situation in Deutschland: Katholische und evangelische Kirche,” August 10, 2020 (<https://www.bpb.de/nachschlagen/zahlen-und-fakten/soziale-situation-in-deutschland/61565/kirche>).

⁹² See Norbert Blüm, *Gerechtigkeit. Eine Kritik des Homo oeconomicus* (Freiburg: Herder Verlag, 2006), 108–24.

⁹³ “Arbeitszeitgesetz” of June 6, 1994 (<https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/arbztg/BJNR117100994.html>). For brief commentaries see Karl Kehrmann, “Ein Blick zurück im Zorn. Arbeitsrechtliche Bilanz der Regierung Kohl,” *Arbeit und Recht* 47 (1999): 5–11; Friedrich Schoch, “Zur Zulässigkeit von Sonn- und Feiertagsbeschäftigung,” *JuristenZeitung* 56 (2001): 403–8; and Reinhard Richardi, “Streit um Arbeitszeiten. Sonn- und Feiertagsruhe im Arbeitsleben,” *Arbeit und Recht* 54 (2006): 379–84.

⁹⁴ See for example Wolfgang Jäger, *Bergarbeitermilieus und Parteien im Ruhrgebiet. Zum Wahlverhalten des katholischen Bergarbeitermilieus bis 1933* (Munich: Verlag C. H. Beck, 1996).

because of the mass influx of Protestant refugees from the East, the growing number of “mixed marriages” between Catholics and Protestants, and an overall increase in rates of geographic mobility for the West German population.⁹⁵ Historians should probably use some language other than “the last gasp of the Catholic milieu” to describe the highly significant fact that most journalists and media commentators feared angering the bishops and Catholic leagues in the 1950s but lost that fear by 1964. Lösche and Walter exaggerate when they speak of “re-catholicization” because the forces of erosion continued to operate, but they are correct to point out that the largely anti-Catholic media environment emerging in the 1960s resembled that of Imperial Germany and the Weimar Republic. Rolf Hochhuth’s treatment of Pius XII was tame in comparison to what the liberal press wrote about Pius IX, but most historians agree that such hostility in the 1870s only strengthened the Center Party.

Do the veterans of the old Christian trade unions featured in this article deserve to be considered “more tenacious and effective dissidents” within the Catholic camp than the more famous intellectuals mentioned in the introduction? In some ways, clearly not. They displayed a largely patriarchal attitude toward gender roles, for example, and supported Adenauer’s call to rearm West Germany and join the NATO alliance. The social committees criticized Adenauer vigorously, however, for neglecting the vital interests of fellow Germans in East Germany and the French-occupied Saarland because of his preoccupation with the integration of western Europe. Their nationalism resembled that of the SPD in the 1950s, and they campaigned with some success to pressure Adenauer to adopt a more bipartisan approach to foreign policy.⁹⁶ Catholic laborites expressed their dissent primarily in the field they understood best, labor relations and social policy, and their representatives in the CDU Bundestag delegation displayed far more willingness to deviate from the party line in parliamentary votes than did any other group. They incurred some risk thereby to their political careers but exerted great pressure on the CDU, which sought to maintain a united front and avoid scandal, to modify its social policy course.⁹⁷ On a deeper level, Catholic labor activists lived in a chronic state of dissidence because they were (in the words of one Catholic functionary of *IG Metall*) “too red” for most colleagues in the CDU and “too black” for colleagues in the trade unions. This memoirist was a cheerful man but felt painfully isolated by the 1970s; the CDU ignored him, and Oswald von Nell-Breuning was the only cleric to offer advice and support when he quarreled with his union superiors.⁹⁸ Historians interested in Catholic dissidents should pay more attention to labor activists, who dedicated their expertise to the task of adapting Catholic moral teaching to the modern world and served as a prime example of the “lay apostolate” that finally won enthusiastic endorsement by the Second Vatican Council.⁹⁹

In Germany Sunday labor is still treated as an exception to the legal rule that requires justification, and it remains difficult for employers to demand it. Old arguments by the Catholic and Evangelical Churches about the “peace of Sunday” still influence the weekly rhythm of German life to a degree that is highly unusual in international comparison. The long-running parallel campaign by small shopkeepers to regulate the hours of retail sales has suffered massive defeats, however. The federal Shop Closing Law of 1956 banned almost all sales in the evening, on Saturday afternoon, and on Sunday, but the exemptions

⁹⁵ See for example Winfried Herbers, *Der Verlust der Hegemonie. Die Kölner CDU 1945/46–1964* (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 2003).

⁹⁶ One Catholic laborite, Wilhelm Elfes, became a radical pacifist, but his position was condemned by all leaders of the social committees; see Patch, *Christian Democratic Workers and the Forging of German Democracy, 1920–1980*, 113–19, 155–61.

⁹⁷ See George Rueckert and Wilder Crane, “CDU Deviancy in the German Bundestag,” *Journal of Politics* 24 (1962): 477–88, and Patch, *Christian Democratic Workers and the Forging of German Democracy, 1920–1980*, 168–86, 284–96.

⁹⁸ See Helmut “Jonny” Wagner, *Meine Lebensgeschichte: Zwischen schwarz und rot. 50 Jahre in der CDU, 50 Jahre in der Gewerkschaft* (Hamburg: Mein Buch, 2003), 347–433.

⁹⁹ See the Council Decree *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, promulgated by Paul VI on November 18, 1965 (http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651118_apostolicam-actuositatem_en.html).

multiplied rapidly in the 1990s, and the law has been largely ignored since 2006, when the federal government returned control of this issue to the states. The Catholic and Evangelical Churches deplored this trend but never attempted a mobilization similar to that in the debate over the steel industry. The issues involved were somewhat different because the primary rationale for the Shop Closing Law was to help small family-owned shops compete with large supermarket chains and department stores. That battle was lost by the 1990s, and politicians lost incentive to thwart the consumer's desire for convenience without pressure from vigorous shopkeepers' associations.¹⁰⁰

The debate over retail sales does illustrate a fundamental trend also relevant to the implementation of the Work Hours Law for industry and large corporations, a recent tendency among Germans to prioritize individual freedom above the old principle, honored by the unchurched as well as observant Christians, that most people should have the same day or days of rest. This tendency does not appear to reflect a decline in religious belief so much as a general decline in associational life. The trade unions, political parties, and especially amateur choral societies have all suffered from dwindling membership since 1990 (although not amateur soccer clubs, which are thriving). This trend does not necessarily signal the rise of egotism because volunteerism has also grown stronger among Germans. In 2014, an impressive 43.6 percent of the population aged fourteen or older reported engaging in some form of volunteer activity outside the family or workplace to enhance the welfare of others, a level of engagement that any priest or pastor from the 1950s would envy. While the refugee crisis of 2015–16 provoked acts of anti-immigrant violence in some German regions, many hundreds of thousands of Germans hurled themselves into loosely organized citizens' initiatives to provide many forms of assistance to immigrants. Most formal organizations that ask members to devote every other Sunday afternoon or Thursday evening to the affairs of the organization have experienced significant decline, nevertheless. German believers and unbelievers alike have apparently lost faith in the joys and potential rewards of club life, as individuals seek to define their own identities and devise their own complex life plans.¹⁰¹ In that sense an attitude toward life once associated primarily with artists and intellectuals has been embraced by broad segments of the population.

¹⁰⁰ See Torsten George, *Das Ladenschlussgesetz auf dem Prüfstand. Beschäftigungseffekte einer Flexibilisierung der Ladenöffnungszeiten* (Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien, 1996); Michael Rühling, *Das Ladenschlussgesetz vom 28. November 1956: Vorgeschichte, Entstehung des Gesetzes und weitere Entwicklung* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2003); and Hans-Peter Schneider, *Der neue deutsche Bundesstaat. Bericht über die Umsetzung der Föderalismusreform I* (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlag, 2013).

¹⁰¹ See Grossbölting, *Losing Heaven*, 295–306; Ulrike Zschache, "Germany," in *Solidarity as a Public Virtue? Law and Public Policies in the European Union*, ed. Veronica Federico and Christian Lahusen (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlag, 2018), 69–89, esp. 73–75; David P. Conradt and Eric Langenbacher, *The German Polity*, 10th ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2013), 103–82, 197–215; and Rudolf Speth and Elke Becker, *Zivilgesellschaftliche Akteure und die Betreuung geflüchteter Menschen in deutschen Kommunen* (Berlin: Maecenata Institut, 2016).

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